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The Hammond B-3 organ legend and **NEA Jazz Master** releases **All in My Mind**, a spirited live trio album recorded at the **Jazz Standard** in New York City. **All in My Mind** opens with a powerful rendering of Wayne Shorter's "JuJu," while Smith also takes Paul Simon's hit "50 Ways to Leave Your Lover" for a 10-minute joyride.



GOGO PENGUIN A HUMDRUM STAR

One of **New York Times'** **12 best bands at SXSW 2017**, the Manchester-based trio conjure richly atmospheric music that draws from their grounding in classical conservatoires and jazz ensembles, while merging acoustic and electronic techniques. Their latest album builds on the momentum of its acclaimed predecessors, the **Mercury Prize**-nominated **V2.0** and **Man Made Object**, and transports it to new realms.



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."



CHRIS DAVE AND THE DRUMHEDZ CHRIS DAVE AND THE DRUMHEDZ

The **Drumhedz** are the session players and road warriors, fronted by bandleader **Chris Dave**, who's drummed for everyone from **Adele** to **D'Angelo**. The group's self-titled debut LP showcases a family of musicians, from core musicians like **Pino Palladino** (bass) and **Keyon Harrold** (horn), to fresh guests like **Anderson .Paak**.



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**.

FEBRUARY 2018

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'Speaking to All Human Beings'

BY JENNIFER ODELL

The trumpeter discusses his ambitious three-album series, *The Centennial Trilogy*, which was inspired by current events as well as the 100th anniversary of the first jazz recordings. We sit down with one of the most exciting artists in jazz in his hometown of New Orleans.



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Danny Janklow's leader debut is titled *Elevation*.

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Cover photo of Christian Scott aTunde Adjuah shot by Erika Golding at the New Orleans Jazz Market on Oct. 24.

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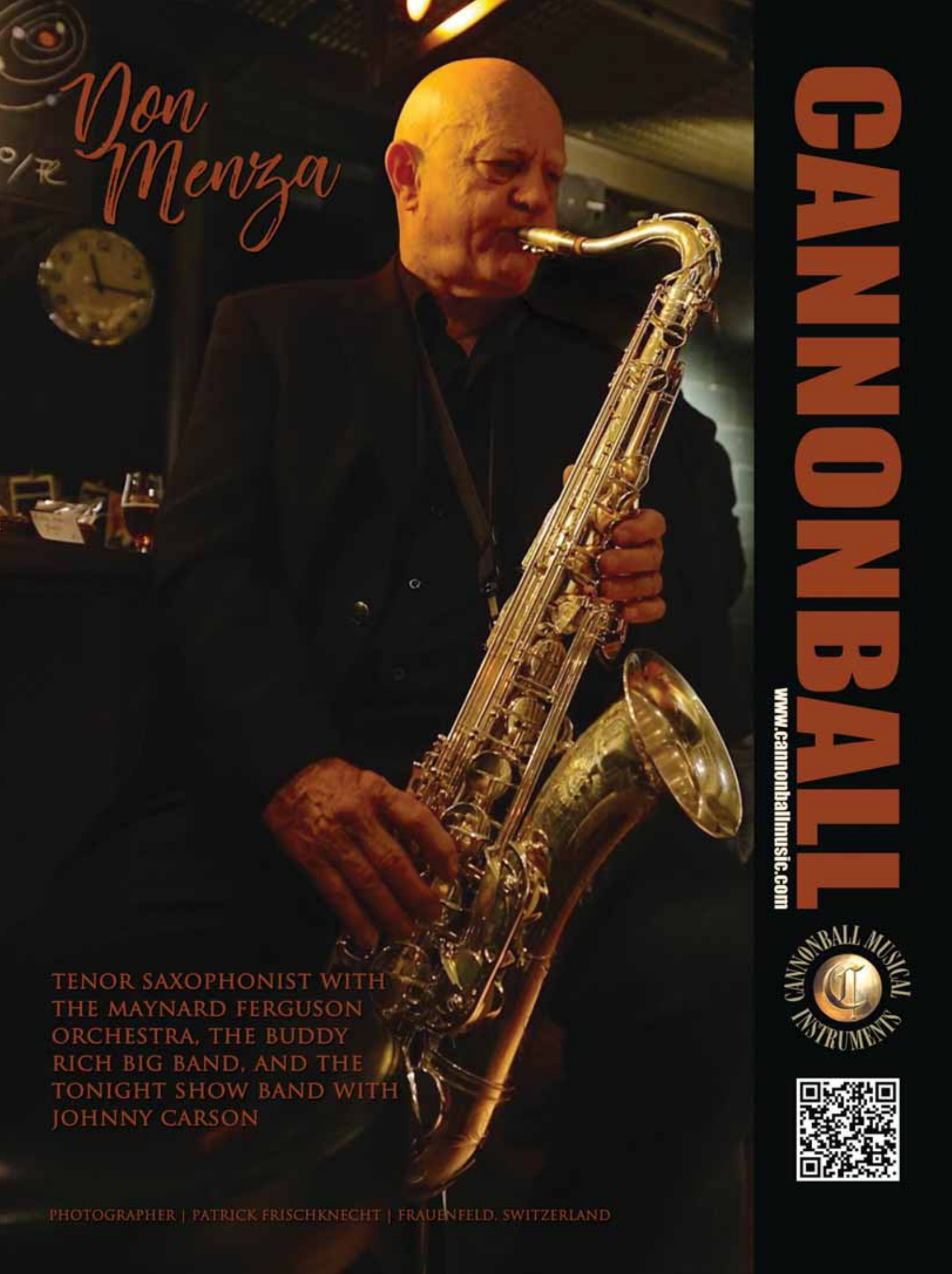
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Ingrid Jensen (left) onstage with her sister Christine Jensen of Dièse Onze in Montreal on July 1, 2016

Concerts That Defy Time

A GREAT CONCERT CAN FREEZE TIME. A great concert in a great venue can be one of life's most memorable, fulfilling experiences—and I'm speaking as a fan and journalist, not as a professional musician.

Some performances are so dazzling that they get seared into our memory banks, captured for decades, and we're able to call them up repeatedly, just like accessing a clip on YouTube. I saw Wynton Marsalis perform on July 11, 1986, and I remember it like it happened last month. In my mind's eye, I can still see his nimble fingers working those pistons as the stage lights shone on the bell of his trumpet, creating sunbursts. I was hypnotized.

That same year, I saw a memorable performance by Lionel Hampton at an outdoor festival. He had stepped in to take the place of a scheduled headliner who had recently died: Benny Goodman.

Those two shows stand out in my mind partially due to the overall context. The Wynton show was the first time I had seen the trumpeter in concert, and his staggering chops matched the hype that I had read in the press.

The Hampton show was bittersweet event. On one hand, I was savoring the opportunity to see and hear the flurry of the vibraphonist's mallets in action. But I was also lamenting the fact that I would never get to see Goodman—the man who had provided the soundtrack to many afternoons spent at my grandparents' house when I was a child.

Other shows are special because of the venue and the entire sensory experience. Such was the case when I caught the Lucas Pino No Net Nonet at Smalls in New York on Sept. 26.

The entire room felt electric. The band roared like an unstoppable machine.

Another particularly memorable night was July 1, 2016, when I went to Dièse Onze in Montreal to see a quintet co-led by the gifted siblings Ingrid Jensen (trumpet) and Christine Jensen (saxophone). The music was adventurous yet entirely engaging, the room had great acoustics, the crowd was attentive, and the food and beverages were superb. Everything about the show—the sight lines, the music, the cuisine, even the temperature of the room—coalesced into a transcendent experience. As a patron, I felt like the club's staff cared about my comfort. But more importantly, Dièse Onze had created an atmosphere in which the Jensens could create mesmerizing improvisations.

Whenever I go to a jazz club, I care more about how the venue treats the artists than how it treats me as a patron. After all, if the artists are treated well, they're more inclined to do their best work.

On page 53 you'll find our International Jazz Venue Guide, which includes listings for 209 clubs around the world. We hope that this guide will help you discover artists and venues that you've not previously encountered. Within the guide, you'll also find features on several clubs, including Dièse Onze (see page 70).

We'd love to hear your thoughts about your favorite (and *least* favorite) jazz clubs. So, the next time you have a particularly memorable experience at a jazz venue, please send an email to editor@downbeat.com and tell us about it. And be sure to tell the venue operator, too. Your constructive feedback might be the key that helps a venue to flourish.

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Photo by Jimmy Katz

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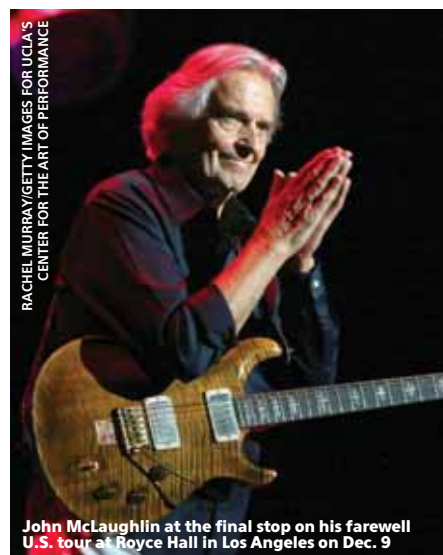
Way More DownBeat Material

I am a longtime reader who started subscribing to DownBeat in 1974 while I was in college. John McLaughlin and the Mahavishnu Orchestra was my gateway to jazz and DownBeat was my monthly cover-to-cover read.

Here we are 40-plus years later and I always seem to want more than what I get monthly from the print magazine. I'm wondering if you might start delivering much more daily content on your Facebook page—perhaps things that don't make it into the magazine, plus photos, videos, reviews, etc.

KEN HUNT
 SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA

Editor's Note: Check out downbeat.com, where you'll find hundreds of interviews, reviews and news stories that are exclusive to our site. And please like us on Facebook, which we often use to link readers to exclusive articles posted at downbeat.com.



John McLaughlin at the final stop on his farewell U.S. tour at Royce Hall in Los Angeles on Dec. 9



David Virelles (left) at Ravi Coltrane at the 2017 Winter Jazzfest in New York

Satisfied Customer

I started reading DownBeat back in the 1960s and have read it on and off ever since. I was spurred to write this note after reading Frank-John Hadley's Xmas record reviews in the Holiday Gift Guide of your December issue.

That's just one example of how DownBeat leads me to great new artists and albums.

PETER J. LOGAN
 SAN FRANCISCO

Defining a Masterpiece

The soul-searching First Take essay by Bobby Reed in your January issue rightly wrestles with a basic mission of your iconic magazine: letting readers know which recordings deserve special attention.

As an avid fan, consumer and DownBeat reader for more than 40 years, I encourage you to embrace this responsibility more productively. There's a lot of really good music being made, but your grade inflation is hurting the culling process.

Your January issue included a list of 23 "masterpieces" released in 2017. Really? Do your critics' choices rightly belong on a hallowed list next to *Kind Of Blue*, *A Love Supreme*, *For Alto*, *The Inner Mounting Flame* and *The Big Gundown*? Are they similarly breaking ground, setting new standards and establishing all-time touchstones?

I've listened to many your 2017 "masterpieces" and I think David Virelles' *Antenna* alone might merit the esteemed 5-star rating. When you publish a phone book of "masterpieces" and "excellent" albums of the year, it dilutes both the usefulness to the reader and the magazine's status as an important jazz tastemaker.

MARTIN WISCOL
 HUNTINGTON BEACH, CALIFORNIA

Digging the Digital Edition

I want to compliment you on the digital subscription. While I am largely a "print guy" when it comes to my reading—I work in IT and I stare at a screen most of the day—I do enjoy the convenience of having several issues on my iPad and being able to take them with me wherever I go. The PDF format is ideal—nice and simple and readable on any device without special software. Well done, DownBeat!

JOE FRANK
JDFRANK@VERIZON.NET

More Accolades for Wynton

Congratulations to Wynton Marsalis on his Downbeat Hall of Fame induction. What he has done for jazz is remarkable. It's not just his outstanding voice as a jazz ambassador; it's also his incredible trumpet playing and his compositions. In this era of being "out" just for the sake of being "out," it's so refreshing to have Wynton burning the flames of swing. He understands that swinging and having a melody are still valued.

KEVIN MCINTOSH
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Ole Morten Vågan double bass
Thomas Strønen drums, percussion



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with Tom Challenger tenor saxophone

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Beat

Lynell Wins Sarah Vaughan Competition

The finals of the Sarah Vaughan International Jazz Vocal Competition often emphasize standards. The vocalists who vie for cash prizes and a recording contract at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center in Newark perform material from the Great American Songbook—tunes that Vaughan herself infused with operatic richness over a career that lasted nearly a half century. Yet one pivotal performance during the competitive and entertaining sixth-annual contest in Vaughan's hometown on Nov. 12—held as part of the TD James Moody Jazz Festival—was a bawdy blues number.

As Quiana Lynell, a Loyola University New Orleans adjunct music professor from Baton Rouge, Louisiana, took the stage to sing her last song as a finalist, she cheerfully announced: "I'm about to turn this [hall] into a juke joint, if you don't mind."

Indeed, after an afternoon of mostly lucid lyrics set to poignant harmonies and breathtaking melodies, the audience in NJPAC's Victoria Theater seemed ripe for a change of pace. Lynell then ripped through the 12-bar blues "Hip Shakin' Mama." But the singer didn't simply grind out a blues; she painted a picture, shading and coloring the lyrics with strong technique. When the song concluded, she owned the room—and was on her way to being No. 1 on the judges' scorecards.

"I am at home in the blues," Lynell told *DownBeat* after capturing the \$5,000 first prize cash award and an offer to record for the Concord label. "The foundation of jazz is the blues. Just play the blues and you will be all right."

With her victory, Lynell joined the ranks of previous winners Cyrille Aimée (2012) and Jazzmeia Horn (2013).

Lynell said she gave up a full-time job as an elementary school music teacher last year



The finalists at the 2017 Sarah Vaughan International Jazz Vocal Competition were Fabio Giacalone (left), Tatiana "LadyMay" Mayfield, Tiffany Austin, Christine Fawson and Quiana Lynell, who was crowned the winner.

to focus on building a career as a jazz singer while teaching part-time at Loyola. In May, she performed at the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival, and trumpeter Terence Blanchard has invited Lynell to perform with his quintet in a series of collaborative outings with symphony orchestras.

Second place went to Tatiana "LadyMay" Mayfield of Fort Worth, Texas, who received a \$1,500 cash prize. Christine Fawson, a faculty member at Berklee College of Music who sang and played solos on trumpet, finished third and took home \$500.

The other finalists were New York-based Fabio Giacalone, the first man to perform in the competition under a rule change this year allowing male singers, and Northern California's Tiffany Austin, whose 2015 album, *Nothing But Soul*, received strong reviews.

Fawson, a distinctive performer with com-

elling dynamism, topped off a trio of songs with a mesmerizing performance of "Fools Rush In." The impact of her trumpet on her singing was undeniable. As Fawson sang behind the beat and held long notes, she imbued the narrative with a seamless continuity that enhanced her believability.

Mayfield served up a medium-tempo reading of "On Green Dolphin Street" that suited her naturally sweet vocal tones and provocative phrasing.

Judges for the finals were Gary Walker, a veteran host for jazz radio station WBGO; singers Ann Hampton Callaway, Vanessa Rubin and Will Downing; and composer, bandleader and drummer T.S. Monk.

Backing the singers was a trio led by pianist Sergio Salvatore, with Buddy Williams on drums and Gregory Jones on bass.

—Michael Barris

Riffs >

Miles Davis (left) and John Coltrane



© JEAN-PIERRE LÉOIR

Miles & Trane 'Bootleg': On March 23, Columbia/Legacy will release *Miles Davis & John Coltrane—The Final Tour: The Bootleg Series, Vol. 6*. Available in a four-CD box set as well as digitally, this installment of the *Miles Davis Bootleg Series* compiles concert performances from the Spring 1960 Jazz At The Philharmonic European Tour, when Coltrane was a member of Davis' band. The set's extensive liner notes include an essay by Ashley Kahn. A two-LP vinyl edition of *Miles Davis & John Coltrane—The Final Tour: Paris, March 21, 1960* will be available exclusively through Vinyl Me, Please as part of its VMP Classics subscription program.

More info: vinylmeplease.com

Jazz at the Moss: In partnership with the Jazz Bakery, the Moss Theater in Santa Monica, California, will present concerts by Larry Koonse & Larry Goldings (Feb. 10), the Cyrus Chestnut Trio (Feb. 14), the Benny Green Trio (March 3), Alfredo Rodriguez (March 10) and Anthony Wilson (March 31).

More info: jazzbakery.org/events

Legendary Hall: On Feb. 1, SFJAZZ will honor New Orleans' Preservation Hall with the SFJAZZ Lifetime Achievement Award. The gala program will feature performances by Preservation Hall Jazz Band, Ellis Marsalis, Terence Blanchard, Chucho Valdés, SFJAZZ Collective, Pedrito Martinez, Christian Scott aTunde Adjuah, Aíto Moreira and others. Proceeds will support SFJAZZ's artistic and education programs.

More info: sfjazz.org/gala

Final Bar: Drummer **Sunny Murray**, who explored free-jazz styles as a leader and as a collaborator with Cecil Taylor and Albert Ayler, died on Dec. 7. He was 81. ... **Willie Pickens**, 86, died Dec. 12 of a heart attack while preparing for a performance at New York's Jazz at Lincoln Center. Based in Chicago, the versatile pianist and educator played with Eddie Harris, Gene Ammons, Dexter Gordon, Elvin Jones and Sonny Stitt. ... Guitarist **Mundell Lowe**, who worked with Charlie Parker, Billie Holiday, Carmen McRae and Tony Bennett, died Dec. 2 at age 95. He was closely associated with the Monterey Jazz Festival during the 1970s and '80s.



Shabaka Hutchings performs with his band The Ancestors at the 2017 Tampere Jazz Happening in Finland.

MAARIT KYÖHÄRÄ

Adventurous Artists Flourish at Tampere

FINLAND'S 36TH ANNUAL TAMPERE JAZZ Happening (Nov. 2–5) gave adventurous artists a terrific forum. The fest took place in the usual comforts of three venues: the intimate, 400-seat Klubi; the acoustically resonant, 600-seat Tullikamarin Pakkahuone; and the cozy, 200-seat Telakka.

The fest got rolling at Klubi on a Thursday night with a series of shows and a celebration of jazz from neighboring, continental Estonia (just across the pond from Helsinki and Tampere). Three Spotlight On Estonia events showcased some of the country's variety, beginning with the Kirke Karja Quartet featuring pianist/composer Karja in a mixed set of unconventional acoustic jazz. Vocalist/pianist/violinist Kadri Voorand performed in a duo setting with bassist Mihkel Malgand, the pair's strong interaction spiced with a touch of electronics from the fiery Voorand. The evening's music ended with the energetic jazz-rock of Heavy Beauty, a quartet headed up by guitarist Jaak Sooaar.

All told, there were 10 events, in which, altogether, 25 ensembles performed. Every one of the shows was filled—if not to capacity, then close to it. American bands included Jojo Mayer's Nerve, Steve Coleman's Five Elements and New Zion with Hamid Drake; other groups were populated with various U.S. artists. One of them that served as a top festival surprise was Dhafer Youssef's "Diwan of Beauty and Odd" show. Tunisian oudist/vocalist Youssef was joined by pianist Aaron Parks, bassist Matt Brewer and Philadelphia phenom drummer Justin Faulkner at Pakkahuone on the final day.

With all three rhythm players in a semi-circle, Youssef energetically moved from player to player in intimate dialog, all the while playing his oud either ferociously or with great tenderness. The time signatures were varied and intricate. The band played as one, their kind of Mahavishnu Orchestra vibe perfectly melding

with North African music styles. Elements of swing swirled in the air. At one point, Youssef, who also contributed haunting, lovely vocals, was heard to quip between numbers, "I want our music to help bring peace to the world. That's why I have American musicians." After eliciting laughter from this packed house, he added, "It's also good for commercial reasons" to more chuckles.

Other highlights included Swiss keyboardist/composer Nik Bartsch's mesmerizing "acoustic zen funk" Mobile band, Nigerian drummer Tony Allen's "Tribute to Art Blakey," two impressive bands from British saxophonist Shabaka Hutchings (The Ancestors, The Comet Is Coming), the experimental Fifth Man with British saxophonist Evan Parker and turntables (a band created especially for TJH), and veteran Finnish saxophonist Eero Koivistoinen playing a robust, straightahead quartet set at Telakka.

Among the other important European artists on hand, one deserves more than merely a mention: Finnish trumpeter Verner Pohjola received his country's top jazz award, the Yrjö Jazz Prize. The ceremony, held Nov. 3 in Pakkahuone, was capped off by an intriguing, engaging free-improv duo performance between Pohjola and longtime partner drummer/percussionist Mika Kallio.

The following afternoon, also in Pakkahuone, Pohjola was guest artist with Icelandic pianist Sunna Gunnlaugs' trio featuring Finnish bassist Þórgímur Jónsson and U.S. drummer Scott McLeMore in a set of Gunnlaugs' originals that were filled with gentle cadences and waltzing vamps.

Earlier this year (April 28) at jazzahead! in Bremen, Germany, Tampere Jazz Happening—and its artistic director, Juhamatti Kauppinen—received the 6th Europe Jazz Network Award for Adventurous Programming. —John Ephland

Pianist King Cuts a 'Brazil-ified' Monk Groove

IN MUSIC, AS IN BIOLOGY, SOMETIMES THE offspring of two genetically dissimilar parents can be a hybrid with its own character and charm.

Journeyman pianist Matt King, a self-described “lifetime improviser and career freelancer,” has for years nurtured twin passions for Thelonious Monk and Brazilian music. His new album, *Monk In Brazil: Re-grooving The Music Of Thelonious Monk*, was released in October to help commemorate Monk’s centennial. It features a dozen tunes, some well-known and some rarely covered, married to various Brazilian rhythm styles and played by an exceptional cast of Brazilian-American musicians. A brilliant concept boldly executed, it may well prove to be King’s breakthrough as a pianist and arranger.

The revered Brazilian musician/composer Hermeto Pascoal used to say that Thelonious Monk was “the most Brazilian of all American jazz composers,” according to pianist/composer Jovino Santos Neto, a close Pascoal associate. “King proves the point” with this album, Neto said, citing creative arrangements that “enhance Monk’s music without harming its DNA.”

Joining King on the album are two crack Brazilian-American rhythm sections: electric bassist Itaigurara Brandão with drummer Mauricio Zottarelli, and upright bassist Nilson Matta with drummer Adriano Santos. King also

elicits strong contributions from guitar whiz Chico Pinheiro and multi-reedist Anton Denner.

Monk In Brazil started four years ago when King was fooling around with a Monk tune on piano—he no longer recalls which one—and realized it worked as a samba. “As soon as it occurred to me that I could ‘Brazil-ify’ that tune, I started pulling other Monk tunes out of my head and trying them with a Brazilian groove,” he said. Not content to record only in the familiar samba and bossa nova styles, King deepened his familiarity with other Brazilian regional genres, then searched for Monk tunes that would work in those settings.

The resulting list yielded roughly 20 Monk arrangements, whittled down to an album that includes 12 songs and nine Brazilian styles. Some have familiar melodies, like “Bemsha Swing” (done as a maracatu), “Round Midnight” (bossa nova) and “Let’s Call This” (baião). The rarely heard “Brake’s Sake” and the more familiar “Ugly Beauty” are done as sambas. Then there are “Four In One” (frevo), “Light Blue” (xote), “Jackie-ing” (afoxé), “Work” (partido alto), “Played Twice” (baião) and perhaps the most unusual track, “Skippy,” done as a choro, featuring a *cavaquinho* (a kind of Portuguese ukulele, played by Kahil Nayton) and King’s melodica. The much admired “Crepuscle



With Nellie” begins as free-jazz with a host of Brazilian percussion and sound effects played by Fernando Saci and Emedin Rivera before segueing into a samba.

Monk’s defiantly quirky, sometimes humorous, often profound musical ideas are still present, but refracted through the warm, sensual and propulsive rhythms of Brazilian music. “I think it makes Monk sexy in a way he hadn’t been before,” King said. —Allen Morrison



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Divergence Highlights Fujii's Talents

IN MAY 2016, BEFORE A PACKED CROWD AT I-BEAM IN BROOKLYN, Satoko Fujii found herself far from her native Japan. But she was there in spirit as she conducted her 13-piece New York Orchestra in the American premiere of her suite *Fukushima*, a searing evocation of the nuclear disaster that struck that Japanese city in 2011.

Last November, Fujii was back at I-Beam, this time in a more modest role—that of an accordionist rendering drones and spare counterpoint as

part of Gato Libre, a trio led by trumpeter and composer Natsuki Tamura, her husband of 30 years, and featuring trombonist Neko Jaras.

The demands of those two performances were wildly divergent. *Fukushima* is a monumental work that, in its disorienting clash of collective improvisation and notated ensemble playing, requires the conjuring of organized chaos. The November material was an exercise in minimalist melody-making that called for a lighter touch.

But in their divergence, they hinted at the scope of Fujii's talents. And they did so without her even approaching a piano, her main instrument and one on which, two days before the trio gig, she had demonstrated a remarkable expressivity as part of a quartet with Tamura, Erik Friedlander on cello and Ikue Mori on laptop at The Stone. In that series of free improvisations, Fujii fully exploited the piano's attributes—from the keyboard to the soundboard—and, in an impressive display of extended technique, augmented those attributes.

Relaxing in a Brooklyn café before the November performance at I-Beam, Fujii, 59, noted that she had not always been so expansive. After studying classical music as a child and jazz in her 20s with pianist Fumio Itabashi in Tokyo and at Berklee in Boston, she returned to Japan and fell into a scene she found stifling. So, in her mid-30s, she returned to Boston, where she sought out a piano idol, Paul Bley, with whom she studied while attending the New England Conservatory. Bley's lessons, which consisted largely of conversation over cappuccinos, eased her toward self-expression.

"He encouraged me to play my stuff," she said.

Eventually, the relationship yielded a duo album, 1996's *Something About Water* (Libra Records), a glistening dance executed by two like-minded artists operating at the edge of abstraction. "That was a big thing for me," she said. "I started to accept myself, little by little."

Since then, she has released dozens of albums, many with leading avant-garde musicians like trumpeter Wadada Leo Smith. Smith appeared in peak form with Fujii, Tamura and Mori on *Aspiration*, released in September. Bracketing that release were the June release of *Neko* and the December release of *Fukushima*.

For Fujii, the pace of activity promises to accelerate in 2018. In celebration of her 60th birthday, she plans to release an album every month. At the same time, she will pursue a full schedule of performances, including a tour of Europe in May and Canada in September. All of which, she explained, is in service of her ongoing introspection.

—Phillip Lutz





Saxophonist Chet Doxas (far right) leads his band as artwork is projected on a screen at Artgang Montréal on Sept. 7.

Chet Doxas Combines Sonic, Visual Art Forms

ON SEPT. 7, SAXOPHONIST CHET DOXAS promoted his new album with a multimedia concert at Artgang Montréal, in his hometown. Visual art created by Jean-Michel Basquiat, Robert Mapplethorpe, Keith Haring and Fab 5 Freddy was projected onto a screen behind the band, as it performed a corresponding “soundtrack,” challenging the audience to contemplate an intriguing question: What do paintings sound like?

Doxas’ new album, *Rich In Symbols* (Ropeadope), features evocative music, blending electric indie-rock into a unique jazz aesthetic. Drawing inspiration from New York’s Lower East Side “No Wave” movement of the 1970s and ’80s, Doxas has created music tied to his love of the visual arts. He created the artwork for the album cover, and all seven compositions were composed during visits to New York museums.

“The two main museums I went to were the Whitney and the MOMA,” Doxas said over the phone from Paris. “I’d go in there with my blank manuscript and sit in front of the paintings, and I’d just let it flow. ... It’s been the easiest writing process I’ve experienced so far.”

Doxas explained he has a condition that affects his everyday life. “I have what they call *synesthesia*,” he said. “If I see certain colors, I hear certain chords. But that didn’t play into it as much I thought it would. It’s like I’m scoring these paintings—as if they had a soundtrack. That’s what I hear. And I try not to get too complicated about it; I do as much research as I can, but I also like the idea of treating the painting as a live art form.”

Doxas earned undergraduate and graduate degrees in music from McGill University, exploring his rock sensibility through collaborations with Montreal’s Sam Roberts Band.

A Juno nominee (Contemporary Jazz Album of the Year for *Big Sky*, 2011), Doxas has appeared

on more than 100 recordings, working with a broad range of artists, including Carla Bley, Rufus Wainwright, Maria Schneider and Oliver Jones. His discography also includes eight albums as a leader or co-leader. Relocating to New York in 2014, he began co-leading the group Riverside with trumpeter Dave Douglas. He is also part of the Brooklyn-based group Yes Men No with pianist Jacob Sacks, bassist Zack Lober and drummer Vinnie Sperrazza.

The core ensemble for the *Rich In Symbols* sessions includes Matthew Stevens (guitar), Zack Lober (bass) and Eric Doob (drums), with special guests John Escreet (who contributes piano on “Orchard”), Dave Nugent (guitarist with the Sam Roberts Band) and Douglas. Liam O’Neil produced the album and plays synthesizers on the album. The pieces range from uplifting, soaring melodies to those conveying deep angst, pure energy and raw emotion.

By projecting artwork as his band played, it seemed Doxas was urging the audience to not be passive, but to actively interpret the sounds and images. “I wanted to give each medium my attempt at equal footing ... [so fans would experience] a painting as a living, breathing thing,” he said. “[Combining] the artwork and the music is something that really excites me. It’s a wonderful idea to have people all celebrating music and art together in the same space.”

The Montreal concert showcased Doxas not only as a highly skilled, imaginative player, but as an artist who seeks to give his audience an immersive experience. “Jazz isn’t jazz without the people there,” he said. “Having everybody in the room at the same time, celebrating art and music, is a big part of the spirit of jazz—watching this musical painting created right in front of you.”

—Sharonne Cohen



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Live performances by Louis Armstrong are compiled on a new release, *The Nightclubs*.

COURTESY OF DOT TIME RECORDS

Documenting Armstrong on '50s Nightclub Scene

EVEN BEFORE LOUIS ARMSTRONG DIED IN 1971, at the age of 69, his image had begun to morph into that of a pop-culture icon. More than 46 years later, he is recalled by many as either a revered figure in a “creation” story—the creation, that is, of jazz—or as a good-natured entertainer crooning “Hello Dolly” and clowning with show-business heavyweights.

He was all of that, to be sure. But he was far more. And that is what Dot Time Legends has captured in Vol. 2 of its Louis Armstrong Legacy Series—*The Nightclubs*.

The volume follows Armstrong through engagements in five different clubs during the 1950s. In 16 tracks culled from the research collections of the Louis Armstrong House Museum

in Queens, what emerges is a multidimensional portrait of an artist at the top of his game.

“We’re trying to have people understand that he isn’t this carbon-copy cutout,” said Jerry Roche, the series’ producer, who collaborated with the Louis Armstrong Research Foundation on the project. “He’s not resting on his laurels, not doing the same solos or the same songs night after night.”

From the start, Armstrong, still in his 40s, is clearly seeking a challenge: The collection opens in 1950 at New York’s Bop City, a venue named for an idiom with which he was not associated. Nonetheless, he owns the crowd with bravura renditions of “Royal Garden Blues,” a longtime Armstrong favorite, and “My Monday Date,” by pianist Earl “Fatha” Hines, who joins trombonist Jack Teagarden, clarinetist Barney Bigard, bassist Arvell Shaw and drummer Cozy Cole on the date.

Armstrong’s horn is as potent as ever in 1952 at San Francisco’s Club Hangover, where—inspired by bandmates Bigard, Cole, Russ Phillips (trombone), Marty Napoleon (piano), Dale Jones (bass) and Velma Middleton (vocals)—he elevates warhorses to quantifiably new heights. On “West End Blues,” for example, he hits 15 high C’s, three more than he hit in his Hot 5 and Hot 7 sessions.

Whatever constraints Armstrong might have felt in the concert hall loosened when he stretched out over weeklong engagements in the intimate settings of clubs, especially when notables like Billie Holiday were in the house. At Club Hangover, Holiday can be heard registering her approval at the end of “West End Blues.” Armstrong, in a 42-second soliloquy, introduces her to the crowd before launching into “A Kiss To Build A Dream On.”

The freewheeling attitude is pronounced in the treatment of the Armstrong original “Pretty Little Missy,” recorded in 1955 at New York’s Basin Street, and even more so, perhaps, in a sustained example of the band’s onstage interaction, reflected in a string of seven tunes recorded in 1958 at Brant Inn in Burlington, Ontario.

In one instance—“New Orleans Function,” recorded at Boston’s Storyville in 1953—tapes from multiple sources are sculpted into a single track. While the result is seamless, Roche emphasized that sonic enhancement was kept to a minimum throughout the album: “Who am I to start peeling off layers of Armstrong’s trumpet so that somebody could feel better about it [and say], ‘Oh, it sounds 10 percent better?’”

That kind of respect was shown the music in Vol. 1, *The Standard Oil Sessions*, drawn from a concert in San Francisco in 1950. And listeners can expect similar treatment in 2018, when Dot Time is planning to release Vol. 3, recorded in South America in 1957, and Vol. 4, recorded in Sparks, Nevada, in 1964. Future volumes are being discussed.

“I felt if I was going to do this I needed to have a lot” of releases, Roche said. —Phillip Lutz



70 Years of Four Freshmen

THE STAR SYSTEM IN THE MUSIC BUSINESS

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This is why the Four Freshmen, which began as a barbershop quartet in 1948, is still on tour today. From the beginning it avoided the curse of stardom by becoming a musical apparatus whose parts could be swapped and switched without disruption. Its identity was based on a collective sound, never on a single charismatic soloist.

Its founding voices were Dan and Ross Barbour, Hal Kratzsch and Bob Flanigan. None ever saw his name outgrow the group, even Flanigan, whose career with the Freshmen ran 44 years.

"I guess you could say that Flanigan was the star in the sense that his lead voice was the most recognizable," said Bob Ferreira, who is today the Freshmen's most senior member. "I joined when he retired in 1992. When we found someone who could do his lead parts well, that's when we realized that the group was its sound and could continue without him."

The groundwork was laid early, on Capitol Records. The group had a great variety of vocal qualities, Ferreira noted. "Dan Barbour and Hal Kratzsch could easily have had a solo careers, and

each later released a solo album through Capitol," he said. "But neither man had a vision of himself as a soloist. The shared identity of the group galvanized this collective talent."

Together they created a sophisticated palette of colors whose layers produced a pillowy, often luminous vocal texture. Influenced initially by the Modernaires, the Mel-Tones (with Mel Tormé) and Stan Kenton, their innovations set the bar for a handful of jazz-influenced vocal groups at mid-century. In 1950 Kenton discovered them and brought the group to Capitol, where they struggled for three years before being dropped.

Kenton intervened again, and they scored their first important seller, "It's A Blue World." Starting in 1954 they began turning out a series of albums that were collected in 2002 on *The Complete Capitol Four Freshman Fifties Sessions* on Mosaic. It started with *Voices In Modern*, then *The Four Freshmen And Five Trombones*, which became their biggest seller.

"There was a purity about that one," Ferreira noted. "The trombones were basically Kenton's trombone section. That's really where the Four Freshmen got their sound and that's what set the group apart. They sang like instrumentalists and that's how they would approach it—instrumentally." It prompted a series of LPs with five sax-



The members of the Four Freshmen are Tommy Boynton (left), Jonathan Gaines, Bob Ferreira and Stein Malvey.

ophones, five trumpets, five guitars and more trombones. By the late '50s the Four Freshmen was considered a jazz vocal group.

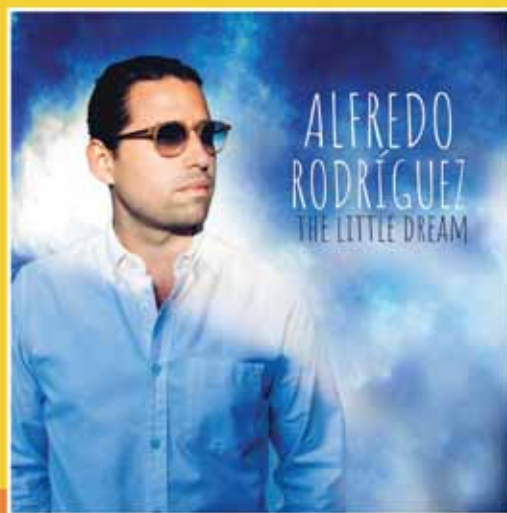
The Four Freshmen today is an entity that has evolved, with 22 singers who have worked in the group since its original members. The current lineup includes Ferreira, Tommy Boynton, Jonathan Gaines and Stein Malvey.

"We continue the legacy by doing new work," Ferreira explained. "Half of our arrangements are things we've created in the last 20 years. We acknowledge our past by moving forward."

The Four Freshmen continues to work more than 80 dates a year. A sound from the past, it would seem, has a bright future. —John McDonough



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Sanders Reissues Provide Deep Soul Sustenance

After joining John Coltrane in expanding the jazz stratosphere over nine pivotal albums, including Trane's *Meditations*, *Ascension* and *Om*, Pharoah Sanders launched his own cosmic ride—one that resonates to this day.

One of the few avant garde tenor saxophonists to ever score FM radio airplay, with 1969's "The Creator Has A Master Plan" (from *Karma*, Impulse!), Sanders was indebted to Coltrane for opening the door through which he plunged. Sanders burnished his singular sound on 11 Impulse! albums spanning 1967's *Tauhid* through 1974's *Love In Us All*. These albums constitute the peak meditative plateau within the free-jazz mountaintop.

As of 2015 only one of these seminal albums, *Karma*, had been reissued on vinyl (on Verve's revived Impulse! imprint). That gaping hole leaves a remarkable body of work unavailable to Sanders' faithful fans as well as younger audiences taken with the resilient analog medium. On Nov. 10, Anthology Recordings released three of Sanders' Impulse! titles on vinyl: *Tauhid* (1966), *Jewels Of Thought* (1969) and *Deaf Dumb Blind* aka *Summun Bukmun Umyun* (1970).

With the newfound interest in '60s and '70s avant garde jazz—the consequent style dubbed "spiritual jazz"—legion young musicians draw on music pioneered by Coltranes John and Alice, Sanders, Albert Ayler, Dorothy Ashby and a lesser known cadre whose tendrils circle the globe. Kamasi Washington, Josef Leimberg and Tomeka Reid, among others, represent a Stateside spiritual jazz locus. In London, Moses Boyd Exodus, Yussef Dayes, Nubya Garcia and Shabaka Hutchings form a parallel European nexus.

More so than Coltrane's latter-period Impulse! recordings, Sanders' Impulse! catalog is surprisingly accessible; his plaintive tenor saxophone cries, and his music's malleable embrace of globally sourced instrumentation within wide-open modal vamps, provide deep soul sustenance. *Tauhid*, *Jewels Of Thought* and *Deaf Dumb Blind* constitute a kind of neural pathway drill-down to cerebral enhancement and spiritual enlightenment via music.

These three important reissues, performed by the likes of Dave Burrell, Henry Grimes and Sonny Sharrock (*Tauhid*); Lonnie Liston Smith, Cecil McBee and Richard Davis (*Jewels Of Thought*); and Woody Shaw, Gary Bartz and Clifford Jarvis (*Deaf*



Dumb Blind), represent eloquently unified group identities: equally graceful, meditative, exploratory and brazenly cathartic.

Sanders was made aware of the reissue project by Keith Abrahamsson, Mexican Summer/Anthology Recordings' co-founder and director of A&R, who brought the tenor legend to Marfa, Texas, where he performed with his quartet at the Marfa Myths festival.

Was the three-LP set cut from the original tapes?

"Unfortunately, no," Abrahamsson explained. "We were told that tapes no longer exist, so we cut from sealed original LPs. Not ideal, but we did our very best to treat these classics with the reverence they deserve."

The three classics are easily digestible as a single blissful listening experience. From the tranquil simmer of *Tauhid*'s "Aum/Venus/Capricorn Rising" and the Leon Thomas yodeling and scorching tenor saxophone of *Jewels Of Thought*'s beautiful "Hum Allah Hum Allah Hum Allah," to the Afro-Cuban overdrive of *Deaf Dumb Blind*'s "Summun, Bukmun, Umyun," it's a joyous journey, start to finish. Sander's "fire music" still entrances, uplifts, soothes and challenges almost 50 years after its release.

Ultimately, what constitutes "spiritual jazz" is ever changing.

"[I have a] definition of spiritual, which I have repeated over the years," multi-instrumentalist and composer Cooper-Moore wrote via FaceBook correspondence. "The spiritual qualities that I see that are needed to do the work: (1) power—strength, the ability to stay on the path even when it is painful; (2) potential—the sense of always being on the ready when the call comes to jump in there; (3) purpose—having vision, intent and high motivation."

DB



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We Out Here Showcases Underground London Scene

SOON AFTER JAZZ RE:FRESHED'S FIFTH annual Jazz Re:Fest concluded in August at London's Royal Festival Hall Southbank, several of the festival's performers—including drummers Moses Boyd and Tom Skinner and saxophonists Shabaka Hutchings and Nubya Garcia—gathered at the Fish Factory studio in London's Dollis Hill district for three days to record the important compilation *We Out Here* (Brownswood Recordings), which will be released on Feb. 9.

The rotating sessions featured more than 30 musicians, most of whom are associated with both the formidable Tomorrow Warriors, a jazz education program spearheaded by bassist Gary Crosby and his partner Janine Irons, and Jazz Re:Freshed, an expansive jazz-meets-DJ culture platform that hosts weekly showcases at London's Mau Mau bar.

We Out Here is a victory lap of noteworthy interconnected underground scenes in London that are primed to make stronger imprints across the globe. The compilation is the brainchild of Gilles Peterson, the iconic music impresario

and co-founder of Brownswood Recordings. "I wanted to showcase this confident generation at an early period in their careers and tell the story of interconnectedness of the people involved," Peterson said.

The nine tunes on *We Out Here* offer a glimpse of how many of the British scene's young jazz musicians reconcile modern jazz with other elements, such as Afrobeat, Caribbean rhythms and menacing garage dance music.

Hutchings, who fronts the MOBO (Music of Black Origin) Award-winning ensemble Sons of Kemet and the equally formidable Shabaka and The Ancestors, acted as the sessions' musical director. While in the engineering booth listening to tubaist Theon Cross and his band record his hypnotic tune "Brockley," Hutchings commented on the significance of *We Out Here*.

"We got a lot of young people playing jazz at a really high level, and they are attracting their own audience," he said. "Bands are starting to play where they are getting higher recognition from outside of England and throughout the mainstream press. This album is trying to say,



Drummer Moses Boyd (left), saxophonist Nubya Garcia and tuba player Theon Cross contributed to the forthcoming album *We Out Here*, on Brownswood Recordings.

"Yes, there is something happening."

"It's incredibly exciting to document where we all are music-wise," added Garcia, whose band Nérija won the 2017 Jazz Newcomer Parliamentary Award. "It's exciting to have us all on this collaboration. We've all grown up together in the past few years. These sessions document what we've been doing for a couple of years."

Emphasizing the eminence of *We Out Here* was the presence at the recording sessions of photographer Adama Jalloh and videographer Fabrice Bourgelle, who crafted an accompanying film documentary. —John Murphy

Dominican Republic Jazz Fest Evolves

SUN AND CERULEAN SKY RULE THE AZURE surf, as kite-riders curl arabesques and lively merengue jazz drifts over the waving palms of Cabarete Beach. Along the silvery sands, from seaside bandstand to classroom, move tiers of musicians in shifting roles at the pastel FeduJazz School: Preteens toot and strum, collegians run scales and workshops, elders teach master classes and rehearsals—all immersed like surfers in the updraft.

The Dominican Republic Jazz Festival has for 21 years presented Panamerican music in soaring shows that cross Stateside bands with native jazz and merengue groups while nurturing a strong educational program. Artistic Director Marco Pignataro—saxophonist and managing director of Berklee College's Global Jazz Institute—has expanded the program's curricula, and conceives annual themes of tangible musical and social impact.

Whereas the 2016 edition's female bandleaders called attention to women's education and health, guests at the 2017 festival framed International Nights exemplifying global unity, with players from all over the world: pianist Alain Mallet and Paris Conservatory (France), Trio da Paz (Brazil), clarinetist Anat Cohen and harmonicist Roni Eytan's Quartet (Israel), trumpet-ers Brian Lynch and Sean Jones (United States)



Romero Lubambo (left), George Garzone, Sean Jones and Marco Pignataro perform at the 2017 Dominican Republic Jazz Festival.

and trombonist William Cepeda (Puerto Rico).

Italian-born Pignataro's own Almas Antiguas Quartet embodied overseas brotherhood, hosting Israeli bassist Ehud Ettun and Stateside artists Alan Pasqua and Adam Cruz on piano and drums, as well as Boston tenor sax paisano George Garzone; they gracefully explored the leader's sepia-tint folk songs and the Italian classic "Estate."

"Music affects society, [and it] can inspire democracy," Pignataro said. "We want to bring about social change in a new model for student training: Give poor kids a T-shirt, an instrument and a sense of belonging. Here theory meets practice." The festival's wider mission had all play-

ers reach out beyond FeduJazz's free music programs into community action. Smiles beamed as Berklee's grad-student quintet led a noontime concert of kids' bands playing Thelonious Monk, Clifford Brown, James Brown and Vivaldi for a diverse audience of 500 preteens.

DR favorites provided highlights nightly. Rafelito Mirabal & Sistema Temperado roared old-school merengue riffs, *pambiche*, samba and tango on keyboard and four saxes, with Pelle Vega on lap cajon (*bombakini*). Fefita la Grande—reigning queen of merengue típico—shook booty, squeezed accordion, sang gravelly and, with her fast and furious tentet, leapt in the hearts of adoring listeners. —Fred Bouchard

The World Comes to Rio for MIMO

AN AMERICAN DEVOTEE OF BRAZILIAN

music attending a music festival in Rio de Janeiro might expect to hear a few familiar sambas and choros, or even a maracatu or baião. Despite the occasional samba, however, the Rio edition of Brazil's annual multi-city MIMO Festival, held Nov. 10–12, had other things on its mind this year: the world of music outside Brazil.

Although there were plenty of Brazilian artists on the bill, the program was dominated by musicians from elsewhere in South America, Africa and Europe. All the performers, whatever their tradition, seemed interested in using traditional materials to create new forms, not celebrating the past. The musical bazaar included MPB (Brazilian pop), Afro-pop, Portuguese pop, jazz, salsa, Middle Eastern-influenced music and unclassifiable music, much of it fascinating, from around the world.

MIMO—the name stands for “Mostra (Show) Internacional Musica Olinda”—is the brainchild of music impresario and record producer Lu Araújo. The festival has been around since 2004, when it began in the historic northeastern town of Olinda with the express purpose of bringing primarily instrumental music to the Brazilian public. Over the years it has expanded to four additional cities around Brazil: Tiradentes, Paraty, Ouro Preto and Rio; concerts are held on a series of three-day weekends over two months in the fall. The festival is free and open to all. Along with concerts, MIMO offers master classes and a film festival with a music theme.

Although unmitigated jazz was uncommon at this year's festival, it could not have been better represented than in the person of French violin master and composer Didier Lockwood, who played a show dedicated to the legacy of his mentor, legendary Hot Club violinist Stéphane Grappelli.

Lockwood and his adroit trio with acoustic guitarist Adrien Moignard and French bassist Diego Imbert performed in the Igreja Candelária in central Rio, an ornate, cavernous cathedral that dates back to the 18th century. Playing “Nuages,” one of Grappelli's most famous songs (actually written by his bandmate Django Reinhardt), Lockwood proved himself to be Grappelli's true heir. He alternated phrases of exquisite tenderness, sometimes soaring into the violin's stratosphere, with explosive, Hendrix-style blues riffs that recalled his beginnings in jazz fusion.

The pièce de résistance, however, came when Lockwood switched to a six-string electric violin, enhanced by pedal-controlled loopers and synths, to improvise a piece of orchestral scope that included African-inspired percussion, flamenco grooves, seascapes with crying gulls and, eventually, Americana fiddling. It was a spectacle, to be sure, but also music of undeniable power and majesty.

The next day, at the much smaller but pretty Our Lady of Bonsucesso church, an unusual trio appeared: two accomplished percussionists, Simone Sou and Guilherme Kastrup, and Brazilian jazz pianist/composer Benjamin Taubkin. They, too, employed electronics, with synths providing a sonic floor of bass obblitos and drones supporting urgent flights of Afro-Brazilian percussion, over which Taubkin played, by turns, impressionistic chords and the occasional post-bop run.

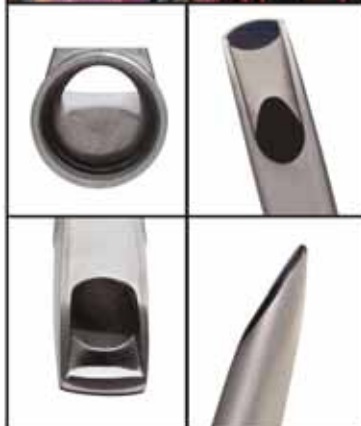
—Allen Morrison



Didier Lockwood performs at Igreja da Candelária in Rio de Janeiro on Nov. 10.

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In Memoriam: Producer George Avakian

GEORGE AVAKIAN, THE GRAMMY-WINNING JAZZ PRODUCER AND label executive who worked with some of the genre's most important artists and brought numerous innovations to the music industry, died Nov. 22 in Manhattan. He was 98.

Avakian was known particularly for his production of jazz and popular albums at Columbia Records, including the first regular series of reissues of jazz albums. In 1948, he helped establish the 33⅓-rpm LP as the primary format for popular music. A short list of classic jazz recordings produced by Avakian includes *Louis Armstrong's Plays W. C. Handy* (Columbia, 1954), Duke Ellington's *Ellington At Newport* (Columbia, 1956), Miles Davis and Gil Evans' *Miles Ahead* (Columbia, 1957), Benny Goodman's *In Moscow* (RCA Victor, 1962) and Sonny Rollins' *Our Man In Jazz*, (RCA Victor, 1962-'63).

Avakian was born in Russia to Armenian parents, who moved the family to New York City in the early 1920s. In his teens he became enamored of jazz through radio programs such as *Let's Dance* with Benny Goodman. While a student at Yale University, Avakian convinced Decca Records to let him produce a 78rpm record of Eddie Condon, Pee Wee Russell and others from the 1920s jazz scene in Chicago. Entitled *Chicago Jazz*, the recordings marked the first time jazz songs were produced in an album format rather than as singles.

In 1940, he was asked by Columbia to produce the industry's first annotated reissue album series, called *Hot Jazz Classics*, which included seminal out-of-print selections from Louis Armstrong, Bessie Smith, Bix Beiderbecke, Fletcher Henderson and Duke Ellington. He included the first-ever unreleased and alternate takes in the series. In effect, he had creat-



NEA Jazz Masters David Baker (left), George Avakian, Candido Camero and Joe Wilder pose for a portrait at the 2010 NEA Jazz Masters Awards Ceremony & Concert.

TOM PICH, COURTESY OF NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS

ed the first history of jazz on records.

After service in the U.S. Army during World War II, Avakian began his 12-year tenure as a Columbia Records executive, eventually presiding over its Popular Music and International divisions. At the same time, he was acquiring a reputation as a jazz researcher and critic of some renown, having pieces printed in *Tempo*, *DownBeat*, *Metronome*, *Mademoiselle*, *Pic* and the *New York Times*. Concerned about the lack of jazz education, in 1946 Avakian started a course in jazz history at the university level at New York University.

In 1948, Avakian introduced the LP record format created by Columbia engineers and produced the industry's first 100 long-playing discs of popular music and jazz. Two years later, he released the original 1938 recording of Benny Goodman's Carnegie Hall concert—one of the first jazz albums to sell more than a million copies. This inspired him to use the long-play format for something new: the live recording.

One of the artists that Avakian signed to Columbia was Miles Davis. "He was under contract to Bob Weinstock at Prestige," Avakian recalled of the trumpeter in an interview with *DownBeat* in 2000. "Then one day in 1954 or '55 Miles came up with an interesting idea. He said he could start recording for Columbia now, but that we would hold the masters until the Prestige contract ended in February 1957. Columbia would help arrange the kind of bookings that could support a stable group, then begin a publicity buildup about six months before the switch. The quintet's first Columbia session was in October 1955."

From 1959 onward, Avakian served as a producer at Warner Brothers, World Pacific, RCA Victor and Atlantic, among others. During the early 1960s, he branched out, becoming the manager of Charles Lloyd and later of Keith Jarrett.

During the era of the compact disc, Avakian contributed his production skills and vast jazz knowledge to numerous reissue projects for Columbia/Legacy, many of them involving iconic recordings he initiated during the 1950s.

Avakian received a *DownBeat* Lifetime Achievement Award (2000) and Europe's prestigious jazz award, the Django d'Or (2006). In 2008, France bestowed on him the rank of Commandeur des Arts et Lettres, and in 2009 he received the Trustees Award from the National Association of Recording Arts and Sciences for contributions to the music industry worldwide. Avakian was a 2010 recipient of the A.B. Spellman NEA Jazz Masters Fellowship for Jazz Advocacy.

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Jon Hendricks, Vocalese Pioneer, Dies at 96

JON HENDRICKS, THE MULTI-TALENTED

jazz singer and songwriter whom Time magazine once dubbed “The James Joyce of jive,” died on Nov. 22 in Manhattan at age 96. In the late 1950s, Hendricks, a self-described “prim and proper” English major from Toledo, Ohio, teamed up with singers Dave Lambert and Annie Ross to form the chart-topping vocal group Lambert, Hendricks & Ross. After the group disbanded, he worked as a solo artist and continued to perform well into his nineties.

Hendricks was not the first jazz singer to practice the art of vocalese—crafting lyrics to jazz standards and well-known instrumental solos—but was widely considered its standard-setting grand master. After hearing King Pleasure’s 1952 record of “Moody’s Mood For Love” with lyrics by Eddie Jefferson, Hendricks was inspired to write his own verses to jazz instrumentals. “It opened up a whole world for me,” he told John S. Wilson of The New York Times in 1982. “I was mesmerized. I’d been writing rhythm-and-blues songs, mostly for Louis Jordan. But I thought ‘Moody’s Mood For Love’ was so hip. You didn’t have to stop at 32 bars. You could keep going.”

Among the tributes pouring in upon his death was this message posted by singer Kurt Elling on his Facebook page: “Full peace at long last to 96 yr-old genius, Jon Hendricks. Artist, Poet, Singer, Father, Teacher, Friend. Thank You. May my own work honor you.”

The long list of jazz standards for which Hendricks wrote witty, often tongue-twisting lyrics, many of which have become classics themselves, include Count Basie’s “Jumpin’ At The Woodside,” Woody Herman’s “Four Brothers,” Benny Golson’s “I Remember Clifford” and “Killer Joe,” Clifford Brown’s “Joy Spring” and Bobby Timmons’ “Moanin’.”

Hendricks was born in Newark, Ohio, in 1921 to a minister father and choir director mother; he was the ninth of 15 brothers and sisters. He began his performing career at age 14 by singing on the radio and at a local nightclub, where he was often accompanied by the not-yet-famous piano virtuoso Art Tatum.

As a scuffling songwriter in New York, he and Lambert collaborated on vocal versions of Count Basie band arrangements. When singers they hired for a recording session couldn’t seem to get the right swing feel, the pair persuaded Creed Taylor, then a fledgling producer at ABC-Paramount Records, to let them sneak into the recording studio at midnight to multitrack the parts with Ross. By 6 a.m., they had completed the album that was eventually released as *Sing A Song Of Basie*. It became an international sen-

sation and made the trio the most famous vocal group of their day. The album ultimately received a Grammy Hall of Fame Award in 1998.

Hendricks, with and without the trio, influenced generations of jazz vocalists and singing groups, including Manhattan Transfer, New York Voices, Al Jarreau and Bobby McFerrin, among many others.

A true jazz renaissance man, Hendricks also worked for two years as a jazz critic for the San Francisco Chronicle and taught at the University of California at Berkeley and the University of Toledo, where he was appointed Distinguished Professor of Jazz Studies and received an honorary doctorate degree.

Two years ago Hendricks was a part of *The Royal Bopsters Project*, an album by the vocal group London, Meader, Pramuk and Ross that featured vocalese pioneers including Ross, Mark Murphy, Sheila Jordan and Bob Dorough. After singing with the group at New York’s Birdland, a cake was wheeled onstage to celebrate his 94th birthday.

In 2017, Hendricks’ vocalese re-scoring of *Miles Ahead*, the seminal 1957 Miles Davis/



Jon Hendricks (1921–2017)

Gil Evans album, had its premiere performance in New York, performed by the London Vocal Project, with Hendricks in attendance.

Hendricks was named an NEA Jazz Master in 1993. —Allen Morrison

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Danny Janklow's debut, *Elevation*, features 10 remarkably talented musicians.

COURTESY OF ARTIST

DANNY JANKLOW

Chronicling a Collective

There's an infectious positive energy one feels when in the presence of alto saxophonist Danny Janklow. It's palpable whether hearing him on the bandstand at San Francisco's Black Cat club or sitting across the table from him in the dining area of an upscale grocery store in the city's Inner Sunset neighborhood.

"The profile of a 2017 musician is someone who's willing to do what he or she has to do to stay afloat but also with integrity in their musical decisions, in who they play with and what they put out," said Janklow, before the final show of a five-night Black Cat run as part of an all-star group of Los Angeles-area musicians led by drummer Kevin Kanner. "It's a delicate balance."

The Southern California native recently completed a European tour with keyboardist/composer Keiko Matsui. Earlier this year, he'd made treks to Northern California as a member of pianist John Beasley's MONK'estra big band.

"Danny is a musician's musician," said pianist Eric Reed, a Janklow supporter and collaborator for most of this decade. "Sometimes a musician will have so much together that it's obvious; in Daniel's case, [it's reflected] by the fact he works with so many different musicians."

Some instrumentalists focus on studio, pit or symphonic work, but Janklow's wide diversity is one of his key strengths. "Danny, to me, seems

to pride himself on placing himself where he can apply his skills to any situation," Reed added.

A member of Kanner's assembled all-star quintet, Reed also plays on Janklow's debut album, *Elevation* (Outside in Music), released Oct. 20.

A 10-track collection of eight originals—plus a soulful interpretation of a Radiohead classic and a version of keyboardist Sam Barsh's "Roastmaster"—*Elevation* is an impressive introduction to Janklow's diverse tastes and musical community. The kinetic album opener, "Philafornia," is nod to both to his home state and the city in which his alma mater, Temple University, is located. The bandleader shares the front line on it with vibraphonist Nick Mancini, who also plays on five other tracks.

The lovely "Hidden Treasure" features vocalist Jesse Palter and *Elevation* co-producer Beasley instead of Reed, while the uptempo "Roastmaster" segues into the crisp funkiness of "Gemini Vibe." Palter's wordless vocals pair perfectly with Janklow's alto flute on the meditative "Lolobai."

"This wasn't my first attempt at recording music," Janklow explained, noting that he's led studio sessions to record submissions for competitions and to document his various bands.

"The thing that I was going for was getting this collective of my favorite people that I've worked with—literally just that. Because in my

eyes, that's what the best musicians do."

Bassists Benjamin Shepherd and Ben Williams, drummer Jonathan Pinson and vocalist Michael Mayo round out the *Elevation* roster.

"Bringing everyone together and fitting everything in like an amazing puzzle—that's what I was trying to do with this album," he said. "I have a collective of people that surround me, and that's the statement I was making. That, in 2017, is an important statement to make, with original music."

Through Barsh, Janklow was introduced to producer DJ Khalil, who has worked with Kendrick Lamar, Eminem and Anderson .Paak. "We've done heavy-hitting sessions, and I've learned so much. Sam has given me a lot of insight into the hip-hop world," he said.

"When a lot of people see jazz guys like Robert Glasper and Donny McCaslin working on popular music, they don't realize how important and relevant it is to the actual audience that's there listening," he added.

Elevation's sole non-original is a nod to Janklow's youth. "Creep," found on Radiohead's 1993 debut, *Pablo Honey*, is the rare interpretation by a jazz artist of a song that's not from the seminal British quintet's mid-career output.

At age 11, Janklow got his first saxophone. It set him on a career path. "I didn't start just listening to jazz," he recalled. "It just sucked me in when I was 11."

—Yoshi Kato

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AKIKO TSURUGA

Extending the Tradition

The sight of the petite Akiko Tsuruga sitting behind a Hammond B-3 organ and digging in with gospel-tinged intensity and blues-drenched authority on the hulking beast is incongruous yet exhilarating. Whether the Osaka, Japan-born organist is leading her own group at Showman's in Harlem or serving as Lou Donaldson's longstanding accompanist (as she did with show-stopping élan at the Charlie Parker Jazz Festival this summer), Tsuruga has been steadily building a solid reputation on the scene since moving to New York in 2001. Her eighth album as a leader, *So Cute, So Bad*, features drummer Jeff Hamilton and guitarist Graham Dechter, and it's elevating her profile even more.

Onstage with Donaldson, with whom she has been playing since 2007, Tsuruga demonstrates an ability to shift nimbly from the earthy funk of "Alligator Boogaloo" to the uptempo swing of Bird's bop anthem "Wee" to the slow blues of "Whiskey Drinkin' Woman."

"When Lou came to check me out at Showman's and asked me to join his band, I thought, 'My dream came true!'" she recalled. Since joining Donaldson, Tsuruga has played major venues like Carnegie Hall and prestigious New York clubs like the Village Vanguard and Dizzy's, and she has also traveled all over the world.

At age 3, Tsuruga's parents bought her a small organ, and soon after, she began learning standards like "The Shadow Of Your Smile," "Fly Me To The Moon" and "The Breeze And I." A revelation came during her high school years when she heard Jimmy Smith's *The Cat*. The aspiring organist later became enthralled by the earthy stylings of "Brother" Jack McDuff, Charles Earland, Jimmy McGriff and particularly Dr. Lonnie Smith, who would become an important mentor for her.

"I met Dr. Lonnie at the Village Vanguard when I was visiting New York before I moved there," she recalled. "He was playing with the Lou Donaldson Quartet. After the set, the band's drummer, Fukushi Tainaka, introduced me and Lonnie asked me to play a blues on his organ. So that was the first time I played at the Village Vanguard."

A couple of years after she moved to New York, Tsuruga began taking lessons with Smith at his apartment in Harlem. "I would watch him play and we would practice together. I learned some very important things about playing organ in those sessions, including getting a bluesy feeling. He would also tell me, 'Play your life into the music. If you are happy, play happy. If you are sad, play sadly.' I leaned how beautiful it is to dedicate my life to the music. Since I met him, I started thinking about 'living with music.'"

On her previous albums, like *Sweet And Funky* (2007), *Oriental Express* (2009) and *Sakura* (2012), Tsuruga has demonstrated her adeptness at swinging, playing the blues, getting funky and interpreting ballads. She delivers more of the same on *So Cute, So Bad*, cooking on "The Lady Is A Tramp," riding a boogaloo on Baby Face Willette's "Face To Face," sailing over Hamilton's 12/8 groove on "You Don't Know What Love Is" and getting mellow on Slide Hampton's "Frame For The Blues" and on her own bossa nova-flavored "Tanabata."

Regarding the album's title, she confides that it refers not to herself but to her pet cat, Tiger. "He is so cute, and he loves music, too," Tsuruga said. "When I practice, he always sits on the Leslie speaker and listens. But he has a bad habit. He loves to drop things from above. My husband and I don't remember how many glasses he has broken, how many pencils and cosmetics he has lost. So, he is also so bad!"

—Bill Milkowski

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Dave Pietro's new album is *New Road: Iowa Memoirs*.

KATIE COLLEARY

DAVE PIETRO

Aural Pictures

Squeezed into the small green room in New York's Jazz Standard on Thanksgiving Eve, Dave Pietro seemed at home surrounded by the instruments—a clarinet, a piccolo, two saxophones and three flutes—that he would be using on his gig with the Maria Schneider Orchestra that night.

The sheer number of instruments testified to his versatility. And his mastery of them became evident as he worked his way through Schneider's first set—easily blending with his section-mates or holding the spotlight mid-set with a cannily conceived, fiercely delivered soprano sax solo on the Schneider classic "Last Season."

"He's an unbelievable doubler," Schneider said before the gig. "On top of it, he solos incredibly on all of those instruments."

Pietro's instrumental gifts have led to work with a diverse range of big bands. Since coming to New York after graduating from the University of North Texas in 1987, the Massachusetts native has played with everyone from Lionel Hampton, Woody Herman and Maynard Ferguson to Toshiko Akiyoshi, Darcy James Argue and Ryan Truesdell's Gil Evans Project.

But that experience is just part of a larger picture. Reflecting his affinity for the big-band broad palette, Pietro has over the years put together small-group projects known more for colorful writing and arranging than for a formal adherence to head-solo-head structure. The latest example is documented in his new release, *New Road: Iowa Memoirs* (ArtistShare).

The album, his first as a leader in a decade, grew out of a residency at the University of Iowa in 2011 and 2012. As he moved across the state teaching young students, he took in the sights and sounds, which he translated into seven original pieces interpreted by Alex Sipiagin on trumpet and flugelhorn, Gary Versace on piano, Johannes Weidenmueller on bass, Johnathan Blake on drums and, on three of the tunes,

Rogério Boccato on percussion.

From the get-go, Pietro—who produced and played alto and soprano saxophones, flute and clarinet—was intent on painting aural pictures. The album's opener, "Sunrise On The Muscatine Highway," was inspired by an early-morning drive along that scenic artery. In it, the players conjure line on contrapuntal line like so many brushstrokes until an image of the titular highway emerges. But complete as it seems, he said, the image could be fleshed out.

"It's almost like a large-ensemble chart waiting to happen," he said.

A similar transformation, from concrete impression to abstract form, applies throughout the album. The plaintive "Sleep, Prairie, Sleep" has its roots in a meditative drive through frozen farmlands. "It's A Half-Decent Muffin" draws its humorous stagger from a conversation over breakfast recorded and transcribed rhythmically.

While the writing and arranging are key to the album, Pietro, in the studio, offered little direction on interpreting his charts. Rather, he largely limited the discussion to the imagery that moved him, setting the tone and leaving the musicians ample freedom to express themselves in their improvisations. "You get an idea about the vibe he wanted, but he doesn't tell you what to play," Versace said.

The attention to soloists derives from Pietro's time with bands like Schneider's, with whom he began as a sub more than 20 years ago. Since then, Pietro, 53, has traveled the world, written music for seven albums and taught full-time at New York University, where he directs the Wayne Shorter Ensemble.

But, as he sat among his horns in the Standard's green room, he said that in the end, it all came back to basics: "I've been clear with myself: 'If everything is taken away from you, what is the thing that's most important to you?' I would hold on to my saxophone." —Phillip Lutz

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Wee Willie Walker recorded his new album, *After A While*, with a dozen musicians.

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WEE WILLIE WALKER

Resurgent Power

Shout the good news. Wee Willie Walker, part of the remarkable Memphis and Muscle Shoals soul scenes of the 1960s, but in the shadows since, finally is getting recognized as one of the most outstanding soul singers active today.

The compelling catalyst is his new album, *After A While* (Blue Dot), recorded with the Anthony Paule Soul Orchestra. Nowadays, Walker is booked to play choice clubs like the Blue Note Napa club in California and at festi-

vals all over, from the Canary Islands and Italy to the Maine coast.

Raised in Memphis, Walker started his career in the 1950s, singing gospel with the Redemption Harmonizers. Discomfited by the Southern social climate, he moved permanently to Minneapolis in 1959.

Throughout the '60s he made trips back to Memphis and over to Muscle Shoals in Alabama, cutting singles for the storied Goldwax label. (Six tracks by Walker appear on the two-CD set *The*

Complete Goldwax Singles, Vol. 3, 1967-'70.)

During a recent phone interview, Walker praised Sam Cooke as his first inspiration then spoke enthusiastically about a certain Southern soul colleague: "Otis Redding was fabulous. It took me a while to recognize what Otis was doing. I guess that's only natural because when somebody doesn't sound like anyone else, it takes a while to adjust."

In the North Star State, Walker worked for many years as a caregiver in nursing homes while singing in clubs on weekends. "I never gave music up," he stated as a point of pride. And he's recorded several albums with Minneapolis's Butanes Band. His career perked up in 2015 when West Coast blues harmonica ace Rick Estrin tracked him down and recorded *If Nothing Ever Changes* (Little Village Foundation). A Norwegian tour and its attendant album, *Live!* (LVF), followed.

Walker's resurgence has gotten its greatest boost from Anthony Paule, a first-rate soul-blues guitarist based in San Francisco. As leader of the house band at the Porretta Soul Festival, he was asked by artistic director Graziano Uliani to bring an American singer of his choice to Italy. Paule immediately thought of Walker. Why? Contacted at his home office, he offered a pithy explanation: "Willie delivers a song like nobody else in the world." The resulting performance by Walker and the Soul Orchestra was a triumph—and they'll be back there in summer 2018.

"When we're performing, the band is like a warm blanket," Walker said, "I thrive on what they're playing. They cover me. It's so comfortable."

It made perfect sense to do an album together. For the first time Walker called the shots on his own recording. Paule described the sessions, held at Berkeley's Fantasy Studios: "Willie was there for the songwriting, the rehearsals, the pre-production, the recordings, a great deal of the mixing. It was good to see him light up with ideas as he offered his input."

"I listen to the music a little different from most singers," Walker said, referring to his work with Paule's septet. "I listen for power areas in the music structure to find my phrasing."

Walker was drawn to the title track for *After A While*, as well as other gems written by Christine Vitale, Paule's better half. "My reading of Christine's lyrics [caused] a feeling that has a lasting effect. That's important in songwriting—to tell a story good enough to last."

Album highlights include a sublime rendition of "Your Good Thing (Is About To End)"—a hit for both Mable John and Lou Rawls—as well as "I Don't Want To Take A Chance," which Walker previously recorded as a demo at Muscle Shoals' FAME Studios.

"These are songs that seemed to rise when we were doing the session," Walker said. "We could all feel the power." —Frank-John Hadley

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CHRISTIAN SCOTT aTUNDE ADJUAH

'SPEAKING TO ALL HUMAN



BY JENNIFER ODELL

PHOTO BY MICHAEL JACKSON

BEINGS'



Christian Scott aTunde Adjuah at the New Orleans Jazz Market on Oct. 24

On a quiet corner of New Orleans' Upper 9th Ward neighborhood, near the low-slung houses and graffiti-tagged stretches of North Claiborne Avenue, Christian Scott aTunde Adjuah sits on the steps of the Donald Harrison Sr. Museum and Guardians Institute.

Part gallery, part cultural center, the space was founded by Adjuah's grandmother, Herreast Harrison, in honor of her late husband's affinity for reading and teaching young people about the Mardi Gras Indian culture that has played a central role in the lives of their family for generations.

Adjuah stands and smiles, slivers of gold glinting off his jewelry in the late-October light. "Welcome," he says as we walk up the steps of the sleek building.

In a few days, the trumpeter is slated to kick off a world tour to promote his three-album series on Ropeadope/Stretch, *The Centennial Trilogy*, a bold expansion of the bound-

ary-challenging style he calls "stretch music." The albums were all released in 2017: *Ruler Rebel* (March 31), *Diaspora* (June 23) and *The Emancipation Proclamation* (Oct. 20). These discs push Adjuah's expansive sound to a new level of fluidity; there's a seamlessness here that sets the albums apart from their 2015 predecessor, *Stretch Music* (Ropeadope/Stretch).

By mining concepts rooted in West African and Latin rhythms, trap music, soul, jazz, global pop and more, Adjuah aims to look ahead, musically, without losing sight of the past. The ideas behind the music represent a balanced combination of history and progressive thinking, too.

The Centennial Trilogy uses the 100th anniversary of the first jazz recording as a point of departure for ideas about identity, cultural connectivity and the sociopolitical problems that persist a century after the Original Dixieland Jass Band's 1917 milestone. It's an admittedly knotty basis for mostly instrumental, jazz-based music. But then, Adjuah has been contemplating this project for much of his adult life.

Inside the museum, the 34-year-old stands amid multiple displays of brightly colored beadwork and plumage as he points to a pair of large costumes in the front of the room. "This suit here was the last suit that my grandfather wore, and this suit is my uncle Donald's," he says, referring to saxophonist Donald Harrison Jr. Other items packed into the small room include costumes made for the younger members of the Guardians of the Flame Mardi Gras Indians, which Adjuah's grandfather founded. Photos lining a windowsill show Adjuah, his twin brother, Kiel, and his aunt, Cherice Harrison-Nelson, the Big Queen of the Guardians of the Flame, in full costume.

"This is a culture I was born into that is deeply rooted in the actual history of this place," Adjuah says of the black Indian tradition that's long influenced his creative output.

If being steeped in New Orleans jazz from a young age inspired his drive to comment on the centennial anniversary of the Original Dixieland Jass Band's recording of "Livery Stable Blues," his background in Indian culture helped inspire *what* he chose to say and how.

Born Christian Scott and raised in and around the neighborhood where his grandparents' non-profit sits, Adjuah interacted with New Orleans jazz luminaries like Danny Barker and Doc Cheatham regularly as a child.

"They would always talk about the first jazz recording and whenever it came up, even before I played music, the energy changed," he recalls. "I could sense that there was something that they were upset about. It wasn't until I got older and I started to be around Clyde Kerr and Kent Jordan that it dawned on me that part of what they were dealing with and speaking about in those moments was essentially that the culture was being laughed at."

He cites the all-white makeup of the Dixieland Jass Band and the vulgar origins of the term "jass" as evidence; older New Orleans musicians also point to the problematic nature of describing early jazz as "Dixieland," given its implicit reference to the pro-slavery Confederacy.

"For it to be viewed in that way, and also for it to be highlighted that this [recording] is the first moment for that music, hurt them deeply," Adjuah says. "They would always tell my peers and me, 'The 100-year mark will be up and you need to do your best to make a statement that speaks to the actual tradition in this music.'"

By the time he was about 13, Adjuah had started to formulate a plan to meet the challenge his elders had offered.

The result is *The Centennial Trilogy*. Adjuah says he intended the first album, *Ruler Rebel*, to introduce the listener to the speaker. It covers what he calls his “identity politics” and reflects undercurrents of the histories he feels tied to. The homages to his hometown hew to soulful jazz, while the crisp feel of “The Coronation Of X. aTunde Adjuah” asserts a change in mood.

The names “aTunde” and “Adjuah,” which he added to “Christian Scott” in recent years, refer to twin generals from Benin who, according to fable, helped foster a bond between West

the roles traditionally played by solos and lead instruments obfuscates some of that.

What stands out on each of the trilogy discs is Adjuah’s exploration of rhythm. Multiple layers of drums and percussion—from a kit, from a collection of mostly West African-derived hand drums and from programmed drums and pads—along with Adjuah’s unconventional use of melodic forms, suggests a kind of equality, overall, to the way atmospheres are built in the music. That vibe speaks to Adjuah’s belief that problems in today’s society can be remedied, at least in part, by better communication and more attention to disparate voices.

It’s noteworthy that all three albums were

ble things—that are coming out of the executive corridor, specifically—are things that I was gonna have to end up dealing with no matter who was in office.”

Adjuah’s longtime bassist Kris Funn asserts that “Christian has a way of picking topics that you may not know much about and shining a light on [them]. And a lot of times he is ahead of the curve on awareness of these issues.”

Funn points to Adjuah’s controversial song “K.K.P.D.,” or “Ku Klux Police Department,” an instrumental track (recorded in 2009 for the Concord album *Yesterday You Said Tomorrow*) based on Adjuah’s experience of being harassed by New Orleans police officers. Says Funn: “Think about when ‘K.K.P.D.’ was recorded and look at the climate on police brutality currently.”

In Adjuah’s eyes, things simply need to change—and there’s a growing degree of intersectionality that’s coming to light that may spur such progress.

“We are living in a moment where no matter who was in office, we are going to have to re-evaluate the way we interact with each other because the world is changing,” he says.

“People are looking for equality and they’re looking for ways to be able to navigate their space without feeling as if they’re some sort of leper because they’re a real person. So I think the sooner we get past some of the infighting that’s happening between cultures that are essentially the same culture, the better.”

The decision to comment on the first jazz recording’s centennial with a sweeping riff on the sounds of different cultures sprang in large part from Adjuah’s nearly lifelong saturation in black Indian culture.

Dating back at least to the mid-19th century, Mardi Gras Indians or black Indians are generally neighborhood-based “tribes” who create hand-stitched, beaded and feather-be-decked costumes. The aesthetic honors the relationship between African Americans in the region and Native Americans. (The trumpeter wears one on the cover of his 2012 Concord album, *Christian aTunde Adjuah*.)

Rival tribes traditionally perform a percussive, call-and-response style of music when they hit the streets in New Orleans on Mardi Gras Day and St. Joseph’s Night, with a hierarchy of members, the leader of which is the Big Chief. When African Americans were legally unable to participate in Carnival parades, black Indian culture became a creative celebratory outlet as well—one that encouraged its practitioners to define themselves within the community as leaders or other important members of their group.

A number of factors have been cited to help explain the Native American influence, some of which involve Native Americans protecting runaway slaves or meeting and mingling

'We're going to have to re-evaluate the way we interact with each other.'

Africans in the New Orleans region and Native Americans, he says.

On his second album in the trilogy, “*Diaspora* is who is being spoken to,” Adjuah says, “and I mean [diaspora] on the macrocosmic level. ... I am speaking to all human beings with as much love as possible.”

That macrocosm is well represented, thanks to a program that veers from supersonically fast beats to ultra-mellow modes, from Delta blues to world music to a Mardi Gras Indian-inspired vocal refrain on the closer, “The Walk.” An homage to Adjuah’s grandmother, “Our Lady Of New Orleans (Herreast Harrison),” ties a feel for the city’s history with an acknowledgement of its gentrified, post-Katrina demographics. That particular track is held together in strong fashion by a stunning solo from flutist Elena Pinderhughes.

“*The Emancipation Procrastination* is essentially a message,” Adjuah continues, “[that] as a world culture we have to become hyper-vigilant in terms of the way we look at things” and “that we need to reevaluate ... how we treat each other so that we can figure out the best way to move forward.” The trilogy’s final album features plenty of dark moments and tension as the band works to convey feelings about a largely broken political system on tunes like “Gerrymandering Game.” Adjuah has said *The Emancipation Procrastination* is more grounded in jazz than the other two albums in the trilogy, although the audible resistance to

recorded in April 2016. The Black Lives Matter movement was in full swing at the time, but Adjuah has dealt with issues like police harassment with regard to race for a decade. Here, he’s focused more on a splintering among people—and suggesting, through music, that our connections are more plentiful than our differences.

The music has changed in performance since it was recorded, but not necessarily because of the drastic shift in the political climate in America.

“For my experience, the subject matter of all three records, even though the first two aren’t as pointedly political ... there has never been a moment in my life where it’s not really relevant,” he says. “Right now we’re enduring a very strange moment in that we’ve allowed the political arena to become inundated with people that have highly bigoted views and that don’t mind insulting the American people to their faces—and have also created counter-narratives to things that we have all witnessed and experienced to get us arguing.”

Today, he says, *The Emancipation Proclamation* may feel as if it has more weight given the strong arm the far-right currently has in Washington, D.C. But Adjuah isn’t convinced that having a different person in the White House would change much.

“If I’m being honest about my experience, a lot of those things that we are dealing with that others are starting to see as being really terri-



The trumpeter released all three albums of *The Centennial Trilogy* in 2017.

in Congo Square to create bloodline ties as well as cultural ties. Others point to the role of African Americans in the traveling Buffalo Bill Wild West shows. The intersection of African American culture and Native American culture resulted in a heritage that was often passed from one generation to another via the oral tradition.

"It's not a linear American narrative, so you're exposed to things in this culture that you wouldn't get in a Louisiana history course," Adjuah says.

That "larger, older narrative," he continues, helped him "realize how important it is not to have a single story about cultures of people," while appreciating equally the value of different cultures of sonic expression.

As a band, he explains, "We prioritize the rhythms that actually created this culture as a sort of launch pad to finding new sonic territory, landscapes, new vernacular, new modes of approaching the music."

Rather than looking to bop or a particular point during which jazz was evolving for a root idea, that generally meant looking to rhythms that came to New Orleans via West Africa, like the Kassa Soro from Guinea or the Malian Sunun Gui.

For a musician who spent much of his life positioned as his Mardi Gras Indian tribe's Spy Boy—the Indian who travels at front of the tribe, scouting out territory and looking for other groups to meet before reporting back to his own tribe about the best way to proceed—garnering musical information from other cul-

tures feels natural, as does calling on a musical lineage that predates the American experience.

"Part of what this culture has been able to do for me is to help me develop a hearing for the root, rhythmically, of the music, and to be able to synthesize those things and then apply them in a way that makes it relevant today," Adjuah explains.

That's not to say the material is simply a remix of rhythms that predate jazz. The layered beats and overdubbed solos are reminiscent of what EDM artists have been doing in recent years with trap music, a gritty, Southern-born hip-hop genre characterized by super-fast, subdivided electronic beats and lots of programmed drums. Trap is not jazz but it is a Southern music style that likely grew out of a conglomeration of similar rhythms. Again, Adjuah's going back to look forward.

While Funn praises Adjuah for encouraging the band to help to shape the direction of the music, he admits that task is made more challenging by the elements Adjuah chooses to include. For Funn, the Roland TR-808 Rhythm Composer, a now-iconic drum machine developed in the early 1980s, is a big one. (Kanye West used the machine and helped immortalize it with his chart-topping 2008 album, *808s & Heartbreak*.)

"I can't even explain what it is like to play an acoustic bass next to an 808," Funn said in an email while on tour with Adjuah recently. "If you listen to trap music, most of the time the 808 is the bass line and kick drum at the same time. So you have to kind of do the opposite and

play in the spaces where the 808 isn't. The 808 takes up so much space sonically that you won't be heard if you don't."

At the band's Oct. 24 performance at the New Orleans Jazz Market, the amount of layered rhythm that went into the ensemble's overall sound was visible as well as audible. Dressed in all black accented by massive pieces of gold jewelry and a sleek, braided hairdo, Adjuah's customized "B-flat instruments" (his horns are essentially trumpets that have been tweaked to help create a breathier effect and mute out some of the brassy tone) occasionally seemed like accessories, both to his ensemble and to the music. He spent a good deal of the show handling what he describes in his album credits as "sonic architecture," or the programmed aspects of the music, from center stage.

Beside him, the virtuosic Weedie Braimah ripped through dazzling patterns on congas and a mix of other hand drums. He was seated beside Butcher Brown drummer Corey Fonville, another bright light on the horizon of jazz-based music who forces listeners to think outside the box.

In the back, Funn gracefully laid down bass lines—and one burning, extended solo—that belied the complex task before him. Samora Pinderhughes, Elena's brother, rounded out the rhythm section on piano while Elena and Adjuah traded lead duties on flute and horn. Together, the group's rhythmic capacity and harmonic dynamic created a different sound than what's normally presented at the venue.

"The most challenging aspect of this music is not having one solid reference to pull from," Funn said. "As jazz musicians, a lot of our development comes from studying material of the past and pushing it forward and shaping our own expression from it. Combining all these sounds, genres and instruments together is uncharted territory."

Adjuah's drive to try new things isn't limited to music. He and his team have created a Stretch Music App that allows a musician to engage with a track in whatever way they need to in order to join the sonic conversation. He has partnered with Ropeadope to start his own label, which he hopes will "create a sustainable community for artists ... so that we don't continue to be the labor class in this music."

On Dec. 8, he released a new track, "Freedom Is a Word," through a sponsorship with 1800 Tequila and Billboard. The hip-hop-meets-jazz collaboration with Vic Mensa is part of a five-part digital documentary about musicians with whom Adjuah has worked.

Adjuah cites these and other accomplishments before noting that he's days away from his third international tour in the past year. Then he pauses, bursts into laughter, and adds, "I haven't slept much in 2017."

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BY DAN OUELLETTE
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VICTOR WOOTEN

Shared AWARENESS

He's an avid communicator and a dynamic electric bassist, but **Victor Wooten** will be the first to tell you that he's not a polished public speaker.

However, that didn't deter him from giving the 2016 graduation address at the University of Vermont's Rubenstein School of Environmental and Natural Resources in Burlington. Wooten wrote out a speech—his first ever, he said—but then at breakfast the morning of the ceremony, he changed his mind about what he wanted to say. Wooten decided to give the graduates an improvised commencement “talk” that focused on his uplifting outlook on life complemented by interludes of electric bass riffs, doodles and high-speed solos. He wore a black gown and one of his black knit hats while everyone else in the crowd donned the traditional mortarboard graduation caps.

“What I was most happy about was that I wasn't speaking to a group of musicians, but environmentalists,” Wooten said in a recent telephone conversation. “It made me happy that these people saw me this way. It's like I've always said, music and nature are a part of everyone's life. You can't avoid it.”

Looking back, the uplifting “show” he performed at Rubenstein exemplifies who the 53-year-old Wooten is as an artist and an environmentalist—an unlikely but fully organic marriage of music and the outdoors that inspires him to reach beyond the jazz status quo to a poignant and spirited purity. His Center for Music and Nature, a 147-acre retreat in rural Tennessee not far from Nashville, enters its 19th season this year. Wooten has won widespread acclaim for the diversity of his virtuosic music, whether it's playing bass in Béla Fleck & The Flecktones, performing as a sideman in Mike Stern's jazz-rock band or launching a future-jazz trio with saxophone/flute/electronics player Bob Franceschini and drummer Dennis Chambers. A passionate educator, Wooten serves as scholar-in-residence at Berklee College of Music, where his distinctive 2008 novel, *The Music Lesson: A Spiritual Search for Growth Through Music*, is part of the school's curriculum.





‘We’re not preaching, but we’re bringing up things for people to think about.’

Considering all of this activity, it’s no surprise that the new trio recording *Trypnotyx*, his 10th album as a leader, is his first release in five years. Wooten said that *Trypnotyx* “goes all over the place”—with propelling power, rowdy dance-party funk, lyrical balladry and improvisational ecstasy. Additionally, there are DJ scratchings (courtesy of Wooten), electronics (Franceschini’s deftly drawn shades of EWI and Roland Aerophone) and vocal soundscapes by stand-up comedian and self-described “voicestrumentalist” Michael Winslow.

The album’s loose outline is a “tryp,” with the book-endings of “Takeoff” and “Landing” and tunes such as “DC10,” “Cruising Altitude” and “Final Approach” scattered within the 14-track program. It’s an animated journey of stylistic colors and sound effects, wordless vocals and even police alarms.

Regarding the *Trypnotyx* album name, Franceschini—who wrote the beefy, funk-inflamed title track—said that Wooten wanted something beyond the trio designation. First they came up with *triptych*, an art term that refers to a piece with three panels. Then there was the authoritative-sounding word *triumvirate*, but that didn’t quite hit the mark. “So, we kind of made up a word,” Franceschini explained. “It’s a mix of hypnosis and anything

with “tri,” and that made sense because that’s the feeling in the air about the vibe of what we’re doing—blending jazz with electronica.”

Wooten emphasized that *Trypnotyx* is not a Victor Wooten Trio album. The group is identified as Wooten/Chambers/Franceschini, even though at some stops on their expansive touring schedule promoters insist on giving the bassist top billing. Call it a collective, he said. “I wanted the record to be the three of us. We go so far beyond jazz and it’s so wide open because most people love all kinds of music. When you hear it, you can’t deny that this is three people who know what they’re doing—and that excites people. We make the audience feel and think because all three of us get the chance to speak. We wanted to make a record that was not full of action all the way through, so we brought in some slower tunes to bring the listener into the experience.”

Before recording, the trio hit the road for a series of dates, exploring a range of tunes to include on *Trypnotyx*. It’s worth noting that while Wooten and company play jazz venues like the Blue Note and Jazz Alley, the bulk of their stops take place in Flecktones territory: rock clubs, theaters, college campuses and performing arts centers that attract a wide range of listener tastes. “Touring was when the project got really solid,” Wooten said. “We were

starting it together. We wrote tunes and shared ideas. We were interested in changing things up from what we had been playing.” A common denominator for the three was Stern’s band.

The 55-year-old Franceschini, who had been playing with Stern since 2000, was introduced to Wooten in 2002 when the guitarist enlisted the electric bassist to join in for a few gigs. The pair hit it off. “I had been listening to Victor’s *A Show Of Hands* album [1996] for a few years, so I knew who he was,” Franceschini said. “Mike would call Victor up from time to time, so we got to know each other better. Victor called me to come to his camp to teach theory, improvisation and arranging. That’s when he said that it might be a good idea to form a trio with Dennis, who was also playing with Mike. Victor wasn’t sure where it would go, but he booked gigs in Japan and Europe. We did older stuff, then wrote new material to the point where we became a band.”

Even though Chambers, the elder of the band at 58, had played with Wooten over the years in the context of Stern’s projects, he quickly saw a different side of the bassist in the trio. “Every night it’s an event playing with him,” Chambers said. “It’s not [simply] playing with a bassist, but with all his pedals; he makes it more interesting. Victor has a serious imagination in the ways he brings his music, his style, his leadership. Playing with him as a rhythm section is a blast. He’s a bass player and a percussionist, and some of his solos are insane.”

When sharing the bandstand with Chambers, Wooten is mindful of the wisdom he received from fellow bassist and music/nature camp alum Anthony Wellington, who told him that a lot of bass players “hold their drummers hostage.” Wooten was committed to making sure that didn’t happen in the trio. “Dennis plays the time, but there are stretches where Bob and I become his metronome so he can drum free,” Wooten said. “He is so active, so he makes it a challenge. He always plays what the music asks for. He doesn’t read music, but his ear is better than most people who read. I send him demos with a drum track and he learns it verbatim. He’s that good. So I started to give him the beat by playing a clicker or shaker to free him up for his own drum [voice].” One of Chamber’s spotlight tunes on *Trypnotyx* is Franceschini’s funk-charged “A Little Rice And Beans,” where his drums dominate even when he’s not in solo mode.

In addition to serving as the DJ maestro and leaping into his high-velocity, fast-fingered, slap-to-pluck excursions, Wooten makes excellent use of the FretTraX, a bass-to-synth MIDI system invented by Nashville-based Lee Young. On the album, Wooten triggers loops in steps and scratches and even generates a Hammond B-3 effect on Franceschini’s swinging tune “The 13th Floor.”

Wooten’s bass effects and synth sounds via

FretTraX show up all over the album, including a tricky fretboard-tapping part on the fast-paced “DC10.” “It seems like the two-hand tapping sounds in 10/4 would be easy, but it’s not,” Wooten said. “So I had to play it right twice in the studio, then I let the computer set up the loop instead of playing the hard part all the way through.”

There are other surprising treats on *Trypnotyx*, including the appearance of Winslow, the so-called “man of 10,000 sound effects” who rose to fame via the *Police Academy* movies of the 1980s. Winslow opens and closes the trio’s journey with voice and sound effects and jumps into the party on “Funky D” with James Brown-like funky shouts to drive the already deep-grooved vibe. “We were at a festival in Houston when Michael’s management called us and told us he wanted to sit in,” Wooten said. “So, we had this song that had the funk beat with JB samples. But we knew it would be a challenge to use these on our recording. So Michael sat in with us, and we knew he could replace JB. It was all for fun, but it worked so well that we asked him to help on other parts of the album.”

There are subtle wordless vocal contributions on two songs by India-based singer Varijashree Venugopal. One of the tunes, Wooten’s “Liz & Opie,” starts in 7/4 with opening bass lines inspired by Dave Matthews. There’s also an almost hidden vocal appearance by Moroccan singer/violinist Amir Ali on “Caught In The Act.” “We needed a song that had a big fusion sound with an angular feel,” Wooten said. “We had this going so fast and so energetic that we needed a relief, so we took Bob’s sax part and put it in half time and then decided we needed an Arabic vocalist. We knew Amir, so we asked him to sing something over the top of this.”

During his University of Vermont commencement talk, at one point Wooten said to the graduates, “I’ve always felt that music is a good way to address the world’s issues.” That’s certainly the case with “Caught In The Act,” which has police sirens and an officer pulling over a presumably innocent driver by shouting, “Step out of the car” and “You’ve been caught in the act, and we don’t want any trouble.” The exchange echoes some of the fatal, racially charged episodes that have made international headlines in recent years.

Wooten explained the notion behind the song: “The whole idea is that the music should be enjoyable. But it’s also a responsibility to share awareness. We’re not preaching. We want people to enjoy this song. But we’re also bringing up things for people to think about.”

An equally profound sentiment is expressed in the socially relevant closer “Cupid,” which gives the album a soft landing with a lyrical joy that’s set in play by Franceschini’s hopeful flute and sailing saxophone, Wooten’s galloping bass

explorations and Venugopal’s unison vocal ride with the leader. Key to the tune is the sentiment introduced in the “Final Approach” prelude with a spoken-word conversation between Wooten and his family (wife Holly and four kids Kaila, Adam, Arianna and Cameron) about a world teeming with destructive bombs.

Wooten points out: “Countries make bombs ... with the goal of hurting people, killing people, proving a point.”

The family questions: “Is anyone working on a bomb that makes people love each other, a cupid bomb?”

He replies: “Well, I believe we already have it. It’s called music. Every country has their own version of it. It works. It brings people together. ... It’s a language, it’s a lifestyle, and it can save the world.”

The song is a gleeful ride through the countryside that conjures up the passions in Wooten’s life as expressed to the University of Vermont grads. “I get that honesty from my brothers and my parents, who guided me toward a positive outlook,” he said. “Addressing music and addressing nature are still safe things to talk about.”

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Victor Wooten

Bassist Victor Wooten's first Blindfold Test was also the first one ever presented on the campus of Berklee College of Music in Boston. The event took place on Nov. 16 at Berklee's Café 939, which was packed with students and faculty members, including Steve Bailey, chair of the bass department. Wooten, who is on the Berklee staff as Visiting Scholar in Performance Studies, was in the midst of a tour to support his latest release, the trio album *Trypnotyx* (recorded with drummer Dennis Chambers and saxophonist Bob Franceschini).

Bootsy Collins

"What So Never The Dance" (*Back In The Day: The Best Of Bootsy*, Warner Bros., 1994/rec'd 1971) Collins, vocals, bass; Clayton "Chicken" Gunnells, Ronnie Greenway, trumpets; Randy Wallace, saxophone; Phelps "Catfish" Collins, guitar; Frankie "Kash" Waddy, drums; Rufus Allen, vocals.

I feel this is from the era when I grew up. But I don't know who this is. It immediately takes me back to my friend Chuck Rainey. But I don't think this is Chuck. But I like the fact that the bass was up in the mix. I liked what the bass player was doing. There was variety but he stayed true to the bass line, and that bridge went to interesting places. [*An audience member guesses correctly.*] It's Bootsy? That makes complete sense. When I think of Bootsy from that era, I think of James Brown and "Sex Machine." I recognize Bootsy's bounce and bubblyness.

Charles Mingus

"Bass-ically Speaking (Take 2)" (*Charles Mingus: The Complete Debut Recordings*, Debut/Fantasy, 1990, rec'd 1953) Mingus, bass; Billy Taylor, piano; drummer unknown.

I'm going to make a wild guess: Mingus. You can hear that angular stuff in what he's doing. The oldness of the recording is what made me go to where this is. I can't tell from the mix why the piano and drums are so low in the mix. I don't know Mingus as well as I should, but I knew it was him just from hearing my brothers play him. I loved this. I'm not used to hearing the bass featured in that way where it's not about chops. It was very musical. He's not playing fast or doing a lot to get his point across. I like hearing the bass in the forefront.

Miles Mosley

"Abraham" (*Uprising*, Verve, 2017) Mosley, upright bass, vocals; Christopher Gray, Don-tae Winslow, trumpets; Kamasi Washington, Zane Musa, tenor saxophones; Ryan Porter, trombone; Cameron Graves, piano; Brandon Coleman, keyboard; Tony Austin, drums; Leah Zeger, violin; Tom Lea, Mike Whitson, violas; Peter Jacobson, cello.

I love it, but I don't know who this is, what the song is, who the singer is. What I like particularly is how the bass line has no fills. There's so much space. Who has enough restraint to not do fills? Who has that discipline? To leave so much space is a lot harder than a lot of people think.

And then that bass solo with that tone and those effects. Who would do that? It's got a serious groove. I'm going to take a guess: Abe Laboriel? No? I liked it because it sounds so current. [*An audience member guesses correctly.*] I didn't know who Miles Mosley was, but I know Miles Mosley now. In this band, there must be some kind of [appreciation] for the bass player to take that solo. That's respect. Miles Mosley. Cool dude.

Joni Mitchell

"Talk To Me" (*Don Juan's Reckless Daughter*, Elektra/Asylum, 1977) Mitchell, guitar, vocals; Jaco Pastorius, bass.

He's often imitated, but it's so nice to hear the original. This brings me back. You hear so many of us imitate him that sometimes you can forget what the original sounds like. Coming back to it is such a breath of fresh air. That's where we came from. After hearing him, so many of us ripped the frets out of our own basses to try to capture that sound. We're still trying to capture it. So, I'm going with Jaco Pastorius. It sounds like two



Victor Wooten at Berklee's Café 939 on Nov. 16

DAVE GREEN

tracks of bass. I'm hearing some bottom stuff and top stuff at the same time. But the bass is out front with the guitar playing chords. Somebody has to like the bass player a lot to let him get away with that. Of course, it's Joni. I don't know that many bass players who can play that busy, but Joni doesn't mind because she knows how good he is.

Usually I preach to play simple if you're playing behind a singer so the focus can be on the voice. But Jaco's all over the place. That's how good he is with his intonation, his note choices. If you're going to be busy, you need to be that hip.

Ray Brown Trio

"Blues For Junior" (*Some Of My Best Friends Are ... Guitarists*, Telarc, 2002) Brown, bass; Herb Ellis, guitar; Geoff Keezer, piano; Karriem Riggins, drums.

I'm going to go with Christian McBride. It sounds like someone who has listened to a lot of Ray Brown. It's not Ray. This sounds like a newer recording. When I think of Ray, I think of feel but also his simplicity. He plays everything perfect. He doesn't play fancy or too fast or try to be too clever with his note choices. For me, this is the best. He also plays "in" where a lot of bassists play outside. So, I still want to say Christian, but then again, he's more precise than what I'm hearing here. Ray didn't play that precise. [*after*] Oh, it is Ray Brown? I always wanted to play double bass. Ray Brown encourages me to do that. I bought a few-hundred-year-old Italian bass. My goal is to make an acoustic record.

Steve Bailey

"Crash & Burn" (*Evolution*, Victor/JVC, 1994) Bailey, Victor Wooten, basses; Doane Perry, drums.

Cool. My kids would know who the fretless bass player is. They know that sound. It's Steve Bailey. The other bass player is stumping me a little because there are times when it sounds like me. Is that other bassist me? No. It is? I played on this? Seriously? Well, the playing is great [*laughs*].

Usually if I record something, I remember it. But I don't remember this at all. Steve's like Jaco. Even if you tried, you couldn't get that sound—the long slides, the artificial harmonics. I'm shocked by how no one is learning the clever stuff he does.

DB

The "Blindfold Test" is a listening test that challenges the featured artist to discuss and identify the music and musicians who performed on selected recordings. The artist is then asked to rate each tune using a 5-star system. No information is given to the artist prior to the test.

Legend



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HOUSTON PERSON ALWAYS CLOSE-BY BLUES

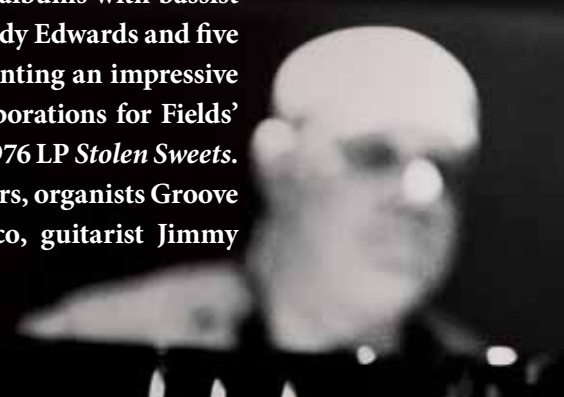
BY TED PANKEN

PHOTO BY GULNARA KHAMATOVA

Four days before his 83rd birthday, towards noon, **Houston Person** sat at the desk of the ground-floor railroad flat where record executive Joe Fields used to conduct the business of the HighNote and Savant labels.

“Joe gave me an opportunity,” said the tenor saxophonist, sporting a crisp blue gig suit, a well-pressed azure shirt and shiny black leather shoes with comfortable soles on this November afternoon. “I came here to tell him that I wanted to produce my own records. He said, ‘No problem; you got it.’ After I started, other musicians started asking me to do theirs. Joe treated me very fairly. We stayed together forever.”

A month before Fields' passing on July 12, Person had recorded *Rain Or Shine*, his 21st leader release for HighNote since it launched in 1997, along with three duo albums with bassist Ron Carter, a duo recital with pianist Bill Charlap, a tenor battle with Teddy Edwards and five co-led sessions with singer Etta Jones. Person produced each one, augmenting an impressive producer c.v. that included 15 leader albums and 12 Jones-Person collaborations for Fields' Muse Records, HighNote's predecessor, during the two decades after his 1976 LP *Stolen Sweets*. Muse also issued multiple Person-produced soul jazz dates by, among others, organists Groove Holmes, Sonny Phillips, “Brother” Jack McDuff and Joey DeFrancesco, guitarist Jimmy Ponder and vibraphonist Johnny Lytle.







Houston Person's new album is titled *Rain Or Shine*.

In the manner of his old friend, Person was focusing on his new release, a nine-song program that nods to various corners of the Great American Songbook. The album title—elided from the opening track, “Come Rain Or Come Shine,” by Harold Arlen and Johnny Mercer—could refer to the extraordinary consistency of Person’s tenor saxophone playing on the 70-plus albums he’s made during the half-century that separates *Rain Or Shine* from *Underground Soul*, his 1966 debut on Prestige.

The years have not diminished his tone, which parallels the voice of a baritone singer, nor the imaginative powers by which he embellishes and honors the melodies with pithy phrasing, a buttery sound from top to bottom, impeccably calibrated intonation and dynamics, and an unerring inner metronome, projecting longing, romance, spirituality and jubilation in equal measure.

Person draws vocabulary and perspective from a host of antecedents—early heroes Illinois Jacquet and Lester Young, r&b tenors like Sam “The Man” Taylor and Tom Archia; operatic tenors like Coleman Hawkins, Ben Webster and Sonny Rollins; not to mention Eddie “Lockjaw” Davis, Johnny Griffin, Stanley Turrentine, Frank Wess, Hank Mobley, Benny Golson and, not least, Gene Ammons, to whom Person has most often been compared—but makes everything his own. As his frequent “dueling” partner, reedist Ken Peplowski, put it, “You can tell from two notes that it’s Houston Person.”

“This record is about the blues,” Person said, pinpointing his default basis of operations. “A lot of people think of the blues as 12-bar, but the blues is also a feeling. When I play, the blues is always close-by, somewhere.”

He offered the title track as an example. “Arlen played a lot in Harlem, and a lot of his tunes lend themselves to the blues, like ‘Ill Wind’ and ‘Stormy Weather,’ which I’ve recorded.” He praised the medium-slow “dancing” tempo postulated by his rhythm section—guitarist Rodney Jones, pianist Lafayette Harris, bassist Matthew Parrish and drummer Vince Ector—and the warm, cogent trumpet solo by Warren Vaché, a pungent voice on his fourth recorded encounter with Person.

“Dance is very important to me,” Person said. “Growing up, when I saw Duke Ellington and Count Basie, they weren’t playing a concert. They were playing a *dance*. Those tempos were always perfect.”

He cited “I Wonder Where Our Love Has Gone,” by the eminent composer-bandleader Buddy Johnson, a fellow son of South Carolina (as was the baritone singer Arthur Prysock, who first recorded it), as “a song that comes partly from the blues repertoire.”

“Never Let Me Go” is not the Jay Livingston song that Nat Cole made famous, but the Joe Scott lyric that gave Johnny Ace a hit in 1954, when Person was in college.

Ector’s simmering funk beats on Onaje Allan Gumbs’ “132nd And Madison” and his shuffle groove on Jones’ “Soupbone” evoke

Person’s tight, well-produced, commercially successful 1970s albums on which drummers like Bernard Purdie, Idris Muhammad and Grady Tate propelled the flow. On “Danny Boy,” the album closer, Person channels his experience in the Air Force between 1954 and 1958.

“I used to hear it all the time when I was a kid,” he recalled. “And when I was in basic training in Texas around Christmas time, I played Christmas carols and this song for the guys in the barracks without accompaniment. We were all lonely, and I was the only guy who had an instrument.”

He continued: “Sometimes I like to close an album with something sentimental, because people have led us to believe that jazz is without sentiment. I still try to present people with songs they’re familiar with and do simple things to them so they hear it differently—but not so different as to mar the thing you expect. And I’ll do things that some jazz musicians won’t touch, that people might not think could be presented in that context.”

Although Person improvises with a less declamatory, more conversational and harmonically efflorescent attitude in response to Carter’s endlessly provocative bass lines on their 2016 encounter, *Chemistry*, melodic expression remains paramount. “We let the melody dictate what happens,” he said. “But the two instruments are free. It’s just about sound—my sound and Ron’s sound—and simplicity.”

“During this period of my life and development, I find that I edit more, watch my

improvisations and keep them from going crazy. Some things I don't even improvise on anymore, because the melodies are so strong. Sound can really be improvisational, too. You can bend a note this way or that way, or accent it in a different place than it was before. Now, all that is predicated on the lyric. It's fun for me to pay attention to the way Strayhorn, Richard Rodgers and all those composers wanted their songs played."

In separate phone interviews, Charlap and Peplowski, who have both shared numerous bandstands with Person, testified to his encyclopedic repertoire.

"We're always trying to stump each other with tunes," said Peplowski, who had collaborated with Person at an Arizona concert just a few days earlier. "He does the blues, and he can draw from that r&b 'Texas tenor' kind of thing, yet often does material that you wouldn't

to play around a singer, play around the melody. Great singers love working with him for a reason."

"A singer I really like is Maria Callas," Person said. "Sarah Vaughan. Filling up a room." He's applied these aesthetic preferences when performing with and/or producing luminaries like Charles Brown, Barbara Morrison, Ernestine Anderson, Dee Daniels and Freddy Cole. Then there's Arthur Prysock and Little Jimmy Scott, behind whom Person played in the house band (Moe Cloud and his All Stars) at a club called the Sundial, in Hartford, Connecticut, while attending Hartt School of Music, where he matriculated in 1958, after leaving the Air Force.

"I learned how to be quiet," Person said of these post-graduate experiences with Prysock and Scott. "How to fill spaces. Where to play and where *not* to play. I didn't perfect it with

how I could improvise—just get up and play my version of the song. It was a process. But they kept me in the band." Person further raised his game after enlisting in the Air Force, where he served as a clerk and moonlighted as a musician, holding a steady gig in an all-white country-and-western band, and jamming and clubbing weekends with Seventh Army band members Cedar Walton, Eddie Harris, Don Ellis, Don Menza and Lex Humphries. "They tolerated me," Person said. "They encouraged me and gave me a chance to develop."

After receiving his degree from Hartt, Person moved to New Haven, Connecticut, and then to Boston. He linked up with Hammond B-3 practitioners Gloria Coleman and Johnny Hammond Smith, and made his first sideman recordings with the latter, first on Riverside, then on Prestige, which signed him in 1966, launching a long series of collaborations with organists.

"The organ was a church instrument to start with," Person said. "There's nothing like it when you hear that bass line, which is the heartbeat, the anchor, and put everything else on top, with the guitar and the drums. I had to learn to cut through that Leslie, so it's responsible for me developing my sound. But the organ started getting burdensome to carry around. They usually were broken when you did get one, and there were very few organ players coming along."

Which is why, during the last three decades, apart from a few cusp-of-the-'90s albums with a young Joey DeFrancesco, Person has gone acoustic, often recording with the late Stan Hope on piano, but also using pianists like Benny Green, Richard Wyands and John di Martino. More often than not since 1996, he's retained the services of bassist Ray Drummond.

"Houston is extremely experienced," Drummond said. "He's got something in mind for every tune he records that changes the traditional view of that tune, and he gets players who he knows will support what he's trying to do. His playing is so deep—subtle on the one hand, but hits you on the head like a sledgehammer on the other. Everything he does is timeless. He's also a seminal producer. When he'd come into Rudy Van Gelder's studio, he knew what he wanted, knew how to ask Rudy a question."

As he progresses through his ninth decade, Person focuses on his next steps, including an in-process project with singer Karrin Allyson and a prospective organ date. "When I got into music, I didn't see any boundary between one style or the other," he said. "I remember that when I select and do what I do, and I try to put my stamp on it. I don't particularly like labels—'smooth jazz,' 'soul jazz.' What do you say when somebody is doing a little of each? I take each individual performance on its merit."

"I live music. It's been good to me, and I'm going to be good to it."

DB

'WHEN I SAW DUKE ELLINGTON AND COUNT BASIE, THEY WEREN'T PLAYING A CONCERT; THEY WERE PLAYING A DANCE.'

associate with that—beautiful, delicate ballads, interesting, out-of-the-way songs. He plays the verses. He really thinks about a song's meaning; he's not just thinking of playing off the changes, though he knows them inside and out. Because he does, he doesn't have to outline every single chord change. Instead, he implies them. The listener fills in the gaps. We're getting the essence of all of his knowledge without him specifically laying it all out for us. He's almost singing alternate melodies to a song as he goes, which is what the essence of jazz is."

"Houston knows way more about popular song than me," said Charlap, whose simpatie with the saxophonist is palpable throughout the 2006 duo album *You Taught My Heart To Sing*. "He isn't trying to do everything. He has a clear idea of what he cares about and wants to communicate. Simplicity and directness are important to him. There isn't a pretentious bone in his body. He's so listenable for musicians and non-musicians. None of it is commerce-oriented. He's just being himself."

"Hearing Houston play is like hearing a great singer—one who sings the blues at the center of everything they do, but can also really sing the song. Singers like Nat Cole, Percy Mayfield and Etta Jones are all in his music. Then there's his special mastery of being able

them, but they kept me there. And I learned a lot of songs, and an appreciation for the melody and the lyric."

Person's love affair with melody began in childhood in Florence, South Carolina, where his mother compelled him to study piano, to participate in the choir of the family's Baptist church and to listen the weekly Saturday-morning broadcasts from the Metropolitan Opera, which supplemented a steady airwaves diet of blues and jump music.

"This was before the ascent of the guitar, and there were a lot of r&b saxophone players who I'd imitate," Person said. During his junior year of high school, he received a saxophone for Christmas. The school's band director taught him the basics, but Person "was mostly engaged in sports" until the jazz band from South Carolina State College, his father's alma mater, played a concert in town.

When Person enrolled at SCSC in 1952, he auditioned for the band and was accepted, joining such future pros as Basie baritone saxophonist Johnny Williams and arranger Horace Ott, who would later arrange Person's 1977 cover of Fela Kuti's "I No Get Eye For Back," recently sampled by Kendrick Lamar on "Mortal Man."

"I wasn't a musician at the time," Person said. "I could barely read the charts, but some-

SHARON JONES

'May the Work I'VE DONE *Speak* FOR ME'

By Geoffrey Himes Photo by Michael Jackson

Sharon Jones beat cancer once, but she couldn't beat it twice. First came the crisis, then the triumph, then the relapse and, finally, the farewell. She died on Nov. 18, 2016, at age 60, but she left behind an impressive posthumous album, *Soul Of A Woman* (Daptone), and a skillful band, the Dap-Kings, dedicated to preserving her legacy.

This ferocious r&b singer was first diagnosed with pancreatic cancer in 2013. There's never a good time to find out you have cancer, but the timing was especially bad for Jones. She had gotten a late start on her career, releasing her first album at age 46 in 2002. But by 2013, after four albums and thousands of shows, Jones and her band, the Dap-Kings, were finally enjoying tremendous success for an act on a small, boutique label. Critics have called Jones the "female James Brown" and the Dap-Kings "leaders of a New York City-centered soul revival."

They had graduated from nightclubs to theaters and festivals; they were appearing in movies, TV shows and commercials. Their already completed fifth album, *Give The People What They Want*, represented their most ambitious and most realized studio work yet. The year was shaping up as their breakout from the soul-revival circuit into the big time. But the health crisis put everything on hold.

Barbara Kopple, the documentary filmmaker known for *Harlan County, U.S.A.* (1976) and *Shut Up & Sing* (2006), started work on a movie about Jones soon after the diagnosis. Titled *Miss Sharon Jones*, the film begins with footage of the singer's pre-2013 concerts, helping viewers understand why she was such an important artist.

Onstage, Jones was mesmerizing. A short woman who wore her hair in an Afro, or sometimes tied off into dozens of braids, she commanded the stage in tight-fitting dresses that revealed every twitch of her body. During a concert, her stocky frame was



Sharon Jones (1956–2016)



Jones performs with The Dap-Kings at the Klipsch Music Center in Noblesville, Indiana, on July 24, 2016.

in constant motion from first note to last; those twitching muscles were a visual representation of the rhythmic drive and emotional commitment she poured into each number. Before long, she would kick off her shoes and begin stalking the stage barefoot as if in vengeful pursuit of every man who'd ever done her wrong—at least in the stories of her songs.

But the film follows those concert scenes with a dramatically poignant one. To prepare for her upcoming chemotherapy treatment, Jones visited a hairdresser, who snipped off the singer's braids one by one and then shaved her head into a gleaming bald dome. As Jones rolled her fallen braids in her fingers, her eyes filled with tears.

Later, when resting up after the latest treatment, she told Kopple: "This chemo is killing every cell in my body every day. You know this is tough for me, sitting here not doing anything. It's got to be 19 years we've been constantly going ... Everybody needs the money. I'm responsible for everyone's payroll; we've got to get out there."

But the new album had been put on hold until Jones was healthy enough that they could tour to support the record. After six months of chemo, the doctors gave her the OK to go back to work. Sharon Jones & The Dap-Kings per-

formed on *The Tonight Show with Jay Leno* on Jan. 14, 2014, the day *Give The People What They Want* was released. But the big test would be the first concert at Manhattan's Beacon Theatre on Feb. 6.

Jones was worried. "Y'all, I'm still taking chemo," she told the Dap-Kings at a rehearsal in the film. "If I have to stand up or lift or walk, it's a whole different thing now. I thought I was getting better, but it's really breaking me down. I'm weaker now. Why don't we take it as it goes?"

The eight members of the Dap-Kings—and the backing vocalists known as Saun & Starr—were worried, too. "That period was a rude awakening," said guitarist Binky Griptite. "We'd been working a lot and drawing a steady income. Despite the number of people in the band, each of us was making grown-up money. Then that balloon deflated really quick. She had always seemed so unstoppable; we couldn't imagine anything stopping that train. But then something did. We were hoping it would be a temporary situation, and when we got back together again and were working, it was great. But we never knew how long it would last."

"The night of the Beacon show, we were very overjoyed that she'd recovered her health and had made it as far as she had," added bassist/bandleader Gabe Roth (aka Bosco Mann).

"But we definitely had concerns. We didn't know how much stamina she'd have. We had not only a Plan B but also plans C and D. We had stools for her to sit down on; we had ballads to swap into the setlist. We had instrumentals to play, songs for the background singers to sing. But once she got out there, we didn't have to do any of that. She was as powerful as ever."

The proof is in the movie. We first see her backstage, shaking with nerves, but when she walked on stage in her shiny, sleeveless, green-and-gold, brocade dress, the sold-out crowd stood up with a roar, and you can see her body swelling with confidence. Soon she was doing a different kind of shaking, boogieing from one end of the proscenium to the next as she belted out the songs from *Give The People What They Want*. Her bald head and gold earrings were gleaming under the lights, as was her smile.

Her triumphant look and her bald head were on the cover of the *Village Voice* that winter, and as she raised a copy of the tabloid weekly to the camera, she told Kopple, "I wish my mother could have seen this after all these years and all this hardship me and the Dap-Kings have gone through. In church Sister Bullock used to sing this song, 'May all the works I've done speak for me ...' Now I believe all this hard work is finally paying off. That was my goal all along: to do good music, get out there and be recognized."

The Beacon show kicked off two years of touring by Jones and the Dap-Kings, who were greeted with acclaim nearly everywhere they went. This writer saw them twice during that run: in July 2014 at the Vienna State Opera House and in April 2016 at the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival.

In Louisiana, the star of the show was the blue-and-white fringe that formed horizontal lines on her blue-sequin dress. Once Jones started singing, that fringe never stopped swinging. It shook with every percussive burst of her voice.

"I was considered the bandleader," Roth said, "but mostly what I did was translate what was coming out of her. I'd watch her face; I'd watch her feet. By watching her body, you could tell when she wanted us to pump it up and give her more energy—and when she wanted us to bring it down and give her more space. Every time we did a song it was different, depending on the room and on how Sharon was feeling."

In Austria, she kicked off the show with her specialty: uptempo soul shouters such as "You'll Be Lonely," "Long Time, Wrong Time" and "New Shoes." But then she revealed another side of her music. She sang a snippet of the James Bond theme "Goldfinger," which she'd recorded for the soundtrack to Martin Scorsese's 2013 film *The Wolf of Wall Street*. The ornate rendition segued smoothly into her own smoldering song of seduction, "You're Gonna Get It," which she'd recorded for the Glenn Close TV series

Damages. Here was proof that Jones could milk a ballad as skillfully as belt a dance number. Here was proof that the Dap-Kings could create a mood as ably as they dug a groove.

Roth, co-owner of Daptone Records and Jones' longtime producer, decided that the next album, *Soul Of A Woman*, would focus on such ballads. He held back three of the slower songs from *Give The People What They Want* and encouraged his bandmates to write more in that vein.

"We've recorded ballads before," Roth pointed out, "but these newer songs are lush, more dramatic, more cinematic."

It's a revealing aspect of Jones' musical personality. "Searching For A New Day" echoes Curtis Mayfield's soundtrack work with Gladys Knight and Aretha Franklin. "These Tears (No Longer For You)" echoes Burt Bacharach's work with Dionne Warwick. "Girl! (You Got To Forgive Him)" echoes John Barry's soundtrack work with Shirley Bassey (who recorded "Goldfinger" in 1964). Both Jones and her band know when to hold back as the atmosphere thickens and when to let go.

"As Sharon got more and more sick," Roth said, "it became obvious that it didn't make sense to plan for a symphony tour that probably would never happen. We wanted to show that other side of Sharon, but we couldn't ignore the first side, the carnivorous stage singer. So we decided to do this record as side A and side B,

to start off as a show band, playing the kind of raw soul songs that are red meat for Sharon, then gradually get quieter. On 'Searching For A New Day,' the strings sneak in at the end. Then it gets moodier and more sophisticated as the record goes on, before we bring it all back home on the gospel song 'Call On God.'" (Jones had composed the song in the 1970s for E.L. Fields' Gospel Wonders, a choir she sang with throughout most of her life at the Universal Church of God in New York.)

Never were the Dap-Tones more successful than during the 2014-'15 tour when Jones first returned from chemo. The movie had its premiere at the Toronto Film Festival in September 2015, but before this feel-good story about Jones' beating the odds could reach the public, some bad news arrived: The cancer was back.

"We had a lot of talks about how to handle that news, because it didn't go with the narrative of victory that the filmmakers were putting forward," Roth said. "But Sharon was adamant; it was important for her to be totally honest with her audience. She didn't know how to be dishonest; she came as fully herself at every show. It soon became clear that management or no management, Sharon was going to do what she was going to do. And it fell very heavy on the audience, because they'd just seen this uplifting movie and here was this bad news. It got very quiet."

Even though the chemo treatments restart-

ed, the tours and recording went on. On some days, Jones felt weak. But on the days she felt up to it, she and the Dap-Kings would work in the recording studio.

Then on Nov. 8—Election Day in the United States—Jones suffered a stroke. She joked that Donald Trump had given it to her, but the next day she had a more severe stroke that left her unable to talk. The entire organization—musicians, singers, managers, etc.—traveled to the hospital in Cooperstown, New York. They stayed with her until she died on Nov. 18.

"It was terrible and beautiful at the same time," Griptite said. "Terrible to lose your friend, but beautiful to spend that time with each other. During that time when she couldn't speak, she was cognizant and aware; she communicated as best she could. We'd pass a guitar around and sing. We heard her make a noise, and we thought she was moaning in pain. But when we listened closely, we realized she was humming 'Amazing Grace.'"

"A while later, she'd sing with Saun & Starr," Roth said. "The moans became harmonies, and the harmonies became words. She was singing with words, and the doctors couldn't explain it, because she couldn't speak at any other time. The music part of her was still working, even when the other parts weren't. It was so happy and so sad. We were able to sing along with her even as we were watching her fade away." **DB**



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Our annual Jazz Venue Guide is your passport to excellent music rooms around the globe. On the following pages, the listings are divided by geographic region, and a venue's name in boldface capital letters indicates there is an advertisement for that establishment within this guide. Interspersed among the listings are features on four venues: Jazz Standard in New York City (page 54), Wally's Cafe in Boston (page 59), the Jazz Showcase in Chicago (page 62) and Dièse Onze in Montreal (Page 70). On page 68, we present an article on the bustling jazz scene in Vienna, Austria, which is home to numerous jazz clubs.



Maria Schneider directs her namesake orchestra at Jazz Standard in New York.

© JACK VARTOOGIAN/FRONTROWPHOTOS

Fans Flock to NYC's Jazz Standard

THE MARIA SCHNEIDER ORCHESTRA played its first shows at New York's Jazz Standard Jan. 19–23, 2000. The shows were a critical and commercial success. That they yielded *Days Of Wine And Roses*, the orchestra's first live recording, made them historic.

So when Schneider opened her show at the club this past Thanksgiving Eve with "Days Of Wine And Roses," there was more than the usual holiday cheer flowing among the crowd packed into the multi-tiered basement space.

"I love the proximity of the audience to the band," she said before the first set. "Everybody is happy to be here. And that makes the band play great."

Great playing has never been in short supply at the club, though management has over the years made changes in the extra-musical realm. For starters, the definite article was excised from the club's name: It is now Jazz Standard, sans "the"—a change made after a 2001 renovation and reopening in March 2002.

With the shorter name came a simplification in the gastronomic strategy: In the post-9/11 world, frills were out—and in response, the kitchen ditched mainstays like roast pheasant with julienned rose-petal sauce for barbeque.

But the programming philosophy hasn't changed. "For the identity of the club, it's important that the programming is consistent," said Seth Abramson, the longtime artistic director. "Whether it's Latin jazz or straight-ahead to more modern, to sometimes pushing the envelope a little bit on more adventurous stuff that's right for the space—within that, it's

important to be very authentic."

In the early years of the club, which opened at its 27th Street location in 1997, titans of straight-ahead piano like Cedar Walton and Tommy Flanagan held forth. In a rare club date, pianist André Previn appeared with bassist David Finck in a performance recorded and released by Deutsche Grammophon in 2001.

At the same time, a generation of future keyboard stars enjoyed early major-club exposure, among them Jason Moran, Robert Glasper and Bill Charlap.

In time, cultural horizons broadened. "One of the things that's changed is that some of the most exciting things have come from the Latin jazz side," Abramson said, citing the work of Miguel Zenón, Yosvany Terry and Dafnis Prieto.

On the more adventurous side, a high point occurred on April 28, 2008, when trumpeter Ambrose Akinmusire, then an up-and-comer, first mesmerized the audience with a quartet that included saxophonist Mark Turner, pianist Aaron Parks, bassist Ben Street and drummer Eric Harland.

"He had this aura," Abramson said. "I saw it right away—that intangible thing."

The club has become one of the most reliable destinations for large ensembles, including Schneider's, Ryan Truesdell's Gil Evans Project and the Mingus Big Band, which has held down Monday nights since October 2008.

The band held a landmark concert on New Year's Eve 2009, when it celebrated the 50th anniversary of the classic albums *Mingus Dynasty*, *Mingus Ah Um* and *Blues & Roots* with alum-

ni Randy Brecker, Jeff "Tain" Watts and, at the podium, Gunther Schuller. WBGO broadcast the event live on NPR's *Toast of the Nation*.

"I said, 'If this comes out OK, we should think about bringing it out as a recording,'" Abramson recalled. Despite challenges—not least maintaining momentum—he and Sue Mingus, the co-producers, persevered. Two years later, *Mingus Big Band Live At Jazz Standard* won the Grammy for Best Large Jazz Ensemble album—the first for the group.

When it comes to meeting the demands of the market, the club has often been ahead of the programming curve. It was, for example, among the first clubs to abandon the custom of strictly booking six-night engagements.

"It was a natural evolution and a necessity for making things work," Abramson said.

The club's programming continues to evolve. Last summer, it launched a Sunday brunch for emerging artists. "It went well," Abramson said, though the brunch lost a bit of steam in the fall when it switched to Saturdays to make way for a pre-existing program for school children, Jazz for Kids. But, he added, he thinks the Saturday brunch can build a loyal audience.

Meanwhile, the club is still taking risks. In March, Jazzmeia Horn, who hasn't played as a leader at the club, will appear for three nights—a recognition of the buzz surrounding the singer. Such decisions have often worked to the advantage of the jazz public—and the club.

"In all likelihood," Abramson said, "this will be our best year to date for the bottom line."

—Phillip Lutz

EAST

CONNECTICUT

Firehouse 12

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

firehouse12.com

Located in the historic Ninth Square District, Firehouse 12 boasts a recording studio/75-seat auditorium dedicated to disseminating improvised music. Regional talent and national acts like Tim Berne's Snakeoil, Nels Cline and Yosvany Terry grace the stage during Firehouse 12's jazz shows.

The Side Door Jazz Club

85 Lyme St.
Old Lyme, CT
(860) 434-2600

thesidedoorjazz.com

The Side Door is more than just a clever name. This club is tucked into the historic Old Lyme Inn, which was given a new lease on life with a full renovation a few years ago. The club opened in 2013 with the goal of bringing world class musicians to Connecticut. Warren Wolf, Dayna Stephens, Russell Malone and Johnny O'Neal are only a handful of the acts that have recently played the intimate venue.

MARYLAND

An Die Musik Live!

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

andiemusiklive.com

This venue embraces much more than jazz, bringing classical and world music shows to a historic townhouse in the city. The lineup juxtaposes the biggest names in jazz, like McCoy Tyner, Regina Carter and Bill Frisell with less well-known artists. Peabody students also get a chance to apply their studies during jam sessions.

Bethesda Blues & Jazz Supper Club

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

bethesdabluesjazz.com

Before transforming into one of the best venues in Bethesda, the Blues & Jazz Super Club started life as a late-'30s movie palace. The historic Bethesda Theatre is now a glitzy supper club with a seating capacity of 500, with promoters booking a range of musicians nearly every night of the week.

Caton Castle Lounge & Package Goods

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

catoncastle.com

Caton Castle has an informal atmosphere; listeners looking for local jazz and blues acts can feel free to dress casually and immerse themselves in the music. Local musicians stack the calendar, but bigger-name jazz acts occasionally stop by.



The Jazz Gallery in New York

MASSACHUSETTS

Chianti Tuscan Restaurant & Jazz Lounge

285 Cabot St.
Beverly, MA
(978) 921-2233

chiantibeverly.com

Chianti is a jazz spot with an overriding mission. The venue is dedicated to supporting area jazz, an issue championed by the famous jazz advocate Sandy Berman, who died of cancer in 1991. Six nights a week, listeners can catch jazz shows by regional and national artists.

Lilypad

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

lilypadinman.com

For more than a decade, the Lilypad has been the place to hear a little bit of everything—music, comedy and even spoken-word performances. Jazz acts that recently performed at the venue, which is located in the heart of Inman Square, include the Joe Hunt Group and the Tim Miller Quartet.

Regattabar

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

regattabarjazz.com

On the third floor of the Charles Hotel, this 220-seat listening room welcomes a range of famous and lesser-known acts. The owners have been bringing quality jazz to the area since 1985.

Scullers Jazz Club

400 Soldiers Field Rd.
Boston, MA
(866) 777-8932

scullersjazz.com

Scullers Jazz Club has a long history as a Boston jazz spot. Now located in a DoubleTree hotel the club presents marquee acts on the weekends and local talent on Wednesdays and Thursdays.

Upcoming shows include Bria Skonberg (Jan. 20), Monty Alexander (Jan. 26) and Bill Charlap (Jan. 27).

Wally's Café Jazz Club

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

wallyscafe.com

Family run since the late 1940s, this jazz club is focused on jam sessions. Each night, an open mic begins the evening, giving way to a genre-specific concert. Dubbed "the musicians' training ground," the owners truly aim to prepare the next generation of musicians for the spotlight.

NEW JERSEY

Robin's Nest Rhythm & Blues

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

robinsnestrhythmandblues.com

Going for "great Mississippi feel in the heart of New Jersey," this venue strives to create an immersive juke joint experience. Sunday is reserved for a jazz open mic jam session, and there are themed open mic sessions throughout the week.

Shanghai Jazz

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

shanghaijazz.com

Shanghai Jazz brings an assortment of music to the 1930s Shanghai themed restaurant six nights each week. The goal is to make customers feel like they're in the "Paris of the Orient" while listening to musicians like Claudio Roditi, Jan Findlay and Don Braden.

Trumpets Jazz Club

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

trumpetsjazz.com

Jazz is the name of the game five nights



(le) Poisson Rouge in New York



Bethesda Blues & Jazz Supper Club in Bethesda, Maryland

each week at Trumpets, and it's been that way for more than three decades. Blues and classical music are also presented, but Trumpets is certainly geared toward the jazz lover. Houston Person, John Stowell and Don Braden are among the jazz-leaning acts booked at the club.

NEW YORK

55 Bar

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

55bar.com

Bookers promote a healthy mix of jazz, blues and funk at this Greenwich Village basement spot. A tasty cocktail is appropriate for a venue that touts itself as "a Prohibition-Era dive bar." Legendary guitarist Mike Stern will play there on Dec. 31.

Birdland

315 W. 44th St.
New York, NY
(212) 581-3080

birdlandjazz.com

Birdland has now risen from the ashes twice, and it's still flying high. The top acts in jazz continue to be booked on a nightly basis, just as they were seven decades ago when Birdland sat a block west from the jazz mecca of 52nd Street. John Pizzarelli will have a residency from Jan. 16–20, followed by Vincent Herring's residency on Jan. 23–27. Bands that frequent the venue include Arturo O'Farrill's Afro Latin Jazz Orchestra and the Birdland Big Band.

Blue Note

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

bluenote.net

The Blue Note has spread its brand throughout the world, but the New York location still remains the center of the jazz universe. Everybody who's everybody has been associated with Blue Note, and the history of the venue is intertwined with the history of jazz. These days, listeners can find Chick Corea, Jimmy Heath and his big band, Dee Dee Bridgewater and other luminaries at the club. Upcoming residencies include Keyon Harrold (Jan. 15–18), Ray Angry with Warren Wolf (Jan. 22–24) and José James (Feb. 5–8).

Club Bonafide

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

clubbonafide.com

No longer the center of the jazz world, 52nd Street is still home to venues that offer wide-ranging takes on the evolution of jazz music. Club Bonafide recently presented shows from bands like Snarky Puppy spin-off Ghost-Note and the Harry Smith Quartet.

Cornelia Street Café

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

corneliastreetcafe.com

In business for more than 40 years, this Greenwich Village spot that is "a culinary as well as a cultural landmark," per a mayoral proclamation. Bookers stack the lineup with a variety of musical performances as well as readings and a lecture series. Upcoming shows include Lage Lund (Dec. 29), Tom Rainey (Dec. 30), Paul Shapiro's Ribs & Brisket Revue (Dec. 31) and the Andrea Wolper Quartet (Jan. 3).

Dizzy's Club Coca-Cola

10 Columbus Circle, 5th Floor
New York, NY
(212) 258-9595

jazz.org/dizzys

At Dizzy's Club Coca-Cola, the view behind the stage can be breathtaking, but the musicians who perform in front of the floor-to-ceiling window overlooking Columbus Circle are pretty good, too. After nightly performances by renowned musicians like Steve Nelson, Wycliffe Gordon and Dayna Stephens, lesser-known acts take over.

Fat Cat

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

fatcatmusic.org

Early birds need not look into the Fat Cat jam session; four nights a week, the session begins at 12:30 a.m., and it's an hour later on Friday and Saturday. For jazz lovers who need more sleep, Fat Cat bookers present a range of jazz earlier in the evenings throughout the week.

Iridium

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

theiridium.com

The Iridium bills itself as bringing jazz, rock and blues to the city, but it's famous in jazz circles for the exceptional live albums recorded at the venue over the years. Current booking includes rock and pop acts. Upcoming shows include Roy Ayers (Dec. 26–27), Macy Gray (Dec. 30–31) and Albert Lee (Jan. 3–4). Once a month, "Mondays at the House" showcases emerging artists.

The Jazz Gallery

1160 Broadway, 5th floor
New York, NY
(646) 494-3625

jazzgallery.org

With a dedication to commissioning new works from less-established artists, the owners of the Jazz Gallery have created a unique space with a goal of cultivating the next generation of jazz talent. This small jazz space also tries to book the best jazz musicians out there today mixed with more adventurous programming; in November, an evening of Gamelan music shared the calendar with gigs by drummer Johnathan Blake and the big band fueled Jazz Composers Showcase.

Jazz Standard

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

jazzstandard.com

For nearly a decade, the Mingus Big Band has played two sets at the Jazz Standard each Monday night. The Maria Schneider Orchestra has a long history with the venue, which has also presented shows by Donny McCaslin, Bill Frisell, Joe Lovano, Matt Wilson and dozens of other major jazz stars.

(le) Poisson Rouge

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

lpr.com

Le Poisson Rouge rose from the ashes of the noted jazz club The Village Gate, but that doesn't mean bookers rely on a steady diet of jazz acts. The venue highlights a broad range of musicians, with everything

from classical to rock hitting the stage. The venue's jazz shows feature the country's top musicians, such as Wadada Leo Smith and John Hollenbeck.

Mezzrow

163 W. 10th St.
New York, NY
(646) 476-4346

mezzrow.com

While clarinetist Milton Mezzrow may have been the inspiration for the club's name, Mezzrow, which is owned by the folks who run Smalls Jazz Club, presents intimate music with a heavy focus on pianists and duos. On Sunday through Thursday, admission into Mezzrow includes a pass for Smalls Jazz Club (good for the same evening). For example, on Sept. 26, fans caught a duo show by Julian Lage and Steve Swallow at Mezzrow, then headed over to Smalls for a set by the Lucas Pino No Net Nonet.

Minton's

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

mintonsharlem.com

In the 1930s Minton's Playhouse became the go-to place to hear adventurous jazz, and the venue soon rightly earned its place in the annals of jazz history. Minton's is the product of that same pioneering spirit, reopening in 2013 to keep the history intact. The club now presents a range of music acts, with many of them leaning toward the jazz realm.

Nublu

151 Avenue C
New York, NY
(646) 546-5206

nublu.net

Nublu is a live music venue, and it's a record label, and it presents the Nublu Jazz Festival, which has premiered in New York, São Paulo and Istanbul. Nublu showcases DJs, jazz and rock at 151 Avenue C and at its "classic" location at 62 Avenue C.

ShapeShifter Lab

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

shapeshifterlab.com

Creative Director Matthew Garrison and Director Fortuna Sung have worked to create a space that mixes a variety of different genres. One night could highlight a Jeff Buckley tribute concert, and the next might feature the jazz group Mostly Other People Do the Killing.

SMALLS

183 W. 10th St.
New York, NY
(646) 476-4346

smallslive.com

Smalls started as a noted jazz club, a must-stop haunt for the best musicians, but has expanded its reach in the genre with a series of live recordings. The Smalls Live record label works to capture the fire that happens at the club every single night. These concerts can also be streamed on the venue's website.

On Sunday through Thursday, admission into the venue Mezzrow includes a pass for Smalls Jazz Club (good for the same evening). Smalls has recently booked the Akiko Tsuruga Quartet, the Adam Larson Quartet and the Mark Whitfield Trio.

Smoke

2751 Broadway
New York, NY
(212) 864-6662

smokejazz.com

Even though this 50-seat club isn't the largest venue in town, booking agents pack the club with huge names. Musicians play there every night of the week. Bill Charlap, Vincent Herring and Kenny Washington are among the recent stars showcased at the venue. The venue owners are involved with the label Smoke Sessions Records, and fans can purchase CDs right at the bar.

The Stone

Avenue C at 2nd St. (until Feb. 2018)
55. W. 13th Street (Feb. 2018 onward)
New York, NY

(212) 488-2705 (until Feb. 2018)

thestonenyc.com; newschool.edu

This non-profit venue was founded by musician John Zorn as a space dedicated to avant-garde and experimental music. After a 13 years on Avenue C, in February the acclaimed venue will move to The New School's College of Performing Arts' Glass Box performance space in Arnhold Hall. In the new partnership, The Stone's tradition of being an artist-centric venue will continue, and there will be increased opportunities for students.



smallslive.com

*we are dedicated to
world peace through music*

all shows live-streamed nightly
from both Smalls and Mezzrow



The Village Vanguard

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

villagevanguard.com

This iconic venue is one of the most famous in jazz history. The noted Vanguard Jazz Orchestra has a running Monday gig, and the rest of the week is reserved for the biggest names in jazz. Musicians like John Zorn, Fred Hersch and Ravi Coltrane all play lengthy residencies at the club. Seemingly everyone from Sonny Rollins and Gerry Mulligan to Barbra Streisand has recorded a live record at the Village Vanguard. The Bad Plus selected this venue for its final shows with pianist Ethan Iverson in the lineup.

PENNSYLVANIA

Chris' Jazz Café

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

chrisjazzcafe.com

With an all-ages show policy and discounted tickets for students, Chris' Jazz Café caters to the next generation of jazz musicians without explicitly spelling out that goal. Weekday shows are reserved for lesser-known talent, and on the weekends, listeners can see jazz luminaries like Pat Martino, Kurt Rosenwinkel and Joey DeFrancesco.

Deer Head Inn

5 Main St.
Delaware Water Gap, PA
(570) 424-2000

deerheadinn.com



Lilypad in Cambridge, Massachusetts

The 10-room Deer Head Inn, which markets "sumptuous" dinner fare and a range of local beers on tap, brings a range of jazz acts to the Pocono Mountains. Jazz has been the music of choice at the club since 1950, but the inn's notoriety really started to build in the 1960s and has grown across two ownership changes. Concerts, which have recently included Dave Liebman and Houston Person, happen Thursday through Sunday nights.

MCG JAZZ

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

mcgjazz.org

Manchester Craftsmen's Guild has been a staple of the Pittsburgh jazz scene for 31 years. During the 13-show season in 2017-'18, musicians like Arturo Sandoval, Earl Klugh and Dee Dee Bridgewater grace the 350-seat music hall. The owners say they have a mission to "preserve, present and promote jazz," which is accomplished through live performances, live concert recordings and educational programs. Students can attend shows at free or discounted rates, and MCG frequently hosts master classes by touring artists.

South Jazz Parlor

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

southrestaurant.net

This jazz venue is nestled in the highly rated South restaurant, which is among the best places to eat in Philadelphia. A weekly jazz jam hosted by the Leon Jordan Sr. Trio shares the schedule with routine appearances by notable bands like the Warren Wolf Quintet and Carmen Lundy's ensemble.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

Blues Alley

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

bluesalley.com

Roberta Gambarini, Arturo Sandoval and Freddy Cole represent the caliber of internationally known jazz musicians Blues Alley books for multi-night residencies around twice a month. For the remainder of its 360-days-of-music schedule, the venue is packed with local and regional talent covering a variety of genres. The venue has a 50-year history, and the staff's devotion to jazz education is particularly impressive.

KC JAZZ CLUB AT THE KENNEDY CENTER

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

kennedy-center.org

Housed inside the Kennedy Center arts complex is the KC Jazz Club, which has a 160-seat capacity for seated shows, and room for 250 for standing shows. Pianist Jason Moran, who serves as the Kennedy Center Artistic Director for Jazz, occasionally performs, but he also curates the programming, bringing a blend of emerging jazz talent and nationally known musicians. Moran helps bring large jazz acts to other performance spaces in the Kennedy Center, too. Louis Hayes is booked for the KC Jazz Club on Jan. 19-20, and Eric Harland will play there on Feb. 9.

Twins Jazz Lounge

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

twinsjazz.com

The original Twins began as a 1980s Ethiopian restaurant in a space where jazz had once ruled supreme. It didn't take long for the music to once again take over, and now, after a 2000 relocation to the U Street Corridor, jazz is the main course. Students get half-priced tickets for some Friday concerts. The Ethiopian food is still served, but patrons can now hear acts like Tim Whalen, Joe Vetter, Levon Mikaelian and the Twins Jazz Orchestra.

THE KENNEDY CENTER

JAZZ
2017-2018
Jason Moran, Artistic Director for Jazz

KC JAZZ CLUB
Jason Moran, Artistic Director for Jazz

HARRIET TUBMAN
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 16

LOUIS HAYES,
SERENADE FOR HORACE
FRIDAY & SATURDAY,
JANUARY 19 & 20

DISCOVERY ARTIST
JOEL ROSS GOOD VIBES
FRIDAY, JANUARY 2

RUTHIE FOSTER
FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 2

All performances at 7 & 9 p.m. in the Terrace Gallery.
No minimum. Light menu fare available.

Discovery Artists in the KC Jazz Club are supported by The William N. Cofitz Jazz Initiative and The King-White Family Foundation and Dr. J. Douglas White.
Support for jazz at the Kennedy Center is generously provided by C. Michael Rogers. Additional support is provided by The Angus Fund.



Wally's Café Jazz Club has served as a training ground for generations of musicians in Boston.

Boston Club Wally's Celebrates 70 Years

WALLY'S IS THE WORLD'S OLDEST BLACK-owned, continuously operating jazz club. Founded in 1947 by Joseph L. Walcott, Wally's Café Jazz Club is located in Boston's historic Jazz Corner (Massachusetts Avenue and Columbus). Barbados-born Walcott built Wally's as an oasis where the black community could socialize and listen to bands led by Sabby Lewis, Jimmy Tyler, J.C. Higginbotham and Alan Dawson, and guests like Sarah Vaughan, Oscar Peterson, Roy Haynes, Stan Getz and Coleman Hawkins.

Walcott engaged the community, letting school kids practice on the house piano and hosting neighborhood holiday dinners. Daughter Elynor and her sons Paul, Frank and Lloyd Poindexter maintain that commitment today, hosting open-minded music and prac-

ticing open-handed generosity. "When high school students from New Jersey attended Berklee's summer program a few years ago," said Elynor, "they had no housing funds, so some stayed with me and our family."

Since Walcott died in 1998 at age 101, little has changed the 20- by 80-foot bandbox. Its brick wall of photos and tables face a well-stocked bar lit brighter than the cramped, low bandstand. Policies stand firm: no cover, quick service, low-cost name-brand drinks. The music is usually jazz, but fans might also hear salsa, blues or funk.

There are three sets nightly, showcasing young players honing their craft and seasoned pros perfecting it. When in town, Wally's alumni like the Marsalis brothers, Roy Hargrove, Tim Warfield, Sean Jones, Ambrose

Akinmusire, Aaron Goldberg or Vicente Archer have been known to drop by to hang or jam.

Wally's proudly labels itself a "musicians' training ground," and bandstand protagonists of three generations enthusiastically back up the claim. Trumpeter Jason Palmer, a 20-year veteran began his career at this modest forum, said: "The owners are always encouraging, open to my bringing in tunes and musicians. They never told me to play a certain way, and that's given me freedom to experiment."

Italian trumpeter Cosimo Boni, a Berklee grad student, concurred: "Wally's just says, 'There's jazz or blues or funk tonight.' So people come for the music, not for you. It makes you question how to engage the audience and teaches you to read their vibe and attention level. It's like stand-up: Try your new joke to see if people get it. How's your timing? Adjust your expectations. Try new tempos, sequences."

"Jeremy Pelt introduced me to Wally's in 1997," Palmer recalled. "He saw me walking by Berklee to NEC with my trumpet case, had me sit in and call a tune, and took me under his wing. He was rooming with Darren Barrett, now a Berklee colleague. I've played there ever since. I hosted Sundays from 2002, and later added Fridays and Saturdays." He leads 10 p.m. weekend sets currently with Noah Preminger (saxophone), Lee Fish (drums), Max Light (guitar), Domi Degalle (piano) and Simon Willson (bass). Their album of originals recorded live by Jimmy Katz is due out in April on SteepleChase.

On a recent night at Wally's, Boni led a quartet through a playful Monk set. "Lately I've been working on a concept in lessons with Joe Lovano of cueing the band through my phrases," Boni said. "This group can react when I turn a ballad into bossa nova or double-time." They did that after Boni opened "Ask Me Now" alone. Later Israeli pianist Tom Oren launched a super-slinky "In Walked Bud" as alto saxophonist Jonathan Goetz joined them, and the five played an electric "Evidence."

Saxophonist Grace Kelly referred to the club as "our historic, buzzing home." She added, "Sundays with Jason's band, we'd play originals, go anywhere, everywhere, pick up on the room's great energy. It's a playground to work stuff out—the opposite of pristine and sterile."

Bassist Sahil Warsi, who's from Delhi, led sets with Andrew DeNicola (alto saxophone), Mitchell Selib (guitar) and Samuël Bolduc (drums) and loves Wally's atmosphere: "In an era where music is increasingly electronic, synthesized and over-produced, it's good knowing there's a space where I still get to play raw, messy tunes."

—Fred Bouchard

SOUTH



Joey Gilmore Band performs at Bradfordville Blues Club in Tallahassee, Florida.

FLORIDA

Blue Bamboo Center for the Arts

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

bluebamboocenter.com

Ignacio Berroa, Selwyn Birchwood, the Fred Hughes Trio: This diverse array of artists is typical of the bookings at the Blue Bamboo Center for the Arts, which also has a gallery space. In addition to music, the venue presents dance, theater and spoken-word performances. Live shows happen most nights of the week. Bill Cunliffe will perform with his trio on March 3.

Bradfordville Blues Club

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

bradfordvilleblues.com

This venue has colorful history as a barbeque establishment that presents live music. The club is a bit out of the way—it's situated among fields and oak trees outside Tallahassee—so it's a scenic trip. Upcoming shows include Johnny Rawls (Feb. 14) and James Armstrong (Feb. 17).

Heidi's Jazz Club

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

heidisjazzclub.com

Founded in 1992 to foster the jazz scene on Florida's Space Coast, Heidi's presents local and regional jazz acts every Wednesday through Sunday. Each week is capped off with a jam session. Artists who have performed at the venue include Bria Skonberg, Larry Coryell and Allan Harris.

GEORGIA

Velvet Note

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

thevelvetnote.com

The Velvet Note, located a 30-minute drive from midtown Atlanta, is now the only jazz club in the metro area. Thursday nights are

reserved for open-mic performances, and the weekend routinely features national jazz talent, such as Christian McBride, Kenny Garrett and Gretchen Parlato.

LOUISIANA

Blue Nile

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

bluenilelive.com

Here at one of the oldest clubs on Frenchmen Street, listeners can hear an assortment of traditional New Orleans jazz and more contemporary fare. There are two stages, and shows take place six nights a week.

d.b.a

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

dbaneworleans.com

This club has been firmly planted in New Orleans jazz lore for about two decades. Patrons come here to get a dose of local jazz and blues, with performances by artists such as Hot Club of New Orleans, the Tremé Brass Band and Walter "Wolfman" Washington.

Fritzel's European Jazz Pub

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

fritzelsjazz.net

For authentic Dixieland and New Orleans jazz music, Fritzel's is the place. Founded in 1969, Fritzel's is situated in an 1830s building. The Dukes of Dixieland will play on Dec. 31.

Jazz Playhouse

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

sonesta.com/us/louisiana/new-orleans/royal-sonesta-new-orleans/jazzplayhouse

Formerly called Irvin Mayfield's Jazz Playhouse, the venue, which is situated in the Royal Sonesta Hotel, cut ties with the trumpeter in the fall of 2016. That ended a seven-year residency with the trumpeter. Today, the club books acts like Gerald French and the Original Tuxedo Jazz Band.

The Maison

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

maisonfrenchmen.com

On two stages, Maison bookers bring funk and brass bands to a clientele of tourists and locals. Any night of the week, listeners might catch a regional brass band or a touring national act. During dinner hours, traditional jazz is provided until 10 p.m.

The Maple Leaf Bar

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

mapleleafbar.com

This venue has a deep history of jazz presentation. The Rebirth Brass Band plays on Tuesdays, and the rest of the week is given over to a mix of jazz, funk and blues.

Palm Court Jazz Café

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

palmcourtjazzcafe.com

Palm Court packs its music offerings with traditional jazz five nights per week. The French Quarter venue pairs its regionally appropriate jazz with local cuisine.

Preservation Hall

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

preservationhall.com

Preservation Hall is one of the most famous venues in New Orleans, so visitors will likely contend with quite a few tourists during the multiple sets each night. The Preservation Hall Jazz Band is the big name in the lights here, but the venue also books a range of local and national acts. It's an all-ages venue.

Prime Example

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

primeexamplejazz.com

Local acts perform at this "jazz, blues and food" venue throughout the week. Tuesday nights are reserved for jam sessions.

SNUG HARBOR JAZZ BISTRO

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

snugjazz.com

For more than three decades, Snug Harbor has welcomed a veritable who's who of jazz artists. Music happens every night of the week. Delfeayo Marsalis' Uptown Jazz Orchestra plays on Wednesdays.

Spotted Cat

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

spottedcatmusicclub.com

With three different bands playing each night, the Spotted Cat buzzes with activity.

Meschiya Lake & The Little Big Horns and The New Orleans Cottonmouth Kings have both played extensively at the club.

Three Muses

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

3musesnola.com

Chef Daniel Esses makes sure that the food at Three Muses is as good as the brass bands and New Orleans jazz the club presents.

Tipitina's

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

tipitinas.com

The owners of Tipitina's see music as one of Louisiana's greatest assets; to back up that philosophy, they created a foundation that supports music education. The venue itself is a city staple, providing local, regional and national artists with a place to play for an enthusiastic audience. The 2018 bookings include Maceo Parker (Feb. 9) and Dweezil Zappa (May 13).

MISSISSIPPI

Ground Zero Blues Club

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

groundzerobluesclub.com

Live music happens at Ground Zero, which is owned by Morgan Freeman, every Wednesday through Saturday. Befitting a club that sits at the birthplace of Delta blues, blues is king at this club. Blues aficionados will want to check out the Delta Blues Museum, located next door.

NORTH CAROLINA

Beyù Caffé

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

beyucaffe.com

With an open mic on Wednesdays and Latin-flavored music on Thursdays, this jazz club offers a wide swath of musical activity. Big-name acts occasionally drop by; in the past, the club hosted a presentation of Gerald Clayton's Piedmont Blues.

SOUTH CAROLINA

THE JAZZ CORNER

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

thejazzcorner.com

The Jazz Corner, open since 1999, provides fans with the best regional jazz and national acts. Jazz artists throughout the Southeast journey to the club for gigs; Atlanta musicians are featured prominently each month.

TENNESSEE

Alfred's on Beale

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

alfredsonbeale.com

Alfred's has been on Beale Street for more than 30 years, setting up shop in the mid

1980s. Much of the week is reserved for club-music fare, but jazz still has a presence at this Memphis institution.

The Jazz Cave

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

nashvillejazz.org

The Jazz Cave is the performance arm of the Nashville Jazz Workshop, which offers vocal and instrumental classes. The NJW hosts more than 40 shows a year, with top local and visiting jazz artists swinging by the Jazz Cave, featuring an 80-seat listening room.

Rudy's Jazz Room

809 Gleaves St.
Nashville, TN
(615) 988-2458

rudysjazzroom.com

This new jazz club has quickly become a key spot for jazz fans and musicians in Nashville. The club is named after the late saxophonist Rudy Wooten. Every week, the Wooten Wednesday performance is assembled by Regi Wooten. (His siblings Victor Wooten and Roy "Futureman" Wooten have been known to sit in.) Jeff Coffin has played the club, and the Jason Marsalis Vibes Quartet is booked for Jan. 9.

TEXAS

Carmen's De La Calle

320 North Flores
San Antonio, TX
(210) 281-4349

carmensdelacalle.com

This Spanish restaurant hosts jazz nights on Thursdays. Friday is reserved for flamenco, with world music on Saturdays.

Cezanne

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

cezannejazz.com

Jazz only happens at Cezanne on Friday and Saturday nights, but for a \$10 cover, listeners can hear the best regional and local musicians around.

Elephant Room

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

elephantroom.com

Gigs by the acts like John Fedchock Quartet, Ephraim Owens and Red Young Quintet are representative of the calendar at the Elephant Room, a basement bar. Bookers are dedicated to a wide variety of jazz and blues acts. Admission is free on weekdays, and there's a small cover charge on the weekend.

SCAT JAZZ LOUNGE

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

scatjazzlounge.com

Promising "a vibe that only exists in our dreams or maybe in the movies," this club is located in the basement of the historic Woolworth building. It presents music six nights a week, mostly booking local and regional musicians, but national acts do drop in from time to time.

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Melissa Aldana onstage at the Jazz Showcase in Chicago

Jazz Showcase: Shrine for Serious Music

THE CIRCULAR LOGO OF THE JAZZ

Showcase reads, “Where Jazz Lives in Chicago,” with “Since 1947” added under an illustration of a trumpeter and saxophonist wailing against the city’s skyline. This medallion tells the story: Touring stars and local artists alike have been presented under the Jazz Showcase banner for 70 years, since founder Joe Segal put on shows featuring then-emerging players—Charlie Parker among them—as a student at Chicago’s Roosevelt College.

At age 91, Segal—who was honored as a 2015 National Endowment of the Arts Jazz Master and is the author of a recently published autobiographical scrapbook titled *Stay On It!* (Chicago Jazz Publishing)—can still be found sitting at the entrance of his club, poking his head inside to listen, sometimes announcing the acts and urging customers to return soon. Bebop and hard-bop, his favorite jazz styles, are often presented at the Showcase, which offers music seven

nights a week, including Sunday matinees.

The venue has long been renowned locally and internationally as a shrine, haven and laboratory for serious music. Over the course of seven decades, there have been changes, of course, including a higher profile for Wayne Segal, Joe’s son, as manager of the club.

“Joe is the Jazz Showcase, but I’ve always been in the background, keeping things running,” said Wayne, who is in his early 60s. “When I started [circa 1970], I was driving around town putting up posters, which was frustrating because someone would follow behind me slapping up their posters over ours.”

In those days, the elder Segal presided over his Showcase in a basement of the Happy Medium theater on the Rush Street entertainment strip. Earlier Showcase productions were held in others’ clubs and rented spaces; later the Showcase had lengthy runs in a ballroom of the Blackstone Hotel and a spot of its own a few

blocks north of downtown.

In 2008 it opened at its current address, 806 S. Plymouth Court, in a side building of the old Dearborn Street railroad station. Wayne Segal, who has spent the previous decade booking a Showcase offshoot called Joe’s Bebop Café at tourist destination Navy Pier, designed the new place.

“I wanted it to look like the only home we ever had,” he says of the 170-capacity club. He accomplished that with soft lighting, seating at small tables and strategically placed, cushioned sofas, a horseshoe bar and tall cocktail tables in the rear. Hanging on plush red curtains over a broad stage with a Steinway grand piano is a huge photo of Parker, who looks like he’s evaluating what’s happening. Other decorative elements include an equally large portrait of Duke Ellington on a side wall, as well as images of Dizzy Gillespie, Miles Davis, Sonny Rollins, Thelonious Monk, Dexter Gordon, Johnny Griffin, Art Blakey—all of whom played the Showcase—and Showcase posters from past decades.

Cutout caricatures of musicians line the foyer, readying attendees who pay a \$20 cover or use student and Jazz Institute of Chicago member discounts to have a good time. “When they walk up to the music room entrance,” Wayne said proudly, “and see all the history and the music starts, it’s magical. The place has a good vibe.”

Musicians think so, too. “I always look forward to singing at the Showcase,” affirmed vocalist Dee Alexander, whose quartet with pianist Miguel de Cerna, bassist Junius Paul and drummer Ernie Andrews played a week in December. “One of the reasons is what it stands for, as a pivotal place in Chicago music, historically. So many great artists have come through it—when Betty Carter was there, I’d be sitting in the front row.”

Since opening at Plymouth Court, Joe and Wayne Segal have worked closely together on bookings. Wayne estimated the ratio of nationally touring acts to local groups is 70 to 30. Multi-instrumentalist Ira Sullivan, one of the few stars of Joe Segal’s generation remaining active, visits from his Florida home every August to headline the Showcase’s Charlie Parker Month, while recent younger attractions have included Robert Glasper, Catherine Russell, Joey DeFrancesco and Jon Irabagon, with Roy Hargrove coming for New Year’s. Chicago artists who frequently perform there include keyboardists Robert Irving III and Dave Gordon, drummers Xavier Breaker and Dana Hall, saxophonists Pat Mallinger and Juli Wood, trumpeters Corey Wilkes and Victor Garcia, and guitarists George Freeman and Mike Allemana.

“I have a million things to do for the club from the moment I wake ’til we close after our 10 p.m. show,” Wayne Segal said. “But that’s OK. I like the music, I’ve learned a lot about the business and it’s such a great joy to be able to work with my father.”

—Howard Mandel

MIDWEST



Drummer Dana Hall performs at the Green Mill in Chicago.

ILLINOIS

ANDY'S JAZZ CLUB

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

andysjazzclub.com

Since 1977, local, regional and nationally known jazz musicians have played at Andy's. Pharez Whitted will lead the jam session every Sunday night in January and February.

B.L.U.E.S.

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

chicagobluesbar.com

Bues fans at this club can hear artists like Vance "Guitar" Kelly and Claudette Miller. Wednesday is the night for blues jams.

Buddy Guy's Legends

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

buddyguy.com

Bluesman Buddy Guy will play 16 shows in January 2018 at his namesake club, with opening acts such as Bobby Rush, Eric Gales and Toranzo Cannon. The rest of the year, emerging and national blues grace the stage.

Constellation

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

constellation-chicago.com

Started in 2013 by drummer Mike Reed, Constellation is a space dedicated to progressive and contemporary music, presenting jazz, classical and avant-garde works. Upcoming shows include Tom Rainey's trio with Ingrid Laubrock and Mary Halvorson (Jan. 27), Thurston Moore (Feb. 10) and Tigran Hamasyan (Feb. 28).

Elastic Arts

3429 W. Diversey Ave., #208
Chicago, IL

info@elasticarts.org

Elastic Arts is a non-profit organization that develops and hosts concerts, exhibitions and multi-arts performances. Jazz musician

Dave Rempis is the president of the board. Its space in the Avondale/Logan Square neighborhood has presented jazz musicians such as Rempis, Joe McPhee and Tim Stine.

The Green Mill

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

greenmilljazz.com

This famed Chicago jazz spot programs the top-notch local and touring musicians. Jazz is featured every night of the week, and artists run the jazz gamut. The Fat Babies has a standing gig on Tuesdays. Recent performers have included Matt Ulery and Matt Wilson.

The Iron Post

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

facebook.com/theironpost

The Jeff Helgesen Quintet plays at this bar and grill once a month on Fridays, and the University of Illinois jazz bands make the Iron Post a frequent performance spot.

Jazz Showcase

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

jazzshowcase.com

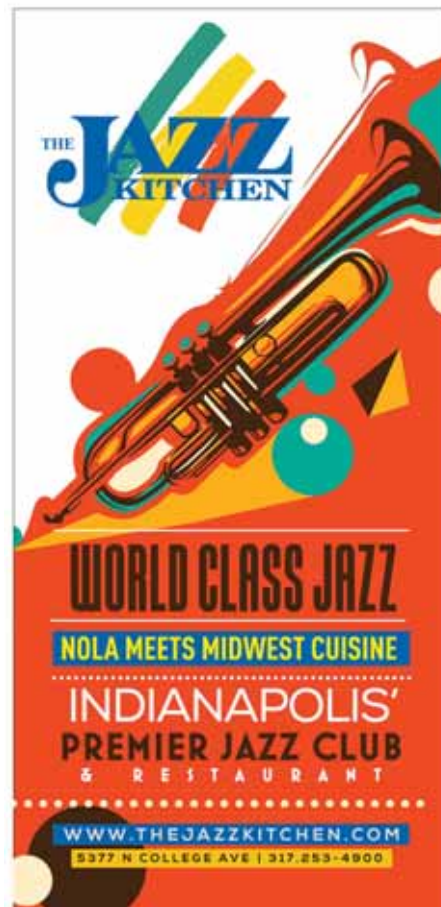
Russell Malone, Roberta Gambarini, Donald Harrison and Carmen Lundy are just some of the headliners who have performed at the Jazz Showcase recently. Joe Segal, who founded the club, was the recipient of the 2015 A.B. Spellman NEA Jazz Masters Award for Jazz Advocacy. Trumpeter Roy Hargrove and his quintet will play an extended residency from Dec. 26 to Jan. 7.

Kingston Mines

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

kingstonmines.com

Since 1968, scores of blues musicians have graced the Kingston Mines stage. The blues jam with Linsey Alexander happens on Sunday nights. Performers in January will include Corey Dennison and Shawn Holt & The Teardrops.



SPACE

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

evanstonspace.com

SPACE brings a wide variety of world-class music to Evanston, located just north of Chicago. Upcoming shows include Stacey Kent (Feb. 10), the Charlie Hunter Trio (March 21) and the Billy Cobham Band (March 29).

210 Restaurant & Live Music Lounge

210 Green Bay Rd.
Highwood, IL
(847) 433-0304

210restaurant.com

This restaurant, located in the Chicago suburb of Highwood, presents jazz, blues and other styles of music Wednesday through Sunday. On Feb. 1, The Bad Plus will perform.

Winter's Jazz Club

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

wintersjazzclub.com

Winter's presents jazz six nights a week. The venue seats about 150, so jazz listeners are in intimate surroundings to see musicians like the Dana Hall Trio.

INDIANA

Chatterbox Jazz Club

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

chatterboxjazz.com

In addition to booking shows, the venue also offers jazz hopefuls scholarship money to the Jacobs School of Music at Indiana University via the Dick Dickinson Jazz Scholarship.

THE JAZZ KITCHEN

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

thejazzkitchen.com

The Jazz Kitchen hosts a free jam session on Mondays and a variety of jazz-leaning music throughout the week. Upcoming shows include The Bad Plus (Jan. 26) and Jason Marsalis (Jan. 28).

MICHIGAN

Baker's Keyboard Lounge

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

theofficialbakerskeyboardlounge.com

This 99-seat club with a piano-shaped bar presents jazz and other genres of music.

Bert's Market Place

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

bertsentertainmentcomplex.com

This club hosts jazz Wednesday through Friday, with blues taking over on the weekend. Located in Detroit's Eastern Market District, Bert's is billed as a soul food restaurant/cocktail lounge/theater.

Cliff Bell's

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

cliffbells.com

This club has spotlights local and regional jazz musicians, and the occasional internationally known artist, such as James Carter.

Dirty Dog Jazz Cafe

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

dirtydogjazz.com

Patrons flock to the Dirty Dog for jazz in an old English pub atmosphere. This charming venue hosts local, regional and international jazz artists. Past performers include Wayne Shorter, Cécile McLorin Salvant, Pat Martino, Cyrille Aimée, Stanley Jordan, Tia Fuller and Sean Jones. The Charles Boles Quartet plays a dinner performance on Tuesdays.

Jazz Café at Music Hall

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

jazzcafedetroit.com

The Jazz Café at Music Hall features a range of music. In November, MundoMetal, a jazz-rock group, shared the calendar with a poetry session and the Dave McMurray Trio. The jazz jam session, presented in cooperation with the Metro-Detroit Jazz Workshop, happens on Mondays.

Kerrytown Concert House

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

kerrytownconcerthouse.com

This concert venue is a literal house that's been transformed into a 110-seat space to spotlight a wide range of music. Home to the renowned Edgefest jazz festival, the venue also presents classical and folk music.

MINNESOTA

CROONERS LOUNGE & SUPPER CLUB

6161 Highway 65 NE
Minneapolis, MN
(763) 760-0062

croonerslounge.com

Crooners celebrates and pays homage to the era when Sinatra ruled the airwaves, America's best restaurants served "Continental Cuisine" and patrons dressed up when dining out. The venue has received accolades from Fodor's Travel, Trip Advisor, and OpenTable. Local artists perform nightly, including nationally recognized acts such as Davina & The Vagabonds.

Dakota Jazz Club

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

dakotacooks.com

Where does a concert by The Bad Plus share calendar space with Leo Kottke, the Rebirth Brass Band and Melissa Manchester? The 33-year-old Dakota Jazz Club, which books a variety of genres. The club can pack in about 350 fans. Upcoming shows include Sergio Mendes (Feb. 23), Donny McCaslin (Feb. 28), Delfeayo Marsalis (March 1) and Cécile McLorin Salvant (March 7).

Jazz Central Studios

407 Central Ave. SE
Minneapolis, MN
(612) 520-1066

jazzcentralstudios.org

On Sundays, this nonprofit venue hosts a \$5 jam session with Cole Mahlum; the following day, the weekly jam session is chaired by that night's featured guest. The venue also books regional and local talent, including the Twin Cities Latin Jazz Orchestra.

MISSOURI

The Blue Room

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

club.americanjazzmuseum.org

Kansas City's American Jazz Museum is a jazz-lover's dream. The museum's jazz collections and educational outreach events are underscored by its performance space, The Blue Room. The venue features free jam sessions on Mondays.

Ferring Jazz Bistro

The Harold & Dorothy Steward Center for Jazz
3536 Washington Avenue
St. Louis, MO
(314) 571-6000

jazzstl.org

Tucked in the Harold & Dorothy Steward Center for Jazz, this 200-seat venue hosts the cream of the jazz crop. While the center is a home base for educational and community engagement programs, the bistro spotlights artists like

Joshua Redman, Jane Monheit and Freddy Cole. Most artists perform for extended stays.

Murry's

3107 Green Meadows Way
Columbia, MO
(573) 442-4969

murrysrestaurant.net

The owners of Murry's tout their eclectic menu and "little regard for protocol," saying this 30-year-old venue has become a jazz and food institution. Solo jazz piano reigns on Monday through Thursday starting at 7 p.m. Trios and small ensembles take over on Saturdays. The "We Always Swing" jazz series brings in nationally known artists. Recent performers include Bobby Watson and René Marie. The Billy Childs Quartet plays on Jan. 28.

OHIO

BLU JAZZ+

47 E. Market St.
Akron, OH
(330) 252-1190

blujazzakron.com

BLU Jazz+, which is open Wednesday through Saturday, is a combination photo gallery/jazz spot that mainly features local and regional musicians. The BLU Jazz+ Masterclass Foundation is committed to jazz education endeavors. Nationally known artists are booked at the club, too, with past performances by JD Allen, Fred Hersch, Chris Potter and Terrell Stafford. Upcoming shows including Huntertones (Jan. 21) and Becca Stevens (Jan. 26).

Nighttown

12387 Cedar Rd.
Cleveland, OH
(216) 795-0550

nighttowncleveland.com

For more than 50 years, the bookish Nighttown (it's named for the red-light district in James Joyce's *Ulysses*), has presented jazz, rock and world music in surroundings modeled after turn-of-the-century New York pubs. Performers have included the Ernie Krivda Fat Tuesday Big Band and the Sammy DeLeon Latin Jazz Sextet.

WISCONSIN

The Jazz Estate

2423 N. Murray Ave.
Milwaukee, WI
(414) 964-9923

jazzestate.com

Hosting local and regional jazz and jazz-adjacent music, the Jazz Estate has been operating since 1977. It's open seven days a week. The Bobby Broom Trio visited in December.

Jazz Gallery Center for the Arts

926 E. Center St.
Milwaukee, WI
(414) 374-4722

riverwestart.org

The goal of the Riverwest Artists Association, which runs this venue, is to "foster reflective, innovative, and proactive art to enrich and stimulate our community." The organization presents local musicians and other events in an art-gallery setting. Jazz jam sessions occur on Tuesdays.



Best performers include:
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BILL CHARLAP
FRED HERSCH
HOUSTON PERSON
CYRILLE AIMEE
CORY HENRY
JEFF COFFIN
JANE BUNNETT & MADJOUQUE
DELFEAYO MARGALIS
FREDDY COLE
WALTER BEASLEY
BECCA STEVENS
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THE LOBERO
HAS BECOME
AN OLD FRIEND.
- Charles Lloyd

LOBERO THEATRE
See our lineup @ Lobero.org

Photo: David Siskind

WEST



Billy Hart (right) performs in a quartet at Bach Dancing & Dynamite Society in Half Moon Bay, California.

everyone from Oakland School for the Arts students to touring musicians.

YOSHI'S OAKLAND

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

yoshis.com

A second location, which was in San Francisco, is no longer in business, but the original Yoshi's has been presenting world-class jazz in Oakland area since the 1970s. Listeners know Yoshi's is the spot for Japanese cuisine matched with the best touring musicians on the scene today. There's live music every night. Upcoming shows include Poncho Sanchez (Jan. 26–27) and Stanley Jordan (Feb. 16).

ARIZONA

Elliott's On Congress

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

elliottsoncongress.com

On Tuesday nights, blues fans in Tucson can head to Elliott's to hear Tommy Tucker.

The Nash

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

thenash.org

This downtown venue is owned by Jazz in Arizona, a nonprofit organization. The Nash hosts a mix of touring acts and local players, with a dedication to nurturing student musicians. Jam sessions happen on Sundays.

Pastiche

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

pastiche.com

Weekends are given over to jazz at this restaurant, which is located right down the street from the University of Arizona campus.

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

BACH DANCING & DYNAMITE SOCIETY

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

bachddsoc.org

This prized jazz haunt presents jazz, world music and classical performances on Sunday afternoons. As a nonprofit, the Bach Dancing & Dynamite Society has spent more than half a century hosting shows by artists such as Lew Tabackin and Jeremy Pelt at the picturesque Douglas Beach House.

Blue Note Napa

1030 Main St.
Napa, CA
(707) 880-2300

bluenotenapa.com

Blue Note Napa bills itself as a mix of the

"Greenwich Village jazz club experience" with "wine country ambiance." And it all happens on the first floor of the 1800s Napa Valley Opera House. The programming includes jazz, rock and other genres. Upcoming shows include Brian Culbertson (Dec. 29–31), Spoon (Jan. 15) and Lee Ritenour (Feb. 16–17).

KUUMBWA JAZZ CENTER

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

kuumbwajazz.org

More than 40 years ago, organizers founded the 200-seat Kuumba Jazz venue to bring touring jazz acts and educational programming to the area. The center also runs a jazz summer camp, brings artists to area schools and hosts a scholarship program. Upcoming shows include Jason Marsalis (Jan. 22), Katie Thiroux (Jan. 29) and Julian Lage (Feb. 19).

Savanna Jazz

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

savannajazz.com

This venue books artists and runs the Savanna Jazz Agency. There's a sports bar in the front of the establishment, and there's jazz room in the back. Guitarist/vocalist Pascal Bokar frequently hits the stage.

Sequoia Room

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

northcoastbrewing.com/calendar

On Friday and Saturday nights, jazz takes over in the North Coast Brewing Company's Sequoia Room. Owners book a range of local, regional and national talent. The Edward Simon Trio is booked for Jan. 13.

The Sound Room

2147 Broadway
Oakland, CA
(510) 496-4180

soundroom.org

The Sound Room is the concert arm of the Bay Area Jazz and Arts organization. In the performance space, owners welcome

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

The Baked Potato

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

thebakedpotato.com

Open nightly for jazz, this venue has been presenting local and national music for nearly 50 years. Upcoming shows include Jeff Lorber Fusion (Jan. 12–13), Vivino Brothers (Jan. 17) and Brian Charette (Jan. 31).

Blue Whale

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

bluewhalemusic.com

While listeners hear live jazz from a variety of performers, they can also scope out art in the adjoining gallery. Steve Coleman, Jen Shyu, Nicole Mitchell and Anthony Wilson all played the Blue Whale recently.

Catalina Bar & Grill

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

catalinajazzclub.com

This is a supper club with "old-world charm" that is dedicated to presenting a who's who of jazz musicians. Catalina books acts like Adam Ben Ezra, Lizz Wright and Gordon Goodwin's Big Phat Band.

LOBERO THEATRE

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

lobero.com

The Lobero Theatre, which is closing in on its 150th birthday, has a rich musical past. In the middle of last century, the venue began showcasing jazz. These days, bookings run the musical gamut. The jazz series includes artists like Charles Lloyd and Arturo Sandoval.

Upstairs at Vitello's

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

vitellosjazz.com

A club above a famed Italian restaurant,

the venue hosts a variety of acts—music, comedy, and everything in between. At Upstairs at Vitello's, listeners will find a blend of local and regional pop-leaning bands, but jazz musicians also stop by.

Vibrato Grill Jazz

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

vibratogrilljazz.com

Conceived by trumpeter Herb Alpert and with a dress code of "L.A. smart casual," this spot presents jazz, classic rock and pop. Much of the calendar, which is full of music every week, is reserved for local and regional acts.

COLORADO

Dazzle Jazz

1512 Curtis St.
Denver, CO
(303) 839-5100

dazzlejazz.com

Although Dazzle Jazz moved to its new location in May 2017, the club has been a Denver staple for two decades. With the move, owners recently added a small retail section for jazz record sales. Tuesday nights are reserved for jam sessions, with jazz brunch sessions on the weekends. Upcoming shows include Nate Birkey (Dec. 30), Diane Schuur (Jan. 16–17) and Billy Childs (Jan. 25).

El Chapultepec

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

thepeclodo.com

Visitors to Denver in the mid-1930s would have seen El Chapultepec sitting on the same corner on Market Street. The venue is the oldest jazz and blues club in Denver, and it offers Mexican food. Mondays are reserved for an open jazz jam.

Nocturne

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

nocturnejazz.com

Jazz comes to Nocturne five nights each week. The club books artists for eight-week runs so the musicians can focus "on the exploration of a musical icon, the study of a particular era or genre of jazz, or their own original works."

NEW MEXICO

Outpost

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

outpostspace.org

This venue presents more than 100 shows each year. In addition to booking a wide variety of acts, Outpost Productions, which is a nonprofit, hosts educational programs.

OREGON

The Jack London Revue

529 SW 4th Ave.
Portland, OR
(866) 777-8932

jacklondonrevue.com

This intimate performance space helps fill

the void created by the closing of the venue Jimmy Mak's. Upcoming shows include Jason Marsalis (Jan. 18) and bluesman Tinsley Ellis (Feb. 23).

Jo Bar & Rotisserie

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

jobarpx.net

Presenting diners with "wood-oven-fired and spit-roasted fare," Jo Bar also usually books jazz on Wednesday and Friday evenings and on the weekends.

Wilfs Restaurant & Bar

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

wilfsrestaurant.com

Primarily booking jazz on Wednesday through Saturday nights, the occasional regional or local act will perform on Mondays or Tuesdays. The bookings include jazz as well as classical-crossover music.

WASHINGTON

Dimitriou's Jazz Alley

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

jazzalley.com

Founded more than 30 years ago, Dimitriou's has become the nexus for jazz in the city, hosting the biggest musicians when they come through town. Roy Hargrove and Russell Malone are familiar faces at Dimitriou's. Upcoming shows include the Chick Corea Trio (Feb. 1–4), Mindi Abair (Feb. 13–15), Joey Alexander (Feb. 22–25) and Dr. Lonnie Smith (Feb. 27–28).

Egan's Ballard Jam House

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

ballardjamhouse.com

By day, Egan's serves as an all-ages rehearsal and workshop space. At night, local and regional talent performs and holds jam sessions. When there is an entrance fee, it's usually \$10. Occasionally, touring acts will command a higher cover and a minimum.

The Royal Room

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

theroyalroomseattle.com

When local jazz players perform at the Royal Room, there's never a cover; the musicians "are compensated by your donations." Bookers bring a variety of music to the Royal Room, presenting all-ages shows next to events like the Jazz Night School, an educational set of shows and master classes.

Tula's

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

tulas.com

Tula's books regional and national jazz talent each night of the week. As one of the venues for the annual Earshot Jazz Festival, the dinner spot/listening room has become an integral part of the busy Seattle jazz scene.



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Sun of Goldfinger bandmates David Torn (left), Ches Smith and Tim Berne perform at the jazz club Porgy & Bess in Vienna, Austria.

ECKHART DERSCHMIDT



Jazz Thrives in Vienna

IN TERMS OF MUSIC HISTORY, IT IS IMPOSSIBLE to understate the importance of Vienna. Its storied history includes the groundbreaking work of Haydn in the late 18th century; Beethoven, Mozart and Schubert in the early 19th century; the populist superstars of the Johann Strauss clan (Jr. and Sr.), waltz-royalty in the late 19th century; Mahler in the romantic-cum-modern era; and the revolutionary “Second Viennese” school of 12-tone architect Arnold Schönberg and protégés Alban Berg and Anton Webern in the 20th century.

Lesser known is the city’s vitality as a center of jazz activity and support systems. Within the past half century, two primary jazz clubs—the city’s oldest continuous venue, the more traditional-oriented Jazzland (founded in 1972) and the world-renowned, programmatically adventurous Porgy & Bess (established 1993)—have been significant club hubs, featuring musicians from the States, Europe and elsewhere, while numerous other clubs, such as the Blue Tomato, keep the scene buzzing. Meanwhile, the Vienna Jazz Festival is a draw for artists and fans from around the world.

Jazzland’s founding director, Axel Melhardt, noted that in Vienna, “the jazz audience is better than ever. Besides the Porgy and Jazzland, there are about eight to 10 other venues with jazz and surrounding types of music.”

But the jazz-club pulse here was not always thus. As Melhardt explained, when Jazzland opened its doors in ’72, the jazz club options were limited, with the Storyville Club offering trad jazz and early swing, after the closure of other venues.

Porgy & Bess co-founder Christoph Huber commented that “of course, Vienna is associated with Mozart, Beethoven, Mahler, Schönberg, etc., but we also had a saxophone titan named Hans Koller.”

At the inception of Jazzland, Melhardt said, “I was mainly into traditional jazz but with at least a small inclination toward Charlie Parker, Dizzy, Adderley and early Coltrane—they were the avant-garde in those days. [Musicians] tried to find a new place to perform and they looked for someone who would be able to bring old and new jazz together, and they found me.” Early bookings included Ben Webster and Albert Nicholas.

As Melhardt admitted, “Since my personal taste begins with country blues and ends with Coltrane’s *Blue Trane*, the program of Jazzland is more ’20s to ’50s than recent styles.” He recognized that, across town, Porgy & Bess is “a very good avant-garde club.”

As a recent example of the avant-garde component of Porgy’s program, last November’s calendar featured John Zorn, whose appearances there included a marathon of his epic “Bagatelles” project in 2016.

As Huber noted, the 400-capacity club is “officially called ‘Jazz & Music,’ [which] means that jazz is in the center, but there are also a lot of concerts in the category ‘& Music,’ which can be electronic, contemporary serious music, singer/songwriter, etc. We program traditional Americans, [such as] Benny Golson, Ron Carter and Houston Person, avant-garde veterans like Cecil Taylor, Archie Shepp or Pharoah Sanders, straightforward players like Joshua Redman and Branford Marsalis or modern players like Steve Lehman and Rudresh Mahanthappa.”

A few layers of Viennese history are entrenched in Porgy & Bess’ history. Its origin story, starting in 1993, goes back to when the famously multi-tasking Swiss-turned-Viennese musician Mathias Rüegg, the mastermind and leader of the venturesome big band known as the Vienna Art Orchestra, launched the venue in what

was formerly known as the “Fledermaus Bar,” dating back to Johann Strauss II’s operetta classic. At the time, the notion and gumption of bringing international jazz musicians through Vienna was a unique enterprise, apart from Jazzland’s efforts in that direction. The current location of Porgy & Bess, as of 2000, involves rooms dating back to mid-19th century theater groups.

“Porgy & Bess is my favorite club in Europe,” said reedist Dave Liebman, one notable American musician who has played the venue many times. “The reasons are simple, but not so easily attainable, unless there is a care and concern that things are done correctly. Porgy is run like a business with excellent backline equipment, a great piano and even good food. The Vienna audience is one of the most sophisticated in the world. Do you think it is because Vienna was the center of Western music for years?”

Liebman added that, as a passionate founder and emotionally invested owner, Huber “takes care of business and respects the musicians and the music. You really get a true feeling of interest in what you are playing. The Porgy schedule reflects our present period of musical eclecticism with featured projects from all over the world.”

Liebman has played with many Viennese musicians over the years, including a decades-deep relationship with drummer Wolfgang Reisinger. He said that “the level of musicianship is beyond the norm, and again, with such a rich tradition and concerts all over Vienna, seemingly on a daily level, it couldn’t but be that way in this historical cultural center.”

Porgy & Bess, which celebrates its 25th anniversary in 2018, also gains traction and networking power through working closely with a circuit of other major clubs in Europe, through its connection with the European Jazz Network (EJN). A “member card” system, launched in 1994, enables holders to gain access to other clubs, such as the Jazzhouse in Copenhagen, Denmark; Stadtgarten in Cologne, Germany; Bimhuis in Amsterdam, the Netherlands; Moods in Zurich, Switzerland; and Unterfahrt in Munich, Germany.

One of the city’s most celebrated artists—the late Joe Zawinul (of Weather Report fame)—got into the Vienna jazz club scene late in life with his venue Birdland (2004–2008), named after his famed tune and running until shortly after his death. As Huber said, “For me, it was very important that he play Porgy & Bess before opening Birdland, which he did in 2003—three nights—after nearly 50 years after playing with [Austrian pianist] Friedrich Gulda.

“In the opening week of Birdland, we had Pharoah Sanders scheduled at P&B. After the Sanders concert, we went with him to Birdland, where he joined Joey DeFrancesco. That was our gesture. Vice versa, Zawinul showed up at P&B regularly when he was in town. He was a great musician and a great human being.”

—Josef Woodard

INTERNATIONAL



nights a week. Touring acts from the United States, like Lew Tabackin and Scott Hamilton, play extended residencies when in town.

GORGY & BESS

Riemergasse 11
Vienna
43 1 512 88 11

porgy.at

Celebrating its 25th birthday in 2018, Porgy & Bess books international jazz stars touring through Austria. Upcoming shows include Marc Ribot (Jan. 26), Dave Liebman (Jan. 27), David Murray (Feb. 10), Tim Berne (Feb. 12) and Chris Potter (March 1).

STOCKWERK JAZZ

Jakominiplatz 18
Graz
43 316 821433

stockwerkjazz.mur.at

An inviting and intimate café serves as the entrance to this upstairs club, which has been presenting jazz for more than two decades. Upcoming shows include The Kandinsky Effect (March 9), JD Allen Trio (March 14) and Canada Day Quartet (March 22).

Treibhaus

Angerzellgasse 8
Innsbruck
43 512 572000

treibhaus.at

This club is actually a functioning greenhouse, so the moniker Treibhaus, which is German for greenhouse, is more than just a clever name. The performance features jazz and other genres.

BRAZIL

Blue Note Rio

Av. Borges de Medeiros, 1424, Lagoa
Rio de Janeiro
55 21 3577 4477

bluenoterio.com.br

The Blue Note Rio is part of an extended network of Blue Note clubs, which are also located in New York; Napa, California; Honolulu, Hawaii; Milan; Beijing; Tokyo; and Nagoya, Japan. Upcoming shows at the Blue Note Rio include Eliane Elias (Jan. 12–13), Joyne Moreno (Feb. 1) and Eumir Deodato (April 6–7).

Bourbon Street Music Club

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

bourbonstreet.com.br

The aim of this club is to bring the food, spirit and sounds of New Orleans to Brazil. Besides jazz, the club also books pop and rock acts.

The Maze

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

jazzrio.com

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ARGENTINA

Notorious

Av. Callao 966
Buenos Aires
54 11 4813 6888

notorious.com.ar

Programming music every night of the week, this venue also offers listeners a record store in the front, and a café in the back.

Thelonious Club

Jerónimo Salguero 1884
Buenos Aires
54 11 4829 1562

thelonious.com.ar

Founded in 2000 by two jazz lovers inspired by the feel of New York nightclubs, this venue presents music four nights a week.

AUSTRALIA

Bennetts Lane

25 Bennetts Lane
Melbourne, Victoria
61 412 063 570

facebook.com/bennettslane

Bennetts Lane continues to adapt to changing circumstances. After a temporary closure in 2015, ownership has changed hands, and the club is primed for a resurgence. The owners are slated to open a new space at the Grand Hyatt complex on Flinders Lane.

Elixir Tapas Bar

92 Abbott Street
Cairns, Queensland
61 406 534 996

facebook.com/ElixirBarCairns

This location, which was formerly was Pop & Co, presents music Wednesdays through Sundays. Two Fridays a month are reserved for a local jazz trio, while the Sunday shows spotlight blues artists.

Foundry616

616 Harris Street
Ultimo/Sydney
02 9211 9442

foundry616.com.au

Founded in 2013, Foundry616 is a relative newcomer to the scene, but it's made quite a splash already. Michael Griffin's Thelonious Monk Octet and the Michael Gordon Bebop Band have played at Foundry616.

The Sound Lounge

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

sima.org.au

Affiliated with the Sydney Improvised Music Association, this 120-seat lounge books jazz acts on Fridays and Saturdays.

VENUE 505

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

venue505.com

Started in 2004, Venue 505 (in the Sydney area) is part of a performing arts one-two punch: While Venue 505 is dedicated to promoting jazz and other music six nights a week, its sister venue, the Old 505 Theatre, presents theater productions. On Jan. 26–27, the venue presents Bandaluzia Flamenco with Paco Lara & Chachy Peñalver.

AUSTRIA

Blue Tomato

Wurmsergasse 21
Vienna
43 1 985 5960

bluetomato.cc

In 2017, Blue Tomato celebrated its 35th year in business—a lengthy run for a jazz club. It has showcased a jazz, classical and other genres. The duo of Joe McPhee and Paal Nilssen-Love performed there recently.

Jazzit

Elisabethstraße 11
Salzburg
43 662 883264

jazzit.at

Jazzit has presented avant-garde jazz in Salzburg for more than four decades. Today the promoters book local, national and international groups like the Benjamin Schmid Jazz Quintet and the Jazzit Trio.

Jazzland

Franz Josefs-Kai 29
Vienna
43 1 533 2575

jazzland.at

As a venue entering its 46th year of operation, Jazzland, which operates out of a 500-year-old cellar, holds the title as the oldest jazz club in Austria. Live music is presented six



There's not a great distance between the patrons and musicians at Montreal venue Dièse Onze.

Good Vibes at Montreal's Dièse Onze

LISTENERS WHO WANT TO EXPERIENCE jazz in Montreal would be well advised to check out the talent on tap at Dièse Onze. The intimate venue has become a key part of the Montreal jazz scene. Established in 2006 at 4115-A St. Denis, the semi-basement venue—whose French name translates to “sharp 11,” a musical reference with an especially hip connotation—presents two sets of high-quality music every night.

The club's proprietor, Gary Tremblay, makes an effort to offer his clientele diverse programming. On Mondays, the club is heated up with Trabuco Habanero, featuring artists from Montreal's Latin jazz scene. Tuesdays are reserved for a weekly jam session led by bassist Alex Bellegarde, running late into the night. Wednesdays are Soul Therapy Night, hosted by The Brooks collective. Thursdays feature a monthly spotlight. Fridays and Saturdays showcase mostly local, and some international, artists. And Sundays are vocal jazz jam nights, hosted by singer Kim Richardson.

Raised in Montreal, Tremblay grew up listening to Jimmy Smith, Marvin Gaye and Miles Davis. As a young man, he worked as a DJ and a clerk at a record store with a significant jazz section. Later he studied computer-assisted sound design and business management. He went on to manage several establishments, covering booking and sound, until walking into Dièse Onze

eight years ago. Impressed with the ambiance but disappointed by the service, he pointed out to the owner that “the manager had no smile,” and was soon hired to take over operations.

When Tremblay took ownership of the club in 2014, it was with the intention of transforming it into a jazz institution. “I was a little hesitant when I took over,” he recalled. “I had already been working 80- to 100-hour weeks, and knew there was a lot of work to be done. But I really dug the vibe. I was involved in the local jazz scene, and believed in it. So I decided to give it a go.”

Seeing the club as a long-term project, he envisioned it as a venue with the highest standards—both musical and culinary. “Every cent of profit since then has been re-invested into the club,” Tremblay continued, noting Dièse Onze's superior sound system, a new house drum kit, a Kawai piano and a completely re-equipped kitchen serving world-class cuisine.

The club's weekly jam session has been led by Bellegarde, a mainstay of Montreal's jazz scene, for the past eight years. The evening traditionally begins with a set by Bellegarde's trio with an invited guest—on the night of DownBeat's visit, it was Bulgarian saxophonist Tihomir Krastev. That's followed by an open jam that draws professional musicians (frequently including out-of-towners), university students and devoted hobbyists with its welcoming vibe. “Gary has done

a great job making musicians feel at home,” Bellegarde said.

Mentored by American-born bassist Skip Bey, Bellegarde had been leading jam sessions at various Montreal establishments for well over a decade before taking the gig at Dièse Onze. “The problem had always been finding venues that had a good vibe, which I think is super important for a good jam,” he said. “It was a no-brainer for me to finally get to do it in a proper jazz club.”

“The common thread of our clientele is that they are all real music lovers, whether they're 18 or 90,” Tremblay noted. Starting in January, he will begin a major renovation, moving the stage and raising the banquettes to enhance the audience's experience.

Dièse Onze partners with L'OFF Festival de Jazz de Montréal, and this past October presented multiple shows during the fest, including alto saxophonist Jason Stillman's Quartet. The venue also hosts its own series as part of the Montreal Jazz Festival. During the 2016 edition of that massive fest, Dièse Onze drew an international crowd for sets from a quintet co-led by trumpeter Ingrid Jensen and saxophonist Christine Jensen.

“Montreal is a jazz city—always has been,” Tremblay said. “There used to be a late-night set, running till 2 a.m. And I want to bring it back.”

—Sharonne Cohen

at the same location where the music happens? This three-decades-old bed and breakfast is also an art gallery. Plus, the owner hosts a monthly jazz night.

CANADA

DIÈSE ONZE

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

dieseonze.com

Dièse Onze, which celebrated its 10th birthday in 2016, presents two shows a night, every day of the week. The schedule highlights the best local jazz musicians mixed with international artists. Past featured artists have included Harold Mabern and Ben Monder. The vocal jam happens on Sundays, and Tuesdays are reserved for an instrumental jam session.

Frankie's Jazz

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

frankiesitaliankitchen.ca

The Coastal Jazz and Blues Society books acts at Frankie's four nights a week. The Vancouver Legacy Jazz Orchestra has held a Gerry Mulligan tribute night at this club.

L'Astral

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

sallelastral.com

Presenting more than just jazz, L'Astral has focused on bringing quality live music to Montreal since 2009. Artists who have played L'Astral include the Orchestre National de Jazz, Sass Jordan, the Simon Denizart Trio and Sleigh Bells.

The Rex Jazz & Blues Bar

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

therex.ca

This hotel/jazz venue, which has been in operation since 1992, books local, national and international acts on a nightly basis. Jazz ensembles from the University of Toronto frequently take the stage.

Upstairs Jazz Bar & Grill

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

upstairsjazz.com

This venue has been a vital part of the Montreal scene for more than two decades. The club showcases McGill University jazz students twice a week, chairs two jam sessions each week, and books local and international talent on the weekends.

Yardbird Suite

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

yardbirdsuite.com

Yardbird Suite has been helping shape Edmonton's jazz scene since 1957, and the venue has been in its current location for three decades. Yardbird Suite, which hosts jam sessions each Tuesday and a Canadian jazz festival in November, is the headquarters of the Edmonton Jazz Society.

CHINA

Fringe Club

2 Lower Albert Road, Central
Hong Kong
852 2521 7251

hkfringeclub.com

For nearly 35 years, the Fringe Club (a former dairy show) has been presenting a range of jazz and other music, as well as performing arts events, in Hong Kong.

COSTA RICA

Jazz Cafe

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

jazzcafecostarica.com

This 220-seat club is often filled with tourists, locals and expats. The owners book jazz, pop, rock and comedy shows.

CZECH REPUBLIC

AghaRTA Jazz Centrum

Zelezna 16
Prague
420 222 211 275

agharta.cz

A smooth-jazz ensemble, a vocal jazz trio, a modern ensemble and a straightahead group are representative of the diversity of bookings at this Old Town club. The venue also hosts Prague Jazz Festival shows.

The Jazz Dock

Janackovo Nabrezi 2
Prague
420 774 058 838

jazzdock.cz

The Jazz Dock is an extremely literal place—this club is on the edge of the Vltava River, offering a beautiful backdrop to the music. Julian Lage and forward-leaning European jazz musicians typify the club's offerings.

Lucerna Music Bar

Vodi kova 36
Prague
420 224 224 537

musicbar.cz

The owners' first inclination isn't to book jazz, as this venue leans toward more rock and pop acts, but intrepid listeners can find improvised music at the venue.

DENMARK

Copenhagen Jazzhouse

Niels Hemmingsens Gade 10
Copenhagen
45 3315 4700

jazzhouse.dk

Jazz trio The Necks, who performed at the Jazzhouse recently, epitomize the club's mission of "a place for experiments." The venue hosts these jazz experiments a few times each month.

Jazzhus Montmartre

St. Regnegade 19A
Copenhagen
45 70 20 20 96

jazzhusmontmartre.dk

Jazzhus has been bringing top-quality jazz to Copenhagen audiences since 1959. The venue served as the European base of operations for Dexter Gordon and Ben



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JFC Jazz Club in St. Petersburg, Russia

Webster. Nowadays, the club hosts a wide variety of music, but focuses on jazz.

ENGLAND

The 606 Club

90 Lots Road
London
44 20 7352 5953

606club.co.uk

Opened in 1976 as a basement venue, the 606 Club moved above ground in the late 1980s to a space that has ample room for listeners to catch 10 bands each week. The venue rarely books visiting acts, choosing instead to focus on the London scene.

Cafe OTO

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

cafeoto.co.uk

This venue is a café by day and a club by night. Bookers highlight an array of avant-garde styles, include jazz, rock and experimental music.

Jazz Cafe

5 Parkway
London
44 20 7485 6834

thejazzcafelondon.com

Seven nights a week, the Jazz Cafe books jazz, hip-hop, pop and blues artists.

PizzaExpress Jazz Club

10 Dean St.
London
44 20 7437 9595

pizzaexpress.com

At this venue, jazz and pizza are a natural pairing. The actual club is nestled right below PizzaExpress restaurant, and the music lineup is anything but cheesy. The Kenny Werner Trio recently appeared at the club.

Ronnie Scott's Jazz Club

47 Frith St.
London
44 20 7439 0747

ronniescotts.co.uk

What the venerated Village Vanguard is to New York City, Ronnie Scott's is to London. Jazz, blues and jazz-leaning rock musicians play every night of the week at this legendary venue, which has been in operation since 1959. Upcoming shows include the Brubeck Brothers (Jan. 11–14), Kurt Rosenwinkel (Jan. 15) and Django Bates (Jan. 30).

The Vortex

11 Gillett Square
London
44 20 7254 4097

vortexjazz.co.uk

This small, not-for-profit club has been a London staple for more than 20 years. The owners book contemporary jazz and hold a jam session each Sunday. The London Jazz Orchestra has a long-running residency here.

FINLAND

Rytmihäiriöklubi / Juttutupa

Säästöpankinranta 6
Helsinki
358 20 7424240

juttutupa.com

The Juttutupa restaurant is the oldest of its kind in Helsinki, and the owners claim its legacy goes back to the 1880s. The 20-year-old club inside presents jazz and blues, with an emphasis on young Finnish musicians.

Storyville

Museigatan 8
Helsinki
358 50 363 2664

storyville.fi

A century ago, excess mixed with hot jazz was the norm in New Orleans' Storyville district, and this Helsinki spot aims to recreate some of that festive vibe. Hosting music four nights a week until 4 a.m., the venue books jazz, swing, blues and rock.

FRANCE

Duc Des Lombards

42 Rue des Lombards
Paris
1 4233 2288

ducdeslombards.fr

The Kenny Werner Trio, Mark Turner and Marquis Hill recently performed at this venue. When not booking international jazz talent, the club fills its six-nights-a-week music calendar with jazz talent from throughout Europe.

Le Caveau de la Huchette

5 Rue de la Huchette
Paris
33 1 4326 6505

caveaudelahuchette.fr

Aiming for a Cotton Club vibe, the Le Caveau de la Huchette features nightly jazz music that is perfect for dancing. Need proof? The venue was featured in the film "La La

Land." Le Caveau sits in a building originally constructed in the 1500s, but the club itself has only been around since 1946.

New Morning

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

newmorning.com

While it has presented jazz since its founding more than 30 years ago, the venue now hosts rock, funk and hip-hop acts. Jazz stars come here for short residencies.

Le Piano Barge

Allée Loïc Caradec, 56000
Vannes
33 2 97 47 76 05

pianobarge.com

Le Piano Barge allows jazz listeners to have a fine dining experience on a permanently docked boat overlooking the Marle River. The venue presents funk acts and improv theater.

Sunset-Sunside

60 Rue des Lombards
Paris
33 0 1 40 26 46 60

sunset-sunside.com

Monday night jam sessions draw musicians to this venue, which has been open for nearly 35 years. During the week, European and French jazz dominates, though international acts are occasionally booked at this famous club. Enrico Rava is booked for Jan. 18–19.

GERMANY

A-Trane

1 Bleibtreustraße St.
Berlin
49 30 3132550

a-trane.de

For more than 25 years, A-Trane has been presenting European and international jazz artists. The venue also serves as one of the main spots for Jazzfest Berlin. Upcoming shows include Lionel Loueke & Céline Rudolph (Jan. 16), the Fly Trio (Jan. 21) and Bernhard Meyer (Jan. 31).

Aufsturz

Oranienburger Straße 67
Berlin
49 30 2804 74 07

aufsturz.de

Aufsturz opened its doors in 2004, hoping to bring a heavy dose of jazz to the community—along with a weekly swing dance party, complete with lessons. Aufsturz boasts a 100-selection beer menu. The club also serves as a gallery space and a lecture hall.

B-Flat

Dircksenstraße 40
Berlin
49 30 2833 123

b-flat-berlin.de

Modern jazz, soul, r&b—this jazz-leaning club has it all. Touring musicians and local acts take the stage each night of the week, with Wednesdays reserved for jam sessions. Recent performers include the Eden Bareket Trio and the Heiko Fischer Quartett.

Jazz im Prinz Karl

Gradmann Weg 7
Tübingen
07 07 1376 01

jipk.net

Fred Hersch and Chris Potter recently played this venue, which has been presenting top-notch jazz for more than 40 years.

Jazzkeller

Kleine Bockenheimer Str. 18a
Frankfurt
49 69 288537

jazzkeller.com

It's been more than six decades since trumpeter Carlo Bohländer founded this basement space. Local artists and international acts are presented five nights a week. Ernie Watts performed in December. Upcoming shows include the Uta Dobberthien Quintet (Jan. 20), the Jesse Davis Quartet (Jan. 23) and Juliana Da Silva (Jan. 25).

Quasimodo

Kantstraße 12A
Berlin
49 30 318 045 60

quasimodo.de

Quasimodo may have started out as a jazz-dominant spot five decades ago, but over the years, bookers started promoting a wider range of acts. But Quasimodo remains one of the main Berlin jazz spots.

Stadtgarten

Venloer Straße 40
Köln
49 0221 952994 0

stadtgarten.de

Stadgarten encompasses both a concert hall and a smaller performance area. While the primary focus is jazz, some of the shows branch out into other genres. Among the stars who've played Stadtgarten are Jimmy Heath, Bill Frisell and Theo Bleckmann.

Unterfahrt

Einsteinstrasse 42
Munich
49 0 89 448 27 94

unterfahrt.de

Sunday is jam-session day at Unteffahrt, a jazz venue that also serves as an art gallery. Recent performers included the Dusko Goykovich Big Band, the Yosuke Onuma Quartet and Dieter Ilg Trio B-A-C-H.

GREECE

Half Note Jazz Club

Trivonianou 17
Athens
30 21 0921 3310

halfnote.gr

Greek jazz musicians always have a home at the Half Note, which presents music nearly every night of the week. In addition to jazz, the owners also book blues and world music.

HUNGARY

Budapest Jazz Club

Hollan Erno Utca 7
Budapest
36 70 413 9837

bjc.hu

This venue aims to support jazz youth. There

are jam sessions three nights a week and classical music every Sunday.

ISRAEL

Beit Haamudim

Rambam 14
Tel Aviv
972 3 510 9228

facebook.com/BeitHaamudim

The best Israeli jazz musicians play Beit Haamudim every night of the week. Vegetarian fare is served in this small club.

Shablul Jazz

Airport Hangar 13
Tel Aviv
972 3 546 1891

shabluljazz.com

Blues, reggae, pop, jazz—it's all presented at the Shablul, which has been active in the community for more than a decade. Jazz is still prominent at the club, and it comes mostly via regional and European acts.

ITALY

Alexanderplatz

Via Ostia, 9
Rome
06 39 06 8377 5604

alexanderplatzjazzclub.com

The oldest jazz club in Italy, Alexanderplatz has been presenting jazz to locals and tourists at its home near St. Peter's Basilica for more than 30 years. Local and regional jazz musicians are frequently featured.

Cantina Bentivoglio

Via Mascarella, 4/B
Bologna
39 051 265416

cantinabentivoglio.it

This small jazz venue presents jazz nearly every night. Barry Harris and the Smalls Club All Stars performed at the club during the Bologna Jazz Festival.

Jazz Club Ferrara

Via 167, Rampari di Belfiore
Ferrara
39 0532 171 6739

jazzclubferrara.com

Programming at this venue is heavy on the jazz. Situated within St. John's Tower, this club has presented jazz since 1999. Monday nights are reserved for jam sessions.

La Salumeria Della Musica

Via Pasinetti 4
Milan
39 02 5680 7350

lasalumeriadellamusica.com

For about two decades, this venue has been booking emerging jazz artists, established Italian jazz talent and touring international musicians. Pop and rock acts also play here.

Tramjazz

Departs from the Porta Maggiore plaza
Rome
3 39 6 334 700

tramjazz.com

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Louise Phelan Quintet performs at La Casa del Menguero in Puebla, Mexico.

each Wednesday night. The musicians are mainly from New Zealand; occasionally the venue will feature an international guest.

NORWAY

Victoria Nasjonal Jazz Scene

Karl Johans Gate 35
Oslo
47 23 89 69 23

nasjonaljazzscene.no/en

This 300-person club is a great place to hear a blend of local and regional musicians mixed with international jazz stars, such as David Murray, Mike Stern and the Nels Cline Four.

PORTUGAL

HOT CLUBE DE PORTUGAL

Praca de Alegria 48
Lisbon
351 21 346 0305

hcp.pt

In 1948, broadcaster Luis Villas-Boas founded the original club to foster the Portuguese jazz scene. In 2009, the music had to move when the club was hit with extensive water damage from flooding. In the relatively new space, jam sessions are held every Tuesday.

RUSSIA

IGOR BUTMAN JAZZ CLUB

21, Verkhnyaya
Radischevskaya St.
Moscow
7 (495) 792-21-09

butmanclub.ru

Igor Butman, the most famous saxophone player to come out of Russia, owns his namesake club in Moscow. At the venue, he showcases Russian jazz, but also books huge stars from the States, such as Christian McBride, Chris Potter and Ron Carter.

JFC Jazz Club

Shpalernaya St. 33
St. Petersburg
7 812 272 9850

jfc-club.spb.ru

Russia-based musicians from various genres flock to JFC to perform. The venue showcases New Orleans style jazz, along with rock, blues and avant-garde music.

SCOTLAND

The Jazz Bar

1A Chambers Street
Edinburgh
44 0 131 220 4298

thejazzbar.co.uk

The Jazz Bar programs r&b, soul, rock and jazz. One of the more inventive running gigs is the World Premiere Quintet, a Saturday night show during which a random selection of five jazz players unite to create music—no set list, no rehearsal time, just improvised music.

SOUTH AFRICA

The Crypt

St. George's Cathedral, 1 Wale St and Adderley St.
Cape Town
27 79 683 4658

thecryptjazz.com

Located under a church, this venue presents live jazz Tuesday through Saturday.

JAPAN

Alfie Jazz House

6-2-35 Roppongi
Hama Roppongi Bldg. 5F
Tokyo
81 3 3479 2037

facebook.com/pages/Alfie/147192971998741

Owners book mostly local musicians in this intimate venue, which was founded by the late drummer Motohiko "Toko" Hino.

Body And Soul

6-13-9 Minamiaoyama
Tokyo
81 3 5466 3348

bodyandsoul.co.jp

Presenting local jazz music six days a week for two shows each night, Body And Soul serves as an advocate for Tokyo jazz musicians. International touring acts occasionally stop into the club.

Downbeat

Miyamoto Bldg, 2F 1-43
Yokohama
045 241 6167

yokohama-downbeat.com/index.html

You've got to be doing something right if you've been presenting jazz in Tokyo since the mid-1950s. This venue has built a great jazz legacy in an intimate setting.

Jz Brat

26-1 Sakuragaokach
Shibuya
Tokyo
81 03 5728 0168

jzbrat.com

Jz Brat focuses on jazz—for example, the recent appearance of Jun Saito and Hiroyuki Wanatabe's Drum Talk—but ownership presents rock, hip-hop and r&b.

Shinjuku Pit Inn

2-12-4 Accord Bldg. B1
Shinjuku shinjuku-ku
Tokyo
81 3 3354 2024

pit-inn.com

This club books a lot of large ensembles: In December, the Otomo Yoshihide Special Big Band closed out the year with eight concerts, and the month began with a concert by the Shibusasirazu Orchestra. The club features mostly local jazz artists.

MEXICO

La Casa del Menguero

Calle 4 Sur 304, Centro Histórico
Puebla de Zaragoza, Puebla
52 222 232 5148

casadelmenguero.com

Live jazz is at the center of La Casa del Menguero, but it's certainly not the only thing this venue has to offer. It also has a full restaurant, a museum and an art gallery.

Zinco Jazz Club

Calle Motolinia 20, Centro
Mexico City
52 55 5512 3369

zincojazz.com

In December, the Zinco Big Band shared the calendar with the Dannah Garay Quintet and a tribute concert celebrating Amy Winehouse. Programming at Zinco may run the gamut from pop to jazz, but the club's dedication to improvised music is unmistakable.

THE NETHERLANDS

BIMHUIS

Piet Heinkade 3
Amsterdam
31 20 788 2150

bimhuis.com

Since 2005, when it moved to a modern building right on the water, Bimhuis has been a crowning jewel among European jazz venues. Bimhuis presents more than 300 concerts each year, billing local, European and international artists. Jam sessions happen each Tuesday. Upcoming shows include the Marcín Wasilewski Trio (Jan. 31), Mike Reed's Flesh & Bone (Feb. 3) and the Charles McPherson Quartet (March 8).

Jazz Cafe Alto

Korte Leidsdwaarsstraat 115
Amsterdam

jazz-cafe-alto.nl/home

This venue presents jazz and blues shows every night of the week.

NEW ZEALAND

Creative Jazz Club Aotearoa

1885 Britomart
27 Galway St.
Auckland
0212 389 747

creativejazzclub.co.nz

Creative Jazz Club presents a jazz showcase

The Orbit

81 De Korte St.
Johannesburg
27 11 339 6645
theorbit.co.za

This welcoming, regional jazz spot presents music nearly every night of the week.

SPAIN

Bogui Jazz

Calle Barquillo 29
Madrid
34 915 21 15 68

bogui.es

Bogui features stars from the Spanish and European jazz scenes as well Americans such as Greg Osby.

Cafe Central

Plaza del Angel 10
Madrid
34 913 69 41 43

cafecentralmadrid.com

Founded more than 35 years ago, this club, an Art Deco wonderland, offers jazz, gospel, blues and other genres. The venue has presented Wallace Roney and Ernie Watts.

Harlem Jazz Club

Carrer de Contessa de Sobradriel 8
Barcelona
34 933 10 07 55

harlemjazzclub.es

Now in its 31st year, this Club has become a touchstone of the jazz world in Barcelona. The programming also includes blues, funk and soul. There's a blues jam every Monday.

Jamboree Jazz Club

Plaça Reial 17
Barcelona
34 933 19 17 89
masimas.com

Founded in 1960, this club hosts the best jazz musicians in Catalonia, as well as international stars such as Harold Mabern.

Jimmy Glass Jazz Bar

Calle Baja 28
Valencia
34 656 89 01 43

jimmyglassjazz.net

This club, which is 25 years old, presents Spanish jazz artists and international stars.

SWEDEN

Fasching

Kungsgatan 63
Stockholm
46 8 20 00 66

fasching.se

In 1977, Fasching opened its doors to showcase Scandinavian artists. Today, patrons flock to the club to hear stars like Chris Potter rub elbows with Stockholm Jazz Underground and other regional artists. The club also offers reggae, indie pop and soul.

Glenn Miller Café

Brunnsgatan 21
Stockholm
46 76 882 45 49

glennmillerprogram.se

This small venue showcases jazz on Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays.

SWITZERLAND

Marian's Jazz Room

Engestrass 54
Bern
41 31 3096 111

mariansjazzroom.ch

This venue, which is located in the Innere Enge Hotel, has presented world-class jazz for more than 25 years. Closed during the summer months, bookers program jazz artists five days a week from September to May.

THAILAND

Saxophone Pub

3/8 Phayathai Rd. Victory Monument
Bangkok
+66 022 465 472

saxophonepub.com

For more than three decades, Thailand's jazz musicians have performed at Saxophone Pub. Music happens seven nights a week. The booking leans heavily toward jazz, but other genres are occasionally presented.

TURKEY

Nardis Jazz Club

Kuledibi Sok. No:8
Istanbul
90 212 244 6327

nardisjazz.com

Turkish jazz musicians share space with artists from a range of genres at this 120-seat venue. Shows happen every night of the week. The venue has recently hosted a Django Reinhardt-style jazz group, a Latin music ensemble and numerous straightahead musicians.

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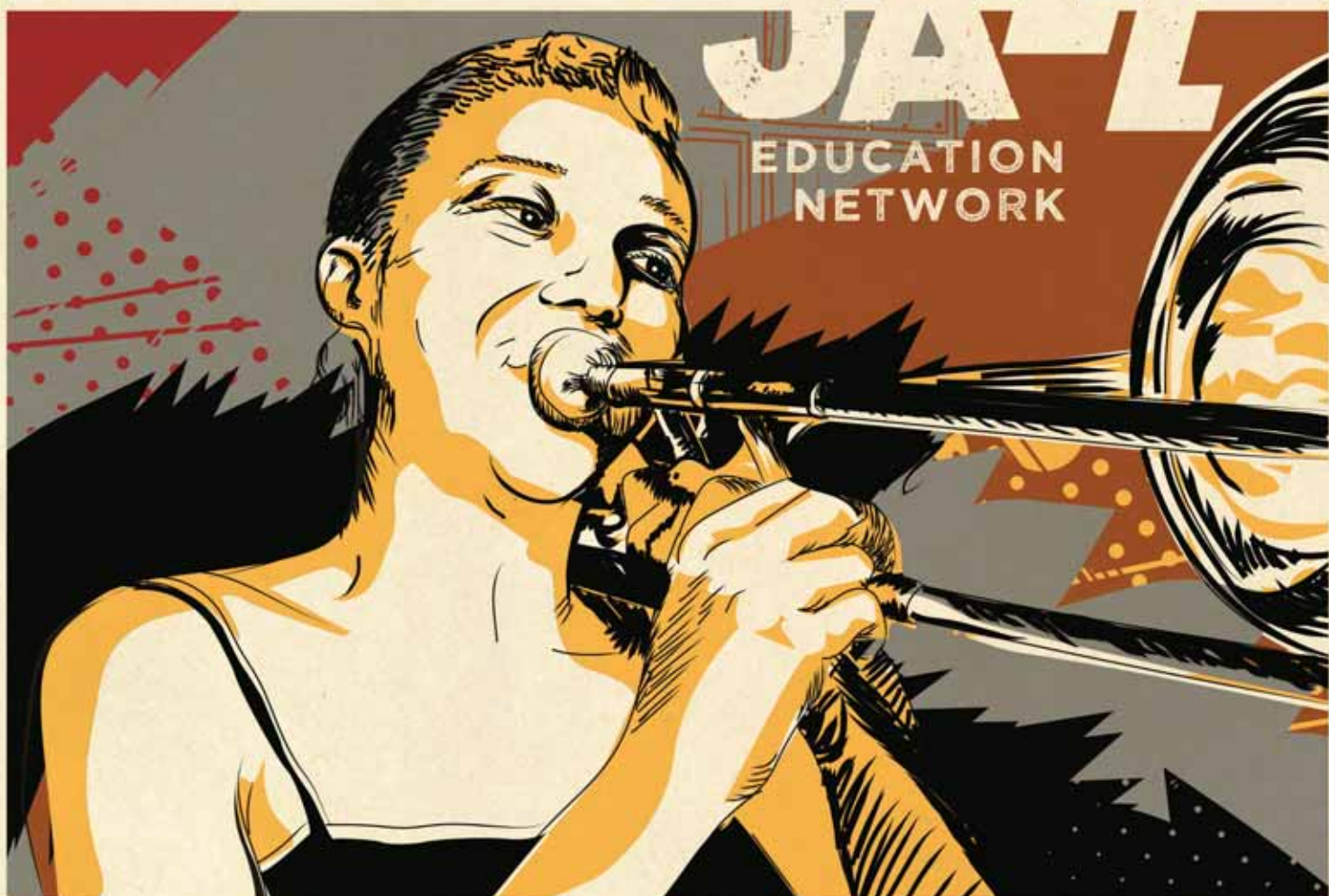
- Chris Potter
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- Ray Brown
- Mike Stern
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LAUREN DESBERG



Lucas Pino

Lucas Pino *The Answer Is No*

OUTSIDE IN MUSIC

★★★★

Those who've caught the No Net Nonet at Smalls in New York probably know that one of the group's calling cards is precision. Intricate themes, mercurial tempos—when the elements stack up on pieces such as “Bankenstein” or “Orange” from the band's self-titled debut, the thrills of sharp interaction speak for themselves. Leader Lucas Pino knows what a kick this kind of clear-cut unity can generate. On the group's *The Answer Is No*, he keeps the bar high; his charts are just as elaborate as before, and the ensemble fulfills on them with the same extraordinary definition.

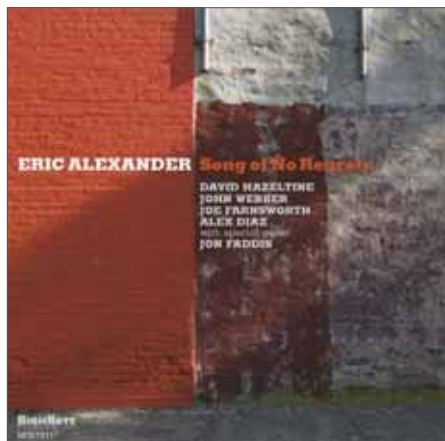
Perhaps more importantly, the quality of Pino's designs has been bolstered along the way. This second disc boasts the hang-onto-your-seat whirl of its predecessor, but the tunes have more emotional depth. Milking Mingus a bit deepens the hues assigned to his little big band, and in the process, Pino's stock rises. The rumble of drummer Jimmy Macbride's toms mixes sagely with the opening horn flourish of the introspective “Sea Level.” As the band pushes along, a near-orchestral demeanor arises. On “Take A Walk In The Sky,” pulse and flourish accommodate each other while giving a string of swirls some breathing room as well. A certain grace keeps everything moving forward.

Plenty of hot solos crop up through these seven tracks. Trumpeter Mat Jodrell and trombonist Nick Finzer go to places that remind us just how key a little derring-do is to a performance. Tenor saxophonist Pino can really unload on his horn as well. But the program is built on teamwork, a clutch of improvisers appreciating the prescribed guidelines. They do the job with such confidence, the title could actually be *The Answer Is Know*. —Jim Macnie

The Answer Is No: Pick 'Em Up, Turn The Lights Out; Take A Walk In The Sky; The World Ahead; Sea Level; Sidestep; Mass-produced Person; I Can't Remember. (50:56)

Personnel: Lucas Pino, tenor saxophone; Alex LoRe, alto saxophone; Mat Jodrell, trumpet; Nick Finzer, trombone; Andrew Gutasukas, baritone saxophone; Rafal Sarnecki, guitar; Glenn Zaleski, piano; Desmond White, bass; Jimmy Macbride, drums.

Ordering info: outsidemusic.com



Eric Alexander *Song Of No Regrets*

HIGHNOTE 7311

★★★★

For nearly three decades, Eric Alexander's smoldering tenor saxophone tone has steamrolled through a sizable discography that mostly centers on soulful, blues-laden hard-bop. Even though Alexander throws a few curveballs on *Song Of No Regrets* by enhancing his music with Afro-Cuban and Brazilian rhythmic flourishes and by featuring David Hazeltine on piano instead of his mentor and longtime compadre Harold Mabern, the disc

captures the saxophonist in his quintessential glory. He imbues the music with unflinching emotional immediacy and jolting enthusiasm.

Drummer Joe Farnsworth, percussionist Alex Diaz and bassist John Webber steer the program through various rhythmic pulses that range from Hazeltine's mambo-charged "But Here's The Thing," which features special guest Jon Faddis' sparkling trumpet asides upping the sonic fireworks; a percolating reading of Jorge Ben Jor's samba classic "Mas Que Nada"; and the swaggering funk of Lucas Alexander's original "Boom Boom."

While some may quip that Alexander has long been coasting through his repertoire—an argument made possibly because of the blistering assuredness of his executions—there's no denying that he's a force to be reckoned with, especially on the disc's ballads: his sensual makeover of the Sergio Mendes-penned title track and his own "Corazón Perdido," a slow-churning nugget that best allows listeners to experience his luminous sound and majestic lyricism.

—John Murph

Song Of No Regrets: But Here's The Thing; These Three Words; Grinder; Corazón Perdido; Mas Que Nada; Boom Boom; Song Of No Regrets; Cede's Shack; Up, Up And Away. (55:03)

Personnel: Eric Alexander, tenor saxophone; David Hazeltine, piano; John Webber, bass; Joe Farnsworth, drums; Alex Diaz, conga, bongos, auxiliary percussion; Jon Faddis, trumpet (1, 2); Joshua Bruneau, trumpet, cowbell (2); Esther Lomas-Sampedro, rattlesnake (2); Lucas Alexander, triangle (2).

Ordering info: jazzdepot.com

Hiromi & Edmar Castaneda *Live In Montreal*

TELARC

★★★★

It's hard to miss the delight Hiromi Uehara seems to take in performing. That vibe is on full display here as she explores the possibilities opened up by the presence of harpist Edmar Castaneda, who sees no reason to be contained by the usual boundaries of his instrument.

"A Harp In New York" kicks things off with a showcase of shifting moods and roles. Uehara anchors a melodic figure for Castaneda, then the two switch, giving her fingers room to flutter through a new take on a similar pattern against the underpinnings of his seemingly shapeshifting string work. As the sections change, so do Uehara's energy and depth. There are a few abrupt changes and some moments in the Castaneda-penned track that suggest the composition is serving his zeal for her technical dazzle potential more than the music itself, but for the most part, she plays her way out of them.

"For Jaco," meanwhile, sees Castaneda alternately inhabiting bass and, briefly, piano voices, with some room for a squeaky bit of harp humor. He and Uehara are in great sync here. The *Star Wars* "Cantina Band" homage is another



ideal vehicle for two players who aren't afraid to unleash their senses of humor and adventure. Uehara's suite takes over most of the rest of the album, offering plenty of bright moments, particularly when Castaneda channels flamenco guitar on "Fire." But the suite's compositions take time to establish direction and Castaneda's approach occasionally veers toward the strident, making the second half of the album a bit less appealing than the first.

—Jennifer Odell

Live In Montreal: A Harp In New York; For Jaco; Moonlight Sunshine; The Elements; Air; The Elements; Earth; The Elements; Water; The Elements; Fire; Libertango. (72:11)

Personnel: Hiromi, piano; Edmar Castaneda, harp.

Ordering info: concordmusicgroup.com



John McNeil & Mike Fahie *Plainsong*

DESTINY RECORDS 0013

★★★★

Plainsong is a good title for this pleasantly off-kilter, cool-school collaboration between New York stalwarts John McNeil (trumpet) and Mike Fahie (trombone), though a lot of dry wit leavens its chipper, plainly spoken lines. The pair's fetching compositions and understated brass blends and weaves are a treat—and so are Ethan Iverson's surprise-filled piano solos—but the album is a bit uneven and the quintet sometimes feels diffuse.

Daring to start with darkness, *Plainsong* kicks off with the mournful yet beautiful "Dover Beach," originally written for the late guitarist John Abercrombie (with whom McNeil played). McNeil's more direct tribute, "Abercrombie," also a gorgeous melody, slips into a lovely swing feel, as does Fahie's "Backseat Pedal."

But there are problems along the way. McNeil, who has overcome substantial health issues over the years, sounds pinched and "tubby" on "Abercrombie," and on the same track, bassist Joe Martin's rhythmically independent lines sound almost tangential to the proceedings. That's not the case on the faster-paced "Can Do," with Martin walking and drummer Billy Hart kickin' it. "Prospect" splits things wide open, with clanging chords, throbbing bass and McNeil's smears and taffy-pull phrasing.

High points include Thelonious Monk's "Green Chimneys" and Fahie's "Plain Song, Rain Song." The Monk tune's cheeky repetition feels just right for McNeil's brand of humor, and the ensemble falls into a pleasant groove that recalls the airy openness of the Jimmy Giuffrè/Jim Hall/Bob Brookmeyer outings.

—Paul de Barros

Plainsong: Dover Beach; Can Do; Prospect; Abercrombie; Conversation Starter; Green Chimneys; Plain Song, Rain Song; Random Activity; Backseat Pedal; Undercurrent; Get Out; The Tristano Chord. (72:33)

Personnel: John McNeil, trumpet; Mike Fahie, trombone; Ethan Iverson, piano; Joe Martin, bass; Billy Hart, drums.

Ordering info: destinyrecordsmusic.com

The Hot Box

Critics	Jennifer Odell	John Murph	Jim Macnie	Paul de Barros
Lucas Pino <i>The Answer Is No</i>	★★★½	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★
Eric Alexander <i>Song Of No Regrets</i>	★★½	★★★★	★★★	★★★★
Hiromi & Edgar Castaneda <i>Live In Montreal</i>	★★★	★★★	★★★	★★½
John McNeil & Mike Fahie <i>Plainsong</i>	★★★½	★★★½	★★★½	★★★

Critics' Comments

Lucas Pino, *The Answer Is No*

The No Net Nonet's welcome return to the studio shows this dynamic band at its most adventurous. There's a healthy sense of drama at play here that shares a bloodline with Darcy James Argue's *Secret Society*, Pino's other main gig. This is a treat, start to finish. —Jennifer Odell

The majestic harmonic power and rhythmic pliancy from Pino's nonet are matched by his imaginative compositions and the velvety tone and biting melodicism on tenor sax. —John Murph

This follow-up blast from the No Net Nonet shimmers and roils with luxurious wind textures, tempo changeups, a flood of smart ideas and deft integration of solos with ensemble development. —Paul de Barros

Eric Alexander, *Song Of No Regrets*

Alexander pours his heart into tracks like Stevie Wonder's "These Three Words," but it's hard to get past the smooth feel. For much of the rest of the album, there's a precision that comes off as restrained and occasionally dry. It would be nice to hear him let go a bit more. —Jennifer Odell

Alexander's emotional range continues to grow, from the somber moans of "Corazón Perdido" to the animated wails of "But Here's The Thing." And the band sounds authoritative throughout the disc, too. That kind of confidence goes a long way. —Jim Macnie

The soulful, chest-toned tenor man takes a swing through Latin territory, including clanging Afro-Cuban music, torch-song bolero, slinky boogaloo and even a radio stop at the Sergio Mendes classic "Mas Que Nada." —Paul de Barros

Hiromi & Edgar Castaneda, *Live In Montreal*

Given these virtuosos' propensity to display superfluous pyrotechnics, it's refreshing to hear them pull back and provide thoughtful accompanying support for each to deliver some of the most substantial music yet of their individual careers. —John Murph

Chops and flash, of course. But moments of schmaltz and cheese, too. That said, this duo has a seductive range of motion. The artists truly connect and their lines enhance each other in a deep manner. —Jim Macnie

Castaneda's harp adds attractive textures but does nothing to alter Hiromi's fundamentally exhibitionist, crowd-pleasing style, which seems rooted not in jazz but the pyrotechnics of late-19th century classical piano. —Paul de Barros

John McNeil & Mike Fahie, *Plainsong*

Despite spending most of the recording out front, McNeil and Fahie seem tethered to the contributions of their rhythm section. Iverson is thoughtful and conversational in his approach, and Hart punctuates the hornmen's lines with an innate feel for where each is headed. —Jennifer Odell

It'll take a few spins to fully grasp the disc's fetching, sometimes prismatic compositions and the deft musicianship. But the disc rewards with each repeated listen, especially the driving "Back-seat Pedal" and the transportive "Plain Song, Rain Song." —John Murph

The chemistry is there because the guys gig together on the reg. By featuring their combined perspectives, they accommodate a breadth of ideas, widening the music's scope. —Jim Macnie

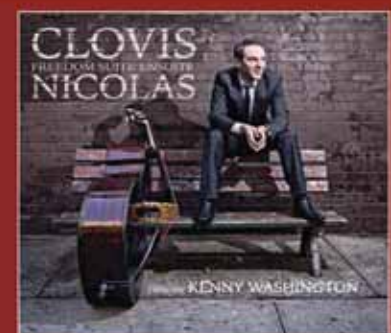


WAYNE ESCOFFERY VORTEX

SSC 1499 - IN STORES January 26

Escoffery's evocative new recording, *Vortex*, is about the current dizzying maelstrom of racism, bigotry and hate in the U.S. and the saxophonist's renewed commitment to his responsibilities and artistic goals.

On his new recording, Escoffery presents his great quartet on a number of original pieces, a standard and an original piece by the ensemble's brilliant drummer, Ralph Peterson, who Escoffery has worked alongside since Escoffery's arrival in New York in 2000. The rest of the band is equally pedigreed. Pianist David Kikoski has been a regular collaborator in the Mingus Big Band and with Eddie Henderson, and bassist Ugonna Okegwo has been driving the rhythm section of Tom Harrell's ensemble for the entirety of Escoffery's tenure. Escoffery's quartet is augmented by the percussion of Jaqueline Acevedo on a number of pieces.



CLOVIS NICOLAS FREEDOM SUITE ENSUITE

1495 - IN STORES January 19

The concept of freedom in music relates to many things. Bassist/composer Clovis Nicolas didn't eschew formal jazz harmony and rhythm in the search for freedom but found a measure of added purpose and space for his bass playing in a chord-less band format without piano or guitar. *Freedom Suite Ensuite* is a recording of Nicolas's efforts in this formation and a tribute to the musician who exemplifies playing free within a form, saxophone great Sonny Rollins.

Clovis is assisted by Brandon Lee and Bruce Harris on trumpet, Grant Stewart tenor saxophone, and Kenny Washington drums.



itunes.com/WayneEscoffery
itunes.com/ClovisNicolas
www.sunnysiderecords.com





Stacey Kent *I Know I Dream: The Orchestral Sessions*

OKEH

★★★★★

Stacey Kent's mezzo-soprano voice is a beautiful instrument for offsetting orchestral accompaniment, a fact that *I Know I Dream* illustrates well. The orchestra, a 52-piece London studio assemblage, has a lushness that would smother Nelson Riddle—yet Kent cuts through it effortlessly.

In fairness, the arrangements hardly compete with Kent. But the singer has a relatively

soft, restrained voice that on a less-skilled performer might easily be overpowered. Kent is incisive even at a near-whisper, as on the tender arrangement of Jobim's "Photograph."

Her voice becomes a featured instrument against saxophonist Jim Tomlinson's vivacious samba "Make It Up." Indeed, the effect in a song with a segmented lyric line, like the French-language "Avec Le Temps," is very like a concerto, with rich strings blooming in the spaces Kent leaves.

Along with the Jobim and other standards are several originals, composed by Tomlinson with several lyricists. On the two best songs, the latter role is author Kazuo Ishiguro's—Kent's longtime collaborator and a Nobel laureate. "Bullet Train" puts Kent in a dream, with familiar faces around her.

The closing "The Changing Lights" is *I Know I Dream*'s crown jewel, a bittersweet memory that could be a companion piece to Joni Mitchell's "The Last Time I Saw Richard." It's the capstone of a nearly perfect vocal jazz album.

—Michael J. West

I Know I Dream—The Orchestral Sessions: Double Rainbow; Photograph; Les Amours Perdues; Bullet Train; To Say Goodbye; Make It Up; Avec Le Temps; I Know I Dream; La Rua Madureira; Mais Uma Vez; That's All; The Changing Lights. (65:50)

Personnel: Stacey Kent, vocals; Jim Tomlinson, saxophones, alto flute, percussion; Graham Harvey, piano; Fender Rhodes; John Paricelli, guitars; Jeremy Brown, bass; Joshua Morrison, drums; Curtis Schwartz, Fender electric bass (4); Erika Matsuo, station announcement (4).

Ordering info: okeh-records.com

Scott DuBois *Autumn Wind*

ACT 9856

★★★★½

Autumn Wind is a moody, increasingly tempestuous and provocatively reflective suite that ambitiously challenges the jazz/classical divide. Guitarist-composer-conductor Scott DuBois wrote and recorded 12 themes, their opening pitches generating a 12-tone line. His decade-old quartet comprising in-demand bassist Thomas Morgan, veteran German saxophonist Gebhard Ullmann and Danish drummer Kresten Osgood improvised on these pieces, and DuBois later imposed strings and woodwinds performing his written parts.

Each track features one more instrument than the last (the program starts with DuBois alone, improvising modally, texturally). The composer says he applied aleatory, minimalist and serial techniques to the material's rhythms, pitches and dynamics, but listeners might not think about parsing his processes as the band coheres and the "classical" instruments enter, thickening the polyphonic mix.

Even at *Autumn Wind*'s stormiest, DuBois sustains a tonal center for his compositions, emphasized by the recording's resonant ambience, so it's sometimes as if nature is letting



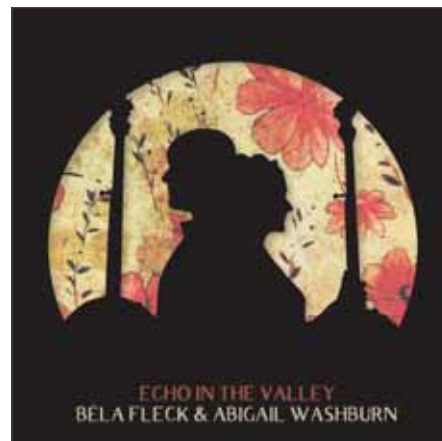
loose its thunder and lightning over an implacable plain, leaving no impression. However, there are distinctive episodes of folk-rock harmolodicism, hardcore free-blowing, flamenco-flecked guitar virtuosity and genuine genre-meshing.

—Howard Mandel

Autumn Wind: Mid-September Changing Light; Late September Dusk Walk; Early October Insect Songs; Mid-October Migration; Late October Changing Leaves; Early November Bird Formations; Autumn Wind; Mid-November Moonlit Forest; Late November Farm Fields; Early December Blue Sky And Chimney Smoke; Mid-December Night Sky; Autumn Aurora Borealis; Mid-November Moonlit Forest String Quartet Reprise. (68:48)

Personnel: Scott DuBois, electric guitar, conductor; Gebhard Ullmann, tenor saxophone, bass clarinet; Thomas Morgan, bass; Kresten Osgood, drums; Eva Leon, Conway Kuo, violins; William Frampton, viola; Sarah Rommel, cello; Erin Lesser, flute; BJ Karpen, oboe; Elisabeth Stimpert, clarinet; Michael Harley, bassoon.

Ordering info: actmusic.com



Béla Fleck & Abigail Washburn *Echo In The Valley*

ROUNDER 1166100290

★★★★½

With nothing more than a couple of banjos, Béla Fleck and Abigail Washburn have pulled off something close to miraculous with *Echo In The Valley*. Of course, there's more involved here than the instruments; the heart of the project is this husband-wife team's virtuosity and vision. Speaking generally, Fleck is the revolutionary, the greatest innovator within this legacy since Earl Scruggs. Washburn stands a little closer to tradition; although it's difficult to be sure without a video complement to these tracks, she seems not to venture too far outside of harmonic structure or slide in and out of adventurous single lines during solos.

Which is not to say that her contributions are secondary in any way. First of all, she sings all the lead vocals, sticking close to the tune rather than stretching out. But by simply singing the words and the tune, Washburn, like all the best who draw from folk performance practice, consistently invests each lyric with interpretive meaning.

This gives both players room to create instrumental backdrops that manage to be explosively inventive and unobtrusive at the same time. This is especially true on the more metrically varied compositions, such as "Don't Let It Bring You Down," which begins in 5/4, switches to one bar of 4/4 and later goes into 7. It all flows smoothly, thanks in part to the constant presence of the tonic as the chords move.

Echo In The Valley is to bluegrass as Charlie Parker was to New Orleans in the '20s: respectful of its roots, untethered in its ambitions and triumphant in bringing it all together.

—Bob Doerschuk

Echo In The Valley: Over The Divide; Let It Go; Don't Let It Bring You Down; Medley: Sally In The Garden, Big Country, Molly Put The Kettle On; My Home's Across The Blue Ridge Mountains; Hello Friend; Younger Me; Winding Road; Come All Ye Coal Miners; Bloomin' Rose. (47:24)

Personnel: Béla Fleck, Abigail Washburn, banjos and vocals.

Ordering info: rounder.com

Andreas Hourdakis Trio

Señor

KNASTER 044

★★★★

Jazz musicians have been covering Bob Dylan for as long as the man has been on the scene. And in a time when the Bard himself is neck-deep in Frank Sinatra, the historic relationship between Bob and bop reaches a new level of modernism with the second full-length album from Sweden's Andreas Hourdakis Trio.

The Stockholm guitarist and his apt rhythm section of bassist Martin Höper and drummer Ola Hultgren utilize these seven Dylan classics as starting points rather than treating them as direct homages. The work of Bill Frisell provides a template for the trio's approach here, perhaps most evident in versions of "The Lonesome Death Of Hattie Carroll" and "Lay Lady Lay" that are presented in such an abstract language you can barely find a hint of the original melodies. Yet the true muse of *Señor* reveals itself on versions of such deeper Dylan cuts as "Moonshiner" and "Señor (Tales Of Yankee Power)," where brilliant shades of *Bright Size Life*-era Pat Metheny come into the foreground as they glide across the trio's Scandinavian stratosphere. This is one of the most creative jazz translations of Dylan's work in the decades-long symbiotic relationship between the man and this music.

—Ron Hart

Señor: The Lonesome Death Of Hattie Carroll; My Back Pages; It's Alright Ma (I'm Only Bleeding); Lay Lady Lay; Moonshiner; Political World; Señor (Tales Of Yankee Power). (39:00)

Personnel: Andreas Hourdakis, guitar; Martin Höper, bass; Ola Hultgren, drums; Daniel Karlsson, piano (6).

Ordering info: brusoknaster.se



Barry Altschul's 3Dom Factor

Live In Kraków

NOT TWO RECORDS MW960

★★★★½

3Dom Factor has been Barry Altschul's main vehicle since his return to the fray. The veteran drummer's own brand of free-bop is particularly well served by two musicians who have considerable experience in navigating such a territory: saxophonist Jon Irabagon and bassist Joe Fonda. On the band's third offering, they revisit old Altschul favorites such as "For Papa Joe, Klook, And Philly Too" and "Irina"; newer pieces that have appeared on previous recordings, "Martin's Stew" and "The 3Dom Factor"; and "Ask Me Now," a composition by Thelonious Monk whose music Altschul has explored on many occasions.

With the exception of the introductory solo on the opening track, the drummer leaves the improvisational field to his two cohorts. The program is appropriately balanced, alternating fiery romps with slower pieces. On the ballad "Irina," Irabagon picks up his soprano instead of his tenor to provide a lighter touch. The trio's original take on "Ask Me Now" is full of endless variations. "For Papa Joe, Klook, And Philly Too" reminds us that the freedom that fuels the band is rooted in the jazz tradition, and Altschul proves once again that he has not lost any of his swing touch.

—Alain Drouot

Live In Kraków: Martin's Stew; Ask Me Now; For Papa Joe, Klook, And Philly Too; Irina; The 3Dom Factor. (52:26)

Personnel: Barry Altschul, drums; Jon Irabagon, tenor and soprano saxophone; Joe Fonda, bass.

Ordering info: nottwo.com



Lena Bloch & Feathery

Heart Knows

FRESH SOUND NEW TALENT 531

★★★★

Russian-born, New York-based saxophonist Lena Bloch draws upon a diverse array of gambits for the tunes she brought to *Heart Knows*, a formidable quartet album that flourishes within the confines of post-bop orthodoxy. She and pianist Russ Lossing, bassist Cameron Brown and drummer Billy Mintz operate at a high level here, bringing a rippling energy and sublimely weightless sort of interplay to the proceedings.

The brooding opener "Lateef Suite" is named for one of Bloch's key mentors, but she doesn't convey Yusef's theoretical ideas in the piece, opting instead to sculpt an effective tone poem about the enduring impression he made upon her. Two of the four tunes Bloch brought to the record draw inspiration, albeit subtly, from the Middle East. Lossing brought the other half of the eight pieces to the group, and his sources are multifarious, too, whether reharmonizing Bach's French Suite in D Minor for the humorously titled "French Twist," or translating early impressions of Newfoundland in his "Newfoundsong." The finely pitched performances are the product of a focused group energized by diverse ideas translated squarely within a traditional, richly lyric attack.

—Peter Margasak

Heart Knows: Lateef Suite; Heart Knows; Three Treasures; French Twist; Esmeh; Counter Clockwise; Munir; Newfoundsong.

Personnel: Lena Bloch, tenor saxophone; Russ Lossing, piano; Cameron Brown, bass; Billy Mintz, drums.

Ordering info: freshsoundsrecords.com



Pete Levin Möbius

IYOUWE

★★★★½

Despite important gigs with Gil Evans and Jimmy Giuffrè, plus his own touring band with bassist-brother Tony, keyboard wizard Pete Levin is less feted as a leader than as a prolific sideman. Nevertheless, this is his ninth leader album, and it features a cast with impressive mileage.

The title track, with its looping 12-tone keyboard riff and Jeff Ciampa's angular guitar, trades commercialism with experimentalism. The influence of Evans' rock inquiries and electric Miles Davis is apparent, but the material is varied and indicative of Levin's broad experience. A standout is the African-influenced "Kakilambe," featuring forthright contributions from Brazilian percussionist Nanny Assis, trumpeter Chris Pasin and more intensity from Ciampa. There's a funky version of Thelonious Monk/Coleman Hawkins' "I Mean You," and Tony Williams' "Another Time, Another Place" includes a nice, measured solo from the leader, whose omnipotent role is as soundscape architect and colorist. The rousing closer, recorded on an earlier date with Levin on organ, Jerry Marotta on drums and Kal David on guitar, is bounced along by bari saxist Erik Lawrence and Rob Paparazzi's disarming jaw harp.

—Michael Jackson

Möbius: Promises; Another Time, Another Place; I Mean You; Fade To Blue; I'm Falling; Möbius; If; Kakilambe; There Comes A Time; Way Down Yonder. (68:05)

Personnel: Pete Levin, electric piano, clavinet, organ; Tony Levin, bass; Nanny Assis, percussion; Jeff Ciampa, guitar; Alex Foster, tenor and soprano saxophone; Chris Pasin, trumpet; Lenny White, drums; Kal David, guitar; Erik Lawrence, baritone sax; Jerry Marotta, drums; Rob Paparazzi, harmonic, jaw harp.

Ordering info: iyouwee.com



STEPHEN FREIHEIT

Sinne Eeg

The Company Vocalists Keep

It's not a bad strategy to assess singers by the company they keep: The strongest singers are, not surprisingly, often accompanied by the best players.

Sinne Eeg, *Dreams* (ArtistShare 0153; 46:59 ★★★★★½): Learn to say this name: It's pronounced "Seen-uh Eeg." The Danish jazz singer, an established star in Europe, checks all the boxes; burnished tone, perfect intonation, swing, unerring taste and an adventurous streak. She is a complete musician who, remarkably, also has a gift for interpreting lyrics in a natural, conversational way. On the fan-funded *Dreams*, she surrounded herself with a dream team: Larry Koonse on guitar, Scott Colley on bass, Joey Baron on drums and Danish pianist Jacob Christoffersen.

Ordering info: artistshare.com

Rondi Charleston, *Resilience* (Resilience Music Alliance; 44:28 ★★★★★½): Charleston displays a pleasing, flexible alto that she wields with authority. Occasionally straddling the line between cabaret and jazz singing, she proves she belongs in the latter category with assured recitations of Clifford Brown's "Joy Spring" and Harold Arlen's "I've Got The World On A String," both featuring typically fine solos by guitarist and musical director Dave Stryker. Charleston gets excellent musical support from pianist Brandon McCune, bassist Ed Howard, drummer McClenty Hunter and percussionist Mayra Casales; Tim Ries and Alex Norris contribute strong horn solos.

Ordering info: resiliencemusic.com

Diana Panton, *Solstice/Equinox* (Self Release, 64:46 ★★★★★½): The genteel soul of pianist George Shearing infuses this silky collection of songs about the seasons, which Panton sings with a breathy delicacy that recalls Blossom Dearie and Stacey Kent. But she's got her own

thing, giving classic songs like "They Say It's Spring" and "September In The Rain" a literate, sensitive reading, while allowing generous solo opportunities for her first-rate Canadian ensemble.

Ordering info: dianapanton.com

Alma Micic, *That Old Feeling* (Whaling City Sound 099; 33:39 ★★★★★½): This Serbian émigré, who now calls New York home, has absorbed the influence of classic jazz singers to such a degree that you'd never guess her Eastern European heritage. She's abetted by judicious, spare accompaniment from guitarist/husband Rale Micic, vibraphonist Tom Beckham, bassist Corcoran Holt and drummer Johnathan Blake.

Ordering info: whalingcitysound.com

Randy Porter Trio with Nancy King, *Porter Plays Porter* (Heavywood Music; 41:57 ★★★★★): Unlike the other albums discussed in this column, the singer here is listed as a "special guest." This is really the Oregon-based pianist Randy Porter's album, and he delivers the goods. His modern interpretations of eight Porter classics (plus one worthy Randy Porter original) are dazzlingly accomplished. Nancy King's singing is inventive, but sometimes strenuously so, leaving me longing for the original melody.

Ordering info: randyporter.com

Low-Fly Quintet, *Stop For A While* (Losen Records 188; 38:05 ★★★★★½): This Norwegian group, a piano trio plus cello backing vocalist Camilla Tømte, is going for a modern take on a bluesy '30s sound. Tømte brings good intonation and charisma, as well as a background in gospel, blues and pop. Her own songs tend toward the slow, sad and slightly off-kilter, but could use more polish. Although the album doesn't quite gel, the group shows its potential in appealing takes on vintage songs. **DB**

Ordering info: losenrecords.no



Scheen Jazzorkester & Jon Øystein Rosland *Tamanoar*

LOSEN RECORDS 177

★★★★½

In 1985, the Vienna Art Orchestra had an album called *Perpetuum Mobile*. This title would have befitted this new recording by the Scheen Jazzorkester, a 12-piece band led by Norwegian saxophonist Jon Øystein Rosland that owes as much to classical orchestral music as to jazz. Throughout, there is a sense of constant motion that is generated by shifts that unfailingly occur in quick succession.

Throughout the tapestry woven by Rosland, solos occur organically and not out of obligation or convention. The most significant ones are the product of trumpeter Thomas Johansson, arguably the busiest member of the band. In all cases, they never overstay their welcome. As a result, *Tamanoar* is truly a group effort where collective performance is privileged over individual prowess.

Rosland's arranging talents contribute largely to the cohesiveness of the ensemble and illustrate this approach. The colorful voicings bring out the pieces' inner beauty with the extensive use of countermelodies and tonal contrasts. Pastoral moods are favored and only on rare instances do the synthesizer or the drums disrupt the melodious output.

The main operational mode also has its shortcomings. It is music that will appeal to those with short attention spans, but it might frustrate others who would have liked to hear further developments. On the other hand, it might be an encouragement to go back often to those multifaceted compositions.

—Alain Drouot

Tamanoar: Snake Oil; Oppidum; Lost In Lemuria I; Sjarlatan; Latroductus; Lost In Lemuria II; Habitable; Wabi Sabi; Lost In Lemuria III; Tamanoar. (50:51)

Personnel: André Kassen, soprano saxophone; Børge-Are Halvorsen, flutes, alto saxophone; Jon Øystein Rosland, tenor saxophone; Line Bjørnør Rosland, bass clarinet; Finn Arne Dahl Hanssen, Thomas Johansson, trumpet; Benedikte Follegg Hol, Magne Rutle, trombone; Asgeir Grong, bass trombone; Rune Klakegg, piano, synth, accordion; Jan Olav Renvåg, bass; Audun Kleive, drums.

Ordering info: losenrecords.no



Ed Partyka Jazz Orchestra feat. Julia Oschewsky *Kopfkino*

MONS 874608

★★★★½

Calling a big band a “jazz orchestra” can sometimes seem pretentious, but not in the case of Ed Partyka’s Berlin-based ensemble. His arrangements go well beyond the standard big band palette, exploiting timbre and dynamics to create the most vivid, coloristic sound possible.

Note, for example, the gorgeous pastels he gets at the beginning of “It’s The Peace That

Deafens,” deftly layering horn, clarinets, piano and tuba under a lilting flugelhorn melody. Or cue up his eerily despairing treatment of Harold Arlen’s “Out Of This World” and marvel at how, after breaking the song down to just an expressionist trio of piano, voice and Malte Schiller’s soprano saxophone, Partyka builds an almost Prokofievian sense of foreboding out of saxophones, flute, muted brass and percussion.

Julia Oschewsky’s creamy mezzo-soprano remains utterly relaxed even when placed against a screaming trumpet section. And the intricate backings Partyka places behind Paul Imm’s bass solo on “Fee Fi Fo Fum” succeed thanks to the band’s masterful command of dynamics. Add in the brassy, blustering swing of “The Summer Of My Discontent (Summer In My Disco Tent),” and *Kopfkino* stands as a thrilling slice of state-of-the-art big band jazz.

—J.D. Considine

Kopfkino: The Summer Of My Discontent (Summer In My Disco Tent); Out Of This World; Fee Fi Fo Fum; It’s The Peace That Deafens; One Two Three Ten; Ataraxia. (59:06)

Personnel: Ed Partyka, conductor and arranger; Oliver Leicht, alto and soprano saxophones, flute, clarinet, alto clarinet; Florian Trübsbach, alto saxophone, flute, alto flute, clarinet; Malte Schiller, tenor and soprano saxophones, flute, clarinet, bass clarinet; Florian Leuschner, baritone saxophone, bass clarinet; Katharina Thomsen, baritone and bass saxophones, bass and contrabass clarinets; Kirsty Wilson, English horn (5, 6); Felix Meyer, Benny Brown, Gerhard Ormig, Jörg Engels, Martin Auer, trumpet, flugelhorn; Linus Bernouli, French horn; Simon Harter, Lukas Wyss, trombone; Robert Hedemann, bass trombone; Jan Schriener, bass trombone, tuba; Hendrik Soll, piano; Paul Imm, bass; Reinhold Schmolzer, drums; Julia Oschewsky, vocals.

Ordering info: monsrecords.de

Cowboys and Frenchmen *Bluer Than You Think*

OUTSIDE IN MUSIC

★★★★

Cowboys and Frenchmen, a quintet led by saxophonists Ethan Helm (alto and soprano) and Owen Broder (alto and baritone), embraces and expands on a range of influences that’s exceptionally broad even for this eclectic era. Also featuring pianist Chris Ziemba, bassist Ethan O’Reilly and drummer Matt Honor, the ensemble is smart, cohesive and credible in a way like The Bad Plus or Mostly Other People Do The Killing, using virtuosic skills and rhythmic power to walk the line between irony and earnestness, with listenability as high a priority as group creativity.

Bluer Than You Think, their second album, opens with the John Coltrane-meets-klezmer orientalism of “Wayfarer,” then takes a hard turn with “Beasts,” based on episodes of a Steve Reich-style phased phrase alternating with a kinky line. On “Companion Plan” a ’60s soul vamp gets a riff and harmony update, and Helm and Broder—on alto and bari, respectively—solo with guttural power. “Lillies Beneath The Bridge” is a vehicle for pianist Ziemba’s balladic lyricism and Honor on brushes, Helm and Broder sighing



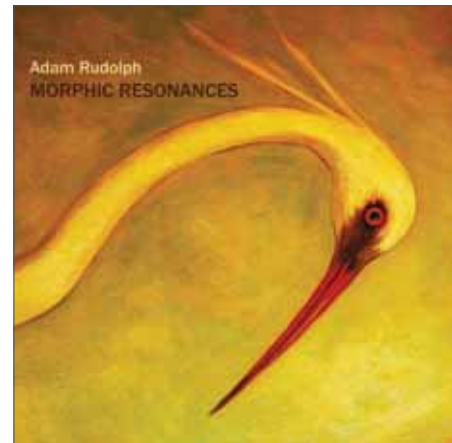
in mournful unison; “Clear Head” includes a brisk, bright sax duet that evolves within proscribed but not limiting parameters to end with multi-tracked soprano sax. “Bluer Than You Think” has the funky bass intro, gospelish piano comping and bold, dark hook of a radio hit, but opens wide for blowing and a drums dance that leads to a genuine, live-performed fadeout.

—Howard Mandel

Bluer Than You Think: Wayfarer; Beasts; Companion Plan; Lillies Beneath The Bridge; Clear Head; Bluer Than You Think; C&F Jam; Uncommon Sense. (57:30)

Personnel: Ethan Helm, alto and soprano saxophones; Owen Broder, alto and baritone saxophones; Chris Ziemba, piano; Ethan O’Reilly, bass; Matt Honor, drums.

Ordering info: outsideinmusic.com



Adam Rudolph *Morphic Resonances*

META/MOD TECHNOLOGIES

★★★½

This is the third collaboration between the Meta and MOD labels, presenting Adam Rudolph’s multifaceted approaches. For this last in the trilogy, several artists interpret a new set of Rudolph’s compositions.

The opening title piece, and second track “Syntactic Adventures,” are written for New York’s Momenta Quartet. Cello, viola and a pair of violins negotiate a dramatic and dark environment, delivering an opening flourish that breaks out into a scampering pizzicato section. These modes alternate, as singing tonalities paint a warm shimmer, organically turning from activity to reflection and back again. Nearing the end of the second piece, a purposeful canter develops, suggestive of works by Steve Reich or Kevin Volans.

Two compositions are penned for Kaoru Watanabe (flute) and Marco Cappelli (acoustic guitar), this duo adopting a cautious interaction on “Garden, Ashes,” pacing around each other and eventually discovering common ground as they stride off in tandem. Rudolph is primarily concerned with creating a depth of concentrated listening, usually resolved by a process of propulsive activation. Sometimes he takes the musicians back for further contemplation before continuing the journey.

The album’s closing “Lamento” sees Watanabe and Cappelli departing softly, immediately following the more vigorous “Coincidentia Oppositorum,” which is almost as brash as a typical Louis Andriessen work. One of the album’s best pieces, “Orbits,” is performed by the Odense Percussion Group, from Denmark, their spread ranging from vibraphone to tympani.

—Martin Longley

Morphic Resonances: Morphic Resonances; Syntactic Adventures; Garden, Ashes; Strange Thought; Orbits; Coincidentia Oppositorum; Lamento. (55:00)

Personnel: Momenta Quartet, strings; Kaoru Watanabe, flute; Marco Cappelli, guitar; Sana Nagano, violin; Odense Percussion Group; Figura/Kammerat Orkester Ensemble.

Ordering info: metarecords.com

Playing To Win

Corey Dennison Band, *Night After Night* (Delmark 852; 61:16 ★★★★★):

A regular performer at Chicago's Kingston Mines club, Corey Dennison shows considerable respect for the great blues and soul-blues traditions without being interned within them. This gritty well-above-average singer and guitarist has a liberating personality that casts songs he's written by himself or with multi-instrumentalist Gerry Hundt in a contemporary light. Dennison's second album also benefits from a rhythm section that works up all the combustion needed to reinvigorate songs borrowed from Jimmy Reed, Carl Weathersby (his former employer), country soul men Cate Brothers and spiritual singers.

Ordering info: delmark.com

The Mark Robinson Band, *Live At The 5 Spot* (Blind Chihuahua 003; 41:09 ★★★★★):

When in East Nashville, go hear Mark Robinson at the Forrest Avenue club. Failing that, his third album's the next best thing. A former student of legendary jazz man David Baker at Indiana University, he manifests all the powers of his electric guitar while merging conventional or Mississippi hill country blues with jazz, country, psychedelia, even Chuck Berry rock. Robinson's singing is less interesting than the musicality of his guitar playing yet it's adequate for strong originals and tunes by the Temptations and Eddy Clearwater.

Ordering info: markrobinsonguitar.com

Mindi Abair & The Boneshakers, *The EastWest Sessions* (Pretty Good For A Girl; 48:06 ★★½):

Long established in safe-and-slick pop music, saxophonist-singer Mindi Abair has the audacity to cavort with guitarist Randy Jacobs' high-volume, aggressive blues-rock Boneshakers. Throbbing originals, she summons the intensity of forefather Junior Walker. Guest Joe Bonamassa multiplies the urgency of "Pretty Good For A Girl." Singing the Sly Stone ballad "Let Me Hear It From You," Detroit soul singer Sweet Pea Atkinson cools down the hot proceedings for a short spell.

Ordering info: prettygoodforagirl.net

King Louie's Blues Revue, *Live At Riverhouse Jazz* (Shoug; 55:53 ★★★★★):

Portland-based organ player Louis "King Louie" Pain, one of the most soulful sitting at the console today, directs the spontaneous big fun of a gig in Bend, Oregon. Veterans Andy Stokes and LaRhonda "Portland's First Lady of the Blues" Steele set their vocals strongly in the intermixed blues, soul, jazz and r&b instrumentals of a specially assembled band that includes venerable Bay Area trombonist Danny Armstrong and



Corey Dennison

bassist-singer-songwriter Lisa Mann. The set takes a provocative turn with ultra-sensual songs by James Brown, Marvin Gaye, Willie Dixon and B.B. King.

Ordering info: loulspain.com

Various Artists, *Howlin' At Greaseland* (West Tone 1708; 45:46 ★★½):

By rule of thumb, Howlin' Wolf tributes are a short walk onto deep quicksand. This is the exception. The Chicago and West Coast musicians gathered in guitarist Kid Andersen's Greaseland Studios, the ranks including Wolf's pianist Henry Gray, handle "Spoonful" and other lupine classics with passion and proficiency. Alabama Mike and Tail Dragger give it their best shot emulating Wolf's bloodcurdling vocals even though, of course, they don't begin to approach the master's existential dread.

Ordering info: cdbaby.com

Andrea Marr, *Natural* (Self Release; 45:36 ★★½):

Supported by her Funky Hitmen band at 2012 and '17 sessions, Australia's blues queen proffers her first soul album in a career going back to 1999. She's a gale wind of sensuous energy, generally comporting herself well. Yet Marr might have stuck to her own enjoyable compositions, leaving alone the Aretha Franklin gem "Rock Steady."

Ordering info: andreamarr.com

Various Artists, *HardCore Harp* (Electro-Fi 3455; 70:01 ★★½):

Andrew Galloway's compilation of 19 tracks by 13 harmonica players who have recorded for his label fulfills a hankering for vibrant Chicago blues driven by honest emotion. Storied elders Billy Boy Arnold, Sam Myers and Snooky Pryor don't scrimp on confidence or imagination. Also making the grade are relative young'uns like Mark Hummel, James Harman and Harrison Kennedy.

Ordering info: electrofi.com



Lauren Kinhan *A Sleepin' Bee*

DOTTED I

★★★★½

Lauren Kinhan, most famous for being a member of the New York Voices since 1992, became enamored with the classic Nancy Wilson/Cannonball Adderley (1961) recording on Capitol as a child. *A Sleepin' Bee* is her tribute to that album plus early Nancy Wilson in general.

On tribute albums, a balance needs to be struck between reverence and reinvention. Kinhan does not attempt to copy Wilson's singing style, although there are moments when the influence is naturally felt. Her singing is much more extroverted, high-powered and jazz-oriented with plenty of wild scatting that Wilson never would have attempted. The original Wilson/Adderley recording was split between vocals and instrumentals, with Wilson only starring on six songs. Five (all but "I'm Afraid The Masquerade Is Over") are on the new project along with five other songs from Wilson's 1960-'64 period.

"Let's Live Again," a delightful song from Wilson's album with George Shearing's quintet, *The Swingin's Mutual!* (1961), requires a wide range, which Kinhan readily displays during her boppish version. In contrast, "Guess Who I Saw Today" is overdue for retirement, although the singer does her best with it. Most memorable is an adventurous ride on "Never Will I Marry," one of three songs that feature excellent playing from guest trumpeter Ingrid Jensen. Nat Adderley's "The Old Country" has a prominent role for bassist Matt Penman before Jensen's trumpet gracefully transforms it into "Passion Flower." "Born To Be Blue" and "You Don't Know What Love Is" are treated more conventionally before the full group closes with a romp on "Happy Talk."

—Scott Yanow

A Sleepin' Bee: Let's Live Again; Guess Who I Saw Today; A Sleepin' Bee; (You Don't Know) How Glad I Am; Never Will I Marry; Save Your Love For Me; The Old Country/Passion Flower; Born To Be Blue; You Don't Know What Love Is; Happy Talk. (50:23)

Personnel: Lauren Kinhan, vocals; Andy Ezrin, piano; Matt Penman, bass; Jared Schoning, drums; Ingrid Jensen, trumpet.

Ordering info: laurenkinhan.com

Idit Shner *9 Short Stories*

OA2 22147

★★★★

9 Short Stories marks the latest release from Idit Shner on the OA2 label. The saxophonist and composer is currently an associate professor of saxophone and jazz studies at the University of Oregon.

In spite of the rich precedent for women players and composers in jazz, there remains a lack of opportunities for women in this music. Happily, more female artists today are growing empowered to take their careers into their own hands. Shner, for example, not only produced her latest effort, but she also composed eight of the nine tracks on the album.

While *9 Short Stories* highlights Shner's gifts as a multi-reedist, what resonates most with the listener are the incredible journeys taken with every "story" and collaboration between her longtime bandmates—pianist Josh Hanlon, bassist James Driscoll and drummer Stockton Helbing.

On *9 Short Stories*, Shner encapsulates just some of her varied influences—from the polymetric rhythms of New Orleans and the black church on "Revision," to the spirituality and otherworldliness of Coltrane on "Hymn And Variations." Despite jet-setting from one sound to another, you never feel deprived or overwhelmed by the shift, as each of Shner's tunes lends something to the prior song. —Shannon J. Effinger

9 Short Stories: Revision; Passion Flower; Arrival; First Waltz; Hymn And Variations; Like Satie; Departure; Angst As Usual; Not Friends. (35:00)

Personnel: Idit Shner, alto and soprano saxophone; Josh Hanlon, piano, Hammond B-3; James Driscoll, bass; Stockton Helbing, drums.

Ordering info: originarts.com



Florian Hoefner *Coldwater Stories*

ORIGIN 82740

★★★★½

For his fourth recording overall and first solo outing, the German-born pianist sets a reflective tone with generous use of space, glistening ostinatos and a tender touch. Inspired by the maritime landscape of his new home base of Newfoundland, the large Canadian island off the east coast of the North American mainland where he moved three years ago from New York City, *Coldwater Stories* is, ironically, more luminous than Hoefner's previous Origin release, *Luminosity*, a muscular quartet outing featuring tenor saxophone burner Seamus Blake.

Opening on a contemplative note with the sparsely appointed, slightly melancholic "The Great Auk," Hoefner continues the calming vibe with "Migration" and sublime pieces like "Sunrise Bay" and "The Way Of Water." The buoyant "Green Gardens" carries an uplifting lilt while the more somber "Never Lost" has the feel of one of Keith Jarrett's ruminative sections from the *Köln Concert*. In fact, like much of Jarrett's playing from that landmark album, it's hard to tell where composition ends and improvisation begins on *Coldwater Stories*. Recorded at the acoustically brilliant Sendesaal concert hall in Bremen, Germany, this one is especially good for soothing frayed nerves or casting a wistful spell. —Bill Milkowski

Coldwater Stories: The Great Auk; Migration; The Send; The Way Of Water; Never Lost; Iceberg; Green Gardens; Sunrise Bay; Iceberg; With The North Atlantic. (54:16).

Personnel: Florian Hoefner, piano.

Ordering info: originarts.com



Oscar Feldman *Gol*

ZOHO 201705

★★½

Argentinian saxophonist Oscar Feldman presents the breadth of his interests on this generously proportioned CD, sometimes to a fault. While he sounds engaged across the styles represented here, listeners who appreciate his bolder moments might not want to hang with his smoother ones.

"Viva Belgrano," the sole Feldman composition among this album's eight tracks, is an ode to a triumphant goal that put his hometown soccer team over the top. Framed by the fulminations of an impassioned sports commentator, the combo passes possession of the solo moment from one man to the next, and each player sounds like they're trying to break beyond the stately melody. Advance one tune and Feldman swaps sports fever for nap-time torpor by turning the Cuban bolero "Murmullo" into a syrupy, soprano-led ballad. A lengthy unpacking of Beck's "Nobody's Fault But My Own" unlocks some intriguing polyrhythmic combinations, but it's possible you'll forget all about them two tracks on when the band digs into an irritatingly busy treatment of the Beatles' "I Feel Fine" that is only partly redeemed by the leader's impassioned alto solo. *Gol* may authentically express Feldman's diverse interests, but this album might make more sense if he separated them. —Bill Meyer

Gol: I Let A Song Go Out Of My Heart; La Cancion Que Falta; Viva Belgrano; Murmullo; N.N.; Nobody's Fault But My Own; Is That So?; I Feel Fine. (66:32)

Personnel: Oscar Feldman, alto and soprano saxophone; John Benitez, acoustic and electric bass; Leo Genovese, piano, keyboards; Antonio Sanchez, drums; Guillermo Klein (2), vocals, keyboards.

Ordering info: zohomusic.com



Cory Weeds *Let's Groove: The Music Of Earth Wind & Fire*

CELLAR LIVE 041017

★★½

Alto saxophonist Cory Weeds previously teamed with Hammond B-3 player Mike LeDonne for the fresh-sounding *Condition Blue: The Music Of Jackie McLean* and the less-persuasive *Up A Step: The Music Of Hank Mobley*. Now the pair has turned to a less likely object of jazz homage: vintage r&b hit-makers Earth, Wind & Fire. This concept, driven by LeDonne and his skilled arrangements, would surely have been better captured live in a bar, the band hot to entertain a crowd of revelers. The slick studio sound of *Let's Groove* has scarcely a hair out of place, not a bead of sweat in the mix.

The title track has some finger-snapping charm, with tenor player Steve Kaldestad paired with Weeds for front-line unisons as LeDonne voices most of the vocal hooks at the keyboard. When it comes to "Shining Star," no amount of smooth facility can make up for the lack of the original's dazzling vocal arrangement. If the other uptempo tracks suffer from a glib vibe, the ballads "Imagination" and "After The Love Is Gone" sound like the sort of pop-jazz Muzak one might hear amid the aisles of a chain grocery. —Bradley Bambarger

Let's Groove—The Music Of Earth Wind & Fire: Let's Groove; Getaway; Devotion; You And I; The Way Of The World; Imagination; Shining Star; Kalimba; After The Love Is Gone. (64:36)

Personnel: Cory Weeds, alto saxophone; Steve Kaldestad, tenor saxophone; Mike LeDonne, Hammond B-3; Dave Sikula, guitar; Jason Tiemann, drums; Liam MacDonald, percussion.

Ordering info: cellarlive.com



The Gospel of Bob

For too many years, Bob Dylan's "Born Again" period has been improperly tagged as one of the eras to avoid at all costs. But then again, it's that same wrongheaded disdain that makes discovering this aspect of his career so gratifying. And it's also what's helped to build the anticipation for the 13th volume of Dylan's quarter-century-old Bootleg Series archives, rendering it perhaps the most anticipated edition to date.

The ensembles Dylan assembled for the albums *Slow Train Coming*, *Saved* and *Shot Of Love* rank amongst the best bands he has worked with since going electric, enhanced by the massive talents of legendary session drummer Jim Keltner, acclaimed FAME Studios keyboardist Spooner Oldham, Little Feat guitarist Fred Tackett and former CSNY bassist Tim Drummond, all of whom would accompany him on the road during that era. And when combined with the invincible group of backup singers featuring the talents of Clydie King, Carolyn Dennis, Regina McCrary, Helena Springs, Madelyn Quebec, Mona Lisa Young, Gwen Evans and Mary Elizabeth Bridges, it's quite a powerful evolution to behold as you dig into ***Trouble No More—The Bob Dylan Bootleg Series Vol. 13, 1979–1981 (Columbia/Legacy; 77:14/76:00/66:48/69:09/48:43/45:52/42:02/65:14 ★★★★★)***.

The majority of these eight discs compile live material, giving listeners an opportunity to hear this group develop in real time. For the lion's share of this era, Dylan refused to perform anything but his devotional music, which in turn incited fans to walk out of shows, opting to watch the street performers playing the singer's old material outside of the arena. But those who stuck around saw this outstanding band get tighter and stronger with each gig, evident as you listen to each of these eight discs in order.

The first two CDs contain selections from assorted dates across these three years on the road. And perhaps the clearest indication of how this group jelled into arguably Dylan's best live band is the two performances of the *Slow Train* staple "Gotta Serve Somebody" featured here: When the group played it in San Francisco on Nov. 15, 1979, shortly after the tune reached no. 24 on the Billboard charts, they were playing pretty close to the way it sounded on the album. However, by the time they got to Bad Segeberg, Germany, on July 15, 1981—with



Bob Dylan

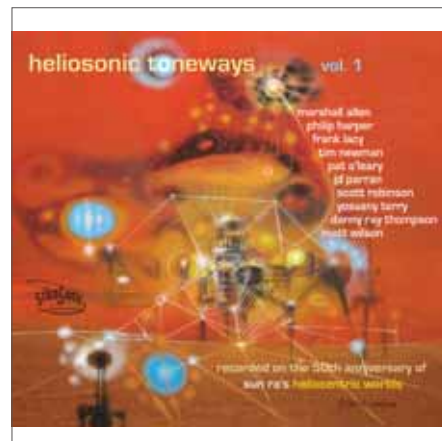
Willie Smith taking over for Spooner on keys and the addition of second guitarist Steve Ripley—the song literally explodes with Holy Ghost maximalism on emotional overdrive.

The third and fourth discs consist mainly of previously unreleased studio outtakes and rehearsals, including a beautiful alternate version of the *Shot Of Love*-era highlight "Caribbean Wind" featuring longtime Neil Young cohort Ben Keith on pedal steel. The "best of" collection from Dylan's three-night run at the Toronto Maple Leaf Gardens on discs five and six might be short in length, but long on rich, spirited versions of material like "Are You Ready?" and the reggae-flavored "Man Gave Names To All The Animals." By the time you get to the complete concert at London's Earl's Court from June 27, 1981, featured on discs seven and eight, the show when he finally lifted the moratorium on his pre-'79 works, you're so dizzied up by Dylan's gospel you find yourself fuzzy about where the religious music ends and the old warhorses begin.

By this time, the band was at the height of its collective powers, the Muscle Shoals revue trip reaching peak nirvana as "I Believe In You" bleeds into "Like A Rolling Stone" as if they belonged together the whole time. None of the controversial "sermonizing" in which Dylan partook during these tours makes the cut, save for the dialogue utilized so brilliantly by actor Michael Shannon in the documentary film featured on the accompanying DVD. Nevertheless, *Trouble No More* paints a solid, stirring portrait of the artist and his three-year bromance with the Almighty.

DB

Ordering info: legacyrecordings.com



The Heliosonic Tone-tette *Heliosonic Toneways Vol. 1*

SCIENSONIC 10

★★★★★

The two volumes of *Heliocentric Worlds* that ESP Records released in the 1960s loom especially large in Sun Ra's voluminous discography. Ra wanted to stretch people's notions of what was possible, and the outlines of his musical concepts are expansive enough that they're still ripe for investigation 50 years later.

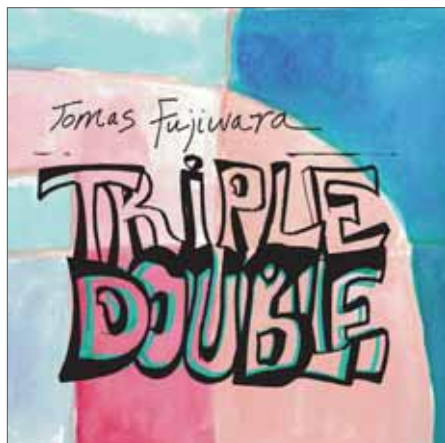
Scott Robinson, a veteran multi-instrumentalist and proprietor of ScienSonic Records, is especially suited to such work. The Heliosonic Tone-tette includes two members of the current Sun Ra Arkestra, including Marshall Allen, who played on the original *Heliocentric Worlds* sessions. The Tone-tette's music was totally improvised by the participants, but they did so very much in the spirit of those long-ago sessions. Low winds braid intricate lines through "Heliotone 1B." On "Heliotone 3A," timpani and bass marimba generate masses of sound that expand and contract like cumulous clouds while overblown reeds flash like lightning. On "3B" the bulbous sounds of Allen's EVI direct the listener's gaze towards outer space.

This music is much closer to the often-thorny music that Sun Ra made in the 1960s than the boisterous anthems that constitute the current Arkestra's standard fare, but there's one moment when Matt Wilson's syncopated beat induces some call-and-response exchanges between the horns that would be just the thing to accompany one of the Arkestra's joyous marches through a crowd. —Bill Meyer

Heliosonic Toneways Vol. 1: Heliotone 1A; Heliotone 1B; Heliotone 2A; Heliotone 2B; Heliotone 3A; Heliotone 3B; Heliotone 4A; Heliotone 4B; Heliotone 5B; Heliotone 6; Heliotone 7. (62:12)

Personnel: Scott Robinson, tenor saxophone, bass marimba, electric piano, piccolo, timpani, theremin, "power bore" bugle, Faventia barrel piano, trichel bell, soundsheet, dragon drum, space magnets; Marshall Allen, alto saxophone, EVI, Casio VL-tone, piano, bass marimba; Philip Harper, trumpet; Frank Lacy, trombone; Tim Newman, bass trombone; Pat O'Leary, string bass, waterphone; JD Parran, bass clarinet; Yosvanny Terry, alto saxophone, woodblocks, bells; Danny Ray Thompson, baritone saxophone, flute, bontos, space sound tube; Matt Wilson, drums, timpani, Korean gong, dragon drum.

Ordering info: scienSonic.net



Tomas Fujiwara *Triple Double*

FIREHOUSE 12 04-01-026

★★★★½

Triple Double's instrumentation is a double trio (two drummers, two guitarists, cornet and trumpet), and at other exploratory moments, it's a splendid triple duo. Doubling up instruments with a nod to Ornette Coleman, the new recording offers creative adventures that showcase New York drummer Tomas Fujiwara's passionate compositions.

"Diving For Quarters" presents call-and-response playfulness from guitarists Mary

Halvorson and Brandon Seabrook. A hint of prepared guitar melds into a tradeoff of emphatic exclamations of anti-chords, harmonics and spidery pizzicato. Enter the drum kit and a duo of Taylor Ho Bynum's cornet and Ralph Alessi's trumpet improvising over 15-beat cycles. Momentary melody resurfaces and the sextet wanders into a two-drum-kit extravaganza from the bandleader and Gerald Cleaver.

Triple Double is all about in-your-face intensity. Active avoidance of melodic consonance by the guitars makes for angular and dissonant rebellious dark anti-melodies. "Love And Protest" lassos down-home cowboy with rapid picking and tremolo effects on Halvorson's guitar, repeating loud static digging-in of notes, and ancient 1950s-reminiscent raw reverb. Fujiwara blurs compositional form while looped guitar effects proceed from an introductory funeral-like dirge into free horn exploration and exiting sorrowful melody. "For Alan," Fujiwara's poignant tribute to legendary drummer Alan Dawson, features recordings of Dawson teaching Fujiwara to play drums at the age of 10.

—Kerlie McDowall

Triple Double: Diving For Quarters; Blueberry Eyes; Hurry Home B/G; Pocket Pass; For Alan; Love And Protest; Decisive Shadow; Hurry Home M/T; Toasting The Mart; To Hours. (58:34)

Personnel: Tomas Fujiwara, drums; Gerald Cleaver, drums; Mary Halvorson, guitar; Brandon Seabrook, guitar; Taylor Ho Bynum, cornet; Ralph Alessi, trumpet.

Ordering info: firehouse12records.com

Nestor Torres *Jazz Flute Traditions*

ALFI 8817

★★★★½

Nestor Torres' *Jazz Flute Traditions* opens up with "Swingin' Shepherds Blues," a jaunty blues written by Moe Koffman, followed by a classic track from the late Herbie Mann, "Memphis Underground." Played pretty much true to form and tempo as Mann recorded it in 1969, this live recording at WDNA in Miami features a soulful turn on alto saxophone by Ian Munoz, with flutist Torres stretching out a little more with some Latin zest on the back end. A more familiar Torres returns with the torrid "Jungle Fantasy," reminding us how his flute can fly at any tempo. Likewise with his visit to Chick Corea's "Spain" (via an adagio by Joaquín Rodrigo), the tune again played at the original fast tempo but with Joe Farrell's original flute spot expanded upon by the leader. Pianist Silvano Monasterios emerges as Torres' sparring partner for this date.

Things get more interesting as Torres moves into a quieter zone with the reflective "The Golden Flute," a Yusef Lateef waltz that finds the flutist singing like a nightingale. The most dramatic moment comes with Torres' more measured approach to Corea's



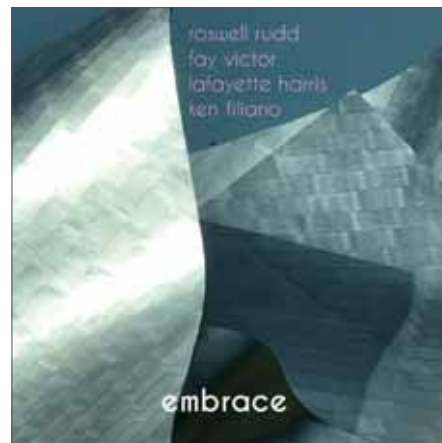
"Windows," originally heard with Corea and Hubert Laws. It still has the swivel of the original, but is played at a much more relaxed pace. Cole Porter's "So In Love" is played at a crawl, and rightfully so. "Miami Beach Rhumba," a hearty hoedown chock full of percussive twists and turns, takes us out on familiar Torres turf.

—John Ephland

Jazz Flute Traditions: Swingin' Shepherds Blues; Memphis Underground; Jungle Fantasy; Adagio from Concierto De Aranjuez/Spain; The Golden Flute; Serenade To A Cuckoo; Sequenza/Gazzelloni; Cute; Windows; So In Love; Miami Beach Rhumba. (73:01)

Personnel: Nestor Torres, flute; Silvano Monasterios, piano; James Ousley, bass; Michael Piolet (1–7, 9–11), Marcus Grant (8), drums; Jose Gregorio Hernandez, Miguel Russell (2, 3, 11), percussion; Ian Munoz, alto saxophone (2, 6, 8).

Ordering info: alfirecords.com



Rudd/Victor/Harris/Filiano *Embrace*

RARE NOISE 2012

★★★★½

The idea of a bunch of standards and jazz oldies played by a crusty veteran trombonist with gal singer and drum-less rhythm section may not strike you right off as hot stuff, but let me pull your coat.

Trombonist Roswell Rudd inhabits his noblest of axes like none other. He reigns over dead-slow tempos and excels at medium trots, summoning more dry wit and expressive breadth with plunger mute on "Can't We Be Friends" than Charlie Chaplin. Vocalist Fay Victor evinces pain, joy and lust with exceptional candor and warmth. Bassist Ken Filiano and pianist Lafayette Harris find amiable affinity as backroom buddies of easy accord, imperfect straight men for free-form front-line antics.

The repertoire on *Embrace* was all written before 1958 (except a wry ditty by Rudd's partner, Verna Gillis). At 82, Rudd has been playing these compositions for ages, and his accumulated affection is tangible as barnacles. They're eclectic as Rudd, who embodies a rich confluence of jazz cultures.

These are no polished charts, rather rough-cut barroom jams by solid pros exuding gritty experience and slow-smoked passion. Taking their sweet time, the band jostles inside the lyrics to nudge nuanced emotions.

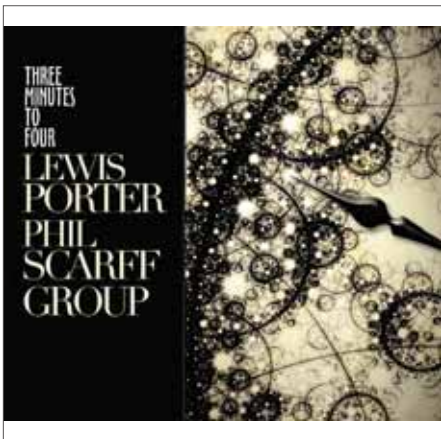
Thelonious Monk's "Pannonica"—drawn from Carmen McRae's version with Jon Hendricks' lyrics—is a far cry from the snappy two-step he and Steve Lacy laid down on *School Days* (1961). Roswell here reminisces on his savory, crunchy career, showing us, with a bearhug, that it's been one swell ride.

—Fred Bouchard

Embrace: Something To Live For; Goodbye Pork Pie Hat; Can't We Be Friends?; I Hadn't Anyone Til You; Too Late Now; House Of The Rising Sun; I Look In The Mirror; Pannonica. (65:11)

Personnel: Roswell Rudd, trombone; Fay Victor, vocals; Lafayette Harris, piano; Ken Filiano, bass.

Ordering info: rarenoise.com



Lewis Porter/Phil Scarff Group
Three Minutes To Four
 WHALING CITY SOUND 100

★★½

Featuring two full-length traditional ragas (and an original piece based on a third), a pair of two-part suites, four straightahead originals and a Sonny Rollins cover, *Three Minutes To Four* is nothing if not ambitious. That ambition is conceptually imaginative, impeccably performed ...and emotionally empty. Pianist Lewis Porter and saxophonist Phil Scarff apparently expended so much intellectual energy on the music

that they forgot to make it expressive.

This is most apparent in Porter's compositions. Primarily known as a jazz historian (of great knowledge and perception), Porter devotes his space in the liner notes to explaining the structural details of "Journey" and "Olivier." And indeed that may be all to say about them. The former could be a kicky dance number (with shifting meters) if anybody but drummer Bertram Lehmann seemed to be having any fun. "Olivier" has a promisingly mysterious opening that soon gets swallowed by its own self-conscious complexity.

But Scarff's contributions, and the covers, fare little better. Despite some bright moments in "Bageshri-Bageshwari," its primary take-away is that it takes a leitmotif from the bass line of Joe Zawinul's "Birdland." Moreover, Scarff's use of a tamboura in this and in the two authentic ragas is a thuddingly obvious touch. Both of Scarff's suites share Porter's proclivity for dull complexity. His tune "Long Ago" is the disc's highlight, as much by default as by its for-once-engaging cheer. —Michael J. West

Three Minutes To Four: Journey; Bageshri-Bageshwari; Olivier; Long Ago; Raga Shree, Gajarawa Baje Hi Rahila Baje Hi Baje Hi; Skies Of Africa Suite: Bird Songs Of Hermanus, Branches In The Trees; Three Minutes To Four; Striver's Row; Serially Retro Suite: Dozens Not Baker's/Retro Cells; Raga Bhairavi. (73:25)

Personnel: Lewis Porter, piano; Phil Scarff, tenor, soprano and soprano saxophones, tamboura; John Funkhouser, bass; Bertram Lehmann, drums.

Ordering info: whalingcitysound.com

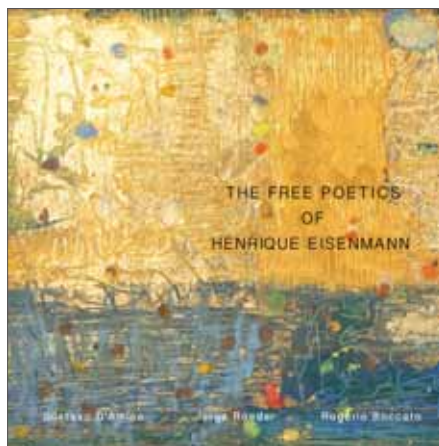
Henrique Eisenmann
The Free Poetics Of Henrique Eisenmann
 RED PIANO 14599-4429

★★★

Brazilian pianist and composer Henrique Eisenmann effortlessly braids ideas from disparate traditions and disciplines on this rigorously conceived quartet outing.

It makes sense that the album's second track is a spry, dancing interpretation of "Zurich" by Hermeto Pascoal, one of Brazil's most important musicians; Eisenmann certainly seems interested in pursuing a similarly multifarious path. On this track and numerous others, the interplay of the pianist with his South American ensemble—fellow Brazilians Gustavo D'Amico on soprano saxophone and Rogerio Boccato on percussion, and Peruvian Jorge Roeder on bass—offer shape-shifting harmonic and rhythmic exchanges with breathless fluidity.

The opener, "Introduction: Niños Peruanos," is one of several pieces that use field recordings of children singing and talking, and further transcribes them and weaves the melodies of the patterns into the arrangements. "Jeneupti" also overlays chord changes from the Charles Ives piece "Serenity" to cast a spell that seems to ema-

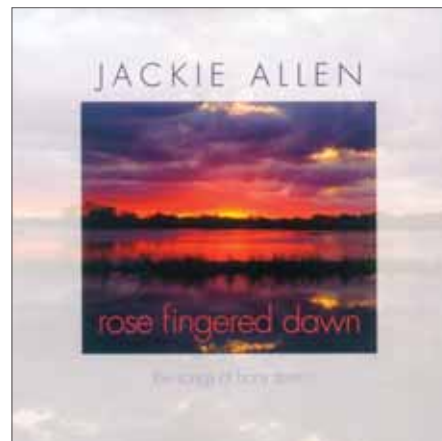


nate from the sing-songy melody delivered by a young Ghanaian boy. More subtle is the tonal influence of Zimbabwean mbira music on "Afro-Latidos," a deeply propulsive vehicle that allows D'Amico to dispense with the generally sweet-toned approach on the album in favor of wonderfully charged lines, delivered with an abraded tone, that draw upon free-jazz tradition. —Peter Margasak

The Free Poetics Of Henrique Eisenmann: Introduction; Niños Peruanos; Zurich; Sarabande No. 2; Jeneupti; Afro-Latidos; Anthropolophagy; Dans un Fracas de Plumes (birds); Zumbi; Epilogue; Pifanos. (53:09)

Personnel: Henrique Eisenmann, piano; Gustavo D'Amico, soprano saxophone; Jorge Roeder, bass; Rogerio Boccato, percussion.

Ordering info: redpianorecords.com



Jackie Allen
Rose Fingered Dawn
 AVANT-BASS

★★★½

Jackie Allen is among the many talented but under-the-radar singers you often find in unexpected places, meaning anywhere outside of New York City. On *Rose Fingered Dawn*, Allen's 12th album since 1994, she showcases a polished virtuosity and a varied procession of her musical personas.

The title song is not really a song at all but an intimate, often whispered recitation entwined in wafting coils of seductive, film noir accompaniment. In tandem, they radiate a fiercely sensual erotic vapor. It's inspired by *The Odyssey* and Odysseus' encounter with the goddess of the dawn, although the connection is somewhat lost in the breathy but seductive pillow talk. But Allen has more faces and voices than Sherlock Holmes, a skill she italicizes on the second cut, "NOLA," as she sashays down New Orleans' Bourbon Street swinging a naughty backbeat and a hot Southern accent reflected in Victor Garcia's plunger horn.

Having established her control over two very different poles, she begins to explore some of the in-between. "Time" begins coyly, gets wild as John Moulder smashes things up, then comes back to coy. "Bel Air BBQ" is a slice of Southern fried funk that she sings with an assertive, hip-swinging thrust. She then turns "The Laugh That Is You" into a shimmering paradigm of stylish and sophisticated jazz singing. It swings with a light airiness and is her highlight moment on the CD. "Moon On The Rise" has some lovely verbal imagery but can't quite escape its own poetic narcissism and actually tell a story. Same with the lyrical mood of "Dark Butterflies"—a provocative thought that doesn't quite fly. —John McDonough

Rose Fingered Dawn: Rose Fingered Dawn; NOLA Love Song; Time; Dark Butterflies; Bel Air BBQ; The Laugh That Is You; Moon's On The Rise; Holy Man; Sweet Dreams; Steal The Night. (49:21)

Personnel: Victor Garcia, trumpet; Andy Baker, trombone; Geoff Bradfield, reeds; John Moulder, guitar; Tom Larson, keyboards; Hans Sturm, bass; Dane Richeson, drums.

Ordering info: avant-bass.com

Ernesto Cervini's Turboprop Rev

ANZIC RECORDS 0059

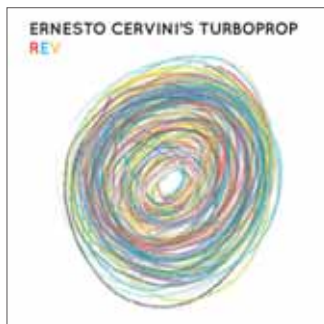
★★★★★

The latest project by Ernesto Cervini's Turboprop focuses on its American and Canadian band members' melodious compositions with equal sharing of the spotlight. *Rev* has a relaxed vibe, with the sextet locking in with tight horn lines, solo features and group interplay. Bandleader Cervini, who hails from Toronto, is an accomplished multi-instrumentalist on clarinet, piano and drums.

Feel-good improvisation on the title track delivers memorable fun, with floating chromatic horn lines shapeshifting behind Cervini's driving drum solo. "Granada Bus" is an imaginative, fiery feature of Davidson, Farrugia and Frahm. Cervini anticipates and shapes emerging improvisatory ideas and propels his bandmates' playful ideas.

Lyrical, inventive writing by Cervini's sextet members complements the two tracks penned by the drummer/bandleader/producer. Compositional displays showcase dazzling melodic writing and arranging from Toronto trombonist/composer William Carn, spirited upbeat flourishes from New York bassist Dan Loomis and high-energy exploration from Toronto pianist Adrean Farrugia.

—Kerlie McDowall



Rev: The Libertine; Granada Bus; No Rain; Rev; The Daily Mail; Pennies From Heaven; Ranthem; Act Of Instability. (48:42)

Personnel: Ernesto Cervini, drums; Tara Davidson, soprano and alto saxophones; Joel Frahm, tenor saxophone; William Carn, trombone; Adrean Farrugia, piano; Dan Loomis, bass.

Ordering info: ernestocervini.com

Richie Cole Latin Lover

RCP 005

★★½

Following the death of Phil Woods, Richie Cole stands as the leading reminder of the seductive power of the alto saxophone when it's played fluidly over sophisticated changes. Unfortunately, the spell is broken when the tune doesn't pass muster.

Cole is at his fleet, inventive best on "If I Only Had A Brain." He sails through the melody, building in asides and rubato phrases, and nodding to Charlie Parker with a reference to "Stormy Weather." It's not particularly Latin in feel, but it's an exhilarating ride. At the other end of the spectrum is a cheesed-up take on "Lonely Bull," which was cheesy enough in Herb Alpert's hands, without the pseudo-Ennio Morricone vocal effects and castanets. Neil Sedaka's "Laughter In The Rain" fares little better for the subtle South American vibe that Kevin Moore's Rhodes and Vince Taglieri's percussion add to it. There's meatier fare to be found on "Cielito Lindo," a traditional Mexican song that lets Cole and Moore take wing, and Debussy's "L'Eclipse De Lune," which melts like butter in Cole's horn. Overall, this has the feel of an early '60s "easy listening" album—thin gruel for someone as skilled as Cole.

—James Hale



Latin Lover: If I Only Had A Brain; Cielito Lindo; L'Eclipse De Lune; Lonely Bull; Serenata; Laughter In The Rain; Girl From Carnegie; Harlem Nocturne; Island Breeze; Indicted For Love; Malibu Breeze; Almost Like Being In Love. (61:18)

Personnel: Richie Cole, alto saxophone, vocals (4); Eric Suehoff, guitars; Kevin Moore, piano, Fender Rhodes; Mark Perna, bass, vocals (4); Vince Taglieri, drums, castanets (4); Rick Matt, baritone saxophone (4); Nancy Kepner, Jim Barr, George Heid, Tony Goreczny, vocals (4).

Ordering info: markpernamusic.com

Rob Schneiderman Tone Twister

HOLLISTIC MUSICWORKS 16

★★★★½

Throughout his sideman stints with notables such as James Moody, J. J. Johnson, Art Farmer and Eddie Harris, his tenure in the band Tana Reid and his 10 previous discs as a leader, pianist Rob Schneiderman has shown a straightforward heart marked by lyricism and no-nonsense taste.

That holds true on this set featuring eight originals burnished with subtle left turns and infused with shades of Latin ("Footloose Freestyle"), blues ("Tone Twister") and even a dose of half-time funk ("Left Coast Lullaby"). The centerpiece grabber is "Slapdance-Tapstick," an uptempo swinger inspired by tap dancer Buster Brown.

This quintet's sumptuous sound owes much to the rich, warm front-line union of trumpeter Brian Lynch (who owns the label and produced) and tenor saxophonist Ralph Moore. These two luminaries are, of course, tremendous soloists. But the key here is their rare sonic blend.

Bassist Gerald Cannon—taking time off from his long tenure as McCoy Tyner's musical director—lends his signature fat, solid support, while drummer Peter Van Nostrand is grooving, probing and catalyzing throughout. In essence, it's the sound of a deeply connected quintet.

—Jeff Potter



Tone Twister: Footloose Freestyle; Unforgettable; Left Coast Lullaby; Distant Memory; Slapdance-Tapstick; Windblown; Tone Twister; Tailspin; The Lion's Tale. (61:00)

Personnel: Rob Schneiderman, piano; Brian Lynch, trumpet; Ralph Moore, tenor saxophone; Gerald Cannon, bass; Peter Van Nostrand, drums.

Ordering info: robschneiderman.bandcamp.com

Musicianer Slow Learner

ILUSO RECORDS 08

★★★★★

This trio plays together with an ease and fluency that bespeaks a couple decades of shared experience between baritone saxophonist Josh Sinton, bassist Jason Ajemian and drummer Chad Taylor. When Sinton's tunes call for a groove, they move with him like synchronized dancers.

Sinton writes melodies that could fit a singer's voice as easily as they do his horn's, and he imbues them with lived-in emotion. The way "Can't Really Say" drops to a hush halfway through, he might be mustering up courage for an apology or a tender plea. And when he scales the upper registers before lurching into some urgent funk on "Evening Of Mourning (Ferguson Goddam)," you feel the dismay. A generous leader, Sinton lets his accompanists score some of the points; Taylor's intricate drumming on "Pork Bueno" feels so eager that the listener may feel like they're right next to him at the BBQ take-out window, mouth watering while they wait for their number to be called. And Ajemian's bowed punctuation of "Devoid Of Form, Devoid Of Meaning" communicates the song's gravity every bit as forcefully as the keening saxophone. If this is what "slow learning" sounds like, Sinton should keep on taking his time.

—Bill Meyer



Slow Learner: Outside; Can't Really Say; And Then It Came To Me; Sunday's Rehearsal; Jimmy; Evening Of Mourning (Ferguson Goddam); Pork Bueno; Devoid Of Form, Devoid Of Meaning; Left-Side Paralysis; Fall Beautiful. (47:07)

Personnel: Josh Sinton, baritone saxophone, keyboards; Jason Ajemian, bass; Chad Taylor, drums, percussion; Eivind Opsvik, keyboards.

Ordering info: ilusorecords.bandcamp.com

Where Improvisation Met Composition

Nessa Records, which released some of the earliest records by members of the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians (AACM) as well as more traditional efforts by Ben Webster and Von Freeman, has turned 50. The Chicago Jazz Festival celebrated the event last summer, and now the label, which relocated to Michigan many years ago, is honoring its landmark anniversary by rereleasing its first LP on CD. **Numbers 1 & 2 (Nessa; 46:45 ★★★★★½)** is credited to Lester Bowie, but it was a truly collective effort by the future members of the Art Ensemble of Chicago—Bowie on trumpet, Roscoe Mitchell and Joseph Jarman on woodwinds, Malachi Favors on bass and everyone on miscellaneous hand percussion. This unique and wide-ranging music stood apart from anything else that was happening in 1967. Besides flat-out free blowing there are carefully sequenced passages that simultaneously honor and send up older musical styles, and episodes of frenetic, absurdist theatrics. The original record contained two edited pieces, each the length of an album side. Previous CD iterations as part of the boxed set *1967/68* and *All The Numbers* reproduced the entire sessions, but the group's response to time limits back in the day amounted to compositional decisions, so these versions are well worth hearing.

Ordering info: nessarecords.com

A similar understanding of improvisation and composition as complementary tools is at work on **Roscoe Mitchell Duets With Anthony Braxton (Sackville/Delmark; 43:41 ★★★★★)**. The original LP, which was recorded in Toronto in 1976, devoted one side to each musician's compositions; this CD edition adds an alternate of Mitchell's "Seven Behind Nine Ninety Seven Sixteen Or Seven." Mitchell's titles pun on numerology while Braxton's look like schematics, but when they're playing together the men realize a collective understanding as complete and mysterious as a shared fraternal handshake. Working with a collection of woodwinds that ranges from flutes to contrabass saxophone, the two men are absolutely in sync while scrutinizing abstractions of line and shape as well as extremes of pitch and attack. But they're equally at home executing the staggered steps of Braxton's madcap march "Composition 40Q."

Ordering info: delmark.com

In the late '70s, pianist Greg Goodman cofounded The Beak Doctor/Metalanguage Records with guitarist Henry Kaiser and ROVA saxophonist Larry Ochs. After each man went his separate way, The Beak Doc-



Greg Goodman (left) and John Gruntfest

tor documented Goodman's encounters with improvisers from the Bay area and around the world. Goodman has revived the label after a nearly 15-year layoff and returned to its original format, the vinyl LP. Goodman plays on both LPs. **Extracting Fish-Bones From The Back Of The Despoiler (The Beak Doctor; 41:27 ★★★★★)** is a previously unreleased duet with English guitarist Derek Bailey that took place in Eugene, Oregon, in 1992. Bailey, who died in 2005, could be a challenging improviser, and he plunges right in by segueing from a gentle volume swell to a crab-walking sequence of jagged chords in the first 20 seconds. Goodman responds in kind, shifting between low rumbles and light, right-hand clusters before putting his hands directly on the piano's strings. Part of the pleasure in this sort of free improvisation comes from hearing how each player negotiates the choices between accommodation, confrontation and simply going one's own way. There's a bit of each across this continuous, 41-minute performance, but the engagement between the two musicians never flags.

Ordering info: thebeakdoctor.bandcamp.com

In This Land All The Birds Wore Hats And Spurs (The Beak Doctor; 48:32 ★★★★★) documents the decade-spanning partnership of Goodman and tenor saxophonist John Gruntfest. Gruntfest is a poet and visual artist as well as a musician, and this album is presented as an art object in a sturdy box with glossy inserts and an original painting as well as the LP. The first side includes two pieces from the '80s, each of which expresses a meditative, free-flowing lyricism. Side B is a suite recorded in 2008. It's a much more mercurial and pugnacious affair, full of abrupt shifts between dueling face-offs and dense, pure-sound meltdowns.

DB

Ordering info: thebeakdoctor.bandcamp.com



Dave Bennett *Blood Moon*

MACK AVENUE 1126

★★★★½

Dave Bennett, who hitched his wagon to Benny Goodman's star about a decade after his death, has built a career as one of the master's most faithful avatars. Having cultivated a poised and polished sound of cool and measured serenity, Bennett aligns particularly well with Goodman's more settled and relaxed Capitol era of the late '40s. This lyrical tidiness carries over to *Blood Moon*, even though its intent seems to be to moderate the Goodman bond by showcasing Bennett as a distinct musical personality.

Five of the 11 titles are Bennett's own, four of which are softly introspective pieces whose gentle flutter remains largely in the darker, more subterranean range of the clarinet. Their low emotional flame directs us more toward the welcoming purity of Bennett's sound than any specific musical intrigues. The same can be said of the various non-Bennett tunes, which sustain similarly sullen atmospherics.

Yet, in the middle of this meditative recital, Bennet injects three heady shots of adrenalin that bring the music sharply to life. At the same time, however, they tend to undermine Bennett's declaration of independence from the ghost BG. "Indiana," with its interpolation of "Donna Lee," is a swinging powerhouse, while Bennett's own "13 Fingers" takes off on a variation of Goodman's "Nagasaki" intro and sails into a meticulously phrased, tongue-twisting sprint. "Honky Tonk" leans toward a New Orleans feel, but only slightly removed from the swing realm. Bennett is a player superbly well balanced between purity and power, two qualities he shares with Goodman. But they need not permanently trap him as a Goodman understudy.

—John McDonough

Blood Moon: Blood Moon; A Long Goodbye; Falling Sky; Halle-lujah; Wichita Lineman; (Back Home Again In) Indiana; 13 Fingers; Down In Honky Tonk Town; The Good The Bad And The Ugly; In My Life; Heavy Heart. (48:41)

Personnel: Dave Bennett, clarinet; Reg Schwager, guitar; Dave Restivo, piano; Jim Vivian, bass; Pete Siers, drums; Davide Dizenzo, percussion.

Ordering info: mackavenue.com



Negroni's Trio *New Era*

SONY MUSIC LATIN 8898 544846

★★★★½

Jose Negroni has a special ability to discover new insights into what makes each tune unique. He always begins with the essence of the composition, whether the entire work or some element that particularly inspires him. Sometimes his approach is obvious, though never disappointing: Of course his opening chords and left-hand ostinato emulate the rhythm of a whistle blowing and wheels chugging down a track at the top of "Take The 'A' Train," with his

son Nomar Negroni amplifying on this a few seconds later with 16th notes on closed hi-hat. Guest vocalist Lapiz Conciente follows with a rap that might have been pinched from an arrivals-and-departures speaker in the Times Square station.

On the bridge, the brakes slam into a half-time trudge, an extra bar is added and then we're back to full speed on the verse. This is but one of many examples of two devices Negroni uses effectively: alterations to the structure of the tune and sudden contrasts. Thus, on "El Incomprendido," having established a mellow texture with a live string quartet, a simmering groove and tasty piano fills behind Pedro Capo's vocals, he solos with a buzzing analog synth tone—and it feels exactly right for the moment.

There is so much more to say, especially about the trio's interpretation of "My Love," with its lovely articulation of the melody on cello and flugelhorn and perfectly contoured string charts. It's probably the most beautiful treatment this song has ever received, not excluding the original version. —*Bob Doerschuk*

New Era: Brazilian Love Affair; Sweet Georgie Fame; Isn't She Lovely; El Incomprendido (I'm Misunderstood); My Love; Sunny; That's The Way Of The World; Perfidia; Moon River; Take The "A" Train. (54:52)

Personnel: Jose Negroni, piano, keyboards; Josh Allen, bass; Nomar Negroni, drums, percussion.

Ordering info: negronitrio.com

Tim Armacost *Time Being*

WHIRLWIND RECORDINGS 4701

★★★★

Some people say that the most important thing about jazz is rhythm, but saxophonist Tim Armacost makes a convincing case for the view that it's time that matters most. As he says in the liner notes, *Time Being* evolved out of "the idea of people swinging at the same time, but not together"—in other words, different articulations of rhythm locked within a common pulse.

Given Armacost's concept, it would be hard to imagine a better pair of collaborators than Robert Hurst and Jeff "Tain" Watts. Not only are they a remarkably simpatico bass-and-drums team, but each is virtuosic enough to push their rhythmic conception to the limit while still maintaining a lock on time. And even though pianist David Kikoski sits in on four of the album's 10 tracks, Hurst is generally left in charge of the harmonic context, an opportunity he uses to take his ideas in less traditional directions through the use of strummed double-stops.

"Alawain" opens the album with a moodily virtuosic solo by Hurst, and then, after stating the theme, Armacost steps aside as Watts unleashes a burst of polyrhythmic fury before the tenor repeats the head. Having set the bal-



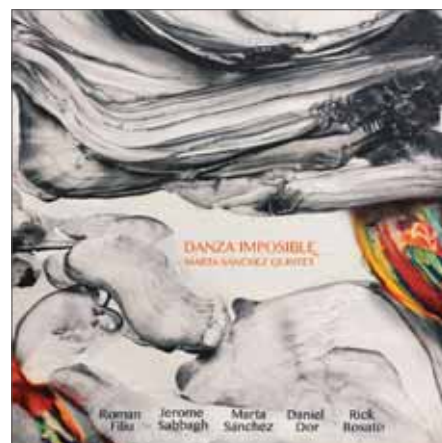
ance of power, *Time Being* proceeds to work variations on Armacost's ideas for interplay.

Three sonic "sculptures" explore the in-time-but-not-together concept using various rhythmic feels. But the most poignant track is the trio's take on Ornette Coleman's "Lonely Woman," which not only amplifies its melodic melancholy, but underscores a rhythmic tension within its phrases most musicians miss. —*J.D. Considine*

Time Being: Alawain; Time Being; Sculpture #1: Phase Shift; The Next 20; Teo; Sculpture #2: Tempus Funkit; One And Four; Lonely Woman; 53rd Street Theme; Sculpture #3; All The Things You Could Become In The Large Hadron Collider. (63:55)

Personnel: Tim Armacost, tenor saxophone; Robert Hurst, bass; Jeff "Tain" Watts, drums; David Kikoski, piano (3, 4, 7, 10).

Ordering info: whirlwindrecordings.com



Marta Sánchez Quintet *Danza Imposible*

FRESH SOUND NEW TALENT 533

★★★★

Born and raised in Madrid, Marta Sánchez made waves in Spain's jazz scene before relocating to New York in 2011, courtesy of a Fulbright scholarship. Her training in classical and jazz finds fruition with her latest unit, which straddles the line between chamber ensemble and jazz quintet.

Sánchez's compositions feature adventurous use of counterpoint, challenging meters and the layering of rhythms trickily offset between the front line and rhythm section, all colored with intimate improvisatory interplay. And her frequent use of hocketing—the relayed dispersion of melodic segments between instruments to create a continuous phrase—is used to great effect between tenor saxophonist Jerome Sabbagh and alto saxophonist Roman Filiú.

The eight heartfelt compositions transcend their cerebral methodologies, painting compelling chiaroscuro canvases that are beautiful, mysterious and restlessly morphing. Strengthening that sound, the quintet members solo in support of the compositional textures, never stealing focus.

The young pianist cites a wide range of inspirations for her compositions, including some unlikely sources. Case in point is the title track, sparked by the rhythmic nature of a digital delay she noticed in an Aphex Twin track. "Nebulosa" unfolds slowly yet maintains an entrancing forward momentum, despite being rubato throughout.

As in her writing, Sánchez's soloing favors lyricism, warmth and a strong sense of storytelling. Although the disc's metric complexities may make for an "impossible dance," listeners will find themselves swaying and thoroughly swept away.

—*Jeff Potter*

Danza Imposible: Copa De Luz; Danza Imposible; Scillar; El Girasol; Board; Nubulosa; Flesh; Junk Food. (41:33)

Personnel: Marta Sánchez, piano; Roman Filiú, alto saxophone; Jerome Sabbagh, tenor saxophone; Rick Rosato, bass; Daniel Dor, drums.

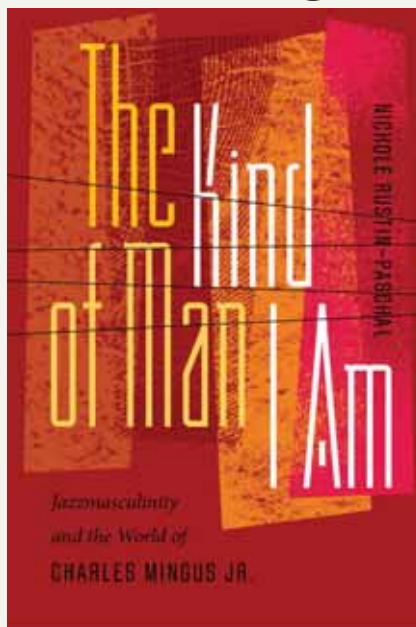
Ordering info: freshsoundrecords.com

Meditations on Mingus

Charles Mingus was a virtuoso bassist, a Duke Ellington-influenced composer whose compositions eclipsed everything from the ground-truth of the gutbucket blues to the outer limits of the avant-garde. He was an artist who wanted his children—and everybody else—to hear his music, simply on his own terms. His reputation as jazz’s “angry man” was well deserved, as evidenced by his legendary assault on trombonist Jimmy Knepper and the night he pulled the piano strings out of the keyboard, to name but two examples.

But as Nichole Rustin-Paschal posits in her fascinating book, ***The Kind of Man I Am: Jazzmasculinity and the World of Charles Mingus Jr.*** (Wesleyan University Press), Mingus possessed a gentle, even fragile, nurturing spirit, singed by the unrelenting fires of a turbulent world he never made. Rustin-Paschal, who is the coeditor of *Big Ears: Listening for Gender in Jazz Studies*, deconstructs Mingus’ life and music through the lens of *jazzmasculinity*: a gender-neutral term that, while not defined in the book in a linear, dictionary-entry fashion, is best described as “a creatively empowering source for self-expression and political engagement.” Her application of the term *jazzmen* to women is an extension of jazzmasculinity.

The author examines many aspects of Mingus’ art and influence, from the 1979 LP *Mingus*, his collaboration with Joni Mitchell, to *Mingus/Mingus: Two Memoirs*, by Al Young and Janet Coleman. Her most expansive writing is on Mingus’ notorious 1971 autobiography/memoir, *Beneath the Underdog*, with its outrageous passages on race and sex, the shady side of the jazz business, psychotherapy and marriage. In *BTU*, Rustin-Paschal highlights Mingus’ dark and twisty recollections of growing up in South Central Los Angeles as a shy, light-skinned son of a tough, Caucasian-looking Army father, and his struggles as a black musician in his hometown, San Francisco and New York, creating a new type of jazz prose in the process. “Composing the memoir over the course of more than a decade,” Rustin-Paschal writes, “Mingus expands the boundaries of feeling in jazz autobiography by embracing uncertainty, multiplicity, and vulnerability.” Rustin-Paschal also chronicles how Los Angeles shaped him, including the crucial mentoring Mingus received from local legends including Buddy Collette, Lloyd Reese and Herman Reinshagen, the former principal bassist with the



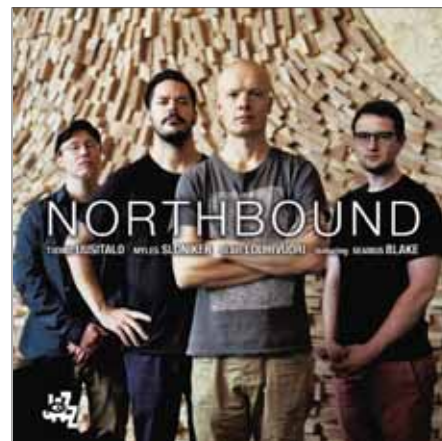
New York Philharmonic.

Mingus engaged in a lifelong struggle to control his music, which played out in the ‘50s with Debut, the record label he co-created with his wife, Celia, and Max Roach. Artistically adventurous, with releases by Roach, Miles Davis and Oscar Pettiford, and the canonic, live recording *Jazz At Massey Hall* with Mingus, Dizzy Gillespie, Charlie Parker, Roach and Bud Powell, Mingus learned the hard way that running a record label while functioning as a working musician was an impossible square to circle. To the extent that Debut enjoyed a modicum of success was, as Rustin-Paschal makes clear, largely due to Celia. “Her embrace of jazzmasculinity fostered the interpersonal relationships that sustained Debut as an aesthetic and commercial enterprise,” she writes.

Rustin-Paschal constructs a powerful portrait of Hazel Scott, the glamorous and technically brilliant pianist who recorded *Relaxed Piano Moods* on Debut, with Mingus and Roach, married the Harlem congressman Adam Clayton Powell and was blacklisted as a Communist for her outspoken support of civil rights. That Mingus signed her to his label shows that long before it was popular, he created “an opening for female jazzmen—like myself, like Hazel Scott, like Celia Mingus—to acknowledge why we continue to love jazz and jazzmen,” the author writes, “even when our experiences are often marginalized.”

DB

Ordering info: wesleyan.edu/wespress



Uusitalo/Louhivuori/ Sloniker/Blake *Northbound*

CAM JAZZ 7917

★★★

Northbound begins in a rather plodding fashion, guest Seamus Blake’s tenor saxophone and Tuomo Uusitalo’s piano determinative, the percussive support like a rhythmic clapping board or constricted swinging door. As an opening number, it seems uneventful but perhaps revealing of what’s to come.

“Awakening” follows and already there’s a bit more life as bassist Myles Sloniker and Uusitalo interact in a more rhythmically loose, swinging-groove interlude. “Forgotten” finds the return of Blake surrounded by the trio in what is a highly interactive piece with all four members essentially soloing within a rubato-laden improv. Everything is sandwiched with a modest theme and theme restatement, all of it consistent with the slow-to-medium tempos and subdued moods already established.

That all changes with the aptly titled “Rumble,” starting off with drummer Olavi Louhivuori pitter-patting with hands across the skins of his drum heads. It’s a fervid little solo juncture that’s followed by something called “Song For Mr Moorhead,” a piece that could be a part two to “Forgotten,” the group’s approach to pulse akin to early Ornette Coleman or Keith Jarrett’s group with Dewey Redman. The music remains melodic to the core but dwells more in the group vibe with what’s clearly a worked-out esthetic within an integrated group sound.

“Burst” is straightahead swing, the improvising by the piano trio ending in a subdued collapse before the final number, “The Aisle,” the album’s most songful piece. Blake’s soloing beyond the theme pulls the music into a gentle atonality even as the trio continues its steady march towards song’s end.

—John Ephland

Northbound: Counterparts; Awakening; Forgotten; Rumble; Song For Mr Moorhead; Quietus; Gomez Palacio; Focus; Pablo’s Insomnia; Burst; The Aisle. (39:31)

Personnel: Tuomo Uusitalo, piano; Myles Sloniker, bass; Olavi Louhivuori, drums; Seamus Blake, tenor saxophone.

Ordering info: camjazz.com

Borderlands Trio *Asteroida*

INTAKT 295

★★★★

The Borderlands Trio—pianist Kris Davis, bassist Stephan Crump and drummer Eric McPherson—is a band that revels in gestural detail, rhythmic repetition and drama. Songs like “Flockwork” bump and rumble forward, with Davis’ muted, repeating figures sounding almost electronic. Full choruses may be nothing more than a single drumstick striking a snare rim.

With minimalism on this level, how the parts fit together is critical to keep things from sounding like mere experimentation with no goal. Fortunately, Davis, Crump and McPherson are highly attuned listeners who share the common purpose of not allowing their music to remain static, even when stasis is being used as a momentary device. So, when the sonic stage is reduced to just three dampened piano keys and a single bass note, things appear to be moving somewhere.

The 26-minute title piece is all tension, no release. Urgency and motion are generated through repetition and subtle dynamic shifts. When Crump’s walking bass line emerges, the contrast to the spare surroundings makes it seem like an orchestra in flight.

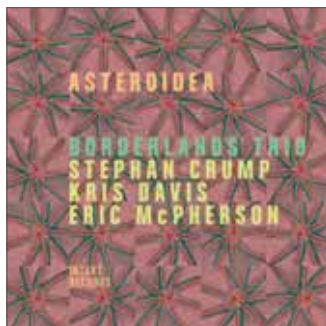
Appropriately, only the 2-minute “Carnaval Hill” expands the sound palette, with Davis making pianistic forays and filigrees, the equivalent of a minimalist pun.

—James Hale

Asteroida: Borderlands; Carnaval Hill; Flockwork; Ochre; Body Waves; From Polliwogs. (52:42)

Personnel: Kris Davis, piano; Stephan Crump, bass; Eric McPherson, drums.

Ordering info: intaktrec.ch



Seal *Standards*

REPUBLIC

★★★

Contrary to expectations, pop stars’ standards-with-studio-orchestra albums entail more caveats than those by moonlighting actors. Singers have already cultivated musical personas that make the Songbook a tough sell even for those with the technique for it. English soulster Seal’s “Kiss From A Rose” persona is sensitive, passionate, somewhat melancholy, but cerebral. That gives him an outwardly clearer path on standards than, say, Lady Gaga; it also prevents total success.

Can that nuance, plus his unquestionable rhythmic and melodic chops, help him carry off a lyric like “Stick with me, baby, I’m the fella you came in with”? Well, no. More than swing, soul and a pretty voice, “Luck Be A Lady” needs a machismo that Seal doesn’t wear well. Still more out of place is “I Put A Spell On You.” “Autumn Leaves,” on the other hand, was made for Seal. He lends it a delicacy that fits both the opening plaintive piano and the later lush strings, and the touch of gravel in his voice amplifies the poignancy. He also lands a bossa rendition of “Love For Sale” with all its emotional facets, and Irma Thomas’s swelling “Anyone Who Knows What Love Is.”

—Michael J. West

Standards: Luck Be A Lady; Autumn Leaves; I Put A Spell On You; They Can’t Take That Away From Me; Anyone Who Knows What Love Is; Love For Sale; My Funny Valentine; I’ve Got You Under My Skin; Smile; I’m Beginning to See the Light; It Was A Very Good Year; The Nearness Of You. (49:40)

Personnel: Seal, vocals; Randy Waldman, piano; Chuck Berghofer, bass; Greg Fields, drums.

Ordering info: republicrecords.com



Debbie Poryes Trio *Loving Hank*

OAA 22146

★★★★

Debbie Poryes, long based in the San Francisco area, is a talented modern mainstream pianist. On her recent trio album, an homage to Hank Jones (1918–2010), she sometimes sounds a bit like McCoy Tyner and displays the influence of Bill Evans in some of her chord voicings and her close interplay with bassist Peter Barshay. However, she mostly sounds very much like herself.

While the picturesque “Loving Hank” utilizes flugelhornist Erik Jekabson in the ensemble, the remainder of this project is a mixture of standards and originals performed by her trio with Barshay and drummer David Rokeach. The familiar tunes, such as “How About You,” “Autumn In New York” and Joni Mitchell’s “Both Sides Now,” are reharmonized and modernized a bit without losing their essence. “Confirmation” is a joy, showing that Poryes can play bebop quite well.

Of the originals, the energetic “The Wish,” the downbeat ballad “Tears We’ve Shed” and the complex “Tossing, Turning” are particularly memorable. Due to the mood and tempo variations, along with the consistently inventive piano solos, *Loving Hank* holds one’s interest throughout. This is one of Poryes’ finest recordings to date.

—Scott Yanow

Loving Hank: Loving Hank; Both Sides Now; How About You; Phrases Of The Moon; The Wish; Confirmation; Tears We’ve Shed; All Of You; Our Star; Autumn In New York; Tossing, Turning; Wonderful Day. (54:24)

Personnel: Debbie Poryes, piano; Peter Barshay, bass; David Rokeach, drums; Erik Jekabson, flugelhorn (1).

Ordering info: originarts.com



Philipp Gerschlaier/ David Fiuczynski *Mikrojazz!*

RARE NOISE RECORDS

★★★

German alto saxophonist Philipp Gerschlaier and American fretless guitarist David Fiuczynski have created a quintet dedicated to microtonal techniques, bringing in bassist Matt Garrison and drummer Jack DeJohnette. Opener “MikroSteps” is very together structurally, but unpleasantly “off” in its chosen tonal universe. This incarnation of microtonality goes further than most excursions. Whereas artists such as Harry Partch, Joe Maneri, LaMonte Young, countless bluesmen, Indian classicists and Hawaiian sliders all produce naturally organic microtonal sounds, this quintet takes the approach so far that it becomes disturbing.

Fiuczynski begins with what’s almost a conventional solo, but derails when the pitches begin to wiggle. Garrison’s fretless bass sounds less radically detuned, and this only adds to the disorientation.

Ultimately, microtonal techniques are probably best suited to completely free improvisation, where all other governing rules are also suspended. Instead of completely creating their own bold new universe, this quintet is sticking with most of the other “rules” of jazz, and only being selectively revolutionary.

—Martin Longley

Mikrojazz! Neue Expressionistische Musik; MikroSteps; Für Mary Wigman; Lullaby Nightmare; MiCROY Tyner; Umarmung; Last Chance; November; Hangover; LaMonte’s Gamelan Jam; Walking Not Flying; Sofia Im Türkischen Café; Zirkus Macabre. (64:00)

Personnel: Philipp Gerschlaier, alto saxophone; David Fiuczynski, guitars; Giorgi Mikadze, microtonal keyboards; Matt Garrison, fretless bass; Jack DeJohnette, drums.

Ordering info: rarenoiserecords.com





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IT TAKES A TEAM

STUDIO PROS DISCUSS BRIAN LANDRUS'
JAZZ ORCHESTRA PROJECT

PAGE 100

Brian Landrus (Photo by Vince Segalla)

The Rise of Affordable, High-Quality Studio Mics & Outboard Gear

By Keith Baumann

Over the past 30 years, major changes in the music industry have affected nearly every aspect of its creation, distribution and consumption. Gone are expensive high-fidelity sound systems, now replaced by smartphones, tablets and computers downloading or streaming compressed MP3 audio.

Large commercial recording facilities are fading away as musicians shift toward home recording and small project studios. Drastic reductions in the cost of digital recording gear have made multitrack recording, once the exclusive domain of the professional studio, accessible to an entirely new market.

But the market quickly realized that even with all these digital tools, producing a quality recording still required good microphones, preamps and outboard processors—all of which amount to a serious cash outlay. However, in recent years such products have been undergoing a major evolution, and there are now numerous companies producing high-quality, professional-grade studio gear at surprisingly affordable prices.

One of the most significant events in the

digital recording revolution occurred in 1992 when Alesis introduced its ADAT recorder, offering multitrack recording at a consumer-friendly price. That same year Pro Tools was also released by Avid, but its high price tag made it affordable to professional studios only. Eventually market competition did drive the cost of digital audio workstation (DAW) software down to the point where today Apple's GarageBand app is free to Mac/iOS users. With an expanding market of budget-conscious users, audio manufacturers responded by offering low-cost microphones produced mostly in China. With few exceptions, this first wave of overseas audio products fell short of expectations, leaving a long-lasting prejudice against Asian-manufactured analog recording gear.

The industry has come a long way since that

time. We are now seeing a new crop of budget-friendly gear coming out of China that's of significantly higher quality. This metamorphosis can be attributed to several factors. In today's global market, it's much easier for companies to work closely with Asian factories, gaining more manufacturing control and maintaining tighter quality tolerances. Also, with years of experience behind them, both the factories and the companies that work with them have become much better at what they do. The availability of affordable quality microphones and analog audio gear is currently exploding, and we are now at a "golden age" in the market with a mind-numbing amount of amazing products—including original designs and clones of vintage units—priced below \$1,000. To learn more about this trend, we spoke with several innovative pro audio manufacturers.

Warm Audio WA-2A



Miktek Audio

Right from the start, microphone manufacturer Miktek Audio decided to avoid the clone route and create something completely unique instead. The company produces a variety of studio microphones, with the MK300 condenser being the least expensive. Most of Miktek's microphones are assembled in Nashville, Tennessee, but the MK300 is the first one to be built in China using all overseas-made components.

Mike Ketchell, owner of Miktek Audio, has confidence in China's ability to produce a quality product, and points out that the region's factories have gotten much more sophisticated in recent years. He also observes that young customers today are much less concerned with where a product is manufactured and focus more on its value.

Miktek designs and builds all of its mics from the ground up, including the metalwork. Ketchell points to the quality of the company's components, particularly the capsule, head amp and transformer, which are critical to getting a world-class sound. Sourcing to China, keeping margins reasonable and exploring new technologies and better options for manufacturing are all key factors in Miktek's ability to control costs. According to Ketchell, low-cost DAW recording has helped to create demand for these products. When asked whether the trend of producing inexpensive studio-quality microphones has hit its peak, he responds that "cost has hit its peak, but quality has not."

Lauten Audio

Solidly focused on designing and building unique microphones, Lauten Audio offers both a high-end signature line and its less expensive LA line featuring offerings priced below \$500. Lauten manufactures its LA line in China and also utilize all-Chinese components.

According to Brian A. Loudenslager, founder of Lauten Audio, the company has been able to locate Chinese suppliers that are equivalent to, if not better than, domestic ones. Prior to launching Lauten, Loudenslager worked in the industry as a consultant helping companies with overseas manufacturing. This experience was key in Lauten developing solid relationships with factories and suppliers in China. Loudenslager says that Chinese manufacturers were always good at copying and building, but not designing, and there was no one providing design and component-level direction to them.

Lauten supplies unique designs to its factories and allows them to do what they do best: build it. Loudenslager points out how China has opened its doors and evolved over the years but warns that due to a rapidly rising middle class, China is no longer cheap. He compares this to a similar scenario that occurred in Japan after World War II. Along with extensive knowledge of Chinese manufacturing, Loudenslager feels that having a physicist on staff for capsule design and partnering with good engineers have helped Lauten stand apart from the competition.

Mojave Audio

Considering that industry guru David Royer designs its microphones, Mojave Audio is a company with a very impressive pedigree. According to Dusty Wakeman, president of Mojave Audio, the company was founded in order to bring Royer's designs to market at an affordable price.

With a line of mics that range from \$695 up to \$2,795, Mojave decided it needed to produce something under \$500. To meet this challenge, Mojave Audio manufactures all of its under-\$1,000 mics, including the MA-50 large diaphragm condenser, in China using many quality components from the United States. "Anything you can hear, we source in the U.S.," Wakeman says. Wakeman says he feels confident that Chinese manufacturing has improved and become easier to manage in recent years.

Mojave Audio credits its use of premium components, plus the fact that David Royer actually listens to every mic the company builds, as critical to its success. In Wakeman's view, the market is thriving, and the fact that recording interfaces have become so much more affordable means that customers now have more money available to purchase several microphones. Looking down the road, Wakeman predicts that manufacturing in China will only get more expensive, and the cost of good components will limit how inexpensively a good product can be produced.



sE Electronics

When sE Electronics chose to locate its factory in Shanghai, it was more than just an economical decision. It's a proud part of the company's heritage.

Founded by a Chinese American, sE Electronics was an early contender in the booming microphone market, introducing one of the industry's first affordable condensers, the sE2200, in 2003. With strong ties in China, sE Electronics produces its product line in its own dedicated factory using high-quality Chinese components, including capsules. According to Chris Dauray, brand manager of sE Electronics, "Every capsule is built by hand, and our ribbons are all hand-tensioned."

sE Electronics design its products with production in mind, constantly re-evaluating and tweaking the process to achieve maximum efficiency. Dauray says that not spending a lot of money on marketing and packaging—relying mainly on the Internet and word of mouth—has been a cost-saver for the company, along with working in large volumes and batch production. Dauray predicts that digital audio products will continue to drop in cost, but he sees a limit to that when it comes to analog gear.

Blue Microphones

Blue Microphones got its start designing and building studio condenser mics that look as great as they sound. Known for innovative design and catchy product names, the company has expanded from its pro-audio roots into the consumer market, making a huge splash with its Snowball and Yeti USB microphones, and more recently with versatile models like the Bluebird and Bluebird SL large diaphragm condensers.

Blue does hand-build some of its professional mics in the United States, but its USB line is manufactured overseas. According to John Maier, CEO, Blue designs every product with the end user in mind. Focusing on exactly what is needed and what is not allows the company to create the right solution and offer it at the right price point for the customer.

Blue works closely with its outside partners to source the best components, ordering in high enough quantities to reduce costs. Maier, like many others, sees the plummeting cost of recording as a driving factor in this market. He says he thinks that the trend toward cheaper and better has not yet hit its peak, but with inevitably rising costs it will definitely be slowing down.

Audio Technica

Audio Technica has been a major player in the industry for 60 years, with a wide array of products for the professional and consumer markets. The company broke new ground when it introduced the AT4033 condenser microphone in 1990, offering professional-level studio quality for an unheard of \$399 price tag.

Over the years, Audio-Technica has expanded its microphone line considerably, with selections ranging from \$99 up to \$3,499. According to Gary Boss, marketing director for professional products, Audio Technica manufactures its microphones in one of three locations: Japan, Taiwan and China. The company has been active in the USB market with several mics, including the AT2020 USBi high-resolution condenser, which was launched as a music-creation tool but has since become popular with podcasters and streamers.

Audio-Technica keeps costs low by utilizing similar housings on several of its models, allowing for more focus on the internals. As Boss says, "Put the money on the inside where it matters, not on the outside." Boss says that as a Japanese company, Audio-Technica's relationships with overseas factories have always been strong. The company maintains extremely rigorous quality control on all of its mics and manufactures all of its own proprietary components.



Golden Age Project

Bo Medin may not have been the first person with the idea of creating clones, or replicas, of classic analog gear. But he was certainly the first to offer one at the unheard of price of \$299. As owner of Golden Age Music, Medin was a true pioneer who showed us all what could be accomplished with the proper components, a good overseas factory and some smart business acumen.

In 2008, Golden Age released its Pre-73 microphone preamp, based on the preamp section of the legendary Neve 1073 console, and immediately received high praise for its surprisingly good quality. (Golden Age has since issued the Pre-73 MKII and Pre-73 MKIII.) Medin says that manufacturing in China and producing in large quantities are factors that help keep costs down. He also utilizes what he calls “sensible cost-cutting measures,” which means that he’s only willing to utilize less expensive parts if they don’t impact the quality of the audio. He prefers to put money where it counts in order to produce great-sounding products that are extremely affordable.

Golden Age now offers a full line of outboard gear and microphones, and although Medin does not consider himself a clone manufacturer, many of his designs are based on classic vintage outboard processors. He says that the ability to produce this level of quality on a budget is made possible by a number of converging factors: “It was simply time for this to happen.”

Warm Audio

Warm Audio produces what it calls modern reproductions of studio classics, and like many manufacturers, the company takes inspiration from vintage 1960s and ’70s microphones and outboard gear.

According to Antonio Anzaldua, logistics and quality control manager, Warm Audio’s products are assembled in China using only premium non-Chinese components. This use of boutique components in Chinese-built audio products is definitely a rising trend. Anzaldua says that ordering in large quantities and packing in small boxes are some of the ways Warm Audio keeps prices reasonable. He also says that items such as the WA-2A compressor (a Teletronix LA-2A clone) are not 100-percent reproductions, noting that a true clone would be too expensive to build and Warm Audio even makes a few improvements

over the originals. Anzaldua claims that Warm Audio can get about 90 percent of the way there in emulating vintage processors and microphones.

Anzaldua said he believes that the trend toward higher quality at lower prices will continue for the foreseeable future. “I feel like there is a lot of untapped potential,” he said. With the popularity of home recording still on the rise, Anzaldua predicts continued market growth. He observes that the proliferation of software plug-ins is helping drive his business as many users grow tired of software emulation and realize the benefits of recording with actual analog hardware.

Apogee Electronics

Apogee originally made its mark in professional audio with high-end analog-to-digital (A/D) and digital-to-analog (D/A) converters. The company later expanded into mobile recording interfaces and eventually introduced the MiC Plus USB microphone, which is partially manufactured in China, with all assembly completed in the United States.

According to Sean McArthur, director of marketing and product industrial designer at Apogee, this was a natural step for a company with a 30-year background in conversion. Although \$249.99 is not a hefty price for a decent studio-quality condenser, McArthur points out that in the USB market, where users are used to paying under \$100, this is actually a fairly expensive product. McArthur says he feels that the superior sound quality justifies the price and that Apogee is set on offering the best mic in this category.

The trend toward mobile recording is an obvious factor in the growing demand for USB microphones, and McArthur adds that for users with multiple devices, cross-platform compatibility is crucial. Podcasting is another expanding segment that is helping this market thrive. Apogee sees competition as well as technological advancements and the decrease in component cost due to mass manufacturing as enablers in offering inexpensive products.

Stam Audio

Stam Audio was founded in 2014 with a mission to recreate some of the world’s most iconic classic audio gear from the 1960s and 1970s and offer it at a great price.

According to President Joshua Stam, cloning

a piece of vintage gear can’t be accomplished by simply using the exact same components as the original. He points out that some components are not available today and others are not made the way they used to be. A simple copy would therefore not sound the same as the original, and Stam Audio prides itself on selecting the perfect combination of quality components in order to achieve a sound as close to the original as possible.

The company is based in Chile, and products are manufactured in both China and Chile. Microphones are all hand-made in Chile, while China handles mainly assembly tasks on the outboard items like the SA-2A compressor (a Teletronix LA-2A clone) using components imported from the United States and Europe. The units are then sent to Chile for final tweaking and testing. This hybrid approach of using Chinese labor, but not Chinese components—something that would not have been possible in the past—is a big part of Stam’s success.

Joshua Stam points out that free trade agreements, buying in bulk and direct marketing of his products are key factors for him. He spends very little on marketing and works with small margins in order to keep costs down. Stam also notes that expiring patents on vintage audio gear have helped drive the cloning market, since many of these designs are now public domain.

Still Trending

Although each of these companies offers its own unique perspective on the market and follows a slightly different path, there are some things they all seem to agree on. The reduced cost of recording is the most significant factor in creating demand for these products, and the market is still expanding. The reason we are now seeing so much affordable quality gear is attributable to a combination of market demand, smarter business practices and a major evolution in Chinese manufacturing, which has dramatically improved the level of quality produced there. It is also apparent that the cost of working with Chinese factories is rising rapidly, and many feel that we have hit a plateau for quality versus price.

So, is this price race to the bottom nearly over? Only time will tell. But one thing’s for certain: This is a really great time to buy new recording gear.

DB





It Takes a Team: Studio Professionals on Recording Large Jazz Ensembles

When I set out to record my 2017 album *Generations* (BlueLand Records) with the Brian Landrus Jazz Orchestra, I took the strategy of surrounding myself with artists who have unique, developed and specialized voices. This includes not just the musicians, but also the producers and engineers who contributed to this large-scale project.

I learned a long time ago to always hire the best people. They raise the level of our game and teach us by example what needs to be done, and how to improve. I invited many leading musicians to join our team, and I asked my engineers and producers to provide information that would help us achieve our goals. Ultimately, *Generations* is a success because of the amazing and specialized professionals who were involved.

It's rare to find a studio large enough to record a 25-piece orchestra. But Systems Two, a large studio in Brooklyn owned by the Marciano

family, has extensive experience recording large ensembles. I asked engineer Mike Marciano to talk about the recording techniques he used during the *Generations* sessions:

Mike Marciano, Recording Engineer

"I like to position certain instruments or groups of instruments according to their proximity to the drums. Leakage (or bleed) between instruments is a big concern with a large setup. We want to capture the natural balance of the ensemble in the room. There are instruments that can overpower others, depending on their position, and this can hurt the overall sound. An incorrect balance in the room can't always be fixed adequately in the mix. The opposite is true with the correct placement of musicians and natural balance in the room. With the correct balance, a beautiful sound can be captured with only a stereo pair of high-quality mics. Once the ensemble starts running their parts down, we play around with the placement of

the ambient room mics.

"Drum leakage was a big concern. Having eight strings in the same room with drummers who aren't afraid to hit is a concern for the sound of the strings. Obviously, we wanted a lush, natural string tone, and if you have a lot of drums bleeding onto the string mics, you'll have to alter the string sound later with equalization or digital plug-ins. This can be useful in trying to eliminate the ambient sound of the drums. However, it should be avoided because this can hurt the natural drum and string sound. Of course, there's a place for equalization and plug-ins, but again, it shouldn't be heavily used to solve a problem. Instead, these problems can be avoided simply by correct placement of instruments, correct mic selection and correct miking techniques.

"I added a little extra isolation to the drum kit by adding a few extra-tall baffles with blankets draped from the roof of the drum booth to the baffles. I did this because, with 23 addition-

al musicians in the room, I wanted to keep the liveness of the drums controllable. The setup in the room for Brian had the brass and string sections facing the drums. The harp was positioned on the opposite side of the room in relationship to the drums because of its naturally low level. We decided to put the vibes in an isolation booth because the strong level of the vibes can be a little overpowering at times.

“Capturing the natural sound with a pair of room mics is great, but you will most likely need additional spot mics to fix any balance problems. The mics that I used for spot mics were set in a cardioid pickup pattern. That means that the mics pick up sound mostly from the front. Spot mics are very important in this type of recording. The only concern with using so many microphones is phase. When sound is picked up at different times by multiple mics, the sound can be out of phase. This happens because sound waves can get canceled out when the sound source hits multiple mics at slightly different times. This causes a loss of low end and brings hollowness to the sound. Correct phase can be achieved by moving mics into different positions to avoid this sound cancellation. When using headphones, the balance a musician has in their headphones affects their dynamics. Sometimes this makes them either underplay or overplay dynamically. With spot mics, balances can be adjusted. Also, if there is a great performance and there’s a bad note or incorrect timing, it can be fixed. With the ensembles’ mics facing away from the drums, the mics will naturally reject a lot of unwanted leakage. This saves a great deal of work later when mixing.

“The string section mics I used were Neumann Km184s for the violins and violas, and vintage Neumann u47s for double bass and cello. I chose the 184s because they sound great on strings but also have excellent sound rejection. For the ensemble, we used a nice mixture of vintage ribbon, tube and condenser mics. We used a combination of RCA 77s; Neumann um57s, u67s, u87s and km86s; and vintage AKG 414s. Using the right mic for the right instrument captures the natural sound and eliminates the need for equalization. Because of our planning we really didn’t have to move anyone’s position, which of course saved a lot of time. This allowed us to focus solely on the performance itself.”

John Kilgore, Mixing Engineer

Generations’ mixing engineer was John Kilgore, of John Kilgore Sound & Recording in Manhattan. His mix helped bring out the clarity of this unique ensemble. I asked Kilgore to share some advice for artists undertaking a large ensemble recording of this nature:

“There are a number of ways to record a large ensemble like the one on *Generations*. You



Mike Marciano (foreground), recording engineer for *Generations*.

VINCE SEGALLA

can find a concert hall with a great acoustic, set up the band like an orchestra, put up somewhere between three and five microphones and record it like a classical piece. Using Billy Hart and Justin Brown on drums and Lonnie Plaxico and Jay Anderson on bass makes this an iffy approach, since the drums can overpower the acoustic bass and muddy the clarity of the recording, and the bass ends up getting ‘lost in the sauce.’ Another approach would be to map out the tempos, make a click track for each tune and lay everything down in sections, starting with the rhythm section, then overdubbing winds in another pass, brass in yet another overdub and then strings in a third overdub. This approach yields a great deal of sonic control as well as control over the accuracy of the playing. The major disadvantage is the loss of spontaneity and musical interaction, since everyone is playing to a click instead of all together as an ensemble.

“It was clear from the beginning that neither a standard orchestral approach with minimal microphones nor a record-in-sections approach would work. Brian wanted the players to interact with each other and use their considerable skills as ensemble and improvising players to create music together without being bound by a click. This had to be recorded in a room large enough to accommodate the entire ensemble, with good isolation for the drums and bass, as well as the vibes and harp. That made Systems Two in Brooklyn, the obvious choice.

Alan Silverman, Mastering Engineer

Mastering engineer Alan Silverman from

ARF! Mastering in New York is another creative force in the industry. Here is what he had to say about mastering this project:

“We were thrilled when Brian asked us to work with him on the final, critical step of producing a record—the mastering. It’s a mysterious craft—the compositions, performances and mixes are all in place, yet by refining a recording’s tonal balance and dynamics we can bring the listener much closer to the soul of the music. It’s entirely a “feel” thing. Artists hear it and, when it’s successful, can rediscover their own work.”

Frank Carlberg, Co-Producer

As the leader, I knew that both days in the studio I wanted to be a player and not have to worry about the behind-the-scenes mechanics. So I asked Frank Carlberg and Robert Aldridge to co-produce the album with me. Carlberg always hears the big picture in a project and can see through the minuscule issues that may seem on the surface to be a problem while tracking. He has excellent advice for producing large ensembles in the studio:

“Besides being an artistic sounding board, many of the producer’s responsibilities are practical in nature. He/she can make small or large musical suggestions, and mediate conflicts so that the session can stay on course. Especially in large ensemble recordings, he/she needs to check the score in the control room to make sure that everything is played correctly. When does a take feel ‘right’? That is often best gauged by the producer in the control room.

“I prefer not stopping, but rather to keep moving through multiple takes. Multi-day ses-



Generations co-producers Bob Aldridge (left) and Frank Carlberg join engineer Marciano behind the recording console.

sions give you the added flexibility of evaluating takes between studio sessions rather than during them. The end of the last day is also often the best time to do overdubs and fixes. At that point you are not concerned anymore about the flow of the session in terms of tracking new material.

Bob Aldridge, Co-Producer

Bob Aldridge is a Grammy-winning opera composer and head of composition at Rutgers University, where I am currently adjunct faculty and finishing a Ph.D. in classical composition. An excellent orchestrator, Aldridge helped me tremendously when finalizing all the scores. He gave me ideas on how to bring clarity and precision to the music. He was also a perfect fit to counterbalance the artistic dynamic in the studio as a producer. Aldridge said of the session:

"Brian started bringing me scores for the CD two years ago, in 2015. Mind you, these were not jazz charts; they were concert scores, written in full score for the conductor. I actually added very little to the compositions, which were already superb and in Brian's unique voice. Since Brian had never written for orchestral forces before, I was able to advise him on re-orchestrating some parts, adding doublings and that kind of technical detail."

String Solutions

Something to be very aware of when hiring musicians for your project is to use artists who are comfortable with the genre(s) you're working within. I chose to use string players who were all improvisers, and who work in pop-



The 25-piece Brian Landrus Jazz Orchestra records *Generations* at Systems 2 in early 2017.

ular music, jazz and classical settings. This is important so that the rhythmic feel of the players has cohesion and fluidity in the linguistic dialect. Being able to swing is a necessity that many strictly orchestral players are uncomfortable with. Rhythm, in general, is not the strongest aspect of many string players.

Composing for strings is daunting at first, and this is partly due to the vast techniques available to the composer. After the music was completed, I chose to ask violin virtuoso Mark Feldman to add the bowings for the violins and violas. Bowings are an important component to string composition, and simple phrase markings can guide the player in what direction you want. The extremely talented cellist Jody Redhage Ferber added the bowings for the cello, which were significantly different than the violins and viola since I often orchestrated them with many of the low-register instruments.

Experts All

Generations was the culmination of my life experiences up to now, and I feel blessed to have been surrounded and supported by these cre-

ative and brilliant artists. The recording was successful because of the great number of experts involved who make it stronger, and honest.

In addition to myself, bassists Anderson and Plaxico, and drummers Hart and Brown, the following musicians appear on *Generations*: woodwind players Jamie Baum, Tom Christensen, Darryl Harper, Michael Rabinowitz and Alden Banta; brass players Debbie Schmidt, Ralph Alessi, Igmar Thomas, Alan Ferber and Marcus Rojas; vibraphonist Joe Locke; harpist Brandee Younger; and a string section of Mark Feldman, Sara Caswell, Joyce Hammann, Meg Okura, Lois Martin, Nora Krohn, Jody Redhage and Maria Jeffers.

This dedicated team was unified in making this unusual project as beautiful and powerful as it had the potential to be.

DB

Brian Landrus is a baritone saxophonist and low-woodwind specialist based in New York. In addition to leading his own projects, he has performed with Esperanza Spalding, Ryan Truesdell, Bob Brookmeyer, Rufus Reid, Danilo Pérez, Frank Kimbrough, Gary Smulyan, Maria Schneider, The Temptations, The Four Tops, Martha Reeves, George Garzone, Bob Moses, Lewis Nash, Jerry Bergonzi, Alan Ferber, Uri Caine and Ralph Alessi, among others. Visit him online at brianlandrus.com.

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DOWNBEAT ARCHIVES

Benny Golson

Benny Golson's Tenor Saxophone Solo on 'Along Came Betty'

So many of Benny Golson's songs have become standards. Such notables as his hit "Killer Joe," the seminal ballad "I Remember Clifford" and many others are still performed to this day. His compositions are such classics that we can sometimes forget what a fantastic tenor saxophonist he is. Here's his solo on "Along Came Betty," another of his songs that has become an essential part of the jazz lexicon, from Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers' 1959 Blue Note album *Moanin'*.

The song is a slow swing, though not slow enough to be a ballad. One thing that immediately stands out is Golson's comfort with com-

bining swing and straight feels, especially at the 16th-note level. Swinging 16ths (or double-timing, as it's sometimes called, since the soloist is swinging at twice the rate of the rhythm section) is a trick that's been around at least since Charlie Parker, but Golson tends to play his 16ths straight, going against convention. There are instances, such as bars 21 and 25, where he does swing the 16th (written as 16th-note triplets to make the distinction clear), though in bar 21 it's a backwards swing. We even hear smaller subdivisions, such as 32nds (bars 21, 23, 26 and 28–31), 16th-note triplets (and sextuplets, which are the same, just notated to make read-

ing easier) and even some odd ones, like quintuplets (5, 18) and septuplets (12, 27), though these come off more like he's just cramming a bunch of notes into a beat and ends up with an odd number.

What's even more interesting is how Golson shifts back and forth. In many of the transcriptions we've presented in this column, the soloist will start slowly and then increase the energy by playing denser rhythmic subdivisions as the solo progresses. Golson goes against convention in this regard, as well. We hear him going back and forth between rhythmic subdivisions and inserting rests throughout this solo. But is he really defying the typical?

Though it may seem as if he is keeping the energy up from start to finish, his rhythmic choices help create shifts in energy. Take his use of eighth notes: After bar 18, they basically disappear (except for the beginning of measure 33, almost the end of Golson's solo). And the 16th-note triplets don't appear until measure 12, and here they are only hinted at. Another pair appears three bars later, and then more frequently in measures 19–21. In bars 25–27 they become more prominent, and then drop out again, surfacing just three more times for the remainder of this improvisation.

A similar thing happens with 32nd notes. These are introduced later than the 16th-note triplets (measure 20) and occur sporadically throughout the next 11 bars, vanishing after measure 31 (a couple of bars before the eighth notes reappear). So even though all those 16th notes create a sense of intensity throughout Golson's improvisation, his use of the smaller and larger subdivisions do create an intensification and decrease in energy—very subtle.

Another contrast Golson employs is between "inside" and "outside" playing. Similar to his use of rhythmic subdivisions, most of Golson's playing is "inside," using arpeggios and scales related to the chords. But he does use some more "outside" playing, judiciously at first, but intensifying it as the solo progresses.

The first chromaticism we hear is in bars 5 and 7, though these hardly count as they are just chromatic lines connecting chord tones. But that's exactly the point: Golson isn't hitting us upside the head with "outside" playing, but slowly bringing our ear to these sounds, introducing them subtly. Case in point is the final beat-and-a-half of measure 10. Though these notes are not chromatic (they all exist in the C mixolydian mode), they outline a Gm7 arpeggio, rather than the C7 that's occurring at the time. So it's not all the way "outside" but not totally "inside," either. Golson is slowly introducing more harmonically sophisticated ideas.

It isn't until bar 12 that he goes fully "outside." Building on the idea introduced in measure 10, Golson plays an A arpeggio, but on a Gm7 chord. This produces the 9th, #11th and 13th, all extensions, one of them altered. Two measures later we have another example of this kind of thinking when Golson plays essentially a Bm(maj7) arpeggio on A7. Two of the notes (A, C#) are chord tones, but the other two (Bb, F) are alterations (b9, b6 or #5). This line is especially effective as it's an alteration of the very "inside" lick on the F chord in the previous bar.

Golson starts tempering his dissonance—bar 19 has the F#dim7 arpeggio on D7, which is in essence D7(b9) without the root, and bar 20 has the natural seventh and flat fifth on the Gm7, but is for the most part a Gm sound—and stays within the scale/chord relationships for the most part. We have another gasp of "outside" in the last beat of bar 26, where there is an F+ triad played against the E7. Though seemingly very "outside," this works well as F is the V of Bbm, the chord coming up. So although it is dissonant, it resolves cleanly to the approaching harmony, setting it up.

The big blast comes in measure 30. For an

F7, Golson makes some interesting choices. After the initial G natural, he outlines an F# minor triad (b9, 3 and #5 of the F), resolves to a high F, descends chromatically to the #5 and then goes down a F#m(maj7) chord. This is a very "outside" sound to be playing on this harmony, the most "out" Golson has gone, and for the longest time.

The following bar starts out more tamely, with some chord tones connected with a chromatic run, but the second half of the bar goes way "outside" again, ending with an E6 arpeggio. Just like the F+ in measure 26, this provides a resolution to the Eb7 in the next bar, taken up mostly by an Eb7 arpeggio, a very "inside" sound, providing contrast.

Golson has used both rhythmic and harmonic/melodic devices in ingenious ways to increase and decrease the tension throughout this improvisation. That he's done so on a tune with a 34-bar form (instead of 32) and some tricky chords changes is testament to Golson's improvisational skills. **DB**

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

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Blue Microphones Raspberry Studio

Great Sound in a Portable USB Mic

Blue Microphones' Yeti is a popular USB mic that offers a lot of versatility at a competitive price. Now Blue has introduced a new microphone, the Raspberry, which offers many of the same features, and some new ones, in a portable package.

The Raspberry has a nice vintage aesthetic and feels very solid. The body is metal, with a grille that wraps over the top and a bottom half wrapped in red leather, giving it a premium look. It has an attached desktop stand, which folds around the mic for storage and supports it well. Four rubber pads aid in suppressing vibrations when in use. Should you need to mount the Raspberry to a traditional stand, Blue provides an adapter that can be used in place of the desktop stand. There is an LED on the front to monitor your signal, and the back has a USB port and a headphone jack, to be used for latency-free monitoring.

The Raspberry is cardioid pattern only, unlike the Yeti, and this makes sense for desktop recordings. It comes with a USB cable and a Lightning cable, and is plug-and-play with computers and iOS devices. The mic is recognized as an input source for most iOS recording software right away, so you are ready to go in minutes.

One of the interesting features of this mic is the Internal Acoustic Diffuser (IAD). This is a diffuser system, similar to what you might see mounted on the walls of a studio or concert hall, but shrunk down and mounted inside the grille. The idea here is to reduce the amount of room reflection at the input stage, even in uncontrolled surroundings—incredibly useful for a portable mic. I tested it out in a few different rooms of varying “liveness” and found it to be very effective. This is a killer feature for any style of recording.

The Raspberry is a small mic, as one would expect from something designed around portability, and this can be both a strength and a weakness. It's easy to fit on a crowded workspace, and it folds up to about the size of an iPhone (but twice as thick). The downside is that it is hard to get the mic right up to your mouth on the attached stand. But, you can use it with a regular stand if you choose, and there are a million ways to get it to where



you need it at this size.

I also tested some musical material through the mic—a grand piano in the room and a few acoustic guitars. The mic captured what was happening quite well, and while I might not use it for these applications for a final recording, it was definitely up to the task of getting a decent sound from both. The IAD did dampen the room sound a bit versus other mics, which may or may not be a good thing when recording an acoustic instrument, but it all sounded very musical. I also sang into it a little, and once I got the gain set correctly, it worked well for this, too. The vocal was clear and pleasing, and sounded like it was coming through a mic costing several times the price. As a portable mic, the Raspberry has it all covered.

The “Studio” part of the package includes a copy of PreSonus' excellent Studio One DAW and Izotope's Ozone 7 Mastering software, which constitute a solid workflow for making finished recordings.

All in all, the Raspberry is a very well designed mic for anyone who needs portability. If you are always in the same recording space, and have ample room to work, other options might be a better fit (including the Yeti), but the Raspberry sounds great and has features that make it hard to beat.

—Chris Neville

bluedesigns.com

Zoom LiveTrak L-12 Digital Mixer

On-Location Multitrack Recording

My first Zoom product was the original H2 two-channel pocket recorder. I still remember how impressed I was with the playback quality when I first started doing field recording projects with it. Fast-forward a touch over 10 years, and Zoom's latest piece of recording gear—the LiveTrak L-12 Digital Mixer—is aimed at making on-location multitrack recording as easy and accessible as possible.

The LiveTrak L-12 makes it possible to mix, record and monitor with a single piece of gear. The “12” in the name represents the total number of tracks you can record at one time. There are eight channels of XLR/TRS and two channels that each accept a stereo input. The highest recording format available is 96kHz/24-bit. One of the LiveTrak L-12's more impressive features is the ability to have five individual custom headphone mixes.

Zoom packs a large number of features onto this small board by having shared sections. While each channel has pan, three bands of EQ and effects

sends, these are all adjusted in one common area. There is a “select” button to make a channel active, and then you make adjustments in the common channel-strip section. The L-12 then saves the settings for that channel when you select another channel for editing. And while there are no automated faders, Zoom does a nice job of using the lights to show you where your settings are as you move from channel to channel.

This is also how Zoom can provide five separate headphone mixes in a small package. There is a fader mode section that goes between master and one button for each headphone mix—a total of six buttons. Say, for example, you want to edit the mix for headphone E (they are labeled “A” through “E”). Simply select “E” in the fader mode section and adjust the faders and settings to your liking. When you go back to master mode, E's settings are saved, and again the level lights on the fader channel itself do a good job of telling you where your levels are in your current active fader mode.

Another thing that makes this unit incredibly versatile is the ability to act as a standard SD recorder so you can record straight to the unit itself. Or, as with other Zoom recorders, you can use it as an audio interface for your DAW. So at that point, you are bypassing the SD card (although there are options for doing both at the same time) and recording right into your computer. This takes an additional driver download from Zoom, but setup and installation for use as an audio interface went quickly and easily.

While in interface mode, it is possible to send audio back to the unit for your DAW and have it come in on one of the two stereo channels by pressing the USB button on that channel. This is useful for podcasters who want to play cued-up audio, or if there is existing audio in your DAW that you want to be able to track alongside.

A small backlit screen helps you navigate through modes and setup projects; if you're familiar with other Zoom products, this screen will look familiar. By going through the various options on the screen, I was able to find a few nice surprises. There is a click-track mode and also a built-in slate mic to record comments or talk-back.

My only two qualms were that Zoom doesn't provide an SD card, and the documentation is a little thin. It took a few swings to wrap my head around how the headphone settings worked. That said, there are plenty of online resources available, should you need them.



Zoom is dubbing the preamps on the LiveTrak “the quietest and most advanced preamps we’ve ever made,” and at this price point, with so many features packed in, it’s a very worthy contender for anyone looking for a tracking/playback/interface solution.

—Matt Kern

zoom-na.com



ROLI Blocks

New Controllers, Intriguing Possibilities

ROLI has made some big waves over the last few years. The company’s multi-dimensional Seaboard GRAND controller was revolutionary. Then the Seaboard RISE brought the same astounding level of control at a fraction of the price. Now, with the introduction of Blocks, ROLI has embarked on a new type of controller. I play-tested a system consisting of ROLI’s Lightpad Block M, a set of Control Blocks and a Seaboard Block.

The main unit of the Blocks system is the Lightpad, or the Lightpad M—touch-sensitive control surfaces measuring 3.7 inches square and .86 inches deep. The top layer is a spongy and silky latex-type material that enables access to ROLI’s five dimensions of touch control (through MPE MIDI messages), to which several synths can respond. The Lightpad Block M has 225 “microkeywaves” on the surface, based on the keywaves of ROLI’s Seaboard line, each with its own high-intensity LED. These LEDs enable the Block to reconfigure its visual surface in a myriad of ways to suit the way you control your software. All of the Blocks can snap together using ROLI’s proprietary magnetic connectors, so you can continually add pieces.

The Lightpad Block M feels wonderful. I have not used the original Lightpad Block, which is still available, but that surface was more rigid (it was hard to control pressure with it). The Lightpad M addresses this nicely with the additional depth of its playing surface. This enables you to not only slide freely between notes, but to control vibrato and open and close filters, or switch samples—whatever parameters you wish to manipulate.

The Lightpad Block M is bundled with ROLI’s Noise software for iOS,

as well as ROLI’s Equator Player, Strobe2 Player, Ableton Live Lite, Traktion Waveform, Blocks Dashboard and Max DSP for Mac and PC. The Noise software sounds great, and the patches are designed to take advantage of the playing surfaces, but it is also limited. It has no overdubbing capability, and there is currently no way to export tracks to other software or platforms.

On the computer, however, we have a different scenario. Equator is programmable to a ridiculous depth, and you can make some crazy fun sounds using it. Strobe2 is similarly powerful. These are both “player” versions but can be upgraded for a small price to the fully programmable synths. Blocks Dashboard allows you to set up how Blocks will interact with any software, and it comes with a few templates that really start to open up the possibilities.

The Control Blocks are designed to give you access to features without having to go to your iOS device. The buttons on the Live and Loop Blocks allow you to switch parameters on the fly. The Touch Block gives you control over how your Block will respond to the five dimensions of touch.

The Seaboard Block is a two-octave Seaboard-style keywave controller. It has many of the same properties as its bigger siblings, but the keywaves are smaller, and flat on the top, which I found a little harder to play.

Looking at Blocks as a whole, I see tremendous potential. Running programs like Ableton with an infinitely configurable control surface that can expand as you need it is an intriguing idea.

—Chris Neville

roli.com

Recording School › GEAR BOX

1. Classic-Style Condenser

Warm Audio's WA-14 large-diaphragm brass capsule condenser microphone is based on a classic condenser mic from the 1970s. It utilizes fully discrete, classic circuit topology, including an all-brass CK12-style capsule design and a custom CineMag USA transformer. The WA-14 can be used on a variety of sound sources, including intimate lead vocals, aggressive guitars and heavy percussion. warmaudio.com

2. Audio Clarification

A complete ready-to-install solution, Prosocooustic's WaveRoom kits are suitable for any location where better audio clarity is needed. Each WaveRoom kit is designed for effective coverage of up to 100 square feet and includes Wave hybrid panels with mounting hardware. Additional booster kits with 2- by 4-foot or 2- by 2-foot panels can be added for larger spaces. prosocooustic.com

3. Desktop Interfacing

The latest member of Tascam's US series of USB 2.0 interfaces, the US-1x2 delivers 24-bit/96kHz desktop recording. The unit's XLR microphone input employs Tascam's Ultra-HDDA mic pre-amp, making the US-1x2 a suitable choice for use with most microphones. tascam.com

4. Hi-Def Clip-On Tuner

The Peterson StrobeClip HD has the same 10th-of-a-cent accuracy as all Peterson Strobe Tuners. This versatile tuner comes with a bright high-definition screen, more than 50 Sweetened tunings, alternate temperaments for a vast array of string and wind instruments, and soft rubber-lined jaws to protect your instrument's finish while offering a firm grip for maximum signal tracking. petersonstuners.com

5. Talkin' Back

Radial Engineering's Studio-Q is a compact desktop talk-back/cue system. Each mic is equipped with an individual trim control along with a master mic volume (which can also be remotely activated using a JR1 mute footswitch). Once depressed, the signal is routed to the studio headphone system. The program signal path is balanced for easy integration with any console and features a fully variable level control on the front panel. radialeng.com

6. Honest Representation

Mackie has refreshed its MR series powered studio monitors. Appropriate for home studios, the MR series is available in the 5-inch MR524, 6.5-inch MR624 and the 8-inch MR824, plus the 10-inch MRS10 companion powered subwoofer. Featuring precision transducers and high-performance amplifiers, MR series monitors deliver an honest, accurate representation of the mix. mackie.com





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Jazz On Campus >



Jeff Coffin (foreground, right) works with a student at Vanderbilt University's Blair School of Music in Nashville.

Blair Students Get 1-on-1 Training

THE STORY OF JAZZ STUDIES AT Nashville's Vanderbilt University begins with Billy Adair. After joining the Blair School of Music faculty in 2002, he was soon promoted to chair its Jazz and Folk Music department. From that point until he succumbed to cancer in February 2014, Adair earned the respect and affection of his colleagues and students, not just for his administrative and teaching skills but also for his emphasis on character as an essential component to musicianship.

Few people were more aware of Adair's achievements than composer, arranger and saxophonist Ryan Middagh, who was appointed to succeed him as head of the Blair jazz program. "No one could replace Billy Adair," Middagh said. "But I had some ideas of my own on how to take this program to a new level."

As director of jazz studies, Middagh has built on Adair's mission of offering both world-class music instruction and broader preparations for life in the real world. The cornerstone to this approach involves guaranteeing maximum one-on-one communication between teacher and student. Based on his own past experience, this is in fact the priority for Roland Barber, adjunct professor of trombone and jazz studies.

"When I was in college, I was told that the only thing that would really matter in 10 or 15 years was who I took private lessons with," Barber recalled. "That's not the way it is here. Everything we offer makes a difference: the private lessons, the improv classes, the arrangement classes. Even if you're not a music major, the entire curriculum will give you a personal experience that will matter in whatever you do with your life."

From the small groups to the big band and the jazz choir, every ensemble includes members from a variety of degree programs. "I have

pre-med students, engineering majors, in big band," Middagh said. "And they help bring so much joy and passion into the music."

They also bring perspectives that might not be so accessible in a more conservatory-oriented setting. As an example, Middagh mentioned Emmett Haden, an engineering undergrad who's a talented trumpet player. "In one of his classes he was analyzing sound waves from his trumpet as they interacted with different mutes. Once he'd gotten his data, he brought the recordings to me for my thoughts on their musical quality."

With the number of participants in the Blair jazz program increasing from less than 60 in 2014 to around 140 today, Middagh has brought more instructors on board to maintain the low student-to-teacher ratio. Because most of them work full-time as musicians themselves, some teachers have had to be creative in how they instruct and mentor.

For instance, when Jeff Coffin was named adjunct instructor of jazz saxophone, he was about to begin a six-week European tour with the Dave Matthews Band. This gave him time to meet just once with each student who had signed up for private lessons. After that, he routinely communicated with his students via Skype and FaceTime.

"That's another thing we're proud of," Middagh added. "If you want to study jazz saxophone, you're gonna study with Jeff. You want to study jazz brass, you're gonna study with Roland. And if you want to broaden the base of your musical education, the 'Blair-to-Owen' program gives you an accelerated three-year music degree and then allows you to transfer it over to the Owen School of Business for an MBA. A music degree and an MBA in five years—that's pretty sweet." —Bob Doerschuk

School Notes >



University of Kentucky Jazz Ensemble

UK Jazz: Mark Records has released the University of Kentucky Jazz Ensemble's *On The Road* and the University of Kentucky Mega-Sax Ensembles' *Stinkin' 3.0*. The latter album features musical direction by Miles Osland and Dr. Ian Cruz with contributions from special guests Tony Dagradi, Jeff Driskill and Jeff Coffin. finearts.uky.edu

Icons Booked: Rowman & Littlefield has published *Experiencing Chick Corea: A Listener's Companion* by Monika Herzig, a musician and senior lecturer at Indiana University. Rowman's series also includes the books *Experiencing Bessie Smith* by John Clark, a musicologist, educator and performing musician in the Boston area; and *Experiencing Ornette Coleman* by Michael Stephens, a drummer and author who teaches writing at Bloomsburg University. rowman.com

Educational Exchange: The Jazz at Lincoln Center Youth Orchestra makes its international debut at the Barbican in London on Feb. 27–March 1. As part of the bi-annual Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra with Wynton Marsalis residency at the Barbican, 22 New York-area high school jazz musicians will spend a week abroad for a music and cultural exchange with public performances, workshops and jam sessions. The collaboration will bring together the JLYCO, led by JLYCO saxophonist Ted Nash and New York trumpeter Tatum Greenblatt; National Youth Jazz Orchestra of Scotland; and young musicians from The Guildhall Jazz Orchestra for a world-premiere concert event at Milton Court Concert Hall at the Barbican Centre on March 1. barbican.org.uk

Calling All Coaches: UCLA's Herb Alpert School of Music will host Ensemble Coaching with Hitomi Oba's Contemporary Jazz Ensemble on Jan. 18. The visiting group will interpret Jon Jang's piece *Reparations Now! Concerto For Large Music Ensemble And Taiko* in commemoration of the 30th anniversary of the Civil Liberties Act and the victory by Japanese Americans for redress and reparations. The event, which starts at 6 p.m. and is free to the public, will take place in the Schoenberg Music Building. schoolofmusic.ucla.edu

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Tia Fuller

Saxophonist Tia Fuller took her first DownBeat Blindfold Test in front of a live audience at the Monterey Jazz Festival on Sept. 16. For the past five years, Fuller has been teaching ensemble classes at the Berklee College of Music in Boston, and her fourth Mack Avenue album will be released in 2018. Fuller performed at the festival with her quintet and guest trumpeter Ingrid Jensen.

Lou Donaldson

"Light-Foot" (*The Best Of Lou Donaldson, Vol. 1: 1957–'67*, Blue Note, 1993, rec'd 1958) Donaldson, alto saxophone; Herman Foster, piano; Peck Morrison, bass; Jimmy Wormworth, drums; Ray Barretto, congas.

I'm thinking the time period must be the mid-'50s, post-Bird. The language is extremely hard-bop that is branching off from Bird. Is it Oliver Nelson? I loved it. It's very much anchored in the tradition of the language of jazz during that period. The drummer sounds like Jimmy Cobb, but I'm not familiar with this recording. There's not a lot of nuance in the playing, but it is straight from the meat-and-potatoes of jazz. Oh, Lou Donaldson? [after] I just heard him at the Charlie Parker Jazz Festival [in New York]. Yes, this makes perfect sense. He has an edgy sound that's anchored in post-bop.

Henry Threadgill

"Paper Toilet" (*Too Much Sugar For A Dime*, Axiom/Island, 1993) Threadgill, alto saxophone; Mark Taylor, French horn; Masujaa, Brandon Ross, electric guitars; Edwin Rodriguez, Marcus Rojas, tubas; Gene Lake, drums.

I have no idea. Because of the content of the vibe and instrumentation and the multi-meters, it could be Steve Coleman. But I knew it wasn't him once he started soloing. The sound is rash, intense and growling. I loved it because it was pushing the boundaries.

Melissa Aldana

"Alegría" (*Back Home*, Womusic, 2016) Aldana, tenor saxophone; Pablo Menares, bass; Jochen Rueckert, drums.

This was beautiful. The vibrato reflected that he or she was definitely younger. There are a lot of cats on the scene who have that sound, like Mark Turner when he gets in the upper register. It was reminiscent of that. [Fuller is informed that the artist is a woman.] Well, that's definitely Melissa Aldana. I heard her a couple of months ago when we were doing a recording with Terri Lyne Carrington. I remember the context of what Melissa was playing and the control she had on the horn.

Another thing is the classical element. I know Melissa studied classical music. You can hear that when she went into the upper register. It was really even. That blew me out. The core of her playing blew me out, too, especially in the 16th notes.

Eric Dolphy

"Fire Waltz" (*Eric Dolphy With Booker Little: At The Five Spot, Vol. 1*, New Jazz/Prestige/Concord, 2008, rec'd 1961) Dolphy, alto saxophone; Booker Little, trumpet; Mal Waldron, piano; Richard Davis, bass; Ed Blackwell, drums.

Eric Dolphy. His sound to me is like liberation. He's able to access so much of the history and also the avant-garde era, and make the balance between the two, not only in content but also in the way he stretches his intonation. It's a little bit sharp, a little bit flat as he bends the notes. In getting around his horn, he has a technical proficiency that he doesn't necessarily lean on all the time. It's used as a tool to liberate his voice.

The last phrase of this piece—where he went into the upper octave then went down to a low B-flat—is about complete liberation to me. He's stretching the boundaries. When I first heard him, I didn't like him because he sounded "out." It didn't make sense. But the beauty of this



Tia Fuller takes the Blindfold Test in front of a Monterey Jazz Festival audience.

music is that our ears continue to grow and evolve into something where what seemed ugly before has complete relevance now.

Greg Osby

"Six Of One" (*Further Ado*, Blue Note, 1997) Osby, alto saxophone; Jason Moran, piano; Lonnie Plaxico, bass; Eric Harland, drums.

It's Greg Osby. It's home-field advantage to me because I had taken a couple of lessons from him. His approach is that he never wanted to sound like anybody else. He had a couple of different approaches, like playing intervallically. He'd take a minor third and a half step and allow that to be the strength of his solo—how he interweaved that within his solo. To me, he's a direct extension of Dolphy in lots of ways. He's coming from a very cranial place in his approach, but then there's his level of facility.

Steve Coleman's Natal Eclipse

"Dancing And Jabbing" (*Morphogenesis*, Pi Recordings, 2017) Coleman, alto saxophone; Maria Grand, tenor saxophone; Jonathan Finlayson, trumpet; Rane Moore, clarinet; Kristin Lee, violin; Matt Mitchell, piano; Greg Chudzik, bass; Jen Shyu, vocals.

I think I know who this is—Steve Coleman. [after] I've checked out Steve over the years. He likes playing with trumpets and vocals with all those intersecting harmonies. Compositionally, it's very much his style. Very intense. Tonally, his saxophone sound is very clear.

He and Greg Osby are from the same school. They have similar vocabularies, but their sounds are different. Greg is a little more round and fluffy, and Steve's sound has a sharper harmonic edge. Steve also always hangs on a note at the top so he can keep the sonic tension. That was a characteristic of his playing.

Wardell Gray

"Twisted" (*Wardell Gray Memorial, Vol. 1*, Prestige, 1992, rec'd 1949) Gray, tenor saxophone; Al Haig, piano; Tommy Potter, bass; Roy Haynes, drums.

I feel like I've heard this recording, but I can't recall who it is. Is it [Sonny] Stitt? Gene Ammons? It's another meat-and-potatoes of jazz history. That's why I feel like I've heard this. [An audience member guesses correctly] Oh, yeah, that's "Twisted." I definitely liked it because I knew this tune. My mom's a vocalist, and I remember her singing it. That's just a byproduct of my upbringing.

DB

The "Blindfold Test" is a listening test that challenges the featured artist to discuss and identify the music and musicians who performed on selected recordings. The artist is then asked to rate each tune using a 5-star system. No information is given to the artist prior to the test.

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