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KANDACE SPRINGS INDIGO

Singer and pianist KANDACE SPRINGS returns with her second album which swirls classical composition with quiet-storm cool, jazz poise wtih hip-hop swing, tropical warmth with soulful depth, and earthen groove with airy psych. Produced by drummerproducer KARRIEM RIGGINS-the living bridge spanning Oscar Peterson and Diana Krall to Erykah Badu and J Dilla-Indigo creates a vibe as familiar as it is previously unheard featuring special guests including trumpeter ROY HARGROVE and guitarist JESSE HARRIS.



MARCUS STRICKLAND TWI-LIFE PEOPLE OF THE SUN

On his thrilling new LP, *People of the Sun*, saxophonist MARCUS STRICKLAND blazes a trail fully at the helm of his music-performing, writing, and producing with his Twi-Life band on deck and special guests including BILAL and PHAROAHE MONCH along for the ride-as he sonically and socially traces the African diaspora from present to past in an effort to unpack his identity. It's an album that's busy and beautiful, inventive and contemplative, an amalgam of influences from West Africa (griot culture, Afrobeat, percussion) and America (post-bop, funk-soul, beat music) performed in the key of revelation.



GREGORY PORTER ONE NIGHT ONLY

GREGORY PORTER One Night Only – Live at the Royal Albert Hall captures the two-time GRAMMY-winning singer in a stunning live performance at the famed London venue with his band accompanied by the London Studio Orchestra conducted and arranged by VINCE MENDOZA. Porter sings songs from his acclaimed recent album Nat King Cole & Me, as well as favorite songs of his own including "Hey Laura," "No Love Dying," "Don't Lose Your Steam," and "When Love Was King."

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AMBROSE AKINMUSIRE ORIGAMI HARVEST

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JOSÉ JAMES LEAN ON ME

Singer-songwriter JOSÉ JAMES releases a Bill Withers tribute album including 12 of his most beloved songs recorded in Capitol's legendary Studio B with a dream team: PINO PALLADINO (bass), KRIS BOWERS (keys), BRAD ALLEN WILLIAMS (guitar) and NATE SMITH (drums) including features from TAKUYA KURODA and LALAH HATHAWAY.



JAMES FRANCIES FLIGHT

The 22 year-old pianist, composer and one of the brightest young stars in Jazz, presents a bold new vision with his debut album which features special appearances by saxophonist CHRIS POTTER and vocalists YEBBA and CHRIS TURNER, along with a cast of Jazz youngbloods including vibraphonist JOEL ROSS, guitarist MIKE MORENO, bassist BURNISS TRAVIS II, and drummers JEREMY DUTTON and MIKE MITCHELL.

BLUE NOTE REVIEW

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ON THE COVER

30 Eric Dolphy

'Prophet' of Freedom

BY PHILLIP LUTZ

DownBeat salutes a visionary musician who departed far too soon. In the decades since the passing of DownBeat Hall of Famer Eric Dolphy (1928–'64), his stature has grown. Our cover story examines a new three-disc set from Resonance—*Musical Prophet: The Expanded 1963 New York Studio Sessions*—and explores Dolphy's legacy. The new set features Dolphy on alto saxophone, flute and bass clarinet and includes 85 minutes of previously unreleased material.

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Cover photo of Eric Dolphy by Chuck Stewart, ©Chuck Stewart Photography LLC



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First Take > BY FRANK ALKYER



Saying Goodbye to a Natural

AS WE WERE PUTTING THE FINAL TOUCHES on this issue, the death of trumpeter Roy Hargrove delivered a cold, harsh slap to the jazz community. Gone at 49. It's painful to see a life cut short, especially the life of one of the most talented artists in jazz.

Roy graced the cover of DownBeat five times, and he was the subject of numerous other reviews, features and news stories. His first appearance was in our June 1986 issue, when he was a sophomore at the Arts Magnet High School in Dallas (later renamed the Booker T. Washington School for the Performing and Visual Arts). He received a DownBeat Student Music Award in the Jazz Instrumental Soloist category, the first of many honors this magazine and the jazz world would bestow upon him.

But he already was on the radar of every major jazz school in the nation. As the scholarship offers stacked up, Roy had opportunities to sit in with Wynton Marsalis, Bobby Hutcherson, Herbie Hancock, Freddie Hubbard and others.

Roy was truly a prodigy, a phenom gifted with what Bart Marantz, his first jazz teacher, often has called "unbelievable natural ability."

"He was playing the music with depth, color, space and beauty like few others, *at 14!*" Marantz recently said about Hargrove. "He loved trumpet, jazz and its wonderful history, basing all of his gifts on those who came before him. He was truly carrying more than he could take in and had problems with this weighty artistic ability on his shoulders; [it was] far beyond his understanding. When Roy performed ... we were in the presence of the Lord, who gave Roy this unique ability to take the gift of those 12 notes and make them *his* through Roy."

On top of that ability, Roy had a true love of

his craft. If there was a jam session nearby, he'd be there—a musical sponge who loved to play with, and learn from, other musicians.

"I'm so thankful to Lester Bowie," Hargrove said in the June 1992 issue of DownBeat. "He was listening to me play at the Umbria Jazz Festival in Italy, and after I finished, he said, 'Damn, Roy, you sound good! But you've got to pick some different notes. Play some wrong notes. You don't have to play inside all the time.' So, I took his advice, and it really opened me up to a whole new realm of things that were possible in music."

When Universal Studios Florida opened CityJazz, designed and decorated with memorabilia from members of the DownBeat Hall of Fame, we invited the Roy Hargrove Quintet to play the grand opening. Roy and the band sat down with our staff the next day for a cover story, "Men at Work," for the May 1999 issue.

"To me, this is like a ministry," Roy said of his music. "I'm moving into a vibe that's kind of like musical therapy. Music has a very powerful impact on people. It can uplift you and bring you out of your deepest sorrows. I'm trying to get into a spiritual vibe."

Spiritual, yes; his music drips with soul. But Roy also had his demons, and sadly, they were a factor in his early departure from this planet. That's just part of the frailty of being human and certainly not what will define Roy Hargrove's time here.

"You always have to play with a certain amount of humility, because there's always someone else, the next cat coming up," he said in 1999. "When you start thinking you're the cat, boy, you're in trouble."

Roy, you were the cat, and we will miss you. Rest in peace. **DB**





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**** - DownBeat

Featuring: Andrew Cyrille, Mark Turner, Oliver Lake, Tim Hagans, Gary Foster, Dave Woodley and Putter Smith.



KEITH OXMAN

Acclaimed Denver saxophonist Keith Oxman joins forces with the legendary David Liebman.



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Chords ි Discords

Gone Too Soon

Roy Hargrove's passing hit me hard—really hard. Roy was my all-time favorite trumpet player. I know I'm supposed to say Miles, Dizzy, Freddie, Lee or Woody, or maybe one of the more left-leaning horn players, but Roy was my guy. It had everything to do with emotion. Roy always brought his "A" game, and I felt every single note he played, whether live or in the studio. His flugelhorn playing was luminous almost beyond belief. He respected the melody, honored the tradition, could harmonize or reharmonize anything on the spot, and he could blow his ass off when so inclined.

I distinctly remember seeing him perform at the Kuumbwa Jazz Center in Santa Cruz, circa 1997, with the amazing band he'd recently assembled: saxophonist Sherman Irby, pianist Larry Willis, bassist Gerald Cannon and drummer Willie Jones III. At the time, my interest in jazz had been floundering for several years, but the energy from that show U-turned it back onto its rightful track as a lifelong obsession.

l just can't believe he's gone. Roy was only 49. Hell, Art Pepper lived longer!

GORDON WEBB SANTA CLARA, CALIFORNIA

Remembering a Legend

I want to thank DownBeat for the wonderful, heartfelt articles in tribute to NEA Jazz Master Dr. Randy Weston in your November issue. The reflections on Dr. Weston's greatness by Geof Bradfield (First Take) and Robert Ham's obituary with quotes from Cecil Bridgewater—were deeply moving.

I was extremely fortunate and privileged to be a member of the band African Rhythms. For decades, I witnessed firsthand Dr. Weston's generosity and cultural awareness. His presence enhanced the lives of so many, and his musical creativity is in the pantheon of the greatest exponents of jazz piano.

His amazing legacy will live on in all of us!

T.K. BLUE NEW YORK CITY

Remarkable Longevity

What is the probability that the top vibraphone player (Terry Gibbs) and one of the best alto saxophonists (Lee Konitz) circa 1950 both would be voted No. 4 on their respective instruments in the 2018 DownBeat Readers Poll?

Good for them and good for us!

MARSHALL ZUCKER WANTAGH, NEW YORK



DownBeat pays tribute to Roy Hargrove in the First Take column (page 10) and in The Beat (page 22).

Limited Appeal?

Except for the swing era, jazz has always appealed to a small number of people, just like classical music, just like the arts throughout history.

From the beginning, Mary Halvorson assumed only a small audience would want to hear her music. That's because avant-garde jazz guitar has an even smaller audience than most other jazz. A niche within a niche.

Is this wrong or bad? Is this a moral evil we should try to correct, like lying or swearing or cheating? Some like jazz, some don't. I'm OK with that. It would be imperious of me to say that everyone ought to like what I like, that everyone ought to listen to what I listen to. What about diversity?

People used to say that our differences make us stronger. I don't hear that much anymore. Instead, I hear, "You ought to do this," as though listening to jazz were an unpleasant good, like eating broccoli.

VINCE MACRI VPMACRI@GMAIL.COM

Corrections

In the Holiday Gift Guide of our December print edition, an article on the Art Ensemble of Chicago implied that ECM would release the band's forthcoming 2019 album. Pi Recordings will release the album.

DOWNBEAT REGRETS THE ERROR.

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

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Huntertones' Global Appeal

ot so long ago, Huntertones was the hottest instrumental group in Columbus, Ohio, where sousaphonist and trumpeter Jon Lampley, trombonist-beatboxer Chris Ott and saxophonist Dan White founded the group after meeting in an Art Blakey Ensemble class at The Ohio State University.

In 2014, the three friends and several bandmates abandoned their big-fish-in-a-smallpond status for the high-rent environs of Brooklyn. Their courage and confidence have paid off. Displaying admirable levels of effort and commitment, each individual member has established a viable career in New York while maintaining a role in Huntertones, which has created its own niche.

That band's third release, Passport, reflects the impact of its international travels on a collective aesthetic. Since 2016, Huntertones has made four tours of South America, Africa and Europe via the U.S. State Department's American Music Abroad program. Augmented by Joshua Hill on electric guitar, Adam DeAscentis on electric bass and John Hubbell on drum set, along with Snarky Puppy keyboardist Justin Stanton and percussionist Keita Ogawa, the group offers nine originals and a traditional song, "Hondo," sung by Hope Masike. The band met the vocalist during a Zimbabwe residency that inspired Lampley's composition "Bird Song," featuring his fiery trumpet declamation and White's vocalized tenor solo.

That sojourn also brought them to Togo, which inspired White to compose a highlife-meets-funk tune named after the country. Whatever the repertoire's provenance, Huntertones' intricate charts and kinetic beat language demand high instrumental facility.

The three co-founders are in the spotlight for Ott's "Fergal's Tune" (featuring guest fid-



dler-mandolinist Fergal Scahill from the group We Banjo 3), a stomping reel propelled by the composer's beatboxing and Lampley's slithery sousaphone grooves intertwined with White's tenor

"The cell phones come out and people start recording when we do that [song] at shows," White said, referring to concert segments when he, Ott and Lampley step out front for solos and unison work. "That's the rope that ties in new audiences who don't hear much instrumental music."

The band encounters new audiences frequently, with much of 2018 devoted to touring.

"We benefited from developing in Ohio around indie rock and hip-hop bands," said Lampley, who nurtured his protean chops in OSU's marching band, as did Ott. (He also has played with the rock group O.A.R. since 2011, and, when not traveling, plays with Jon Batiste & Stay Human on *The Late Show with Stephen Colbert.*) "That allowed us to come together as different personalities. We've become very comfortable as a band, where you might hear a little Snarky Puppy, or Led Zeppelin, or the Dirty Dozen Brass Band, or gospel music, or swinging jazz."

"We've played a funk festival in a bullring in Spain from 4 in the morning until the sun came up, and at Le Duc des Lombards, the fancy jazz club in Paris, on the same tour," Ott added.

Presenting repertoire as social music has served the band well throughout its global journeys. "We were brought over as a good representation of the diversity of American music," White said. "Out of respect, we'd sometimes perform songs that are beloved to a certain city or town. But our main goal was to do our thing, play the best we could, and share something. When there was a language barrier, our music spoke to them on an emotional level." —*Ted Panken*

Riffs >



New Laubrock: Bandleader and saxophonist Ingrid Laubrock recruited players with whom she has previously performed for her new album, *Contemporary Chaos Practices* (Intakt), out now. The recording—featuring guitarist Mary Halvorson, pianist Kris Davis and trumpeter Nate Wooley—has a contemporary classical vibe, while still exuding the feel of avant-jazz. The disc is subtitled *Two Works For Orchestra With Soloists*. Intaktrec.ch

Jazz in Italy: Umbria Jazz Winter returns Dec. 28–Jan. 1 and offers sets by the House Quintet (with saxophonist Piero Odorici), pianist Andrea Pozza, Funk Off and Wee Willie Walker & The Anthony Paule Soul Orchestra, among others. The winter iteration of Umbria Jazz, held in Orvieto, Italy, began in 1993.

umbriajazz.com

Certainly Southern: The nonprofit Music Maker Relief Foundation will mark its 25th anniversary in 2019. Aimed at bolstering the music traditions of the American South and its performers, the organization promotes live performances and music education, and it assists with career development, booking and emergency supplies for performers when needed. As part of its quarter-century celebration, MMRF plans to issue in February a book of Timothy Duffy's photography that showcases performers with whom the foundation has worked, a compilation album and a graphic novel. musicmaker.org

Final Bar: Sonny Fortune, a saxophonist and multi-reedist who performed as a sideman on electric dates by Miles Davis, as well as on recordings by Kenny Barron, Nat Adderley, Pharoah Sanders, George Benson, McCoy Tyner and others, died Oct. 25 in New York at age 79. He reportedly succumbed to complications following a stroke. Fortune, whose recording schedule slowed in the 21st century, likely will be remembered for adding hearty textures to a wealth of notable albums. He continued performing at clubs up until July.



Basie Orchestra Gets Contemporary

THE COUNT BASIE ORCHESTRA WAS founded in 1936 in Kansas City, Missouri, and still thrives, decades after its namesake bandleader died in 1984 at the age of 79. Just don't call the large ensemble a repertory band—or worse, a ghost band.

"This band is not about that," said Grammy winner Gregg Field, who played drums in the Basie band from 1981 to '83 and produced a new Concord album by the group, which topped the Big Band category in the 2018 DownBeat Readers Poll. "This band is about retaining all of the things we love about Basie, but then, letting it continue to adopt new material."

The orchestra's new 11-track album, *All About That Basie*, aurally illustrates Field's point. The band plays true to its Kansas City roots, swinging with its trademark, steady 4/4 beat that Basie biographer Albert Murray called "the velocity of celebration," and is led by trumpeter Scotty Barnhart.

"When we did the record, I said we don't have anything to prove anymore," Barnhart said. "I said let's do half of the music people would expect, but do some other stuff we haven't done before, like Earth Wind & Fire, Stevie Wonder, Leonard Cohen, Adele and even 'Tequila.' I wanted to make sure that there is something on this record for everybody. I think Basie would have loved it."

The album ranges from Adele's "Hello" to Cohen's "Hallelujah," and special guests include vocal supergroup Take 6 on a rendition of "Everyday I Have the Blues," as well as Kurt Elling's ebullient take of "Don't Worry 'Bout Me," a tune from the 1966 album *Sinatra At The Sands.* Other guests on the disc include Joey DeFrancesco and Stevie Wonder.

A glance through the orchestra's discography—including *This Time By Basie*, *Pop Goes Basie* and *Basie's Beatle Bag*—proves that pop music is nothing new for the band. "All through the '50, '60s and '70s, Basie would take the music of that time and do it Basie style," Field said. "We were coming up on the 80th anniversary of the band, and I thought, 'Why don't we create an album that celebrates all of the decades of that band by bringing in contemporary artists that love Basie?""

One of the high points of the recording is Basie alumni Carmen Bradford's rousing rendition of Fats Waller's "Honeysuckle Rose." For vocalist Bradford—who was the bandleader's last hire in 1983—this selection, arranged by Benny Carter but previously never recorded, is a tribute to Ella Fitzgerald, who, like Bradford, ranks along with Helen Humes, Billie Holiday and Sarah Vaughan as Basie vocalists.

"I was supposed to sing it with someone," Bradford said, "but I feel like I've been out here long enough to pay tribute to Ella by myself who she was and what she meant to me. The band has a very powerful sound, and you have to be a very fit singer. You have to really want to sing."

Bradford comes full circle as a veteran with the orchestra. "We have so many young people in the Basie band," she said. "What I hear are young voices, just like mine when I was their age. They studied and did their homework to re-create a sound they weren't even alive to hear. So, it warms my heart that Scotty has clearly thought things out in who he's chosen to keep this music alive, and to keep the Basie sound alive."

With the new album and a full touring schedule, Barnhart continues to adapt the Basie sound to the modern era, while staying true to its signature sound.

"I remember reading a quote about Basie hearing Walter Page's Blue Devils, and it was the feeling that they had that made him want to be a part of that sound," Barnhart said. "That's what set Basie's orchestra apart. My job is making sure that everybody can dance to everything we play, no matter the tempo." —*Eugene Holley Jr.*

Joris Teepe Extends Rashied Ali's Legacy

AT NEW YORK'S SMALLS JAZZ CLUB THIS fall, Joris Teepe and his quintet invited listeners to celebrate the inaugural release of the Jazz Tribes label: *In The Spirit Of Rashied Ali*, an album nearly 10 years in the making.

Teepe, a Dutch-born bassist who splits time between New York and Amsterdam, became part of the legendary drummer's quintet in 2001, and remained a permanent fixture of the ensemble until Ali's death in 2009.

"We felt like we were really on to something," Teepe said about the band, which also included tenor saxophonist Lawrence Clark, trumpeter Josh Evans and pianist Greg Murphy. "And suddenly that got disturbed."

At the time, Teepe and the remaining quintet members faced an unusual dilemma: They sought to continue following their vision, but without their leader. "The bookers weren't interested in booking the Rashied Ali Quintet without Rashied Ali," the bassist said.

Teepe felt the loss as viscerally as he felt a desire to continue exploring his interpretation of Ali's extensive work, which included collaborations with John Coltrane, Alice Coltrane and Archie Shepp among others. In the years following the drummer's death, Teepe's projects served as an incubator for what would become *Spirit*.

The new release includes a CD packaged inside a 66-page hardcover book, which was written by Jazz Tribes' John Weijers, and features photos and interviews about the drummer's life and legacy. Besides serving as a tribute to Ali, the project reflects an intrinsic quality of Teepe's music: honest expression.

"Before I met him, I was thinking about the music as something rational," Teepe explained. "Playing with him pushed me to think of the music as a way to express yourself as an individual. It's about the energy, rather than if it's a minor or major chord. It's a very honest way of playing." The release features a five-song suite of Ali's



compositions (arranged by Teepe), plus two of the bassist's original tunes, including the slow-building "Alphabet." During the sessions, Teepe gave his collaborators, like saxophonist Wayne Escoffery, plenty of room to improvise.

"I had some clear ideas of where we would go, but in between those anchor points, there's a lot of freedom," he said.

Before recording Spirit, Teepe worked on a

few other projects, but nothing seemed to achieve what he'd envisioned. Ideas for *Spirit* evolved over time, eventually transforming into exactly what Teepe had in mind—to honor the legacy of his friend and mentor.

"The way I think about music was largely influenced by the experience of playing with Rashied," Teepe said. "This time, it really feels right." —Stephanie Jones

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Pocket Change, describes it as an assortment of "beats, breaks and excursions."

Nate Smith's Universe of Beats

NATE SMITH'S NEW SOLO DRUM SUITE, *Pocket Change*, marks the 44-year-old drummer's second response to a question he asked himself several years ago, when bassist Dave Holland and saxophonist Chris Potter—with whom he made odd meters flow for much of the latter aughts—began to focus on new projects with different personnel.

"Drummers can get caught in the whirlwind of work," Smith said over a recent lunch at a Harlem bistro. "But when the work with Dave and Chris slowed down, I was left with time to look for who I am without them."

To find answers, Smith went to the piano, and began the process he described as "putting something together that tied all my experiences as a sideman into one thing. Once I decided to do that, and focused on which musicians to record with, I knew I had a direction."

The result was 2017's *Kinfolk: Postcards From Everywhere* (Ropeadope), a do-it-yourself production on which Smith augmented a strong unit with the voice of Gretchen Parlato, as well as some previous employers, including guitarists Lionel Loueke and Adam Rogers. Distinct melodies complement an array of Smith's bespoke grooves, executed with drum-machine precision and a speculative attitude. As a producer, Smith was careful not to let the bells and whistles obscure the idiosyncratic personalities of his associates.

While conceiving *Kinfolk*, Smith was creating beats for various clients, including a collaboration with The Loop Loft (a sample shop that was acquired by Native Instruments in 2018). The Loop Loft will release select drum patterns as *Nate Smith Vol. 3, Pocket Change*, while Smith will self-release the proper album on vinyl and digital formats. He noticed a substantial uptick in Instagram-YouTube-Facebook engagement in response to promotional videos on which he plays "simple-sounding grooves that I try to switch up and change." He mashed up jazz titans like Elvin

Jones, Max Roach and Art Blakey, as well as contemporary influences like Omar Hakim, Bernard "Pretty" Purdie and Steve Gadd, and hip-hop avatars like J Dilla and Questlove.

Smith stated that for the initial Loop Loft production he felt a bit "constricted." So, for his new project, he said he wanted "to open up the idea of playing on a grid, with a click track, then deconstructing to see how far I can stray and still land on the 1."

Rather than bring a game plan into the studio, Smith spontaneously chose techniques to work with. On "Day In Dusk" ("something in 3 that modulates to 12/8"), he removes the snares, exploring the shades and colors of the toms. "Big Little Five" modulates between 5/8 and 5/4. On "Wobbly," Smith employs his own way of swinging J Dilla's "drunk on cognac" beats; on "What It Do" he breaks up the rhythm to mimic "the idea of lilts and swing in conversation." His compressed voice enters the flow of "Paved," while his refined production skills come to the fore in manipulated tonality of "Spressly So."

At press time, a YouTube clip of Smith's NPR Tiny Desk Concert posted in November 2017 had generated more than 519,000 views; a *Pocket Change* clip shot at Jazz Standard and posted in July had nearly 115,000 views. This enthusiastic online response reinforces Smith's contention that "it's important for drummers to make it known you have an imagination and important ideas that should be heard." He continued: "Record labels, booking agents, management still can't imagine the drummer-as-bandleader. But numbers don't lie. Now, you can engage directly with your fans. 'Hey, you like this music? This is my next show. Here are the tickets. You like this track? It's on my album; here's the link.'

"The Internet is a crowded place. But there's room for all those voices. There's lot of freedom if you engage directly with people." —*Ted Panken*



Javon Jackson Extends the Tradition

SAXOPHONIST JAVON JACKSON'S NEW album—*For You*, a self-assured post-bop statement released on his own label, Solid Jackson Records—is in many ways an homage to the musicians who have meant the most to him.

The program includes a swinging rendition of Wayne Shorter's "Backstage Sally," along with two songs by pianist Cedar Walton (1934–2013), whom Jackson describes in the liner notes as "a major mentor and close friend." There are original compositions dedicated to Freddie Hubbard (a onetime employer), Pharoah Sanders (who once lent Jackson a mouthpiece before a show) and McCoy Tyner (with whom Jackson has performed at the Blue Note).

The collection of tunes suggests that Jackson is a man who respects the past, but isn't afraid to put his own stamp on things.

"We usually write for people," the tenor saxophonist said during an interview at the Village Vanguard in Manhattan. "I got that from Jimmy Heath."

When Jackson came onto the scene in the late 1980s as a promising new member of Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers, he was lauded for a neo-classical approach, with a dry tone that recalled Joe Henderson and John Coltrane.

"That was a conduit for me to meet all of the musicians that I would later work with," said Jackson, who went on to play alongside such stalwarts as Ron Carter, Louis Hayes and Elvin Jones.

Jackson, 53, serves as a role model and mentor for younger musicians, as he keeps the tradition alive not only onstage, but also in the classroom. For the past six years, he has served as the director of the Jackie McLean Institute of Jazz at The Hartt School, part of the University of Hartford. In 1968, McLean established the African-American music department and later the jazz studies degree program there. "Knowing Jackie as I did and the kind of person he was and his commitment to starting that jazz department, it's been an honor to follow in his footsteps," Jackson said. "I want to help the next generation of musicians as much as I can. I try to offer some input or advice on music or business to [help students] get along ... because we all need some help."

Jackson devised the curriculum for a master's degree in jazz at the school, a process that took him two years. The program was launched this fall.

Along with his education duties, Jackson still finds time to perform and record. On *For You*, the bandleader employs his working quartet: pianist Jeremy Manasia, bassist David Williams and drummer McClenty Hunter. Next year, the group, which has played together since 2013, plans to release *Déjà Vu*.

"[Jackson is] always searching for new ground, but always in the tradition of those guys, Dexter Gordon and John Coltrane, of course, who he loves," Williams said. "Some people, they've played it very safe, they know what they know, and they stay within those bounds, but he'll step out. It makes me play better. It gives me that much more freedom."

Jackson happily remains, at this point in his fruitful career, a searcher.

"I'm still as energized as ever to keep writing and try to keep developing as a musician," he said. But the saxophonist also feels a deep responsibility to pass on what he's learned to the next generation of musicians.

"The students won't get to know Art Blakey," Jackson said. "They won't get to know Freddie Hubbard, they won't get to know Elvin Jones or Cedar Walton or Charlie Haden or Betty Carter. But they can know them through me."

—Matthew Kassel





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European Scene / BY PETER MARGASAK



Svendsen Explores, Unfettered

In his recent improvisational practice, Norwegian bassist Christian Meaas Svendsen embraces a deeply physical relationship to his instrument, doing his best to erase the line between his body and his bass. He frequently uses multiple bows simultaneously—one in his hand, another in his mouth—while vocalizing with the sounds he produces on the instrument. He plays in bare feet, and sometimes he'll use a foot to damp the strings. His solo performances present him alternately dancing and wrestling with his bass.

"Those things are very easily regarded as gimmicky," he said, "but I didn't start doing it to create a gimmick. It came naturally, and I was thrilled to explore an approach to the instrument which revolved more around my physical relation to the instrument and to step away from cemented positions."

During the past decade Svendsen, 30, has become an increasingly vital figure in Norwegian improvised music, playing in Paal Nilssen-Love's Large Unit, fellow bassist Jon Rune Strøm's Quintet and in the trio Momentum, among others. But his personality comes through most clearly in his own projects, frequently released through his Nakama label, which shares the name of a collective quintet he's worked with since 2015.

"I wanted to make music that embraced our differences and still make it work somehow," Svendsen said about the group, which includes a violinist and vocalist.

With the ensemble's latest effort, *Worst Generation*, they've succeeded, forging a thrumming landscape of ebb-and-flow activity that affords singer Agnes Hvizdalek enough space to draw from her arsenal of wordless vocalizing.

Svendsen, who came late to music—picking up an electric bass when he was 15 to play in rock bands with his friends—stresses that he's not a natural musician. "I wanted to know how music was constructed and to understand why that note fit with that chord, and why that chord should come after that chord," Svendsen said.

He grew up in Kongsberg, a modest silver mining town a couple hours outside of Oslo that happens to host an excellent annual jazz festival. He eventually studied at the Norwegian Academy of Music, where Svendsen admits he felt his abilities were dwarfed by those of his classmates. But the pressure propelled him, only encouraging his curiosity and drive to learn. After earning a degree in jazz during 2012, he went on to study classical music at the same school.

His broad-minded aesthetic can be gleaned from the impressive 2017 recording *Avin*, a song collection featuring an eightpiece band that drifts toward art song, with Svendsen's wobbly singing injecting a homemade charm to the exquisite arrangements.

"I'm interested in connecting different established genres, but I'm also interested in getting rid of them altogether," he said, citing American maverick composer Harry Partch as an example of an artist "who carved his own way."

Indeed, the next Nakama album reflects such unfettered exploration—a collaborative effort with a Zen chanting choir. But Svendsen's still committed to free jazz, with a new album set for release by a Scandinavian quartet, which includes Swedish saxophonist Anna Höberg, called the Big YES!

And he's pressing forward with new elements to his solo practice as well.

"I've teamed up with Kyrre Laastad, who will put microphones on certain spots on my body—over the heart, vocal cords, under my nose—places that make sound," Svendsen said. "He will subtly amplify some of those spots to bring my bodywork closer to the audience."

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Remembering Roy Hargrove

ROY HARGROVE, AN INFLUENTIAL TRUMpeter, bandleader and trendsetter, died on Nov. 2 at age 49 in New York's Mount Sinai Hospital. According to his longtime manager, Larry Clothier, Hargrove died from cardiac arrest due to a long battle with kidney disease.

Born Roy Anthony Hargrove to Roy Allan and Jacklyn Hargrove on Oct. 16, 1969, in Waco, Texas, he grew up in Dallas and began playing trumpet at age 9. During his three-decade-long career, Hargrove exemplified the "jazz torchbearer." Even though his virtuosic playing firmly was rooted in the hard-bop tradition, he wasn't beholden to it. His musical vocabulary included blues, Afro-Cuban music, funk, soul and hiphop—without a hint of pandering to commercial tastes. When it came to ballads, Hargrove was nearly peerless as he brought a glowing sensuality to the fore, especially when he played flugelhorn.

Wynton Marsalis gave Hargrove his first national boost after hearing him play at a music clinic in 1987, when Hargrove was an 11th grade student at Dallas' famed Booker T. Washington High School for the Performing and Visual Arts. Impressed by Hargrove's fluid improvisations and musical maturity, Marsalis invited the teen prodigy to join him on a date at the Caravan of Dreams Performance Center in Fort Worth. Later that summer, Marsalis asked Hargrove to play in his all-star band at the North Sea Jazz Festival in The Hague. After high school, Hargrove attended Berklee College of Music for one year. There, he met alto saxophonist Antonio Hart, who would contribute to Hargrove's early-'90s Novus/RCA albums, such as *Diamond In The Rough, Public Eye* and *The Vibe*. Hargrove played on Hart's early-'90s leader discs on the same label, and in 1992, Novus released Hargrove and Hart's double-billed disc, *The Tokyo Sessions*.

Hargrove already had developed a reputation as a stellar trumpeter prior to encountering Hart at a jam session at Wally's Café Jazz Club, where Berklee's jazz students frequently convened. While reflecting on their front-line horn rapport, Hart said that it evolved naturally. "We never discussed anything," he said. "Once we played together, there was just this spiritual bond that I've yet to find with any other trumpet player."

Before Hargrove released *Diamond In The Rough* in 1990, he'd made his recording debut on alto saxophonist Bobby Watson's 1988 Blue Note album, *No Question About It*. Hargrove also joined Watson in the band Superblue, which issued its eponymous debut in 1989 on Blue Note.

In 1990, Hargrove received critical acclaim for performing with saxophonist Sonny Rollins at Carnegie Hall. The following year, he played on Rollins' album *Here's To The People*. Throughout the rest of '90s, Hargrove solidified his reputation as an outstanding trumpeter and bandleader with a string of discs on Novus and Verve that often found him fronting intergenerational ensembles that included veterans, such as bassist Walter Booker, drummer Billy Higgins and saxophonists Johnny Griffin, Stanley Turrentine and Joe Henderson. The trumpeter often reserved the piano chair for masters like John Hicks, Larry Willis and Ronnie Matthews.

Hargrove dazzled onstage during concerts and at after-hours jam sessions he frequented, particularly at the now-defunct New York jazz clubs Bradley's and Augie's Jazz Bar. He topped the category Trumpet (Talent Deserving Wider Recognition) in the DownBeat Critics Poll in 1991, 1992 and 1993.

In 1995, he teamed with business partner Dale Fitzgerald and singer Lezlie Harrison to create the Jazz Gallery, a New York-based venue that continues to be a forum for emerging and established jazz talent.

Hargrove won his first Grammy for 1997's *Habana* (Verve), on which he led Crisol, a coalition of American and Cuban jazz artists that included pianist Chucho Valdés, drummer Horacio "El Negro" Hernández, alto saxophonist Gary Bartz and trombonist Frank Lacy. The late '90s saw Hargrove's artistry expand beyond modern bop. His live shows often featured him and his bandmates nodding to DJ culture, quoting riffs from '70s funk classics such as Rose Royce's "Car Wash" and the Ohio Players' "Skin Tight" while trading fours. He also appeared on the 1997 neo-soul classic *Baduizm*, the debut album from singer Erykah Badu, one of his classmates from Booker T. Washington High School.

At the turn of the millennium, Hargrove became more immersed in hip-hop and modern soul. In 2000, he played on D'Angleo's *Voodoo*, Badu's *Mama's Gun* and rapper Common's *Like Water For Chocolate*—three classic albums associated with the Soulaquarians, a collective that also included keyboardist James Poysner, rapper Q-Tip and drummer Ahmir "Questlove" Thompson. But Hargrove continued playing straightahead jazz, as evidenced by the Grammywinning 2002 disc *Directions In Music-Live At Massy Hall* (Verve), a collaborative effort co-led by pianist Herbie Hancock and tenor saxophonist Michael Brecker.

Inspired by his touring experience with D'Angelo in support of *Voodoo*, Hargrove and 31 musicians convened at Electric Lady Studios in Manhattan for lengthy recording sessions that would yield the 2003 album *Hard Groove* (Verve Records) under the band name RH Factor. With high-profile guest appearances from Common, Q-Tip and Badu, along with mesmerizing vocal performances by then-newcomers Anthony Hamilton, Shelby Johnson and Stephanie McKay, *Hard Groove* significantly raised the bar for the fusion of jazz with hip-hop.

"Roy assembled a unique band of strong and

contrasting personalities to create a visionary music at the time," said saxophonist Jacques Schwarz-Bart, who participated in *Hard Groove* and played with Hargrove on D'Angelo's *Voodoo* tour. "This project has become a reference for the new generation of musicians."

A key ingredient to the album's success was Hargrove recruiting sound engineer Russ Elevado, who helped create the album's hazy sonic allure. "[Elevado] knows how to take live instruments, make them sound correct, but sound like the funk," the trumpeter explained to DownBeat in 2003. "I wanted [*Hard Groove*] to have the sonic quality of hip-hop and r&b, but still have enough sophistication where people can listen to it and say, "That's music.""

Hargrove continued exploring early-21st century hip-hop and soul on RH Factor's *Strength* (2004) and *Distractions* (2006), as well as recordings by Badu and D'Angelo. During this time, Hargrove emerged as a mentor to a younger generation of jazz musicians. His final two major releases—2008's quintet album *Earfood* (EmArcy) and the 2009 big band disc *Emergence* (Groovin' High)—helped introduce such commanding jazz artists as drummers Montez Coleman and Quincy Phillips, bassists Danton Bolder and Ameen Saleem, and pianists Gerald Clayton and Sullivan Fortner.

As a bandleader, Hargrove developed an

expansive songbook that included lesser-known compositions written by Matthews, Willis, Cedar Walton and Weldon Irvine. "One of Roy's gifts was his memory," said alto saxophonist Justin Robinson, who played in Hargrove's band starting in 2001. "He had total recall of music parts that he played. You could play something with him and maybe 10 years later, he'll bring it up and play the same thing back to you."

Hargrove also penned gems such as "Roy Allan," "Trust" and "Strasbourg/St. Denis" that are frequently played by other jazz artists. "He was always writing," Robinson said. "There are things that have not been recorded that he just recently composed. He was always sitting at the piano, writing something down, or developing something on the trumpet."

Despite the health problems and substance abuse that haunted Hargrove throughout much of his career, he consistently performed with power and indefatigable imagination. "The world really didn't get to see the full level of Roy Hargrove's talent," saxophonist Hart said. "He was beyond category and the word 'genius.' Roy had something that you only see a couple of times in your life—something that you'd see in a Charlie Parker or John Coltrane."

Hargrove is survived by his mother; his wife, singer Aida Brandes; a daughter, Kamala; and his brother, Brian. —John Murph



Pignataro's Personal Artistry

IF JAZZ IS A MUSIC OF SELF-EXPRESSION, it's only natural that it should include autobiographical elements. Still, it's not often that an artist presents a narrative as personal and sweeping as what saxophonist Marco Pignataro offers on his second album, *Almas Antiguas* (Zoho).

"This album documents everything involved with my personal life and my work life," Pignataro said. There's his youth in Bologna, Italy; his experiences as a professional musician, including work with his eventual mentor, bassist Eddie Gomez; and the academic career that took him from Puerto Rico, where he co-founded the Jazz and Caribbean Music Department at the Conservatory of Music, to Boston, where he's currently managing director of the Berklee Global Jazz Institute.

"Even on my first CD, all the compositions were based on very personal, emotional impressions," Pignataro said of his 2011 debut, *Sofia's Heart.* "That's the way I like to create music. *Almas Antiguas* represents a very particular frame of mind that I've been in for the last year, personally and emotionally."

What Pignataro wanted to convey was a sense of narrative, so that listeners would hear a story unfold as the musicians performed. "I didn't want it to be about my saxophone or my playing," he explained. "I wanted it to be about the music, in which I happen to play saxophone."

He also wanted the program to highlight strong melodies. "I come from a culture where melody is such an important part of expression," he said. "There's not an Italian musician I know who doesn't have an attachment—or at least a certain sensitivity—to melody."

As the pieces gestated, Pignataro developed a clear idea of how the music should sound, but less of a sense of who would actually create that sound. Gomez was a given. "Eddie and I have a 10-year relationship now," he said. "I always start with Eddie being in the center.

"But then I started thinking about the other people. One day at the Berklee Global Jazz Institute, we had Alan Pasqua and Adam Cruz doing this master class. At one point, they played together, just piano and drums, and when I heard them, I heard exactly the sound that I was hearing in my mind. There's something about the elegance, the sense of space and the sense of emotional output that they deliver when they play. Then I imagined Eddie in the center of it and thought, 'This is just perfect.'"

Still, Pasqua, Gomez and Cruz never had played as an ensemble before. "When we all went into the studio, it was a big question mark,"



Pignataro recalled. "We had barely rehearsed, and I really had no idea what would happen. And as we played the first song, it was as if this band always existed." Tenor saxophonist George Garzone appears on three tracks of *Almas Antiguas*.

"Everybody was really clear on what I was trying to convey through the music," Pignataro said. "[It] made sense to them, and the chemistry was really magical. I was proud of that. One of the things we're trying to teach our students is how important it is to select musicians who will resonate with what you want to do." —J.D. Considine



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Calderazzo Bounces Back

aimed to capture the spontaneity of a concert in a renowned club. "I love studio trio records, the ones I grew up listening to, but I'd rather do it live," the pianist said, referring to *Live From The Cotton Club, Tokyo, Volume I* (Dot Time). "I wanted to put out a project that documents where I'm at as a player today. It was my idea to call it *Volume I*, because I plan on doing it again."

The program contains six tracks culled from four nights of performances with bassist Orlando Le Fleming and drummer Donald Edwards in February 2017.

"I just called the tunes and whatever happened, happened," Calderazzo explained by phone from his home in North Carolina, where he was taking time off before returning to the road with the Branford Marsalis Quartet. Two of the compositions from the Tokyo set—"Cianna" and the ballad "Free"—are slated to be included on a forthcoming album by Marsalis' group, although the latter will be given a different title.

"Both [arrangements] are much different with the quartet," Calderazzo said. "The ballad is looser and freer in the trio, but the song is better in the quartet setting. Branford played great on it."

Calderazzo's leader debut, 1991's *In The Door* (Blue Note), counts contributions from Michael

Brecker (1949–2007), Marsalis and saxophonist Jerry Bergonzi. And in 1998, following the passing of pianist Kenny Kirkland, Calderazzo became a member of Marsalis' quartet.

"I still feel a lot like a student," Calderazzo said. "I still want to grow. That's why I play standards on some of my gigs, because I think playing the standard repertoire is a pretty good barometer of where [one is] as a jazz musician."

Yet, after a recent bout with cubital tunnel syndrome, Calderazzo is lucky to be playing. It was during a 2017 tour in South Africa with Marsalis that he noticed something was wrong.

"It felt like I slept on my arm funny," he said. "My pinky and ring finger on my right hand were numb, and I thought, 'That's so weird.' We tried recording Branford's record and it was even worse. I played a whole record basically with three fingers." Hand surgery and rest were the suggested treatments.

"They cut my elbow, they cut my nerve, they had to rebuild the tunnel to the nerves," he said. "It was scary. I was out for a while. ... The good news is, I have no nerve damage and I'm playing."

In between working on Marsalis' album in June and hitting the road with the saxophonist in the fall, Calderazzo did something he hadn't done in years: He took some time off. "I had my



son 75 out of 90 days this summer and had one of the best summers I've ever had," he said about his 5-year-old. "He learned how to swim, we went to the beach and I took him on a helicopter ride."

Now fully healed, Calderazzo is back at the piano, sketching plans for future recordings.

"I sit at the piano and I want to write," he said. "My life is interesting. I'm not 30 years old living in New York City, running around playing in the clubs. I have another story to tell."

-Denise Sullivan



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In Tampere, History and Revolution

CERTAIN SALIENT HISTORICAL LEGACIES stand out in Tampere: It's where Lenin and Stalin plotted the Russian Revolution before firing it up in St. Petersburg, and the city's industrial heritage has earned it the reputation of being the "Manchester of Finland."

The Tampere Jazz Happening, now in its 37th year, relates to those historical points with its carefully plotted revolutionary agenda, balanced with some accessible sounds, and a centralized base of operations at the Old Customs House and the Telakka, rustic brick-clad buildings dating to the early 20th century.

Tampere's weekend-long festival, which ran Nov. 2–4, always is preceded by an evening of music from a designated visiting country, and this year, the focus was on Austria. Kicking things off with gusto, elastic trumpeter Mario Rom's Interzone, a chordless Austrian trio, swirled around genres. But properly opening the festival on Friday was the presentation of the Yrjö Award, a Finnish jazz prize this year bestowed on drummer Jussi Lehtonen, his quartet then offering a short set of post-bop and soul-jazz.

Tampere's festival, long steered by director Juhamatti Kauppinen, also serves as a compact and smartly curated showcase for Finnish sounds. It's a scene of great variety and strength and ranges from the punk-spiced free-jazz of Black Motor to the elegant mid-'60s Miles Davisinspired classicism of trumpeter Martti Vesala and his Soundpost Quintet.

A recurring theme at Tampere was innovative takes on large ensembles. Even the most straightforward big band at the festival, Timo Lassy & Ricky-Tick Big Band Brass, deviated from the norm by slicing out the traditional sax section: The only saxophonist on the stand was Lassy. Heading further out in perspective, Swedish baritone saxophonist Mats Gustafsson's Fire! Orchestra mixed reeds, strings, rhythm section and vocals by flexible singer Mariam Wallentin while poised between free blowing catharsis and structured tunes.

For Kaja Draksler, a Slovenian pianist and composer, her octet setting loosely followed a chamber-jazz logic, with diversity of textures creating a sound larger than the sum of its parts. Playing music from 2017's *Gledelac*, Draksler folded the poetry of Robert Frost and a disarming wash of Handel's baroque propriety into an ever-shifting musical tapestry.

De facto leader Roscoe Mitchell and drummer Famoudou Don Moye currently are the only original members touring with The Art Ensemble of Chicago, perhaps accounting for its Tampere set feeling unfocused at times, dour and distracted, and lacking the band's classic and critical blend of freedom, humor and ritual. But suddenly, amid a long solo section by Mitchell and with only 10 minutes left in the set, the saxophonist broke the somber ice by abruptly turning to trumpeter Hugh Ragin—deferentially silent during the bandleader's solo and blurted, "Are you going to play anymore tonight?" That old Art Ensemble joy and border-crossing abandon then returned, right at home in a city once literally an incubator for revolution. —Josef Woodard





Scales Extends Steel Pan Territory

BELA FLECK KNOWS A THING OR TWO about establishing an identity in the jazz world while playing an unusual instrument. So, it made sense that the banjo player would bond with a younger jazz musician whose specialty is an unusual instrument: steel pannist Jonathan Scales.

"I see a kindred spirit in him—in his need to be the best he can be," Fleck said. "I identify with his struggle to learn jazz on an instrument where it's hard to find the path, because currently there isn't a clear one for pans or banjo."

Fleck plays with Scales and his band, Fourchestra, on "Focus Poem," a track on Scales' sixth album, *Pillar* (Ropeadope). The clipped twang of his banjo fits well with the distinctive ping of the steel pan.

"[The Flecktones] are such a big influence on me," Scales said. "I wouldn't be here without them. I've worked very hard at getting to know them, driving for hours, so I could be at their show seven hours before they went on, so I could talk to them and maybe play with them at sound check."

Just as the banjo is closely associated with Appalachian music, the steel pan is tightly linked to Trinidadian calypso. But just as Fleck liberated his instrument, Scales has freed the pans,



crafting a jazz-rock fusion on the new album, which also features trumpeter Christian Scott aTunde Adjuah, among others.

It was at North Carolina's Appalachian State University that Scales fell in love with the pans. Due to the efforts of now-retired professor Scott Meister, the school had its own steel pan orchestra, punfully named the Steely Pan Steel Band. Oddly enough, Scales initially was not interested in the group. "My friends twisted my arm, and I joined the band," he recalled. "I loved it. It was the perfect combination of rhythm and melody."

In 2013, Scales dubbed his quartet the Fourchestra, and kept the name even after the

group was trimmed down to a trio, which now includes bassist E'Lon JD and drummer Maison Guidry.

"When I was in college," Scales said, "I had this idea that I would create a jazz band with steel pans and it would be totally unique. Then my friend told me, 'Yo, Andy Narell exists.' ... I've been to Trinidad three times, and I'm definitely not turning my back on tradition. But I'm going to play the music I want to play. I grew up listening to Dr. Dre and Eminem, then studying classical saxophone and orchestral and film score music. I want to get it all in there."

-Geoffrey Himes

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Eric Dolphy PROPHET' OF FREEDOM

BY PHILLIP LUTZ | PHOTO BY JEAN-PIERRE LELOIR

Whether he was wielding his alto saxophone, fluteor bass clarinet, Eric Dolphy was a godsend tothe cadre of musicians who were on a missionto expand the language of jazz.

e was like an angel," Richard Davis, Dolphy's longtime bassist, said in October. "He was my answer to wanting to play a certain way—free." In his short life—Dolphy died in 1964 at age 36—he embraced chromatic post-bop, contemporary classical and (what later would be called) world music on their own terms. At the same time, he was moving toward a synthesis of those forms, presaging the modern global sensibility.

But he was working at a time when cultural purists often prevailed over pluralists, and, among too many critics and club owners, his expansive aesthetic marked him as an unwelcome outlier. Struggling to find work as a leader, the reedist decided that after a 1964 tour



'Dolphy is one of my mentors, even from the grave.' —Bennie Maupin

accompanying bassist Charles Mingus, he would remain in Europe. Dolphy settled in Berlin, where his diabetes went untreated, leading to his tragic death on June 29.

"When I heard it, I didn't want to believe it," said Davis, 88.

That sense of denial summed up the reaction of others close to Dolphy—not least his composition mentor, Hale Smith (1925–2009), and Smith's wife, Juanita. Smith, 91, explained that the pain was so deep that, for many years, her husband refrained from digging into the boxes Dolphy had left at their Long Island home before the saxophonist departed for what would be his final tour.

"It was sort of a raw thing," she said.

But finally, in 1978, the Smiths contacted flutist and scholar James Newton, who flew out from California to take a look. What he found was a multitude of scores and recordings, many ready to be mined. Nine years later, he produced *Other Aspects* (Blue Note), a 41-minute, fivetrack collection that, by his own account, was put together hurriedly to benefit Dolphy's parents.

After that, Newton returned the material he had used to the Smiths' home, where it remained until Hale's death, when Newton became custodian of the entire cache. At that point, he undertook a more intensive exploration of the music, gradually coming to understand that it filled out the picture of a genius' life cut short. When Resonance Records got wind of the tapes and proposed a project, Newton was game.

"I started to think that this music had to come out," he said.

The result is *Musical Prophet: The Expanded* 1963 New York Studio Sessions. From seven-anda-half hours of tapes, Newton, working with Resonance Co-President Zev Feldman at the label's studio in Beverly Hills, culled 74 minutes of music, which had been released in the '60s as the albums *Conversations* and *Iron Man*, plus 85 minutes of previously unreleased material. Co-produced by Newton and Feldman, the collection, which includes extensive liner notes and photos, will be available in a limited-edition three-LP version (out Nov. 23 for Record Store Day's Black Friday event). There also will be a three-CD version and a digital edition (both out Jan. 25).

By the time Dolphy went into the studio for these sessions—on July 1 and 3, 1963—he had recorded with dozens of artists. Prominent among them was John Coltrane. Dolphy spent long hours practicing with Coltrane in the latter's home in St. Albans, Queens, according to bassist Reggie Workman, who worked with both musicians on Impulse classics like *Africa/Brass* and *Live! At The Village Vanguard*.

"They were very close," he said. "They respected one another highly."

On the bandstand or in the studio, Workman recalled, the two operated as equals. No matter what Coltrane's imagination yielded, he said, "Eric would step forward and produce something of the same nature. He always held his own. John expected you to believe in the music and know the terrain, and Eric was happy to be part of it. He always brought his own voice to the music."

That voice, using a full range of instruments to express limitless emotion, was amply expressed as well with Mingus. The two musicians' relationship, which began in Dolphy's native Los Angeles, had reached an early peak with albums like *Mingus At Antibes* (Atlantic) and *The Complete Town Hall Concert* (Blue Note). Despite its ups and downs, the musical bond was so strong that Mingus repeatedly hired Dolphy, right up until his death.

While his reputation as a sideman grew, Dolphy built his own catalog as a leader. By the early '60s, it already included two records of live performances at the Five Spot and three studio gems on Prestige's New Jazz imprint: *Outward Bound, Out There* and *Far Cry*—the last recorded on Dec. 21, 1960, the same day he laid down tracks for Ornette Coleman's singular *Free Jazz* (Atlantic).

Even as the New Jazz dates employed conventional song structures, they hinted at a subversive streak. By 1963, that streak had become more pronounced, and clearer still on 1964's *Out To Lunch!*, recorded with Davis, Freddie Hubbard (trumpet), Bobby Hutcherson (vibraphone) and Tony Williams (drums). Posthumously released, that album widely is considered Dolphy's most definitive; the new collection, with Hutcherson and Davis among the personnel, documents a moment of transition leading to it.

"You're hearing changes, you're hearing swing, but you're also hearing this approach that really gives you a lot of room to express who you are as an individual," Newton said.

For Dolphy—who was voted into the DownBeat Hall of Fame by readers in 1964 individual expression was paramount. Offstage, Smith said, he was an omnivorous consumer of knowledge and an assertive participant in seminar-like sessions her husband and Dolphy held in the Smiths' residences, first in Harlem's Flanders Hotel and, later, in their Long Island home. Onstage, Davis recalled, Dolphy rarely offered direction, preferring to give musicians full rein to shape their sound.

"There was never any discussion of the music," he said. "We just played."

That kind of trust, Davis said, reflected a closeness forged in the crucible of New York—at the Five Spot in a pressurized two-week residency, at Philharmonic Hall performing Gunther Schuller's "Journey Into Jazz" under Leonard Bernstein's watchful eye, at Town Hall contributing music between poet Ree Dragonette's searing disquisitions on race. All of which proved powerful bonding agents.

In the 1963 sessions, that bond also was a morale-booster as Dolphy and Davis squeezed into a single day a series of sonorous duos built on a diverse set of vehicles: the Arthur Schwartz-Howard Dietz ballad "Alone Together," Duke Ellington's "Come Sunday" and, in two previously unreleased takes, Roland Hanna's elegiac "Muses For Richard Davis."

Though Dolphy was no stranger to duos with bassists—two duos with Ron Carter, for example, appear on an acetate disc produced at Esoteric Sound Studios—the interplay in the '63 sessions has a quality of restraint that reflects a level of intimacy with Davis. The restraint is conspicuously unforced, particularly when Davis' bow meets Dolphy's bass clarinet—prompting the bassist, when asked what most stands out about the sessions 55 years after the fact, to cite Dolphy's unique expressivity on that instrument.

"Nobody else played it like that," Davis said. "Some good players would not even attempt to play it."

The impact of the Dolphy-Davis colloquies on Newton was evident. "They bring tears to my eyes, how they understood each other as artists and human beings," he said, adding that he was so taken by "Muses" that, for purposes of analysis, he devised a system for juxtaposing the two takes by simultaneously playing the improvisations—one on his main computer and the other on his laptop.

His conclusion? "Each time it's like they had a thousand different ways of approaching how the improvisation could unfold."

Beyond the duos, all of which were recorded on July 1, *Musical Prophet* offers a variety of settings that shed light on the various dimensions of Dolphy's art. A quintet with Hutcherson, Woody Shaw (trumpet), J.C. Moses (drums) and Davis alternating with Eddie Khan on bass interprets two Dolphy originals, "Iron Man" and "Mandrake," as well as Fats Waller's "Jitterbug Waltz"—a loping head-solos-head exercise whose conservative form belies the flickering of microtonality in Dolphy's birdlike flute.

"Birds have notes in between our notes—you try to imitate something they do and, like, maybe it's between F and F#, and you'll have to go up or come down on the pitch," Dolphy said in "John Coltrane and Eric Dolphy Answer the Jazz Critics," an article by Don DeMicheal that ran in the April 12, 1962, edition of DownBeat. "It's really something. ... Indian music has something of the same quality—different scales and quarter tones. I don't know how you label it, but it's pretty."

A sextet with Davis, Prince Lasha on flute, Sonny Simmons on alto saxophone, Clifford Jordan on soprano saxophone and Charles Moffett on drums provides the setting for some soulful multiphonics on "Music Matador." Composed by Lasha and Simmons, the tune traffics in the kind of avant-Latin groove with which Dolphy, a Spanish-speaking Panamanian-American, was comfortable.

"It's one of the least understood aspects of his language," Newton said. The largest complement of musicians—10 in all, with the addition of Garvin Bushell on bassoon and the replacement of Moffett by Moses—is enlisted on "Burning Spear." The song is named for Jomo Kenyatta, who acquired that moniker for his militant role in Kenya's fight for independence and served as his country's first prime minister and first president. The tune, a raucous celebration led by Dolphy's exclamatory bass clarinet, is one of two in the collection that have an explicitly political edge.

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At the time of his death, Dolphy is said to have been working on music for a string quart

The other is a 15-minute track titled "A Personal Statement." Recorded on March 2, 1964, at a radio station in Ann Arbor, Michigan where the composer, pianist Bob James, was an adventurous student—the piece is the collection's longest. It's also the most wide-ranging sonically, with each of Dolphy's three instruments assuming a distinct profile amid a shifting soundscape of woodblock accents, pianistic clusters and ensemble passages in a kind of fractured waltz time—all framed by a classically rendered libretto centered on a vocal line: "Jim Crow might one day be gone."

A version of the piece also appears on *Other Aspects*, on which Newton—uncertain of its name or composer at the time of that album's release—provisionally titled it "Jim Crow."

Still another side of Dolphy is offered in the single solo outing—three takes, actually—of the Ned Washington-Victor Young tune "Love Me." Those tracks, the shortest in the collection at less than four minutes each, find Dolphy in full flight, pushing his alto saxophone to the limit and beyond. In its risk-taking, Newton said, Dolphy nods to piano titans—Thelonious Monk (for his counterintuitive leaps) and Art Tatum (for his harmonic and technical range).

"He went to the edge of the cliff and he jumped off," Newton said of Dolphy. "He was falling and he had to fly."

Dolphy's artistic courage has had a profound impact on other players, too. Newton, who has

topped the Flute category in the DownBeat Critics Poll 23 times, acknowledges the debt on his album *Romance And Revolution* (Blue Note). The album was released in 1987—as was *Other Aspects*—and Dolphy was clearly on his mind.

Newton's soaring solo version of the Walter Gross-Jack Lawrence ballad "Tenderly" was, he said, "highly influenced by Eric," who had done the piece solo on alto saxophone on *Far Cry.* "A lot of [*Romance And Revolution*] was."

Newton's friend and colleague Bennie Maupin, known for his horn work on albums by Miles Davis (*Bitches Brew*) and Herbie Hancock (*Head Hunters* and *Mwandishi*), similarly was taken by Dolphy's work. His fascination began with an encounter with Dolphy at the Minor Key lounge in Detroit. Following a particularly ferocious set, the youngster got up the nerve to engage Dolphy.

"I told him what I was doing," Maupin recalled. "He was just standing there, holding a flute, and said, 'Play something for me." Maupin did, and an impromptu lesson ensued in which Dolphy spent 45 minutes explaining how to hold the instrument, improve one's embouchure and the like. "They were key things only somebody who really knew the instrument could have shown me. He was very patient and very kind."

Inspired by that experience, Maupin bought a bass clarinet, which he ultimately used on dates with both Davis and Hancock. After Maupin moved from his native Detroit to California, he began using the instrument in gigs with Newton. And when Newton came into possession of the Dolphy sheet music, Maupin used the instrument in a band, Dolphyana, created to play that music.

The group was short-lived, but it brought Maupin and Newton together for a concert at the 2008 Healdsburg Jazz Festival in California. The band covered a variety of material from *Out To Lunch!*, *Outward Bound* and *Last Date*—the last represented by "The Madrig Speaks, The Panther Walks," which, appearing on *Musical Prophet* as "Mandrake," serves as a platform for Dolphy's alto at its most agitated.

"It was definitely a challenge," Maupin said. "We worked through the music measure by measure to see what kind of blend we could get.

"Dolphy's music speaks for itself. He was involved in making things sound beautiful. He was always trying to be himself. A lot of people compare me to him. He's one of my mentors, even from the grave."

Dolphy's influence was felt beyond wind players. The late pianist Geri Allen analyzed Dolphy's music for a master's thesis, incorporating what she learned into her writing, in tunes like "Dolphy's Dance." Another pianist, Diane Moser, drew on Dolphy's predilection for winged creatures—he was said to transcribe the chirping of birds—with her "Birdsongs For Eric," which had its premiere in 2014 at a commemoration of Dolphy's music at Montclair State University in New Jersey.

That year, the 50th anniversary of Dolphy's death, saw a tribute in Berlin, at Rickenbackers Music Inn, featuring a group led by Gebhard Ullmann on saxophone, flute and bass clarinet. Ullmann, who formed the group Out to Lunch in the 1980s, remains a central figure among veteran Dolphy enthusiasts in Germany's capital.

Dolphy also counts enthusiasts among a younger generation. At The Bop Stop, a listening room in Cleveland with a reputation for offering eclectic fare, the new-music ensemble No Exit presented an all-Dolphy program in May 2017. The set offered fresh takes on familiar tunes, including a version of "Hat And Beard," from *Out To Lunch!*, reimagined for string trio, trumpet, alto saxophone and drums.

Recorded tributes to Dolphy began to appear in the years after his death. The late Frank Zappa, who listed Dolphy as an influence on the Mothers of Invention's first LP, *Freak Out!*, included "The Eric Dolphy Memorial Barbecue" on his 1970 recording, *Weasels Ripped My Flesh*.

Closer to Dolphy's aesthetic home, small groups led by saxophonist Oliver Lake offered homages on 1980's *Prophet* and 1996's *Dedicated To Dolphy*, which includes the Hale Smith composition "Feather."

In 2014, pianists Aki Takase from Japan and Alexander von Schlippenbach from Germany released *So Long, Eric!* (Intakt), featuring European interpreters of Dolphy's music. Among them was drummer Han Bennink, who joined Dolphy in his quartet on *Last Date*, recorded in concert at a radio studio in Hilversum, the Netherlands, just 27 days before the multi-instrumentalist died.

If he were alive, Dolphy might very well be surprised at all the attention being lavished on him, given the difficulty parts of the jazz establishment had in understanding him during his lifetime. That failure reveals itself in the elementary nature of the questions the late critic Leonard Feather asked of Dolphy in an undated interview, an audio excerpt of which appears at adale.org, a website operated by neuroscientist Alan Saul.

Feather's questions largely revolve around the move away from improvisation based strictly on harmonic progressions. Feather, with his mellifluous British intonation, asks: "If your foundation is not a chord sequence, which is what the traditional basis of jazz was, then what is the foundation?"

Dolphy, in earthier tones, replies: "Some things you play are not based on chords, they're based on freedom of sound. You start with one line and you keep inventing as you go along."

The gap in perspective remains wide throughout the excerpt, with little apparent prospect for a narrowing. Though Dolphy always showed great respect for all jazz traditions—the anthropomorphic cries he wrung from his horns consciously harked back to the early days of jazz in New Orleans—those who knew him said he was too iconoclastic to operate within the straight and narrow strictures of jazz convention.

"He was constantly bending," Smith said. "That's what got him into so much difficulty. You upset the natural thing, people get upset."

These days, when so much of Dolphy's vocabulary has been absorbed into the jazz lexicon, it seems hard to grasp what the upset was all about. While no one knows how he would have evolved, Davis said that, at the time of his death, Dolphy was working on music for string quartets. He would have been well prepared for such a task: The vivid intimations of Third Stream stylings on Dolphy's 1960 album *Out There*, with Ron Carter on cello and George Duvivier on bass, suggest that the string quartet would have become another in the varied box of tools with which he reached out to new groups of listeners in fresh ways.

"He certainly knew how to put the music across," Davis said.



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McCasin JUST BE BRADE

BY ROBERT HAM | PHOTO BY MARK SHELDON

Onstage at the Star Theater in Portland, Oregon, Donny McCaslin and his band are whipping themselves—and the passel of bodies crowded around in front of them into a frantic frenzy.

The quintet is playing a pulverizing version of "What About The Body," a charged anthem about political division that opens McCaslin's new Motéma album, *Blow*. Keyboardist Jason Lindner and bassist Tim Lefebvre hold things as steady as they can, while the other musicians become electrons swirling around the nucleus. Drummer Zach Danziger slams into his kit with heavy-metal ferocity and the guest vocalist, Jeff Taylor, curls around his microphone stand as he howls the lyrics: "And everything is up in the air now/ Like everything could get dissolved in water/ This is where it makes less sense."

The X-factor is McCaslin. In the past, jazz fans have seen the handsome, lanky saxophonist staying in one spot onstage, occasionally going into a deep knee bend as he gently swings his tenor saxophone in a small arc. Here, on a late summer's night, he's using rock-star moves. He thrusts forward as he lays into the song's downward-spiraling melody, dramatically arching his back while delivering a squealing solo.



As the tune starts crescendoing around its insistent chorus ("Left wing, right wing, what about the body"), McCaslin runs across the stage to share the microphone with Taylor (à la Springsteen and Little Steven). It's a spontaneous moment; Taylor seems entirely surprised to find McCaslin next to him, and the saxophonist quickly retreats.

Later, as the song's intensity grows, McCaslin scurries back over and bumps into Taylor as if the two were in a mosh pit. When the song crashes to a close, the band is sweaty and spent.

Those onstage antics—and the accompanying sonic storm of fierce volume and biting lyrics—felt entirely natural to the bandleader. The concert provided a glimpse of the foundation upon which McCaslin developed as a young musician. In his heart of hearts, he just might be a rock 'n' roller.

"When I was a kid," he recalled during an interview at his Portland hotel, "John Philip Sousa was the first music I was into. Then it was the Beach Boys, and then it was AC/DC. Then it was jazz."

More evidence of those rock influences can be heard throughout *Blow.*, McCaslin's 13th album as a leader. The majority of the 10 songs are examples of pop songcraft, with a verse/chorus/verse structure. Recorded with the members of his longtime band and contributions from other collaborators—including drummer/bassist Nate Wood and guitarist Ben Monder—the songs heave and pitch, bending at odd angles while leaving ample room for McCaslin to soar through it all with electrifying solos and saxophone tones processed by his bank of effects pedals.

"There was this sense of 'I'm traveling down this pathway, but I really don't have a map," McCaslin said about his new sonic bent. "I'm walking on the edge here, looking over the edge. But the reason I do this is to go for the vision, wholeheartedly. And this vision was surprising and not what I would have anticipated."

The most significant difference between *Blow.* and most everything else McCaslin has released under his own name was the decision to feature vocalists on the majority of the tracks. While McCaslin was traversing some uncertain terrain with the decision, it didn't take long to get his bearings once he was introduced to singer-songwriter/producer Ryan Dahle.

"For me, that was the beginning," McCaslin said of their meeting. "That was the moment of clarity about where this record was going."

Dahle is best known in his native Canada for

his work as a member of The Age of Electric and Limblifter, bands that trucked in the glammier side of indie rock. Dahle's former manager, who currently represents McCaslin, suggested the vocalist as a possible contributor to *Blow*.

"We automatically hit it off," Dahle said. "We're both lifers in music in completely different lanes. We started talking about life and ideas and concepts. I was totally charmed by him. He's a great storyteller and just a warm guy."

Even with that, Dahle wasn't entirely convinced it would work. After receiving some rough sketches of song ideas, he spent some time watching live videos of McCaslin, trying to figure out how to work vocals into an already dense jazz-meets-art-rock soundscape. The key, he said, was being patient, hoping for the right moment of inspiration to strike.

"As much as you can play out the concepts and grand themes," Dahle said, "you have to wait by the side of the road to have the ideas come. I have a studio in Vancouver and I would just show up every day and open these demos to see if there's anything I could add, to see if there's something to be inspired by. Slowly, the ideas would start to accumulate."

Dahle's vocals and lyrics certainly are the most crucial element to *Blow.* They reflect the mindset of someone trying to navigate our rather uncertain modern age, imagining a populace trying to build a life again after a catastrophic event ("New Kindness") or using blank-verse poetry to call up the simple joys of nature and youthful thrills ("Club Kidd"). And throughout, McCaslin and Dahle bend to meet one another in the middle.

"I love his lyrics," McCaslin said of Dahle. "And his vocal concept, and the way that there's doubles and layers and a sort of orchestra of voices. When I hear him on a track like 'Club Kidd,' it just pierces me right in the heart and connects me to the love I have for music."

Dahle might have been the element that helped get this project moving forward, but McCaslin freely admits that the seeds for *Blow*. were planted three years ago when the saxophonist and his group helped the chameleonic rocker David Bowie record his final album, *Blackstar* (Columbia).

The story of how the Thin White Duke came to bring McCaslin and company into the fold is almost the stuff of legend. Bowie, a longtime jazz fan, had recorded a single with the Maria Schneider Orchestra and was hoping to continue that relationship. But as Schneider was too busy, she suggested he check out McCaslin's quartet at one of its regular gigs at New York's 55 Bar. Bowie was so impressed that he invited the band to be a part of the *Blackstar* sessions.

On a creative level, the recording sessions were hugely satisfying for McCaslin and his quartet: Lindner, Lefebvre and drummer/percussionist Mark Guiliana. Fans and critics glowing-

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'To see how Bowie's art impacted people's lives is a very profound experience.'



ly praised the album. But all of it came with the sad addendum that two days after the release of *Blackstar*, Bowie succumbed to liver cancer.

Nothing much has been the same in McCaslin's world since then, with both positive and challenging results.

"It was like nothing I'd ever experienced before," McCaslin said, recalling the deluge of media attention following Bowie's death. "David had stopped doing interviews 10 years or so before he passed. Suddenly, I became somebody who was a gateway to him. A lot of publications wanted to know about it and some wanted salacious details. Navigating that was intense. But through it all, I just tried to stay true to myself and stay true to what I thought would be the best way to honor him."

On the flipside, McCaslin and his quartet were introduced to a world of new listeners, many of whom came to the group's shows as a way of processing their grief and seeking one more communion with the Starman.

"To see how his art impacted people's lives is a very profound experience and very humbling," McCaslin said. "I felt very honored to be in that time, in that place. And it was helpful for me with processing my own emotions."

Working with Bowie also served as a reminder to McCaslin that there were really no restrictions on what he could do on his own or with his group. That helped inspire the music he and his quartet recorded on *Beyond Now* (Motéma), the 2016 album that was released nine months after *Blackstar*. The record not only featured a pair of Bowie covers, but also versions of material by pop-oriented artists like Mutemath. But even the originals on the album suggested that McCaslin's focus was sharpening.

As the saxophonist and his band toured to

promote the material, lessons from *Blackstar* only became clearer to everyone involved with those recording sessions.

"The influence is more of a 'do what you want' vibe that David imparted on us," said Lefebvre. "Just be brave and don't worry about what people think. Just do what you feel."

Thanks to the Bowie association, the band was in higher demand than usual, and it remained on the road for the better part of 2016.

"Because we were playing the repertoire so much, I started to hear what I felt like the next move was," McCaslin said. "That was reinforced by playing so much and working on feeding what I thought the next direction was going to be—in terms of finding things to listen to feed the creative unconscious."

McCaslin filled his smartphone with tunes from other artists, almost none of them from the jazz world: LCD Soundsystem, St. Vincent, Deerhoof, Bon Iver, Beastie Boys, Sufjan Stevens, Nine Inch Nails. An eclectic mix, to be sure, but also populated entirely by artists that, like Bowie, are known for pushing boundaries and fearlessly changing what their music sounded like, often from album to album.

The next step for McCaslin was assembling a team who could help clarify his ideas and make them a reality. The ever-reliable musicians who play in various iterations of McCaslin's quartet were, naturally, a lock. But the final piece of the puzzle was producer and engineer Steve Wall.

A multi-instrumentalist and co-owner of Gardentone Studios in New York, Wall already was a familiar presence to several musicians in McCaslin's coterie. Wall co-produced *The Buffering Cocoon* (Jazzland), the most recent album by Lindner's band Now Vs. Now, and he helped mix several recordings to which Lefebvre has contributed.

"I don't know why Donny made the call," Wall said. "I assume that it was because he was surrounded by a bunch of people that I had already worked with. Initially, he wanted to check out engineering and mixing, and I laid down a vision that was in line with what he was thinking. I sort of took a stand, saying, 'If you want to make the same record that you made before, you already know how to do that. Let's not do that.' That was a good bit of fearlessness to conjure—to go in a new direction—to trust, essentially."

Crucially, the producer was the bridge between McCaslin's more jazz-minded approach and the world of singer-songwriter pop. Wall worked closely with Dahle and Taylor, suggesting adjustments to lyrics and vocal melodies. In the case of "The Opener"—which features a speak-singing spiel from Sun Kil Moon leader Mark Kozelek—Wall's cutting and pasting techniques gave the track a contemporary sensibility.

"My style of mixing is that I'm very much producing as I'm mixing," Wall said. "I'm not afraid to really get in there and create and hack and slash stuff, trying to give every song its stamp."

Applying digital post-production to a traditional recording is a growing trend in jazz, and essentially forces artists to relearn the material, so their performances more clearly reflect the recorded versions. And it's the type of challenge on which McCaslin thrives. Just as he did when he started buying pedals to alter the sound of his saxophone onstage and in the studio, he dove in without hesitation. He had to learn how to perform the *Blow.* repertoire night after night as if he were fronting a rock band—which meant keeping the sets and performances tight and cohesive, with only minimum room for far-reaching solos and improvisation.

That's precisely the flavor of the performance McCaslin and his band gave at the Star Theater. The location helped set the tone: The lovingly dingy venue has had a long life in Portland, serving as a silent movie house and burlesque theater in the past, and usually plays host these days to an array of post-punk and hip-hop acts.

McCaslin and his collaborators said they feel completely at home playing such venues. It seems to fuel their desire to get as close to the rock-show experience as possible, without looking like posers or surrounding themselves with pyrotechnics. They thrash and groove with equal authority, and when McCaslin's not joyfully bumping into his bandmates, he's playing directly to them, in a manner that feels partly confrontational, partly urging. Indeed, he's asking everyone to join him in pushing harder and going further than they'd previously thought possible.

"I think a lot more about the show now," McCaslin said. "Keeping it tight, keeping the flow happening, not wanting it to be too long. Because the audience tires out. It's a lot of information to process. There's a lot going on."



11

ORIGIN CLASSICAL

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MAKAYA McCRAVEN

SCIENTIST

By Aaron Cohen | Photo by Michael Jackson

MAKAYA MCCRAVEN USES VARIOUS MEANS TO CREATE AND REDIRECT ENERGY, AS EVIDENCED ON HIS NEW ALBUM, UNIVERSAL BEINGS (INTERNATIONAL ANTHEM). JUST AS HE HAS DONE ON PREVIOUS RELEASES, THE DRUMMER TOOK KINETIC SEGMENTS FROM LIVE PERFORMANCES, EDITED THEM AND TURNED THEM INTO STRIKING ORIGINAL COMPOSITIONS.





G eography became both more and less of a factor on this record's sessions, held in 2017 and 2018. On these tracks, McCraven led distinct groups in four cities, and here, too, transformation yielded new works that stood apart from the original sources.

Maintaining the conversation's momentum with few detours, McCraven blended seemingly disparate ideas during a discussion with DownBeat at a coffee shop in Chicago's Andersonville neighborhood, a few blocks from his home. He spoke with the same intense focus that he brings to the bandstand. (It's not surprising that he was captain of his high school football team.) Although McCraven describes himself as competitive, his forcefulness is intertwined with generosity.

Universal Beings includes contributions from a singular string section—harpist Brandee Younger and cellist Tomeka Reid joining McCraven's longtime bassist Junius Paul on some tracks—and exchanges with British players, including saxophonists Shabaka Hutchings and Nubya Garcia. McCraven's inclusive perspective also means his collaborations focus on people, rather than their instruments, just as the percussionist's Where We Come From (CHICAGOXLONDON Mixtape) does.

"I just try to follow the best, most sensitive, dynamic and creative people I know," McCraven said. "Good musicians have instincts: They're not going to cover each other up; [they] give space, play together. If you have musicians who are sensitive, listen, I hope I get to learn something from them and hope they rub off on me in a positive way. It's an opportunity to bring a lot of great people into a place and let great people do great things."

McCraven constructed the tracks on *Universal Beings* from his groups' improvisational sets recorded in 2017–'18 in Chicago, New York, Los Angeles and London. His take on funk seems universal. On "Mantra" and "Holy Lands," his accents propel Younger and Reid's interwoven lines. Live and in the studio, the drummer's sense of tension frames Hutchings' solo on "Atlantic Black" before quickly changing the tempo. Sometimes he also unifies contrasting rhythms, such as the 5/8 superimposed over a 4/4 feel on "Young Genius." Still, there is some mystery involved, as McCraven explained when describing how he crafted "Black Lion."

"In the session, there was a straightforward backbeat groove that we lined up into," McCraven said. "My first perspective was to find an intro, fade the whole thing in with a filter. Afterwards, I isolated melodic moments in the harp to give the song melodic content and chop bars into smaller bits to alter the chord changes. By the time it develops, it then opens back up into the improvisatory part, from the same improvisation we had. Then, after a hard switch to the next part, it opens up a little bit and takes itself out. It's a puzzle. There are only 30 seconds we played this one thing, but those 30 seconds are magical. Part of the process is isolating these moments."

Hutchings—who alters recorded performances via audio edits for one of his groups, The Comet Is Coming—is a kindred spirit. But he feels that his affinity with McCraven (with whom he first played in 2017) is fueled by the drummer's emphasis on spontaneity. "Makaya set up his drums, didn't play anything, didn't sound check, just set his stuff up, didn't make any noise," Hutchings said. "The first noise we made together was the first note of the concert. There was no second-guessing what anyone was going to do, no figuring out how we navigate the personalities beforehand. He wants that experience and he's happy to put himself into the unknown."

Younger, who described her aesthetic as "very groovy and very vampy," felt completely comfortable in the group. She said that on the bandstand, McCraven displayed not only a great respect for her instrument, but for her skills as a musician.

"I asked Makaya, 'Do you have music?" Younger recalled. "He said, 'You are music.' That will keep you on your toes."

In conversation, McCraven, 35, drew connections between his upbringing and his design for *Universal Beings*. His father, jazz drummer Stephen McCraven, brought his warm touch to such albums as Archie Shepp's *Black Ballads* (1992). But McCraven drew as much inspiration from his mother, Hungarian singer Ágnes Zsigmondi. She ignored supposed boundaries to demonstrate how her country's songs derive from a multitude of ethnicities. Similarly, McCraven seeks to dismiss any internal or external barriers. This point becomes pertinent given the rise of exclusionary nationalism throughout the planet.

"My mother's group, Kolinda, did Hungarian music, Jewish music, Gypsy music, and the political statement was, "This is our music," McCraven said. "That wasn't taken well by the Hungarian government at the time. Its lines were drawn not by culture, but by power. I'm saying, 'Fuck those lines, this is my world to walk."

Born in France, McCraven grew up in western Massachusetts, his family members representing a range of nationalities and social classes. As a youngster, he sought out connections among diverse communities within the college town of Amherst. His years as a teenage musician and athlete involved episodes of crossing through various social strata. His amiability became crucial to his success, as he started working professionally at age 15, playing in the band Cold Duck like Madlib, who has sampled Sun Ra. McCraven wanted to challenge longstanding orthodoxies of free improvisation within his own groups: Grooves and solid vamps had as much of a place as abstraction. Several musicians showed up to contribute, including bassist Joshua Abrams, who mentioned how the drummer combines jazz and hip-hop legacies on his own terms.

"With Makaya, there's a dialog about how he's concerned with his music's relationship with sample-based music and certain realms of hiphop," Abrams said. "But then he adjusts sounds,

'It's a regenerative process of composition—using what was there to reimagine something new.'

Complex, and booking gigs around the East Coast. Through that group, McCraven blended his father's jazz influence with rock and hip-hop. The latter's rhythms add to why he still identifies himself as a "beat scientist." Here, too, McCraven presented this concept in personal and international terms.

"A beat is no more than the ticking of a clock—beats per minute," he said. "Our only way of measuring time is by adding rhythm. It's deep in science—from the rotation of Earth going around the sun—[and] all about pulse and rhythm. I study beats, whether it's hip-hop beats or hip-hop production, whether that's the cymbal beat of a jazz band or polyrhythm, advanced meter, odd time signatures or the polyrhythms of West African music. Rhythm and time are all-important to me."

McCraven had no local musical contacts when he moved to Chicago in 2006 (joining his wife, Nitasha Tamar Sharma, a professor of anthropology at Northwestern University in nearby Evanston, Illinois). So, he forged ahead making his own connections, taking every gig and, as he said, "got pulled into the straightahead world" through working with guitarist Bobby Broom and pianist Willie Pickens (1931– 2017). He released his own jazz piano trio disc, *Split Decision* (Chicago Sessions), in 2012, some of which drew on Hungarian melodic motifs.

When McCraven saw guitarist Jeff Parker play sets of free jazz interspersed with a DJ at a Chicago bar called Rodan, he sought a similar kind of residency at another small venue, The Bedford. He realized that experimental jazz artists could draw listeners to Chicago clubs without simplifying their music. McCraven also was paying attention to adventurous hip-hop producers loops things, and it's cool to see how that's affected different sounds of the kit."

After recording about 48 hours worth of material throughout 10 months, International Anthem Recording Co. producer Scott McNiece encouraged McCraven's experiments with splicing the tapes in his home studio. Sometimes McCraven overdubbed percussion or keyboard parts to bring out more compositional sensibilities. The resulting album, *In The Moment*, came out in 2015. The follow-up, *Highly Rare* (2017), derived from a similar method of remixing open-ended live sessions. McCraven said that the difference between the two was that since he felt the latter's source material sounded more aggressive, he layered in more drums and loops, "so it wouldn't just be 'out' the whole time."

Media attention from beyond the jazz world followed, and the bandleader has not been the only beneficiary. Alto saxophonist Nick Mazzarella, who performed on those dates, credited a growing audience for his own music to what he observed as a "widespread interest in that record's production style."

Such interest has brought McCraven more opportunities for large-ensemble performances. At the time of his DownBeat interview in October, McCraven was preparing to take a group (including Parker and Younger) to the Mondriaan Jazz Festival in The Hague, and he was planning to perform with a 10-piece band at a Red Bull Music Academy event in Chicago. To provide his bandstand collaborators with a roadmap, McCraven has transcribed songs from his International Anthem albums into written arrangements. As McCraven described it, notating and arranging is not far removed from distilling improvisational moments in the studio. "The process is, I find the parts I liked, locate them and assign them to a player in the group, which might be a different instrument, depending on who's playing with me," McCraven said. "I use the melodies and motifs, arrange them and give it a more structured form. When I take the improvisations, I reduce them to this thing that has a structure, but structure can still be loose, reduce it again to core concepts and make a sequence and use that basic composition as a basis for musicians to improvise and make something new. It's the use of form, recurring form."

McCraven added that jazz itself is based on ideas of how to use repetition: "Jazz is no more than loops, anyway. Recurring form—AABA we use that as a vehicle for improvisation to create something new. What I love about that process is that all composition starts with improvisation.

"We improvise, then I edit and rearrange and recontextualize that source material into a new distillation of ideas. Then I can take it and pass it to a DJ, who can remix those ideas. Then [we] take that remix and get a live band to learn the remix, then we can perform it as a live band and use it as a catalyst to improvise over that form or create something [else]. Then we have an additional piece of music that doesn't resemble the improvisation but is a representation of an electronic-sounding remix of that first reimagination. And if we record that live band, we can chop it up all over again and continue the process. It's a regenerative process of composition-using what was there to reimagine something new. It's kind of neat; it's meta.

"But the end result isn't what I'm getting at," he continued. "It's a process—which part of the process were you there for? It exists in a sonic space that doesn't exist in our physical realm. But it speaks to the depth of this music, jazz, culture, rhythm, oral tradition. You can't really pinpoint all of it in words. It's culture as an organic living thing that evolves, like people."

At some point in the future, McCraven would like to delve deeper into the source of many of the beats that shape *Universal Beings*, especially the shifting polyrhythms associated with the traditional music of Africa.

"There are so many other people I want to work with, who I would love to bring into this process," McCraven said. "I want to travel around Africa-Ethiopia, South Africa, Nigeria, Ghana, places I already have connections with musicians, [including] Gnawa musicians. These are people I met through my father. I would do a week in each city, meet musicians, drummers, have a kind of cultural exchange, something where we have an experience and can document that and use that for source material. That's the next phase of the concept. Universal Beings is just a culmination of me investigating this process, trying to connect with people and seeing how much I can do with it. I'm inspired that people like this, that I'm allowed to do this." DR

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"Eric Dolphy is a hell of a musician, and he plays a lot of horn. When he is up there searching and experimenting, I learn a lot from him..." - JOH COLITION (DownBeat, 1962)

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BEST ALBUMS OF 2018 MASTERPIECES *****



AMBROSE AKINMUSIRE Origami Harvest

Blue NoteNov.

When Akinmusire toured the *Origami Harvest* project prior to recording, the music was touted as a "jazz/rap/classical mash-up," in part to explain the presence of rapper Kool A.D. and the Mivos String Quartet. But the music itself doesn't really stitch jazz, rap and classical together. Instead, it repurposes elements of each to create something strikingly unique.

KENNY BARRON QUINTET

Concentric Circles

Blue NoteJuly

At age 75, pianist Kenny Barron embodies the convergence of modern, progressive jazz and classic post-bop traditions. There's nothing old-fashioned about the 11 tracks on *Concentric Circles*, his 47th album as a leader, featuring eight original compositions and four younger colleagues. Barron employs tunefulness, fine touch and implacable swing with ease and variety, drawing from decades of experience as an in-demand accompanist and bandleader. Yes, he could be showier, but this project is absolutely perfect as is, delighting the ear with delicate flourishes and turns.

Kent's mezzo-soprano voice is a beautiful instrument for offsetting orchestral accompaniment, a fact that *I Know I Dream: The Orchestral Sessions* illustrates well. The orchestra, a 52-piece

London studio assemblage, has a lushness that would smother Nelson Riddle—yet the vocalist cuts through it effortlessly. In fairness, the arrangements hardly can compete with Kent's presence. 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 "Photograph," a mesmerizing bossa nova by Antonio Carlos Jobim.

WOJTEK MAZOLEWSKI Polka (Worldwide Deluxe Edition)

Whirlwind.....Sept.

Mazolewski, leader of the Polish experimental jazz quartet Pink Freud, offers up a bundled version of some of his previous works with *Polka (Worldwide Deluxe Edition)*. The bassist and composer swaps three tunes from his critically acclaimed 2014 album *Polka* (Agora S.A.) for the title cuts from his 2017 12inch "London/Theme De YoYo" (Lanquidity). This rejiggering of past releases results in a musical travelogue that tracks the bandleader's wanderlust and musical prowess.

STEVE TIBBETTS Life Of ECMSept.

Because there's so much atmosphere in Tibbetts' music the reverb-laden guitar, ghostly piano chords, quiet washes of percussion—it can be easy to assume that atmosphere is all he's got. After all, the guitarist is not one for big, brash statements or deeply funky grooves, nor do his tunes offer anything like the easily decoded structure of pop songcraft. And when the narrative is hard to follow, it's all too tempting to assume there isn't one at all. With *Life Of*, Tibbetts makes it easier to follow the thread by presenting a series of sonic portraits, each one offered as a "Life Of." It's not storytelling in any conventional sense, but it does lend a certain specificity to the mood and vocabulary of each piece.







HISTORICAL *****



BOB DYLAN Trouble No More —The Bootleg Series Vol. 13, 1979-1981 Columbia/LegacyFeb.

FRED HERSCH TRIO Heartsongs Sunnyside......Nov. Knitting Factory April
OSCAR PETERSON

Oscar Peterson Plays Verve......Aug.

Underground System

FELA KUTI



WOODY SHAW Tokyo '81 ElementalOct.

MUDDY WATERS The Best Of Muddy Waters Chess/UMeApril





NEW * *** ½

JD ALLEN Love Stone Savant......Aug.

BIG HEART MACHINE *Big Heart Machine* Outside In Music.....Oct.

QUATUOR BOZZINI Just So Another Timbre Dec.

ANOUAR BRAHEM Blue Maqams ECMJan.

JOHN BUTCHER The Catastrophe Of Minimalism Balance Point Acoustics.... Jan.

EMMET COHEN Master Legacy Series, Volume 2 Cellar LiveMay

CORTEX Avant-Garde Party Music Clean Feed......March

ROXY COSS The Future Is Female Posi-ToneJune

 JOSEPHINE DAVIES' SATORI In The Corners Of Clouds Whirlwind...... Dec.

SCOTT DUBOIS Autumn Wind ACT.....Feb.

KAIT DUNTON trioKAIT 2 Real & Imagined.....Aug.

SINNE EEG Dreams ArtistShare......Feb.

ROMÁN FILIÚ *Quarteria* Sunnyside.....July

BÉLA FLECK & ABIGAIL WASHBURN Echo In The Valley Rounder.....Feb.

BILL FRISELL Music IS OKeh/Sony Masterworks..May

ELLIOT GALVIN The Influencing Machine Edition May FERNANDO GARCÍA Guasábara Puerto Rico Zoho.....June

HILARY GARDNER/EHUD ASHERIE The Late Set Anzic Jan.

DAYRAMIR GONZALEZ The Grand Concourse Machat.....Aug.

ROBERT HURST Black Current Jam Dot Time...... Jan.

JON IRABAGON QUARTET Dr. Quixotic's Traveling Exotics Irabbagast.....June

SHERMAN IRBY & MOMENTUM Cerulean Canvas Black Warrior Records...... Jan.

LAUREN KINHAN A Sleepin' Bee Dotted I.....Feb.

KREISBERG/VERAS Kreisberg Meets Veras New For Now......Oct.

MICHAEL LEONHART ORCH. The Painted Lady Suite Sunnyside.....Aug.

PETE MCCANN Pay For It On The Other Side McCannic MusicOct.

GARY MEEK Originals Self Release Jan.

MYRA MELFORD'S SNOWY EGRET The Other Side of Air Firehouse 12 Dec.

ADI MEYERSON Where We Stand A:M......Sept.

MILLER/STAAF Science Fair Sunnyside.....Nov.

NEGRONI'S TRIO New Era Sony Music LatinFeb.

MARIUS NESET Circle Of Chimes ACT...... Jan.

JUDY NIEMACK

New York Stories Sunnyside.....Nov.

GARD NILSSEN ACOUSTIC UNITY TRIO Live In Europe Clean Feed......March

ED PARTYKA JAZZ ORCHESTRA FEAT. JULIA OSCHEWSKY Kopfkino Mons.....Feb.

JURE PUKL Doubtless Whirlwind.....Sept.

TOM RAINEY OBBLIGATO Float Upstream Intakt.....Jan.

REMPIS/DAISY DUO Dodecahedron Aerophonic.....Aug.

RUDD/VICTOR/HARRIS/ FILIANO Embrace RareNoise.....Feb.

JAMIE SAFT Solo A Genova RareNoise..... May

ANTONIO SANCHEZ (FEATURING WDR **BIG BAND)** Channels Of Energy CamJazz.....Aug.

SCORDATURA ENSEMBLE Harmonium New World..... Dec.

JEN SHYU Song Of Silver Geese Pi.....Jan.

MARC SINAN/OGUZ **BÜYÜKBERBER** White ECMAug.

DR. LONNIE SMITH All In My Mind Blue Note March

SUBTLE DEGREES A Dance That Empties New AmsterdamJune

FAY VICTOR'S SOUNDNOISEFUNK Wet Robots ESP-DISK'.....Oct.

ELIO VILLAFRANCA Cinque ArtistShare.....Aug.

KAMASI WASHINGTON Heaven And Earth Young Turks.....Aug.

















Ello Villa Franca









Bill Frisell / Music IS



HISTORICAL **** ½



ROBBIE BASHO *Live In Forli, Italy 1982* Obsolete / ESP-DISK'......July

ALAN BRAUFMAN Valley Of Search Valley of Search......Aug. FUSHITSUSHA Live Black Editions.....Sept.



BEAVER HARRIS/DON PULLEN 360-DEGREE EXPERIENCE A Well Kept Secret Corbett vs. Dempsey....... Sept.

ISAAC HAYES The Spirit Of Memphis 1962-1976 CraftMarch

HELEN HUMES The Helen Humes Collection, 1927-'62 Acrobat......March

KHAN JAMAL'S CREATIVE ARTS ENSEMBLE Drum Dance To TheMotherland Eremite......April

JARRETT/PEACOCK/ DEJOHNETTE After The Fall ECM.......May



FELA KUTI Yellow Fever Knitting FactoryApril

FELA KUTI JJD (Johnny Just Drop!) Live! At Kalakuta Republik Knitting FactoryApril

SUN RA Discipline 27-II Corbett vs. Dempsey......April

HERMAN SCHOONDERWALT The Winner Nederlands Jazz Archief... July

LESTER BOWIE Numbers 1 & 2 NessaFeb.

VARIOUS ARTISTS Voices Of Mississippi Dust To DigitalSept.

NEW ****

KIRAN AHLUWALIA 7 Billion Six Degrees Dec.

CYRILLE AIMÉE Cyrille Aimée Live Mack AvenueSept.

ERIC ALEXANDER Song Of No Regrets HighNoteFeb.

KARRIN ALLYSON Some Of That Sunshine Kasrecords......Sept.

ARILD ANDERSEN In-House Science ECM.....June

JULIAN ARGÜELLES Tonadas EditionOct.















E OF THAT SUNSHINE

TIM ARMACOST Time Being Whirlwind.....Feb.

JAKOB BRO Bay Of Rainbows

TIFFANY AUSTIN Unbroken Con Alma.....June

NIK BÄRTSCH'S RONIN Awase ECM Aug.

RONI BEN-HUR/HARVIE S Introspection JazzheadsAug.

NATE BIRKEY Rome Household Ink.....April

BLACK ART JAZZ COLLECTIVE Armor Of Pride HighNote.....Oct.

BLAKE/CORREA Streaming Red Piano..... Dec.

BLIND BOYS OF ALABAMA Almost Home BBOA.....Jan.

BENJAMIN BOONE/ PHILIP LEVINE The Poetry Of Jazz Origin.....July

BORDERLANDS TRIO Asteroidea Intakt.....Feb.

GEOF BRADFIELD Yes, And ... Music For Nine Improvisers Delmark......Oct. Fresh Selects.....Dec.

CRAIG BRANN Lineage

ECM Dec.

ROSA BRUNELLO Y LOS FERMENTOS Volverse CamJazz Sept.

JOHN BUTCHER Last Dream Of The Morning Relative Pitch.....Jan.

TANIA CHEN John Cage: Electronic Music For Piano Omnivore......May

LARRY CAMPBELL AND **TERESA WILLIAMS** Contraband Love Red House Jan.

CÉSAR CARDOSO Interchange AntennaJune

DANIEL CARTER/WILLIAM PARKER/MATTHEW SHIPP Seraphic Light AUM FidelityAug.

ERNESTO CERVINI'S TURBOPROP Rev Anzic.....Feb.

AMY CERVINI No One Ever Tells You Anzic Aug.

REGINALD CHAPMAN Prototype

SARAH ELIZABETH CHARLES Free Of Form Steeplechase......Sept. Stretch Music/Ropeadope.....Jan. Blue Note July





JEAN CHAUMONT The Beauty Of Differences Misfitme Music.....Oct.

FRANCESCO CHIAPPERINI **EXTEMPORARY VISION** ENSEMBLE The Big Earth RudiAug.

SCOTT CLARK ToNow Clean Feed.....Aug.

NELS CLINE 4 Currents, Constellations







STEVE COLEMAN AND FIVE ELEMENTS Live At The Village Vanguard Vol. 1 (The Embedded Sets)

SHEMEKIA COPELAND America's Child Alligator Nov.

Pi.....Nov.

MARC COPLAND Nightfall Innervoicejazz Jan.

GEORGE COTSIRILOS QUARTET Mostly In Blue OA2April













SYLVIE COURVOISIER TRIO D'Agala Intakt......May

COWBOYS AND FRENCHMEN

Bluer Than You Think Outside In Music.....Feb.

DEDEKIND CUT Tahoe KrankyJune

CHRIS DAVE AND THE DRUMHEDZ Chris Dave And The Drumhedz Blue NoteApril

JOHN DAVERSA Wobbly Dance Flower BFM Jazz.....Jan.

MORGAN DAVIS Home Away From Home Electro-Fi......March

DAVIS/TABORN Octopus PyroclasticMarch

DELGRES Mo Jodi PIAS.....Nov.

COREY DENNISON BAND Night After Night Delmark......Feb.

MICHAEL DESSEN TRIO Somewhere In The Upstream Clean Feed......May

FATOUMATA DIAWARA Fenfo Shanachie.....July

DINOSAUR Wonder Trail Edition

ELINA DUNI Partir ECMJuly

MIA DYBERG TRIO *Ticket!* Clean Feed.....Nov.

KYLE EASTWOOD *In Transit* Jazz VillageJan.

ELIANE ELIAS Music From Man Of La Mancha ConcordJuly

BRIAN ENO Music For Installations Astralwerks.....July

PETER ERSKINE & THE DR. UM BAND On Call Fuzzy Music.....June

JOHN ESCREET Learn To Live Blue Room Dec.

ORRIN EVANS AND THE CAPTAIN BLACK BIG BAND Presence SmokeSessionsNov.

SANDY EWEN/ WEASEL WALTER Idiomatic ugEXPLODE.....June

PHILIPP FANKHAUSER I'll Be Around Sony/Funk House Blues...Aug.

NICK FINZER No Arrival Posi-ToneAug.

DUDUKA DA FONSECA TRIO Plays Dom Salvador Sunnyside.....June

MICHAEL FORMANEK ELUSION GUARTET *Time Like This* Intakt...... Dec.

DANNY FOX TRIO The Great Nostalgist Hot Cup...... April

EMMA FRANK Ocean Av Susan......May

ERIK FRIEDLANDER Artemisia Skipstone......July

YUKO FUJIYAMA Night Wave Innova......Sept.

DENIS GÄBEL The Good Spirits Mons.....June

CHARLOTTE GAINSBOURG Rest Atlantic/Because......March

BARRY GOLDBERG In The Groove Sunnyside.....Oct.

BRAD GOODE That's Right! Origin Dec.

RAMON GOOSE Long Road To Tiznit Riverboat......Jan.

KEVIN GORDON Tilt And Shine Crowville.....Nov.

JUSTIN GRAY & SYNTHESIS New Horizons Self ReleaseApril RUSS GREEN City Soul

Cleopatra.....Nov.

ALASTAIR GREENE Dream Train Rip Cat......March

DANNY GRISSETT Remembrance Savant......March

MURIEL GROSSMANN Golden Rule RRGems Dec.

KATY GUILLEN & THE GIRLS Remember What You Knew Before VizzTone/KG&GJune

SAMEER GUPTA A Circle Has No Beginning Self ReleaseJuly

TORD GUSTAVSEN TRIO The Other Side ECMOct.

JEFF HAMILTON TRIO Live From San Pedro Capri.....April

JAMES HARMAN Fineprint Electro-Fi.....Aug.

MIHO HAZAMA/METROPOLE ORKEST BIG BAND The Monk: Live At Bimhuis Sunnyside.....Nov.

GILAD HEKSELMAN *Ask For Chaos* Hexaphonic/Motéma......Nov.

PABLO HELD Glow II Pirouet.....April

FRED HERSCH TRIO Live In Europe Palmetto July

MONIKA HERZIG SHEROES Whaling City SoundJuly

DAVE HOLLAND Uncharted Territories Dare......Aug.

JOHN HOLLENBECK LARGE ENSEMBLE All Can Work New Amsterdam March ANDREAS HOURDAKIS TRIO Señor Knaster......Feb.

MCCLENTY HUNTER JR. The Groove Hunter Strikezone......Aug.

GARY HUSBAND A Meeting Of Spirits Edition......Jan.

IRABAGON/FIEDLER/ NEUFELD

In Formation Network Nuscope.....June

TERESA JAMES & THE RHYTHM TRAMPS Here In Babylon Jesi-Lu.....July

MARK KAVUMA Kavuma Ubuntu......Oct.

KEBERLE/WOESTE Reverso-Suite Ravel Phonoart......March

GEOFFREY KEEZER TRIO On My Way To You Self ReleaseOct.

KING LOUIE'S BLUES REVUE Live At Riverhouse Jazz Shoug......Feb.

QUIN KIRCHNER *The Other Side Of Time* Astral Spirits......March

LEE KONITZ & DAN TEPFER Decade Verve......Oct.

ROLF KÜHN Yellow + Blue MPS......Sept.

AKI KUMAR Hindi Man Blues Little Village Foundation...Sept.

EDEN LADIN *Yequm* Contagious Music.....Jan.

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

PEGGY LEE Echo Painting Songlines.....July



















TANIA CHEN

JOMS CASE









OKKYUNG LEE Cheol-Kkot-Sae (Steel.Flower.Bird) Tzadik.....Sept.

EDITH LETTNER'S FREEMOTION Taking Off Artdialogue.....July

GREGORY LEWIS Organ Monk Blue Self Release March

DAVE LIEBMAN & MIKE MURLEY QUARTET Live At U Of T U Of T Jazz.....April

HAROLD LÓPEZ-NUSSA Un Día Cualquiera Mack AvenueOct.

Sarah Louise Deeper Woods Thrill Jockey.....July

JOE LOVANO & DAVE DOUGLAS' SOUND PRINTS Scandal Greenleaf.....June

MADSEN/VOGEL I Ching Playscape Dec.

ROBERTO MAGRIS SEXTET Live In Miami @ The WDNA Jazz Gallery Jmood Jan.

MARK MASTERS Our Métier Capri..... Dec.

CHRISTIAN MCBRIDE'S **NEW JAWN** Christian McBride's New Jawn Mack Avenue Nov.

MARK MCGRAIN Love, Time And Divination Immersion Records & Media..April

BETH MCKEE Dreamwood Acres Self Release Nov.

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VINCE MENDOZA & THE WDR BIG BAND Homecoming Sunnyside.....Jan.

ANDY MILNE & DAPP THEORY The Seasons Of Being Sunnyside..... Dec.

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MITCHELL/SHIPP Accelerated Projection Rogue Art.....June

ROSCOE MITCHELL/ MONTREAL-TORONTO ART **ORCHESTRA** Ride The Wind

NessaJune NICOLE MITCHELL Maroon Cloud FPENov.

MOONEY/OMURA Benign Strangers Sunnyside.....Oct.

VAN MORRISON AND JOEY DEFRANCESCO You're Driving Me Crazy Sony Legacy July

FRANÇOIS MOUTIN & KAVITA SHAH DUO Interplay Dot Time......May

MUSICIANER Slow Learner Iluso.....Feb.

MICHAEL MUSILLAMI TRIO + 2 Life Anthem PlayscapeJuly

WOLFGANG MUTHSPIEL Where The River Goes ECMNov.

NEGATIVE PRESS PROJECT Eternal Life: Jeff Buckley Songs And Sounds RidgewayMarch

JOSH NELSON The Sky Remains Origin.....Jan.

CYRIL NEVILLE Endangered Species: The Essential Recordings World Order Entertainment.. Nov.

DANIELLE NICOLE Cry No More ConcordApril

ANGELIKA NIESCIER The Berlin Concert Intakt.....Aug.

HADAR NOIBERG **Open Fields** Jammin'colorS.....Sept.

EVA NOVOA'S DITMAS QUARTET Live At Ibeam Fresh Sound New Talent.. Nov.

ADAM NUSSBAUM The Lead Belly Project Sunnyside.....April

ADAM O'FARRILL'S **STRANGER DAYS** El Maguech

ORAZBAYEVA/KNOOP For John Cage All That Dust Dec.

ORQUESTA AKOKÁN Orguesta Akokán Daptone May

PARKER/GUY/LYTTON Music For David Mossman Intakt.....June

ALAN PASQUA Northern Lights Self Release May

JEREMY PELT Noir En Rouge (Live In Paris) HighNote July

PERSON/CARTER Remember Love HighNote..... Dec.

BARRE PHILLIPS End To End ECMOct.

MATT PIET & HIS DISORGANIZATION Rummage Out Clean Feed.....Aug.

MATT PIET City In A Garden ears&eyes.....Sept.

LUCAS PINO The Answer Is No Outside In Music.....Feb.

LESLIE PINTCHIK You Eat My Food, You Drink My Wine, You Steal My Girl! Pinch HardApril

CHRIS PITSIOKOS CP UNIT Silver Bullet In The Autumn Of Your Years Clean Feed.....Nov.

DEBBIE PORYES TRIO Loving Hank OA2.....Feb.

NOAH PREMINGER Genuinity Criss Cross May

BOBBY PREVITE Rhapsody RareNoise.....June

BILLY PRICE Reckoning VizzTone.....Oct.

JEMAL RAMIREZ African Skies Joyful Beat.....June

JOSHUA REDMAN Still Dreaming

ERIC REED A Light In Darkness WJ3.....April

REMPIS/PIET/DAISY Throw Tomatoes

Astral Spirits.....Aug. THE MARK ROBINSON

BAND Live At The 5 Spot Blind Chihuahua.....Feb.

ALFREDO RODRIGUEZ The Little Dream Mack AvenueApril

KRISTO RODZEVSKI The Rabbit And The Fallen Svcamore Much Prefer Sept.

ROELOFS/BENNINK Icarus ICP.....Nov.

ROVA In Transverse Time Victo.....Nov.

THE JAMIE SAFT QUARTET Blue Dream RareNoise.....Oct.

SALGADO/HAGER Rough Cut Alligator.....April

CÉCILE MCLORIN SALVANT The Window Mack Avenue Nov.

MARTA SÁNCHEZ QUINTET Danza Imposible Fresh Sound New Talent...Feb.

CHRISTIAN SANDS Facing Dragons Mack Avenue Nov.

SAUNIER/HALVORSON/ MILES New American Songbooks, Volume 1 Sound American Publications......March

SCHWEIZER/BARON

Live! Intakt.....Jan.

SFJAZZ COLLECTIVE Live: SFJAZZ Center 2017 SFJAZZ Aug.

SHAKERS N' BAKERS Heart Love Little (i) Music.....July

MATTHEW SHIPP Zero ESP-Disk' May

MATTHEW SHIPP QUARTET Sonic Fiction Nonesuch July ESP-Disk' May









catherine sixors brinn chase













MAKO SICA & HAMID DRAKE Ronda Feeding Tube.....Oct.

SIKORA/CHASE Untitled: After Chaikin.....Sept.

WADADA LEO SMITH Najwa Tum......March

WADADA LEO SMITH Solo: Reflections And Meditations On Monk Tum.....March

SUNGJAE SON Near East Quartet ECMNov.

LUCIANA SOUZA The Book Of Longing Sunnyside.....Sept.

SPACE-SAVER Save Yrslf

SPECTRAL Empty Castles Aerophonic.....Aug.

MAVIS STAPLES If All I Was Was Black Anti- Jan.

JASON STEIN QUARTET Lucille! Delmark.....Jan.

BOBO STENSON TRIO Contra La Indecisión ECMApril

FREDY STUDER Now's The Time (Solo Drums) Everest Dec.

YUHAN SU City Animals Sunnyside..... Dec.

JOHN SURMAN Invisible Threads HiccupOct. ECMApril Glitterbeat.....Oct.

STEVE SWELL Music For Six Musicians: Hommage À Olivier Messiaen Silkheart.....April

CHAD TAYLOR Myths And Morals ears&eyes.....Sept.

THE LUCKY LOSERS Blind Spot Dirty Cat Oct.

VINCENT THEKAL TRIO Origami Hypnote.....Oct.

THUMBSCREW Theirs CuneiformAug.

SIDI TOURÉ Toubalbero Thrill Jockey......May

SAMBA TOURÉ Wande



TREE EAR Witches Butter Clean Feed

March

SONNY TROUPÉ QUARTET Reflets Denses SocadiscJuly

ODED TZUR Translator's Note Enja.....Jan.

VARIOUS ARTISTS We Jazz Live Plates, Vol. 1, Berlin 27.10.17 We Jazz Dec.

SACHAL VASANDANI Shadow Train GSI.....Sept.

JIM VEGAS Soul Shattered Sister Goonzy Magoo.....Sept.

FRAN VIELMA AND HIS **VENEZUELAN JAZZ COLLECTIVE** Tendencias Papelon July WEE WILLIE WALKER & THE ANTHONY PAULE SOUL ORCHESTRA *After A While* Blue Dot......Jan.

SALIM WASHINGTON Dogon Revisited Passin' ThruSept.

DOUG WEBB Fast Friends Posi-Tone Dec.

DAN WEISS Starebaby Pi.....June

KENNY WERNER TRIO Animal Crackers Pirouet......March

BARRENCE WHITFIELD & THE SAVAGES Soul Flowers Of Titan Bloodshot.....June MARTIN WIND Light Blue Laika.....June

MICHAEL WOLLNY TRIO Oslo ACT...... May

MITCH WOODS Friends Along The Way eOne......Jan.

NATE WOOLEY *Knknighgh* Clean Feed......Jan.

STEPHANE WREMBEL The Django Experiment III Water Is Life......April

YARN/WIRE Images Of Duration Northern Spy Dec.

YONEZAWA/KAMAGUCHI/

KOBAYASHI Boundary

ESP-Disk'.....June

PATRICK ZIMMERLI QUARTET Clockworks

Songlines.....Aug.

HISTORICAL ****

DEREK BAILEY & GREG GOODMAN

SANDY BULL Steel Tears Omnivore.....July

ORNETTE COLEMAN Ornette At 12/Crisis Impulse/Real Gone......Jan.

MICHAEL COSMIC AND PHILL MUSRA Peace In The World Creator Spaces Now-Again...... April

DEXTER GORDON Tokyo 1975 ElementalOct.

HIGH RISE // Black Editions.....Sept.

FELA KUTI *No Agreement* Knitting Factory April

FELA KUTI Coffin For Head Of State Knitting Factory April

CHARLES MINGUS Live At Montreux 1975 Eagle Rock Entertainment June



ROSCOE MITCHELL Duets With Anthony Braxton Sackville/Delmark......Feb.

ART PEPPER Unreleased Art Pepper, Vol. 10: Bourbon Street - Toronto, June 16, 1977 Widow's Taste.....Dec.

EMILIO SANTIAGO Emilio Santiago Far Out...... Nov.

ESBJÖRN SVENSSON TRIO e.s.t. live in london ACT......July

VARIOUS ARTISTS The Thousand Incarnations Of The Rose: American Primitive Guitar And Banjo (1963-1974) CraftJuly

WHITE HEAVEN Out

BlackEditions......Sept.









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Ingrid Jensen and Steve Treseler Invisible Sounds: For Kenny Wheeler WHIRLWIND 4729

There's not yet a consensus around how to situate Kenny Wheeler—the Canadian-British trumpeter and prolific composer, who died in 2014— in music history. There's decent agreement that his ECM debut, *Gnu High*, is an essential contribution to the story of 1970s jazz. We know that he wrote rapturously for groups small and large, with melodies as comforting as a folk song and as dreamy as a fantasy tale. Beyond that, the standard line is waiting to be written.

This helps explain why trumpeter Ingrid Jensen and tenor saxophonist Steve Treseler feel an urge to help concretize his legacy. Both played with Wheeler and developed a fascination with his music, and after his death, Treseler joined with Jensen to honor him. They arranged tunes from across Wheeler's career for a quintet that featured Jensen's regular rhythm section: Geoffrey Keezer on piano, Martin Wind on bass and Jon Wikan on drums.

The resulting album—*Invisible Sounds: For Kenny Wheeler,* mostly recorded in 2015—offers some bustling, trafficky numbers like "Foxy Trot" (from 1986's *Double, Double You*) and "Old Time" (from 2015's *Songs For Quintet,* Wheeler's final ECM recording). But the marrow of this album lies in its ballads.

Even on his quietest pieces, Wheeler insisted on counter-intuition and elliptical grace. On tunes like "Gentle Piece" and "Old Ballad" fused here into a medley—or "Where Do We Go From Here," his trumpet (or flugelhorn) carried melodies that were equal parts awe and sagacity. Jensen's improvisations have their own rolling drama, related to Wheeler's style but not directly born from it. Where he played notes square on, as if helping to define a center for his flush compositions, Jensen angles into things from below or above.

On "Kind Folk," "Gentle Piece" and the two versions of "Foxy Trot" that bookend the album, her playing is insinuative, proudly tilted, reflecting the influence of Woody Shaw, as well as Wheeler. Treseler, meanwhile, brings a billowing enthusiasm to every track, reveling in his debts to Wayne Shorter and Michael Brecker, hacking down in vertical dashes and rising again in bubbling, bluesy phrases.

Keezer is alight as usual on piano, taking a forceful solo on "546" that shakes up the song's elegant poses and offering a seminar in restraint during other features. But the secret weapon is Wind, whose frothy bass playing and constant rhythmic realignments go beyond honoring the brilliant design of these tunes.

When the group adds a sixth voice— Christine Jensen's soprano saxophone on the studio version of "Foxy Trot" or Katie Jacobson's reedy vocals on two ballads—listeners are reminded of how much texture and dimension Wheeler's tunes can admit. There are unending ways to build upon his songbook; *Invisible Sounds* is just one, and a fine way to begin.

-Giovanni Russonello

Ordering info: whirlwindrecordings.com

Invisible Sounds: For Kenny Wheeler: Foxy Trot; Kind Folk; 546; Gentle Piece (Old Ballad); Old Time (Live); Duet; Everybody's Song But My Own; Where Do We Go From Here; Ingalude; Foxy Trot (Live). (66:05)

Personnel: Ingrid Jensen, trumpet, effects; Steve Treseler, tenor saxophone, clarinet, bass clarinet; Geoffrey Keezer, piano; Martin Wind, bass; Jon Wikan, drums; Katie Jacobson, vocals (3, 4); Christine Jensen, soprano saxophone (1).



Marquis Hill Modern Flows Vol. II BLACK UNLIMITED MUSIC GROUP

"My flow is rooted," asserts the album's first line, and it's not just swagger. *Modern Flows Vol. II* moves as naturally among jazz, hip-hop and r&b as any album to date.

The 31-year-old Marquis Hill was a trumpet student during neo-soul and experimental hiphop's heyday, and even more critically, at a time when heroes Roy Hargrove and Nicholas Payton were bringing those styles to jazz. Like players from previous generations, Hill heard every-

Marcus Strickland Twi-Life People Of The Sun BLUE NOTE 28982

There is an explicit and personal statement at work in *People Of The Sun* that involves race, identity and what it means to be black in America. But the elements Marcus Strickland uses fall back on platitudes of the pop vernacular—funky rhythms, hip-hop interludes and some passing vocal choir blends of West African descent. The humdrum nature of both the music and the ideas just don't measure up to their goals.

Recent outrages have brought a fresh activism to pop music, and Strickland's Twi-Life band is where the saxophonist reaches beyond the perimeters of jazz into the foothills of politics. As a musician, he walks in the deep footsteps of John Coltrane, Sonny Rollins, Charles Mingus and Max Roach, but is cautious by comparison. His predecessors spoke clearly in the language of the modern jazz mainstream and avant-garde. Here, Strickland has mixed a cocktail of categories whose flavors align awkwardly.

Six of his 11 pieces involve vocal recitations or snippets of conversations, sometimes filtered or undermixed, which masks clarity. He noodles about on bass clarinet on "On My Mind," as Greg Tate muses on love without offering much thing—the difference is that the trumpeter came into his musical sensibility at a time when everything already belonged together. His genre exchange has the ease of a walk across the street to a friend's place. Skill fashions this flow: Bassist Junius Paul and drummer Jonathan Pinson lay down dynamic grooves with golden tiger-rare vibraphonist Joel Ross, whose rhythmic-morethan-chordal approach leaves space for rappers and instrumentalists to roam. Hill's continued devotion to craft helps him improvise Donald Byrd-inspired ideas over lengthy grooves, and his lyricism perfectly suits spoken-word artists.

Intergenerational jamming in Chicago with Fred Anderson and Ernest Dawkins during Hill's high school years also gave him a supernatural link to tradition. On "Stellar," he applies a Count Basie melody-only idea as if it came from a peer; on "Ego Vs. Spirit," he quotes "Caravan" without a hint of self-consciousness. His mid-century Blue Note horn voicings are anything but nostalgic—like every element here, they just happen to work for Hill. Best of all, he'd never think to convince us of that. —*Michelle Mercer*

Modern Flows Vol. II: Modern Flows II Intro; Twin Flame; Ego Vs. Spirit; The Watcher, It Takes A Village; Prayer For The People; Moments Of Flow; Smoke Break; Kiss And Tell; It's All Beautiful; As I Am; Herstony; Stellar, Law Of Vibrations; Legends Outro III. (68:32) Personnel: Marquis Hill, trumpet; Josh Johnson, alto saxophone; Joel Ross, vibraphone, marimba; Junius Paul, bass; Jonathan Pinson, drums; Brandon Alexander Williams, Braxton Cook, King Legend, M'Reld Green, Rachel Robinson, Slot A, vocals. Ordering info: marguishill.com



sustenance on the subject. It slips into a tranquil monotone of rap, more preoccupied with flexing its internal rhymes than enriching its content.

Unfortunately, there is little redemption to be found on the five instrumentals. Two are almost too brief to note. An honorable mission of mixed outcomes. *—John McDonough*

People Of The Sun: Lullaby; Timing; People Of The Sun; On My Mind; Relentlessness; Marvelous; Black Love; Build; Make Sure To Return; Aim High; Spirit Of The Music. (44:52) Personnel: Marcus Strickland, tenor, alto, sopranino saxophone,

Personnel: Marcus Strickland, tenor, alto, sopranino saxophone, bass clarinet, vocalis; Keyon Harrold (6, 10), trumpet; Mitch Henry, keyboards; Kyle Miles, bass; Charles Haynes, drums; Weedie Braimah, vocals, percussion (1, 2, 6, 10); Pharoahe Monch (4), Bilal (4), Akie Bermiss (6), Jermaine Holmes (10), vocals; Greg Tate (4), Melanie Charles (9), Kasey Hearns (9), Petra Richterova (11), Angelika Beener (7), Vanessa Strickland (7), Dawn McGee Strickland (7), spoken word.

Ordering info: bluenote.com



Helen Sung Sung With Words: A Collaboration With Dana Gioia STRICKER STREET 1002 ****

Poetry is having a moment in the jazz world again. Matt Wilson took a whirl with Carl Sandburg and Luciana Souza delved into Leonard Cohen. True collaborations between poets and instrumentalists are more unusual, making pianist Helen Sung's project with former California poet laureate Dana Gioia of particular interest.

The Gioia poems included are delightfully lusty and not a little nostalgic. He longs to meet for watery drinks at the old Hermosa Beach Lighthouse circa 1971 and feast on spicy food in a "dark little dive" on a summer night, and he kisses off a lover who begs for another chance.

Ironically, the album's emotional high point is the wordless "Lament For Kalief Browder," where John Ellis' bass clarinet cries for the suicide of a Bronx man who falsely was imprisoned on Rikers Island. That leads to the smartest programming decision on the recording—diving headlong from the requiem into the hard-bop of "Into The Unknown."

With four singers onboard, Sung has a range of tonality to work with, and the combinations of Christie Dashiell and Carolyn Leonhart on "Hot Summer Night" and Charenée Wade on "Mean What You Say" are especially invigorating. As musical as his voice is, the decision to include Gioia's spoken-word intros is a bit odd, though. They seem as superfluous as wearing a belt with suspenders. —James Hale

Sung With Words: A Collaboration With Dana Gioia: Intro (Spoken): Meet Me At The Lighthouse; Convergence; The Stars On Second Avenue; Spoken Intro: Hot Summer Night; Hot Summer Night; Spoken Intro: Thy The Beautiful; Pity The Beautiful; Spoken Intro: Too Bad; Too Bad; Lament For Kalief Browder; Into The Unknown; Touch; CODA (Spoken): Touch; In The Shadowland; Spoken Intro: Mean What You Say; Mean What You Say; (Soc.29) **Personnel:** Helen Sung, piano, Fender Rhodes, organ; Dana Gioia, spoken word; John Ellis, tenor, soprano saxophone, bass clarinet Ingrid Jensen, trumpet; Reuben Rogers, bass; Kendrick Scott, drums; Samuel Torres, percussion; Jean Baylor (3, 7), Christie Dashiell (5, 9, 12, 16), Carolyn Leonhart (5, 9, 10), Charenée Wade (16), vocals.

Ordering info: helensung.com



Critics	James Hale	John McDonough	Michelle Mercer	Giovanni Russonello
Jensen/Treseler Invisible Sounds: For Kenny Wheeler	****	****	****	****
Marquis Hill Modern Flows Vol. II	***½	***½	****½	****
Marcus Strickland Twi-Life People Of The Sun	***	**	***	***
Helen Sung Sung With Words	****	***½	****	***½

Critics' Comments

Jensen/Treseler, *Invisible Sounds – For Kenny Wheeler*

It's difficult to overstate Wheeler's influence on fellow Canadian improvisers like Jensen. She's incorporated his balletic leaps into her own voice, and repays her debt to him with performances that find the heart of the late trumpeter's distinctive compositions. —James Hale

The Wheeler songbook is not widely played, but it receives an energetic showcase here as curated by Jensen and Treseler. Jensen shows unexpected variety, from even-tempered underplay to some unexpected Ellington growls and hues on a live "Old Time." —John McDonough

Wheeler's underappreciation makes simply playing his music straight a radical necessity. Yet Jensen and Treseler go further, refiguring Wheeler's tunes across space and time, and rehabilitating his unassuming musical reputation with some agitation. —*Michelle Mercer*

Marquis Hill, Modern Flows Vol. II

"Flow" is the operative word here; from Hill's constantly buoyant lead lines to Pinson's fluid drumming, all is in flux. Ross' shimmering vibes add liquidity, his marimba another percussive layer. Green's spoken-word contribution is a sharp highlight. —James Hale

The strength here is the smooth ensemble continuity that Hill's trumpet and Johnson's bright alto achieve. Their long, languid blends float through the music like a river of clear air, their dialogs models of moderation. —John McDonough

Hill is well on his way to defining a new style—built of jazz, hip-hop, new age and plenty else that has the potential to ripple out widely. — Giovanni Russonello

Marcus Strickland Twi-Life, People Of The Sun

The banality of much of the lyrical content undermines the power of the most-potent music. But Strickland's decision to flit relentlessly between musical cells also is problematic. —James Hale

This vanguard manifesto tracing the African diaspora is virtuosic but defensive, as if Strickland is working against pushback in advance. I'd love to hear him trust listeners to grasp his spectacular artistic vision. —*Michelle Mercer*

Strickland is a commanding player, but much of the music here stays somewhere in the middle: between late-'90s nostalgia and urbane millennialism, between exultation and self-possession, between full-court press and acting like he's already won the game. —*Giovanni Russonello*

Helen Sung, Sung With Words

Gioia's poems have an inviting emotional clarity grounded in experience, not abstraction. And Sung wraps them carefully in orderly musical structures that make the readings a bit redundant. — John McDonough

Give yourself over to Gioia's avuncular delivery and you'll hear music in his words. Sung certainly did, obliterating poetry and jazz's beret-and-bongos past with these brilliant compositions on which expert musicians say exactly what they mean. — Michelle Mercer

Sung does admirable work here, crafting arrangements of great diversity and conviction, despite the limitations of her apparent inspiration. Gioia's poems gladly revel in ease—even frivolity—mistaking the clink of cliché for the ring of insight. —*Giovanni Russonello*



SSC 1536 - AVAILABLE 11/23

The runner dashes toward the cliff's edge, his hang glider's wings rattling above. He has reached the crest and, before he can think to stop, he is falling. For those few seconds before the wind mercifully sweeps him away, he is in a freefall, in a state of exhilaration, heightened awareness and, perhaps, terror. Yet, he has committed himself and had to push through the fear in order to soar.

The members of Harriet Tubman find this an apt analogy for their musical approach. For over two decades, guitarist Brandon Ross, bassist Melvin Gibbs and drummer JT Lewis have thrown themselves into making music that is sans genre, infective and overpowering.

photo by Michael Halsband





Andrew Cyrille Lebroba ECM 2589 ****½

Free-jazz drumming icon Andrew Cyrille shows no sign of slowing down. At 79, he remains as wide open to the melodic possibilities of his instrument as he was on 1969's *What About?* and 1974's *Dialogue Of The Drums* with Milford Graves. On his second ECM release, Cyrille again is paired with the endlessly inventive guitarist and fellow melodicist Bill Frisell. Trumpeter Wadada Leo Smith rounds out this remarkably creative and empathetic triumvirate.

Maisha There Is A Place BROWNSWOOD 018 ****

If there's an essence to London's jazz scene, some witty and concise way of capturing its appeal, it continues to elude critics and fans. Its musicians draw from a diverse well of influences—Afrobeat to house and far beyond—and freely intermingle on recordings. Currently, the most easily identifiable connective tissue is the unanimous excitement about something new happening, even when something superficially familiar is being played.

Led by drummer Jake Long and featuring saxophonist Nubya Garcia, Maisha's debut fulllength, There Is A Place, clearly self-identifies as spiritual jazz. But it also confidently explores sounds and ideas outside any narrow genre definition. The album opens with the high-energy "Osiris." Garcia's bright, spiraling notes mount in intensity before the music abruptly stops, giving the knotty polyrhythms of Long and two other percussionists a moment to shine unaccompanied. On "Eaglehurst/The Palace," Garcia and guitarist Shirley Tetteh solo consecutively. The distinctiveness of their voices and the steam they generate as soloists elevates the album's fullest composition. Alongside the album's namesake closer, it's one of two moments that feel panoramically epic. The trio of percussionists that Frisell's lonesome blues "Worried Woman" has guitar and trumpet exchanging bold melodic nuggets as Cyrille traverses the kit with a light, interactive touch that creates a loosely swinging pulse. Frisell's sped-up looping spreads pixie dust on this haunting opener. Smith's dramatic dedication to Alice Coltrane, "Turiya (Alice Coltrane Meditations And Dreams: Love)," unfolds gradually over four movements with Cyrille nimbly shifting from open-ended rubato playing to West African polyrhythms and an earthy blues shuffle. His title track is a minor blues that features Frisell's guitar swimming in echo and Smith's muted trumpet alternately issuing plaintive long tones and buzzing like a swarm of bees.

Cyrille's closer, "Pretty Beauty," a tune as tender and affecting as Miles Davis' "Flamenco Sketches" or Erik Satie's "Gymnopedie No. 1," is underscored by the drummer's alluring brushwork and Frisell's patient chording, which highlights Smith's beautiful lyricism on muted trumpet.

Rather than fronting the proceedings by flaunting his chops, Cyrille underscores *Lebroba* with a combination of grace, zen-like restraint and authority. —*Bill Milkowski*

Lebroba: Worried Woman; Turiya (Alice Coltrane Meditations And Dreams: Love); Lebroba; TGD; Pretty Beauty. (42:27) Personnel: Andrew Cyrille, drums; Bill Frisell, guitar; Wadada Leo Smith, trumpet.

Ordering info: ecmrecords.com



gild every track with byzantine rhythmic signatures take a moment to show off here as well.

While a string section sometimes phones in dramatic moments that might've been better left understated, and the slower "Azure" feels aimless, the ideas Maisha brings to a familiar framework manage to energize an entry within a well-explored genre. —Andrew Jones

There Is A Place: Osiris; Azure; Eaglehurst/The Palace; Kaa; There Is A Place. (44:39)

Personnel: Jake Long, drums; Nubya Garcia, saxophone, flute; Shirley Tetteh, guitar; Arnané Suganami, piano, Wurlitzer, Twm Dylan, bass; Tim Doyle, Yahael Camara-Onono, percussion; Axel Kaner-Lindstrom, trumpet; Johanna Bumheart, Barbara Bartz, violin; Tom Oldfield, cello; Madi Aafke Luimstra, viola; Maria Zofia Osuchowska, harp.

Ordering info: brownswoodrecordings.com



Chucho Valdés Jazz Batá 2 MACK AVENUE 1146 ****

With Jazz Batá 2, Cuban pianist Chucho Valdés returns to the small-group format that he used for his 1972 album Jazz Batá. Recorded with just piano, bass and batá drums, Jazz Batá heralded the later success of Valdés' group Irakere, an Afro-Cuban big band that forwarded the evolution of Latin jazz, exponentially.

On Jazz Batá 2, Valdés pays a musical debt to his father, Ramón "Bebo" Valdés, one of the most influential Cuban big-band leaders of the 20th century. To honor what would have been his father's 100th birthday, Valdés offers up his arrangement of "100 Años De Bebo," a danzón mambo melody written by the elder Valdés, alluring in its movement and touching in its simplicity.

Elsewhere, Valdés draws inspiration from the jazz avant-garde, Cuban religious myths and European classical music. Against the dynamic rhythms of Cuban composer Enrique Ubieta's "Son XXI," he plays a kinetic, free solo line. On the mini-suite "Obatalá," he invokes a Yoruban god through beseeching vocals and a rhythmic pattern connected to the deity. And on "The Clown," a solo piano piece, he references the impressionistic works of French composer Maurice Ravel. Throughout all of the tunes on the album, though, the batá grounds Valdés' playing in a specific cultural context, even as his jazz vocabulary speaks to a broader musical world.

Valdés' band—bassist Yelsy Heredia, batá player and singer Dreiser Durruthy Bombalé, and percussionist Yaroldy Abreu Robles—provide unfailing support in the accomplishment of his latest creative vision, and violinist Regina Carter's solos on two tracks are nothing short of dazzling. —Suzanne Lorge

Ordering info: mackavenue.com

Jazz Batá 2: Obatalá; Son XXI; Luces; Ochún; Chucho's Mood; 100 Años De Bebo; El Güije; The Clown. (56:17) Personnel: Chucho Valdés, piano; Yelsy Heredia, bass; Dreiser Durruthy Bombalé, batás, vocals; Yaroldy Abreu Robles, percussion; Regina Carter, violin (4, 6).

Susanna Risberg Vilddjur EHMM 007 ***1/2

Susanna Risberg, blessed with a vibrant sense of musical self, fresh ideas and her own distinct voice, is a young jazz guitarist worth keeping a close ear on. At 27, the Sweden-based player has made some notable noise at European festivals and on her first two albums. For Vilddjur, Risberg performs in settings from duo to nonet, playing beautifully in each.

The bandleader brings an expressive life and tonal depth to the clean, dark-leaning sound of the mainstream jazz guitar tradition with nimble fingers and an agile creative force in her solos. Compositionally, Risberg taps into various subgenres but defies strict allegiance to any one style. Odd meters and beguiling melodic fragments abound, and song structures can take unexpected twists.

Risberg also works well, and sensitively, in ballad mode, whether on originals, such as the Pat Metheny-esque "Häst(era)," or her lambently graceful take on Billy Strayhorn's "Lotus Blossom." There are a few sonic anomalies on the album, though, such as the electronic textures amping up parts of "Jubal's Jug"-which otherwise is a study in extreme dynamic contrasts. A classical detour through a layered guitar tran-



John Moulder **Decade:** Memoirs **ORIGIN 82762** ***1/2

The lovely Decade: Memoirs is as pastoral as the photograph on its cover-not exactly the expectation for a Chicagoan, like guitarist John Moulder.

The heavy folk and country vibe, the spaciousness and high-note reaches of "About Us" and its separately tracked introduction are a natural fit for Moulder's flat-picked acoustic guitar; during the introduction, he even sounds like a dulcimer. "One Last Call" goes so far as to para-



scription of Shostakovich's Piano Trio No. 2 In E Minor Op. 67: III. Largo could seem out of place but reflects the harmonic and melodic content of Risberg's compositional vocabulary.

Her guitar sound might be traditional, in jazz terms, but her approach is awash in contemporary concepts, both cerebral and heart-based. -Josef Woodard

Vilddiur: Leo: Lotass: Hasse & Gnutta: Lotus Blossom: Piano Trio No. 2 In E Minor Op. 67: III. Largo; Kirika; Jubal's Jug; Häst(era); Villdiur (55.28)

Personnel: Susanna Risberg, guitar, Rasmus Svensson-Blixt, drums; Oskar Lindström, piano; Niklas Fernqvist (4, 9), Palle Sollinger (2, 3, 6), Arvid Jullander (1, 7), bass; Fredrik Ljungkvist, soprano saxophone; Erik Tengholm, trumpet; Agnes Darelid, trombone; David Bennett, alto saxophone; Martin Wirén tenor saxophone

Ordering info: susannarisberg.com

phrase the vamp from Neil Young's "Don't Let It Bring You Down." And the melody of "Gregory's Hymn" echoes that of "The Wichita Lineman."

However, that feel has as much to do with the band's timbral blend as with the songs themselves. The harmony behind "Retreat Into Autumn" is dark and somewhat ambiguous, but its slow waltz pacing and the mellow tone of Tim Garland's bass clarinet temper any abrasiveness. "African Sunset" is a slinky contrafact of "Cantaloupe Island": hardly folk music. While Moulder's solo is pure post-bop in its language, he plays it in a clean, unprocessed tone, overdubbed onto an acoustic rhythm guitar line that softens its attack. So does pianist Gwilym Simcock, whose exquisite touch quietly defines the album.

More than anything, the mood of Decade: Memoirs comes from, well, its mood. It's a sentimental recording that ranges from the regrettinged nostalgia of "Remembrance" to the warmth of "Gregory's Hymn." It's only natural that the compositions here are handled with delicacy, and to Moulder and company's credit, they also do it with beauty. -Michael J. West

Personnel: John Moulder, guitar; Tim Garland, soprano saxophone, bass clarinet; Gwilym Simcock, piano; Steve Rodby, bass; Paul Wertico, drums; Ernie Adams, percussion.

Ordering info: originarts.com





When Jazz Standard approached Frank Kimbrough to put together a quartet to play Monk's music, he picked the brilliant rhythm section of bassist Rufus Reid and drummer Billy Drummond. His choice for lead horn voice was the multi-instrumentalist Scott Robinson, with whom he has played for many years and in many combinations, most notably with the Maria Schneider Orchestra. The project to record all Monk compositions was then started.

The recordings form a fantastically diverse collection. On the 6-CD set, titled Monk's Dreams: The **Complete Compositions of TheIonious Sphere** Monk, Monk's compositions are played in various configurations, most by the quartet, but others in smaller combinations, even solo piano.



Decade: Memoirs: Memoirs By The Sea, Part 1; Memoirs By The Sea, Part 2; One Last Call; About Us (Introduction); About Us; Remembrance; Retreat Into Autumn; African Sunset; Gregory's Hvmn (54·12)

Eva Novoa's Ditmas Quartet Live At iBeam (FSNT-556)



"One of the few modern planists that combines originality with accessibility..... Fresh, clever, original and yet still with a foot and some digits in the tradition, Eva Nevoa shows she's hearing something in her head that she wants to share. It's worth our listening! -George Harris, Jazz Weekh

Butterflies and Zebras

***** -DownBeat "A bold and restless planist, moving easily between acute precision and painterly fervor. Novoa is also in command of compositional strategies, conveying a discernible creative voice." -Jasef Woodard, DownBeat

Live at iBeam

***** -DownBeaf "A wonderfully wild, moody, collaborative and improvisational set by Spanish composer Eva Noros...Bitmas Quartet Live At IBeam is anything but usual, and that's exactly what makes it so compelling." -.Denise Suffixan, November 2018, DownBeat

Recorded five at iBeam in Brooklyn by Jeremy Loucas. Mixed and mastered at Sear Sound by Jeremy Loucas www.eanovoa.com www.freshsoundrecords.com



Jazz / BY ALLEN MORRISON

New Singers, New Repertoire

Jazz vocalists, especially those new to the scene, tend to rely on tried-and-true repertoire, revisiting songs that have, in some cases, been covered to death. The best of this new crop of singers, however, showcase appealingly distinctive voices, complemented by outstanding musicians and unusually adventurous song selection.

Kate Reid, The Heart Already Knows (Self Release; 47:27 ****) Reid's third album is a must-hear. Produced by Peter Eldridge, of New York Voices, it's a series of duets with five superb musicians: pianists Taylor Eigsti and Fred Hersch, and guitarists Larry Koonse, Romero Lubambo and Paul Meyers. Reid, who leads the jazz vocal performance program at the University of Miami's Frost School of Music, has a smoky alto that achieves a rare intimacy with the listener. She's also a highly skilled improviser. The fascinating set list includes songs both familiar and not, from Billy Strayhorn's "Something To Live For" to the lesser-known Joni Mitchell track "Two Grey Rooms" and striking compositions by Hersch, Eldridge and Ivan Lins. Among many standout tracks, two with Hersch are a revelation: "No More" (made famous by Billie Holiday) is a dense, moody masterpiece; and "If I Should Lose You," recorded in a single, unpremeditated take, swings with abandon.

Ordering info: katereidmusic.com

Judith Lorick, The Second Time Around (JLJ International 2014; 41:28 $\star \star \star \star$) There's quite a story behind this haunting album of ballads, which includes seldom-heard beauties like "Why Did I Choose You?" and "I'm Gonna Laugh You Right Out Of My Life." And the album's title has a pair of meanings: It's the second meeting of the singer and marvelous veteran pianist Eric Reed, who leads an outstanding quintet. On another level, however, it refers to the arc of Lorick's personal life and a first love reclaimed after an absence of 44 years. Her honeyed alto sometimes recalls Sarah Vaughan; she sings simply, but with frank emotion. Reed's tasteful accompaniment is a model of how to coax the best out of a singer. Trumpeter Jeremy Pelt, drummer McClenty Hunter Jr., bassist Kiyoshi Kitagawa and young tenor saxophonist Chris Lewis provide expert seasoning.

Ordering info: judithlorick.com

Gayle Kolb, I'm Getting Sentimental (JeruJazz 10: 63:37 ***) Somewhat more conventional is the debut by Kolb, a veteran nightclub performer who turned to jazz after a career in Las Vegas and her native Chicago. Her life experience shows in the mix of honey and salt in her voice and



in her frank, unpretentious delivery. With a quintet led by bassist/arranger Dennis Carroll, Kolb performs mostly familiar standards. Most successful are the songs that go out on a limb: a Carroll original, "Wing"; an unorthodox reading of "Stairway To The Stars"; and a simple, effective "My Ideal," a duet with pianist Joey Skoch.

Ordering info: gaylekolb.com

Lucia Jackson, You And The Night And The Music (Roni 6672; 49:42 **) Only 26, Jackson already has a career as a dancer and model. Under the wing of her father, New York journeyman guitarist Ron Jackson, she makes her jazz debut here. The singer has a pretty tone, but many of the song choices are uninspiring ("Just One Of Those Things," "When You're Smiling"), and the interpretations are tentative and too tame. An ill-considered swing cover of the pop hit "Issues" by Julia Michaels never gets off the ground. More successful are "I'm A Fool To Want You" done as a tango, and Jackson's original "Feel The Love." Ordering info: luciajackson.com

Minyeshu, Daa Dee (ARC 2782; 61:22 ★★★★) The music of the Ethiopian singer/ songwriter Minyeshu is refreshingly different. A star on the world music festival circuit, she marries traditional Ethiopian sounds with European big-band jazz to produce something both sophisticated and infectious. Daa Dee-the title referring to sounds of encouragement made by Ethiopian mothers to help children take their first steps-was recorded in The Netherlands with arrangements by Minyeshu's Dutch collaborator, multi-instrumentalist Eric van de Lest. Together, they deliver mesmerizing grooves propelled by a powerful saxophone section, combined with passionate, spiritually connected lyrics. The album, which includes an 11-page book with essays and English lyrics, is well worth seekina out. DB

Ordering info: minyeshu.nl



David Virelles Igbó Alákorin (The Singer's Grove) Vol. I & II PI ⁷⁸ ★★★½

For the past few years, pianist and composer David Virelles has mapped out an intriguing artistic path by delivering modern jazz abstractions that deftly imply ritualistic rhythms associated with folkloric Afro-Cuban music—without the results sounding like conventional Latin jazz. After three ECM releases, he returns to Pi Recordings with another folkloric-centric outing that finds him far from the outer reaches and more earthbound.

The title of Igbó Alákorin (The Singer's Grove) Vol. I & II makes use of an apt Yoruba phrase. And for sure, singers play a vital role on much of the disc's first half—"Volume I, David Virelles Introduces Orquesta Luz De Oriente"-as it focuses on pieces composed by legendary 1930s big-band figures like Electo Rosell, Bernardo Chauvin Villalón and Mariano Mercerón, all of whom hail from Virelles' hometown of Santiago de Cuba. Upping the ante was Virelles deciding to record Igbó Alákorin in Santiago de Cuba and reconnecting with many of the city's contemporary music heroes, including singers Emilio Despaigne Robert, Alejandro Almenares and José Aquiles Virelles (his father), and trumpet-playing brother Abel Virelles. Virelles and company articulate that homecoming joy best on the driving "Echa Pa' Allá," the punchy "El Rayaero" and the sensual "Bodas De Oro."

As the vintage orchestral jazz compositions bounce to such indigenous Afro-Cuban idioms as danzón oriental, chepinsón and bolero, *Igbó Alákorin* seduces with a transportive Buena Vista Social Club allure. Throughout the first half, Virelles tucks in his expansive piano virtuosity in service of the material, revealing not a hint of the avant-garde abstractions that distinguish his earlier ECM discs. Virelles' piano playing is more prominently featured on the disc's second half—"Vol. II, Danzones De Romeu At Café La Diana" which celebrates the music of early 20th-century Cuban composer and pianist Antonio María Romeu. Here, Virelles pairs with veteran güirero Rafael Ábalos. And even on such ebullient tunes as "Tres Lindas Cubanas" and "Mojito Criollo," the pianist closely adheres to the original melodies, which to some will provide new revelations of his sinewy touch and graceful athleticism when it comes to unraveling succinct flourishes.

Cynics might scoff at *Igbó Alákorin*, arguing that it's one of those obligatory "deep in the tradition" standards albums that avant-garde-leaning musicians must release to prove their jazz bona fides. A closer examination of the love and vigorous research that Virelles put into the project reveals that the album is anything but a compulsory strategic move. —*John Murph*

Igbó Alákorin (The Singer's Grove) Vol. 1 & II: Bodas De Oro; El Rayaero; Grato Recuerdo; Echa Pa' Allá; Canto A Oriente; Un Granito De Arena; Sube La Loma, Compay; Cosas De Mi Cuba; Ojos De Sirena; Tápame Que Tengo Frío; Tira La Cuchara Y Rompe El Plato; Mojito Criollo; Mares Y Arenas; Tres Lindas Cubanas, (58:65) **Personnel:** David Virelles, piano; José Ángel Martínez, bass; Lázaro Bandera, congas; Román Filiú, alto saxophone; René "La Flor" Domínguez, tenor saxophone; Baudelis Rodríguez, baritone saxophone; Abel Virelles, trumpet; Gabriel Montero, pailitas criollas, claves; Rafael Abalos, timbal, güiro; Emilio Despaigne Robert, José Aquiles Virelles, vocals; Alejandro Almenares, requinto, vocals.

Ordering info: pirecordings.com





Amaro Freitas Rasif FAR OUT 205 ***1/2

Brazilian pianist Amaro Freitas has developed an approach to the keyboard that's so unique it's startling. On his first album, 2016's Sangue Negro, he was a heavy-handed and romantic player in the vein of Aaron Parks. His bassist and drummer of choice, Jean Elton and Hugo Medeiros, set up a powerful rhythmic bed that seemed to take very little from the music of their home country; even a piece called "Samba De César" packed more punch than that typically breezy

Benny Green Then And Now **SUNNYSIDE 1528** ****

Pianist Benny Green's 20th album as leader, Then And Now, highlights gems from his decades-long career, as well as fresh directions. Featuring his primary-colored trio with bassist David Wong and drummer Kenny Washington, along with complementary splashes from flutist Anne Drummond and vocalist Veronica Swift, the resulting canvas is more than worthy of his legacy.

The trio bounces through Hank Jones' "Minor Contention" and moves through muscular turns on Hank Mobley's "Hipsippy Blues," as if gravity were an elective. Even the balladry of Duke Pearson's "Say You're Mine" reveals a control of fire that only could come from years of performing together.

Swift is a welcome addition to this nexus, shining during solos on Dexter Gordon's "For Regulars Only," lending punch to Green's "Naturally" and slowly heating up the standard "Something I Dreamed Last Night." Drummond sparkles and shines on Cedar Walton's "Latin America." And on Green's own "Donny Hath A Way," she emits good vibes to open the set.

As for Green, in addition to his rightly lauded abilities at the keys, his writing is keener

style usually permits. On Rasif, though, Freitas is in an entirely different realm. His compositions are built of cells arranged into intricate patterns, like a cross between the clockwork funk of Nik Bärtsch's Ronin and the jackhammering postbop of the Matthew Shipp Trio.

Midway through the opening track, "Dona Eni," Medeiros launches into a maracatu, the thundering, militaristic parade-ground rhythm from Brazil's Pernambuco region. A traditional maracatu might number between 80-100 drummers, but Medeiros does all the work himself. Even on more conventionally swinging pieces like "Paço" or "Mantra," his drumming churns up the earth, as Freitas digs deep into looping patterns that gradually spin out into abstraction.

On the final two tracks, "Plenilúnio" and "Afrocatu," the album expands its scope when Henrique Albino joins the ensemble. On the former, he overdubs multiple flutes and baritone saxophone for a piece that's nearly symphonic in scope. The latter is another hard-charging vamp, on which he plays a buzzing clarinet atop another tidal wave of clattering Medeiros percussion.

Rasif has a lot going and all of it's exciting. -Philip Freeman

Rasif: Dona Eni; Trupé; Paço; Rasif; Mantra; Aurora; Vitrais; Plenilúnio: Afrocatu. (57:29) Personnel: Amaro Freitas, piano; Jean Elton, bass; Hugo Me-

deiros, drums, percussion; Henrique Albino, baritone saxophone flute, bass clarinet. Ordering info: faroutrecordings.com



than ever. Whether tipping his hat to mentor Walter Davis Jr. on "Humphrey" or making the hard swing of "Wiggin" feel like the first time, he armors everything with a smile of appreciation for the opportunity to share his art. All the more appropriate that this album should be released on Sunnyside, drenched as it is in the brightest of talents. -Tyran Grillo

Personnel: Benny Green, piano, electric piano. Veronica Swift. vocals (2, 4, 7, 9, 11); Anne Drummond, flute, alto flute (1, 3, 6); David Wong, bass; Josh Jones, percussion (1, 3); Kenny Washington,

Ordering info; sunnysiderecords.com



Lori Henriques **Quintet featuring** Joey Alexander Legion Of Peace (Songs Inspired By Nobel Laureates) MOTEMA 300 **

As the featured pianist on Legion Of Peace (Songs Inspired By Nobel Laureates), 15-year-old Joey Alexander proves a sensitive accompanist, able to read singer Lori Henriques' musical and emotional transmissions with apparent ease. Indeed, the whole band beautifully complements Henriques. The bad news, however, is in the material on which she has them complementing her.

Possessing solid swing and great control, Henriques applies them to a collection of trite lyrics. From "I, Wangari": "I am a child of the trees/ So very wisely for peace/ In my dreams I've seen/ That the world we want is green." Each of her compositions is inspired by the story of a Nobel Peace Prize laureate, but it is no service to cast Muhammad Yunus, Malala Yousafzai and Desmond Tutu's ideas in such childishly simplistic terms. Even more unfortunate, Henriques' voice and articulation have a certain childlike quality, reinforcing this impression. The tunes themselves are pleasant and sturdy, if a bit conventional. Given Alexander's billing, one wonders if the writing is diluted for the sake of the pianist, who, for all his breathtaking technique, struggles when it comes to expression. If so, Henriques goes overboard, making some vanilla harmonic choices: "We Wore White" is striking for its monochromatic palette, though alto saxophonist Eddie Barbash and tenor Oran Etkin do their best to widen it. Everyone involved, from the laureates to the musicians, deserves better. -Michael J. West

Legion Of Peace (Songs Inspired By Nobel Laureates): Welcome From Professor Muhammad Yunus; Everything You Do; Prelude To Brave As A Girl; Brave As A Girl; I, Wangari; Prelude To Imagine The World; Imagine The World; High Time; Prelude To We Wore White; We Wore White; A Human Is A Human; Prelude To A Kinder Way; A Kinder Way. (51:41)

Personnel: Lori Henriques vocals: Joev Alexander piano: Eddie Barbash, alto saxophone; Kabir Sehgal, bass; Joe Saylor, drums, percussion; Pedrito Martinez, percussion (5, 8); Oran Etkin, clarinet (8, 11), tenor saxophone (10); Muhammad Yunus, spoken word (1). Ordering info: motema.com

Then And Now: Donny Hath A Way; For Regulars Only; Latin America; Naturally; Minor Contention; Enchanted Forest; Split Kick; Say You're Mine; Humphrey; Hipsippy Blues; Something I Dreamed Last Night; Wiggin'. (41:52)





Keith Jarrett La Fenice ECM 2601/2602 ****

Keith Jarrett is the pianist who has asserted the most influence on contemporary practice by shifting focus from a blues- or clavé-based bebop vocabulary to classically indebted complexity and abstraction grounded in implicit pulse. Since his 1971 ECM debut, *Facing You*, he's released more than a dozen albums of such in-studio or onstage performances. *La Fenice*, documenting his 2006 concert at Venice, Italy's Teatro La Fenice, is the first to be released since recordings of his 2008 Paris/London concerts were issued in 2009. And it's an apt example of what Jarrett's brought to this demanding format.

With remarkable concentration for more than 70 minutes (there's a four-minute pause three-quarters of the way through, during which he detours into Gilbert and Sullivan's "The Sun Whose Rays"), the pianist creates a suite of loosely related explorations, evidently using no pre-prepared material. All of Jarrett's hallmarks are here: free-flowing, virtuosic finger work, continuity and development of original ideas, sensitive touch and attention to dynamics, demonstration of vast harmonic knowledge and rhythmic surety. The pianist's absorption of classical compositions, particularly those of Bach, the late Romantics and early modernists, dominate this performance; there's no blues connotation until "Part III."

Although Jarrett's improvisation begins with a crisp, keyboard-ranging investigation, by "Part IV" he's established a reflective, autumnal mood that, despite a relatively upbeat "Part V" and the walking blues of "Part VIII," continues through his encores. The finale, his own "Blossom," is melancholy, not so far-reaching as Jarrett's suite, but revealing of the artist's tender, yearning heart. —Howard Mandel

La Fenice: Disc One: Parts I through V. Disc 2: Part VI; The Sun Whose Rays; Part VII; Part VIII; My Wild Irish Rose; Stella By Starlight; Biossom. (47:08/52:58) Personnel: Keith Jarrett, piano. Ordering info: ecmrecords.com Jacob Anderskov Mysteries (Kinetics Live In Köln) ILK 273 ****

Jesper Zeuthen/ Jacob Anderskov/ Anders Vestergaard Out Of The Spectacle

These two recordings capture the breadth of superb Danish pianist Jacob Anderskov, a leading light of the Copenhagen scene for the past two decades. *Mysteries (Kinetics Live In Köln)* is an elegant piano trio with two younger Danes bassist Adam Pultz Melbye and drummer Anders Vestergaard. The beautifully recorded set was captured live in Köln, Germany, and features the stunning intimacy this unit has developed since forming in 2014. "Brekkek Kekkek" highlights the group's graceful sense of flow, extolling a brooding extravagance that reveals one of the pianist's main influences, Paul Bley.

Throughout the recording, Anderskov spreads his notes like a painter over the canvas stretched by the rhythm section. Within the shimmering stream of sound, Melbye and Vestergaard add friction, breaking down the groove with well placed eddies and bumps. "Anchorman" conveys a deep blues vibe and morphs gracefully into the elliptical "Tse Tse," a slow drag meticulously stoked by the drummer's crisp cymbal work and the bassist's sparse low-end surges. Anderskov applies wonderfully spacious counterpoint, using his right hand to unspool sleek, gossamer strands of melody, while his left hand adds thick jabs and swells. There's a lurching, time-stopping quality on "Pull Up," where the pianist explores some appealing tart harmony within stuttery lines. A blues feeling also permeates the title track, a slow crawl, where Anderskov and Melbye are magically in sync, particularly when the latter uses his bow to generate some sensually bittersweet lines.



A much different side of the pianist is present on *Out Of The Spectacle*, an improvised session from a multi-generational band. Alto saxophonist Jesper Zeuthen has been the pianist's regular co-conspirator for years, but he's been kicking around since the late '60s, and his forcefulness is readily apparent. Vestergaard proves himself worthy of such company, adapting to this more open-ended setting with ease. Anderskov effectively deploys some modest manipulations inside of the piano—damping strings here, scraping them there—that impart a rich textural dimension to the music.

The recording opens with an extended duo passage between pianist and drummer, summoning a herky-jerk propulsion, before Zeuthen's cool alto enters, blowing probing lines with a vibrato-rich, nasal tone. The trio coalesces around his lines, which roam freely but remain deeply engaged with the action around him. As the record unfolds, Zeuthen injects some Balkanstyle melody, as well as Ayleresque intensity, turning up the vibrato, while the other musicians powerfully prod and respond. *—Peter Margasak*

Mysteries (Kinetics Live In Köln): Brekkek Kekkek; Anchorman; Tse Tse; Pull Up; Mysteries; Snap, Pans; Origami Megalith. (42:15)

Personnel: Jacob Anderskov, piano; Adam Pultz Melbye, bass; Anders Vestergaard, drums. Out Of The Spectacle: Part I; Part II; Part III. (39:53) Personnel: Jesper Zeuthen, alto saxophone; Jacob Anderskov,

piano; Anders Vesteraard, drums.

Ordering info: ilkmusic.com



Blues / BY FRANK-JOHN HADLEY

Old School, New School

Various Artists, Rough Guide To Barrelhouse Blues (Rough Guide 1375; 75:18 $\star \star \star \star$) It's been a while since a superior collection of historical boogie-woogie and barrelhouse piano tracks came along. Finally, Rough Guide ends the drought with this sumptuous feast of ostinato bass figures and cross rhythms, a total of 25 songs recorded between 1926 and 1941. The big three popularizers—Albert Ammons, Pete Johnson and Meade Lux Lewis—are here in all their glory. Also plunging into tunes with an exhilarating drive suitable for rent parties and barrelhouse saloon entertainment are Roosevelt Sykes, Speckled Red, Louise Johnson, Pinetop Smith and about 20 others. Many of these pianists potently strut their stuff as singers, too.

Ordering info: worldmusic.net

Dave Keller, Every Soul's A Star (Catfood 026: 42:09 ****) Keller, the soul bluesman in northern New England, made a smart move in recording an album in West Texas with producer Jim Gaines and Catfood Records' superb houseband, the Rays. Keller sings and plays guitar with personality, displays good craft and technique and does lots of deep soul-plumbing. Yet, his greatest asset might be a keen understanding of how his songs need to tell a gripping story. Ten tracks concerning the hard lessons learned from a failed relationship and the rebirth of love are of high communicative interest. Blockbuster: "Old Tricks," with Dan Ferguson on organ.

Ordering info: catfoodrecords.com

Sean Ardoin, Kreole Rock And Soul (Zydekool; 45:28 ***½) Vocalist-accordionist Ardoin, a member of a long-established Creole music family in Louisiana, goes beyond zydeco and stakes out a creative niche where traditional music gets modernized by hip-hop and rock. Despite a rather routine rock guitarist, Ardoin and company spread *joie de vivre* across originals and reinventions of work by Estelle and classic rockers Steve Miller and the Cars.

Ordering info: seanardoin.com

Lindsay Beaver, Tough As Love (Alligator 4986; 37:11 ***½) The first album by Beaver, a Nova Scotian drummer-singer living in Austin, comes off quite well. There's a natural edginess to her voice that's appropriate for her old-timey r&b numbers about romantic entanglements, like the call-out "What A Fool You've Been." Sometimes, though, she appears too self-conscious about projecting emotion through lyrics. It's a plus that Beaver invests in good material by heroes of 1950s



r&b: Little Willie John's "You Hurt Me" and Art Neville's "Let's Rock." On Angela Strehli's ballad "Lost Cause," Beaver and talented guitarist Brad Stivers open up a vein of extreme distress. Bravo.

Ordering info: alligator.com

Barbara Blue, Fish In Dirty H2O (Big Blue 018; 62:12 ***¹/₂) Hailed as royalty in Memphis, Blue uses her bracingly strong voice to articulate the hopes and fears of the characters inhabiting acceptable original songs on this Jim Gaines-produced record. She's at her most persuasive on the original ballad "A Walk Away" and on redesigns of the Koko Taylor-identified title track (rapper Al Kapone helps out) and Robert Johnson's "Come On In My Kitchen." Legend Bernard Purdie plays drums. Ordering info: barbarablue.com

Lawrence Lebo, Old School Girl (On The Air 9657; 28:47 ***½) Somewhat reminiscent of 1930s jazz queen Mildred Bailey, Lebo possesses a light voice that has an uncontestable air of honesty about it. Here, the Californian, who's been recording since 1989, adjusts her sense of selfworth in service of the five blues originals and two takes of her Louisiana accordion-spiced "Stop Shouting Your Business." Extra credit for the well-imagined arrangement of "Stormy Monday Blues." DB Ordering info: lawrencelebo.com



Anna Maria Jopek & Branford Marsalis Ulotne SELF RELEASE ****

The recent death of trumpeter Tomasz Stańko and the rise of pianist Marcin Wasilewski's trio have reiterated the close alignment between improvised romanticism and the Polish predilection for minor keys and dark, poetic expression. The connection is as compelling as the link between American blues and Andalusian *duende*.

Polish vocalist Anna Maria Jopek initially was attracted to Branford Marsalis' playing when she heard him in Sting's band. And the attraction carries through to how she uses him on *Ulotne* principally on soprano saxophone—to add color to her expressive voice, and to provide a second lead instrument to soar above the resonant mix of percussion and bass.

The Polish folk song "W Polu Lipenka" builds from a keening, acerbic string movement to fiery wordless vocalizing by Jopek. Mino Cinelu's drums lend depth and help transport the song from central Europe to Northern Africa. "Pozegnanie Z Maria," which begins the short second disc, is dedicated to Stańko, and sways with the melancholy stoicism that dominated much of his music. Marsalis solos with gentle beauty over Wasilewski and the Atom String Quartet.

Non-English-speaking singers face the challenge of having to express themselves enough to transcend the language barrier for American audiences, but like Celtic vocal explorer Loreena McKennitt, Jopek has the ability to make that barrier immaterial. The meaning of these songs is clear, even if you don't understand Polish.

—James Hale

Ulotne: Disc 1: W Polu Lipenka; W Kadzidlanskim Boru; Niepojete I Ulotne; Patrz I Słuchaj; Niezauwazone; Czekanie; Na Droge; Opowiesc; Czule Miejsce; Nielojalnosc. Disc 2: Pozegnanie Z Maria; A Night In The Garden Of Eden; To I Hola; Czekanie (Alternate Version). (51:56/20:55)

Personnel: Anna Maria Jopek, vocals; Branford Marsalis, saxophone; Marcin Wasilewski, piano; Krzysztof Herdzin, keyboards; Mino Cinelu, percussion; Maria Pomianowska, cello; Robert Kubiszyn, bass; Pedro Nazaruk, strings, percussion, vocals; Atom String Quartet, strings.

Ordering info: annamariajopek.pl



In Common In Common WHIRLWIND 4728 ****½

As a title, *In Common* perfectly captures the shared sensibility that goes into the music here. Assembled by guitarist Matthew Stevens and tenor saxophonist Walter Smith III, this quintet—which also includes vibraphonist Joel Ross, bassist Harish Raghavan and drummer Marcus Gilmore—doesn't represent a specific style so much as general modernity, one that acknowledges the traditions of jazz, but is happy to move beyond them.

An improvised duet between Stevens and Smith titled "freefive" introduces the album with the guitarist playing chords under a slow, symmetrical statement from Smith and followed by a flurry of saxophone 16ths that come to a halt when the guitar resolves a suspended chord. In other words, it conveys the shape and feel of traditional jazz while remaining harmonically untethered and melodically free—the best of both worlds, if you will.

A similar eclecticism animates the rest of the album. "ACE," for example, rolls along over a loop that sounds like a cross between wind chimes and toy piano; augmented by Raghavan and Gilmore's deep funk, it seems to lean pop, until Smith and Ross enter with alternating, elegiac phrases that keep the tune firmly in the jazz camp. The pulse on "YINZ," by contrast, is loose enough to pass for free time. But the interplay among the five players is so conversational that it feels like a groove anyway. "Baron" boasts a similar level of collectivity, but at a brisker tempo and working off a rhythmically gnarled head.

In Common manages the great trick of being utterly singular, yet somehow hauntingly familiar. If only there were more of the album to fall into. *—J.D. Considine*

In Common: freefive; Unsung; YINZ; ACE; foreword; Baron; 13th Floor, About 360; Unconditional Love; ACE (Reprise). (37:04) Personnel: Walter Smith III, tenor saxophone; Matthew Stevens, guitar; Joel Ross, vibraphone; Harish Raghavan, bass; Marcus Gilmore, drums.

Ordering info: whirlwindrecordings.com

Sakata/Nabatov/ Seo/Moore Not Seeing Is A Flower LEO 843 ***

Although divided into five tracks, this live set—recorded at Jazz Spot Candy in the Chiba prefecture just east of Tokyo during November 2017—sounds like a continuous improvisation, with only the closing "Abscond" seeming separate. It's a fine example of international collaboration on the improvising front.

Only three minutes into the opening tune, "Surge," and Simon Nabatov's piano is running cascades while Akira Sakata's alto saxophone is molten—not so far removed from a Cecil Taylor/Jimmy Lyons sparring session. Sakata bends his screamed notes as he flies, his cohort reacting swiftly in accord.

All elements coalesce during "Resolve," as Sakata ripples and races on clarinet, tight-



ly focused on a clenched attack, his comrades locking into the thrilling, complicated route of the chase. —*Martin Longley*

Not Seeing Is A Flower: Surge; Retreat; Uncoil; Ritual; Resolve; Abscond. (51:39)

Personnel: Akira Sakata, alto saxophone, clarinet, vocals, percussion; Simon Nabatov, piano; Takashi Seo, bass; Darren Moore, drums, percussion.

Ordering info: leorecords.com





Matt Ulery **Sifting Stars** WOOLGATHERING 005 ***

Is it possible to package an experience as epic as an orchestra and engaging as a museum gallery for the jazz listener? Chicago bassist Matt Ulery has made the effort and proved himself a master of the macabre in the process. Sifting Stars is an arthouse opus, rethinking jazz structure, beauty and realism, Ulery approaching each with the utmost subtlety.

Spacious and suspenseful, Sifting Stars celebrates life as it laments it-"Ida: The Fleeting

Ann Hampton Callaway Jazz Goes To The Movies SHANACHIE 5464 ***1/2

Some listeners will revel in nostalgia, hearing Ann Hampton Callaway's Jazz Goes To The Movies. Consisting of standards and songs tied to 20th-century movie classics, the care with which Callaway approaches these works makes them sound fresh and new, as if they're being rendered for the first time. Traces of Ella Fitzgerald, Nancy Wilson and Peggy Lee sneak into her renditions, but Callaway still owns these songs. Familiar tunes like "S Wonderful" and "This Can't Be Love" breathe under her tutelage, sounding freshly wrought.

Callaway's band works seamlessly with her vocals, her rich three-octave range adding layers of color, texture and depth to "Blue Skies." Pianist Ted Rosenthal's opening andante bars allow Callaway to inject suspense as the tempo increases. The uptempo arrangement of "As Time Goes By" divorces it from the somber timbre of the tune from 1931's Casablanca; in Callaway's version, a kiss is really just a kiss. Jimmy Greene's opening saxophone gambit and solo dazzle on "This Time The Dream's On Me." Drummer Tim Horner's soft touch on "The Nearness Of You" signals his ability to fall back, while still providing the rhythmic punch neces-

Nature Of Time And Beauty" being particularly notable. Ulery bends lush arrangements with subtle swing and irony, made both beautiful and grotesque by his tactful crew of brass and strings. There's an ebb and flow in the muted restraint and sweeping cinematic moments, including Rob Clearfield's brooding piano narrative on "The Prairie Is A Rolling Ocean."

Hands down, though, Sifting Stars' benchmark is the multi-movement introspective Ida, inspired by the aging visage of the song's namesake in Ivan Albright's "Into The World There Came A Soul Called Ida." The oil painting has been a fixture at the Art Institute of Chicago, and likely drew the bassist's attention during a visit. As the talented Axiom Brass quintet breathes jazz texture and phrasing into this symphonic masterwork, Ulery personifies and empathizes with the painting's subject. It's as touching as it is delightfully haunting. -Hilary Brown

Sifting Stars: The Remnant Of Everything; Pictures In Grey; I'm So Shallow; The Prairie Is A Rolling Ocean; Ida: Into the World There Came a Soul (Vanity Fare); Ida: The Fleeting Nature Of Time And Beauty; Ida: I Give My Back to the Dark; Ida: Wicker Party; Ida: The Passage Of Time Can Be Relentless And Unforgiving; Ida: I Have Such A Clown Face. (36:49)

Personnel: Matt Ulery, bass, vocals; Rob Clearfield, piano; Michael Caskey, percussion; Grazyna Auguscik, Katie Ernst, vocals; Yvonne Lam, Jeff Yang, violin; Aurelien Pederzoli, viola; Nick Photinos, cello; Michael Maccaferri, clarinet; Nathalie Joachim, flute; Ben Roidl-Ward, bassoon; Andrew Nogal, oboe, English horn; Liz Deitemyer, Melanie Erena Kiellsen, French horn; James Davis, Chad Mc-Cullough Dorival Puccini, Kris Hammond, trumpet; Steve Duncan, Chris Shuttleworth, Mary Tyler, trombone; Kevin Harrison, tuba. Ordering info: mattulery.com



sary to keep everyone in time.

"Long Ago And Far Away" from the 1944 film musical Cover Girl becomes the perfect vehicle for enjoying Callaway's controlled and well-executed vibrato. She moves through her register without losing enunciation, the closing note making this one of the most memorable tunes on the album. -Michele L. Simms-Burton

Personnel: Ann Hampton Callaway, vocals; Ted Rosenthal, piano; Martin Wind, bass; Tim Horner, drums; Jimmy Greene, saxophone. Ordering info: shanachie.com



Joanne Grauer Introducing Lorraine Feather MPS 0979 \star \star \star $\frac{1}{2}$

Joanne Grauer is a largely forgotten figure these days. Although the L.A.-based pianist cut her first album, a 1957 trio session with Buddy Clark and Mel Lewis, she didn't record as a leader again until the '70s, when she released a funky self-titled album for Avar, and the just-reissued Introducing Lorraine Feather for MPS. And even then, it would be another decade before that latter recording attained cult status, when DJ and raregroove tastemaker Gilles Peterson began spinning "Frog Child" at clubs.

"Frog Child" is a wonder-tuneful and funky, with prog overtones and a very dance-friendly rhythmic arc. Driven by a jazzy fatback, the recording is marked by near-telepathic interplay between Grauer's piano and Colin Bailey's drums. But its secret weapon is David Troncoso's virtuosic electric bass playing, which blurs the line between bass and guitar.

Although the rest of the album isn't bad, it's just not as memorable as "Frog Child." The three tracks with singer Lorraine Feather are beautifully recorded-it can't have hurt that her father, critic and onetime DownBeat contributor Leonard Feather, produced the album-and there are some flashes of Annie Ross-style wit on "The Voice." Grauer, Troncoso and Bailey manage to find a solid, soulful groove in their version of Barbra Streisand's "Evergreen," but the slick playing on "Gork" and "Misty Dreams & Ruffy's Eyes" hews closer to Vince Guaraldi-style soundtrack jazz. Only the samba-fueled "See You Later," with Feather on vocals and Ernie Watts providing tenor saxophone counterpoint, comes close to providing "Frog Child" with a worthy sibling. -J.D. Considine

Ordering info: mps-music.com

Jazz Goes To The Movies: 'S Wonderful: Let's Face The Music And Dance: Blue Skies: The Folks Who Live On The Hill: As Time Goes By; The Way You Look Tonight; This Time The Dream's On Me; The Nearness Of You; How Little We Know; This Can't Be Love; Just One Of Those Things; Taking A Chance On Love; Long Ago And Far Away; From This Moment On. (54:13)

Introducing Lorraine Feather: Gork; Evergreen; Misty Dreams & Ruffy's Eyes; Longing; Happy; See You Later; Can't Sleep; The Voice; Frog Child. (45:19)

Personnel: Joanne Grauer, keyboards; Lorraine Feather, vocals (6, 7, 8); David Troncoso, electric bass; Doug Lenier, electric bass (6, 7, 8); Colin Bailey, drums; Paulinho da Costa, percussion (4, 6, 7, 8); Ernie Watts, tenor saxophone (6, 7, 8).



Kenny Werner The Space PIROUET 3106 ****

Musicians long have pondered the idea of "space." The meanings they ascribe to this word differ, but in general, they apply to performance—the silences that pianists as diverse as Thelonious Monk and Keith Jarrett employ as part of their statements. But in his playing and teaching, pianist Kenny Werner uses it to refer more to the state of mind used when improvising, rather than to the improvisation itself. This is the key concept in his book *Effortless Mastery*, and in these tracks as well.

If finding "the space" means infusing what you play with a sense of awareness and presence, it would follow that Werner's temperament, as well as more traditional measures of artistry, are evident on *The Space*. It should be no surprise, then, that a reflective state of mind permeates each track. Listeners won't hear any driving bass lines or flashy displays; presumably these function more as ornaments, if not distractions. Instead, when Werner plays over an ostinato, that figure often fragmented, changing subtly with each iteration before its evaporation.

It's often best to focus on standard material to develop deeper insight into a player's aesthetic. And "You Must Believe In Spring" serves this purpose here, as Werner lets the rise and fall of the tune guide his tempo. His left hand alters constantly, moving through chords played solidly or gently rolled single notes, ascending sixths and other devices, over which his exploration of the melody draws fully from the composition's movements between major and minor.

Throughout *The Space* Werner conjures a melancholy mood. It is, then, a monochromatic effort—but it's also extraordinarily unified, even eloquent. In the context of his process, it would be unfair to expect otherwise. —*Bob Doerschuk*

The Space: The Space; Encore From Tokyo; Fifth Movement; You Must Believe In Spring; Taro; Kiyoko; If I Should Lose You; Fall From Grace. (64:15) Personnel: Kenny Werner, piano.

Ordering info: pirouet.com



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Beyond / BY ROBERT HAM

Moving Among Worlds

Electronic music often has been at the forefront of artistic movements, and that never has been truer than it is today. The rapid advancements in hardware and software technology, as well as the conceptual brilliance of the people wielding such instruments, has led to a welcome flood of releases that dance along the bleeding edge of soul, contemporary classical, hip-hop and beyond. And with fewer barriers in place to access this technology and distribute new sounds, an exciting array of voices have been able to rise to international acclaim as a result.

One of the most widely celebrated artists of this community has been Midwestern producer Jlin (aka Jerrilynn Patton). Taking the relatively niche genre of footwork—a hyperactive blend of hip-hop and electro rhythms meant for dance battles—out of the underground and onto stages around the world was enough of a feat. But she also has managed to catch the ear of British choreographer Wayne McGregor, who hired Patton to compose the score for a new work by his dance company. The resulting soundtrack release, Autobiography (Music From Wayne McGregor's Autobiography) (Planet Mu ZIQ399; 58:20 ***½), is a perfect distillation of Patton's brilliance, as piercing, drill-like tones make rough consort with resounding bass tones and unhinged melodies concocted out of leftfield samples and blinking synths.

Ordering info: planetmu.com

Georgia Anne Muldrow also takes much inspiration from the world of hiphop, particularly the beat scene in her native Los Angeles, but she uses it to inform the soul-psych visions that she's invoked during the past decade. Her new album, Overload (Brainfeeder 070; 36:58 $\star \star \star \star$), is a vital reflection of our anquished modern age with ironic odes to self-defense ("Blam") and solace-seeking. Muldrow's devastating, powerful vocals are wrapped in diaphanous productions that undulate and stutter with trickling keys, creating something both emphatic and beautiful in a world that seems determined to stamp out critical voices.

Ordering info: brainfeedersite.com

Portland artist Mary Sutton, recording here under the name **Saloli**, offers a balm for the soul on her latest album, **The Deep End (Kranky 214; 42:48** \star \star \star \star **//**2). These all-synth compositions were apparently inspired by a performance she gave at a sauna, where her goal was to aid in relaxation. Sutton kept that same mindset



when composing the material for her solo debut, recording all the songs in one take using an analog synthesizer and keeping them free of effects or post-production sweetening. What emerged from those strictures is a collection that feels cut loose from gravity, with melodies floating and twisting in the air like cottonwood seeds. Through the wowing and wild tones of Sutton's chosen instrument, the mood skirts past New Age territory and into an aesthetic that resembles alien transmissions or Terry Riley's brain waves translated to sound.

Ordering info: kranky.net

There's a slightly soothing quality to the latest release from Kelly Moran, though the real benefit can be found while leaning in and listening intently to every last second of this tiny masterpiece. *Ultraviolet* (Warp 297; 42:08 ★★★★), her first album on Warp, primarily uses what sounds like prepared piano that somehow doesn't lose one bit of the instrument's natural beauty. Instead, Moran is able to find the strangely lovely timbres hidden within whatever objects she has tucked in the strings. The album gets even headier as layers of reverb and other post-production effects are added to the mix, as well as the contributions on synthesizer by Daniel Lopatin, an artist who records as Oneohtrix Point Never. It's little wonder that Moran has been embraced by both classical and experimental audiences (and now getting the support of the one of the world's pre-eminent electronic labels) as the clatter and sweep of tracks like "Nereid" and "Autowave" sit astride both genres. As with all of the artists discussed in this month's column, Moran moves between worlds. DB Ordering info: warp.net



Enrique Haneine The Mind's Mural ELEGANT WALK 002

Enrique Haneine's previous album saw him leading from the piano, but *The Mind's Mural* finds him doing so from behind the drum kit. Born and raised in Mexico, but now a New Yorker, Haneine has a knack as a composer for both sinuous rhythms and free-flowing lyricism. His quartet for *The Mind's Mural*—two horns plus bass and drums—often evokes a smooth, pure-toned version of the vintage Ornette Coleman weave, with the absence of a chordal instrument leaving plenty of space for Catherine Sikora (soprano and tenor saxophone) and Anna Webber (tenor saxophone) to wind melodic lines around and across one another, often creating harmonies between themselves.

Every track has an ear-catching allure, with the dreamy pace and tarter-than-usual mix of Sikora's soprano and Webber's tenor making "Motionless Passage" a real highlight. "Like A Bronco" is another, with seemingly every note the horns, bass and drums play working as a hook. As a drummer, Haneine can have a lithe, coloristic touch, as well as a rolling, tumbling rapport with bassist Carlo de Rosa, whose woody tone was captured beautifully by the recording—and showcased to particular effect in his long, absorbing solo on "The One Eleven Tale."

"Life Of Its Own" has a Middle Eastern feel (with the composer perhaps tapping into his Lebanese ancestry), though the piece also ends up hinting at classic Ethio jazz. For all the excellent playing by Haneine and Rosa, much of the leader's music depends here on the tonal and rhythmic chemistry between Sikora and Webber, and they play like kindred spirits on this track, as throughout the album. —*Bradley Bambarger*

Ordering info: enriquejazz.com

The Mind's Mural: Once A Thought; The Seventh Layer; The One Eleven Tale; Just Because; Motionless Passage; Hidden Mirrors; Reality Shape; Like A Bronco; While You're Away; Life Of Its Own; Komet. (66:13)

Personnel: Enrique Haneine, drums, percussion; Catherine Sikora, soprano, tenor saxophone; Anna Webber, tenor saxophone; Carlo de Rosa, bass.


Jonathan Finlayson 3 Times Round PI 77 ****

3 Times Round is Jonathan Finlayson's first album to dispense with a band name. Its predecessors were co-credited to Sicilian Defense, and both were performed by quintets that included piano and guitar—with Finalyson's trumpet as the only horn. This time, he's dropped the guitar and added two saxophonists. The shift in nomenclature also implies that he's not just playing with the band; he's using it as an instrument.

While the players are given ample chance to display their skills, it's the lucid, but shifting, frameworks that command the listener's attention. Behind the sequence of horn solos on "Refined Strut," a series of intricate countermelodies and rhythms repeatedly are displaced by added rests and detours. There are lengthy stretches on "The Moon Is New," the album's 14-minute centerpiece, where you don't hear Finlayson's trumpet. Instead, the music moves dynamically from one discrete structure to the next. First, Craig Weinrib's drums rustle like barely perceptible leaves behind Matthew Mitchell's bold keyboard figures. Then a gentle piano-and-bowed-bass duet eases toward near silence, only to abruptly cut to a full-band passage that expresses a melodic double helix.

Finlayson's music is intricate and unpredictable, but it never feels unfamiliar. The instrumental lineup corresponds to the early-'60s Jazz Messengers, and there are moments when Finlayson seems to tip his hat to his longtime employer, Steve Coleman, and frequent comrade Steve Lehman. *3 Times Round* presents Finlayson as a composer and bandleader working within a continuum that connects mid-20th century jazz to the newest developments of his contemporaries. —*Bill Meyer*

3 Times Round: Feints; Grass; A Stone, A Pond, A Thought; The Moon Is New; Refined Strut; Rope From The Sky; Tap-Tap. (53:21) Personnel: Jonathan Finlayson, trumpet; Steve Lehman, alto saxophone; Brian Settles, tenor saxophone, flute; Matthew Mitchell, piano; John Hebert, bass; Craig Weinrib, drums. Ordering Info: pirecordings.com

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Historical / BY EUGENE HOLLEY JR.



Definitive Jams from Havana

When Latin jazz was created in New York City in the 1940s, Cuban musicians responded with their own dynamic medium called descargas: improvised iam sessions driven by ostinato-like figures called tumbaos and montunos. The swinging and scintillating The Complete Cuban Jam Sessions (Craft 37:51/34:34/34:05/33:46/42:30 00100: $\star \star \star \star \star$) is a superb five-album collection of the Cuban scene—captured by the independent, Havana-based Panart Records between 1956 and 1964—that features pianist/ bandleader Julio Gutiérrez, tres virtuoso Nino Rivera, flutist Jose Fajardo and bassist/composer Israel "Cachao" Lopez.

Virtually all of these tracks were recorded prior to the Cuban Revolution, when Havana's nightlife was robust. That joyous vibe is caught on Gutiérrez's two LPs, *Cuban Jam Session, Vols. 1 & 2*. The brilliant pianist Pedro "Peruchin" Justiz steals the show with his ebullient and propulsive pianism, as tenor saxophonist Jose "Chombo" Silva trades fours with Alejandro "El Negro" Vivar's high-octane trumpet flights on several standout tracks, like "Theme For Perfidia," the Duke Ellington-flavored "Opus For Dancing" and "Jam Session (Descarga Caliente)."

Another musician on Gutiérrez's sessions, Andrés Echevarría (a.k.a. Niño Rivera), brought a jazz-like virtuosity to the tres, a Cubanized, acoustic guitar that originated in the island's countryside. Independent of the Latin jazz innovations in New York. Rivera is credited with spawning a version of the genre called Cubibop. But here, he takes the helm of Cuban Jam Session, Vol. 3, which only contains four long tracks: "Montuno Swing," "Montuno Guajiro," "Cha Cha Cha Montuno" and "Guanguanco-Comparsa." the latter an ingenious blend of rumba and Franco-Haitian carnival rhythms. Each of these selections is topped by Rivera's pointillistic and piercing plectral strains, contrasted

by flutist Richard Egües' nimble flute improvisations, and buoyed by percussionist Tata Güines and timbales master Guillermo Barreto.

Eques. Guines and Barreto along with bonguero Rogelio "Yeyo" Iglesias also appear on the fourth installment of the series, perhaps the most important and influential one: Cachao's legendary 1957 masterpiece Cuban Jam Session in Miniature: "Descargas." Credited as one of the founding fathers of the mambo (although many musicologists credit its creation to Afro-Cuban composer Arsenio Rodriguez), Cachao didn't invent the descarga, but his rhythmic drive, inventive improvisations and rich, bone-thick tone, especially on the elegiac "Trombone Criollo," propelled the genre to new heights. As Cachao was quoted in co-producer Judy Cantor-Navas' extensive, bilingual liner notes, "[W]hen we finished recording, I told the musicians they should get a suit of armor on because the public was going to go ballistic."

But with the final LP of the series, from bandleader/flutist José Fajardo, *Cuban Jam Session With Fajardo And His All-Stars*, the end of an era was near. Jazz lost favor with the Castro regime, forcing musicians to leave the island. This session, which features drummer Walfredo de los Reyes as the only other verified musician on the date, initially was recorded in Havana and finished in New York. Performed in the flute-violin dominated charanga style, the eight tracks capture the elegance of the arrangements, including the bouncy "Juaniquita," the virtuosic "La Flauta De Jose" and the countryside cadences of "Guajirando."

Simply put, the well-produced and elegantly researched *Jam Sessions* contains the syncopated sonic scriptures from which salsa and modern Latin music were born. **DB Ordering info:** craftrecordings.com



Bill Stewart Band Menu STEWED ***½

There are many reasons Bill Stewart remains one of the greatest jazz drummers on the planet. His interpretive skills practically are without parallel, his ride cymbal is one of the biggest and most hard-swinging anywhere, and Stewart's melodic ideas are consistently singular.

As a composer, he's been a work in progress. Earlier albums, like 1995's *Snide Remarks*, followed a fairly standard approach, usually a quartet or quintet working the drummer's adroit postbop material. Ten records and about 24 years later, Stewart's honed his writing chops. As on his recordings with organist Larry Goldings and guitarist Peter Bernstein, *Band Menu* is a trio outing, but sans a chordal instrument.

Accompanied by saxophonist Walter Smith III and bassist Larry Grenadier, Stewart offers seven originals, plus one each from Smith and Bill Evans. Freed of a chordal center, the trio devours the bandleader's cerebral, yet soulful, compositions like galactic navigators, trading jabs through the cosmos. Each song is presented simply upfront, then dissected and elaborated upon with intensity, insight and glee.

Stewart's brilliant drumming is the center, no matter the tune. His touch, stunning ideas and energetic thrust—from insistent rim clicks and foot-pedal-hammered hi-hat accents—are endlessly fascinating. "F U Donald" bounces with blues, and on "Good Goat," a rapid-fire, Monklike melody scorches the air like a heatwave, while "Apollo" offers a mournful melody, underpinned by Stewart's communicative brush work.

Band Menu is an epic outing by three gifted musicians playing to the jugular. It's a lesson in muscular improvisation from an exciting, stateof-the-art trio. —*Ken Micallef*

Ordering info: itunes.apple.com; amazon.com

Band Menu: Band Menu; F U Donald; Re: Person I Knew; Good Goat; Hair And Teeth; Invocation; Modren; Apollo; Think Before You Think. (45:43)

Personnel: Bill Stewart, drums; Walter Smith III, tenor saxophone; Larry Grenadier, bass.

Aimée Allen Wings Uncaged AZULINE ****

A fine singer who has a warm and inviting voice along with a conversational style, Aimée Allen has been part of the New York jazz scene since 2002. *Wings Uncaged* is her fifth album as a leader.

On this program, which balances

six standards with five originals, Allen is joined by bassist François Moutin, pianist Billy Test and drummer Kush Abadey. Moutin is practically the co-leader, having more solo space than pianist Test, taking the most adventurous improvisations and contributing "Touch The Sun," for which Allen wrote lyrics.

While the treatments given to the standards here are pleasing, it's the originals that command attention, particularly the singer's astute lyrics. Likely to get the most attention on this intriguing set is "Democracy How (Harmony And Dissonance)." Allen's lyrics express her feelings well, particularly during this passage: "They tell me all I have to lose/ By looking and listening/ By reading and researching/ Or gathering several points of view/ They tell me one and one is not two/ The death of truth." It's an effective musical poem as well as a political protest.

Wings Uncaged: Skylark; Shooting Star; Invitation; In My Web; Democracy How (Harmony And Dissonance); Touch The Sun; Fotografia; Night Owl; Save Your Love For Me; Autumn Leaves/Les Feullies Mortes; Midnight Sun. (55:38) Personnel: Aimée Allen, vocals; François Moutin, bass; Billy Test, piano; Kush Abadey, drums.

Ordering info: aimeeallenmusic.com



From the first cavernous notes played by saxophonist Larry Ochs, listeners should sense something unusual. The explanation is quite simple, though.

This duo with drummer Gerald Cleaver was recorded in a cave located

in southwest France. And because improvised music relies heavily on tones, textures and pitches, performers are particularly sensitive to the environment in which they play and constantly on the lookout for new experiences. That's likely why Ochs and Cleaver agreed to venture into the unknown with the unique *Songs Of The Wild Cave*.

Luckily, both saxophonist and drummer find their footing, progressively engaging with their surroundings and gaining in assurance. On the opener, the aptly titled "First Steps," Ochs is in probing mode while Cleaver opts for percussion devices that he gently shakes. As confidence builds, the saxophonist grows impassioned and forceful, and the drummer introduces beautiful thunderous rolls. From then on, rhythm becomes Cleaver's main focus, whether launching into weighty patterns, gallops or polyrhythmic figures. The rich backdrop he provides allows Ochs to be grounded solidly and to deliver one of his strongest performances in recent memory.

—Alain Drouot

Songs Of The Wild Cave: First Steps; Into The Air; Deeper; Down; Ringing It In; Rooted In Clay; Light From The Shadows. (60:51) Personnel: Larry Ochs, tenor, sopranino saxophone; Gerald Cleaver, drums, percussion.

Ordering info: roguart.com



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Felipe Salles Interconnections Ensemble The Lullaby Project

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Those without knowledge of traditional Brazilian lullabies might fear a disadvantage sitting down with *The Lullaby Project*, not only in recognizing musical inspirations, but in one's ability to fully appreciate Felipe Salles and his 18-piece ensemble's intended thematic direction. Since the eight tracks here feature names that won't necessarily point anyone toward immediate conclusions,

Maggie Herron A Ton Of Trouble HERRON SONG

Pianist, songwriter and vocalist Maggie Herron turned her year of misfortune—a broken arm, the flu, a shift in her vocal range and a near-miss with Hawaii's Kīlauea volcano—into a leader date that's a riff on taking life as it comes.

Despite the challenges, Herron came up with 10 originals and two well-chosen covers. The Lennon/McCartney standard "In My Life" is executed with convincing grace, as is Leonard Cohen's "Dance Me To The End Of Love," on which Herron adds a certain gravitas that lessexperienced voices simply wouldn't possess.

Relying on a core group of collaborators for support, the bandleader is joined on six cuts by co-producer Bill Cunliffe, who also arranges and accompanies her on piano. Also in her corner is Larry Koonse on guitar and Dean Taba on bass. Gillian Margot and Jason Morales lend harmonies to the gentle melody of "There Is Love," arranged by Margot and Geoffrey Keezer, who contributes piano.

With all the extra touches on board, Herron's dusky vocals still are the main event, even when punctuated by the horn section. Her vocals lead, whether on the old-time "Red Hot Jazz," the theatrical "Small Stuff" or on the Mose Allisonlisteners are free to focus on players' techniques, timbre and arrangements to explain the emotional aim of each track.

"Lullaby #2" begins with a minimal motif one reminiscent of Maurice Ravel's "Bolero" that's shared across piano, cymbals and vibraphone. The theme relies almost entirely on rhythmic punctuation, repetition and subtly fluctuating dynamics to build momentum and anticipation. Meanwhile, "Lullaby #5" starts with a brass-aggressive ascending motif before receding to a calmer, but still brisk, section built on hi-hat, low-register piano and piercing melodica. As the album shifts toward three through-composed tango-style pieces, that same tone-intense brass takes on a support role, resulting in a reserved noir-style theme on "Astor Square."

The Lullaby Project simultaneously is dense and accessible, and warrants replays to take in Salles' cultural observations, compositional counterpoint and the emotional trajectories.

—Kira Grunenberg

The Lullaby Project: Lullaby #1; Lullaby #2; Lullaby #3; Lullaby #4; Lullaby #5; Odd Tango; Astor Square: Carla's Tango. (73:28) Personnel: Felipe Salles, soprano saxophone; Richard Garcia, Jonathan Ball, alto saxophone, flute; Mike Caudill, tenor, soprano saxophone, clarinet; Jacob Shulman, tenor saxophone, darinet; Tyler Burchfield, baritone saxophone, bass clarinet; Jeff Holmes, Yuta Yamaguchi, Eric Smith, Doug Olsen, trumpet; Joel Yennior, Clayton DeWalt, Randy Pingrey, trombone; Angel Subero, bass trombone; Nando Michelin, piano, melodica; Kevin Grudecki, guitar; Ryan Fedak, vibraphone; Keala Kaumeheiwa, bass; Bertram Lehmann, drums.

Ordering info: sallesjazz.com



styled rhymes of "Perfect Specimen."

Her heavy payload of trouble notwithstanding, Herron delivers an adventurous, yet accessible, repertoire that should please longtime listeners from afar, as well as fans who wish to take home a souvenir from her regular sets at Lewers Lounge at the Halekulani Hotel in Honolulu.

—Denise Sullivan

Personnel: Grant Geissman, Larry Koonse, guitar, Dean Taba, bass; Bill Cunliffe, Geoffrey Keezer (8), piano; Gillian Margot (8), Jason Morales (8), vocals; Bob Sheppard, flute, bass clarinet; Brandon Fields, saxophone; Bob McChesney, trombone; Ryan Pewees, trumpet.

Ordering info: maggieherron.com



Butcher Brown Camden Session GEARBOX 1545 ***

Butcher Brown, a Richmond, Virginia-based quintet, wears its '70s jazz-funk fusion throwback jersey proudly on *Camden Session*, especially on the barreling "Fiat," which could have served any Blaxploitation film's car-chase scene.

The group's chemistry is apparent throughout this laissez-faire-sounding session, captured at DJ and producer Mark Ronson's Zelig Sound studio in London. With no edits or overdubs, the tantalizing "Street Pharmacy" and prowling "Camden Square" reveal that Butcher Brown is indeed a combo that can deliver the goods without the reliance of studio trickery.

On all of the tunes, the group's de facto leader, Devonne Harris, lays down sticky clavinet and Fender Rhodes chords that stretch like butterscotch taffy while bassist Andrew Randazzo buttresses the percolating grooves with big-boned melodic counterpoints. Guitarist Morgan Burrs lends the group an enticing Southern soul aesthetic that recalls Larry Carlton's work with the Crusaders while Marcus Tenney navigates between tenor saxophone and trumpet, demonstrating remarkable command of both. But it's Corey Fonville's hard-hitting drumming-often incorporates Soulaquarian hip-hop pulses-that pushes Butcher Brown beyond its '70s influences.

Of the six cuts on the disc, only four are substantial. And even with those, some listeners might wish more intriguing left turns or heightened compositional aspirations would have been thrown in. But as teaser to something hopefully more conceptually involved, *Camden Session* serves as an agreeable entry point into Butcher Brown's emerging discography. —*John Murph*

Ordering info: gearboxrecords.com

A Ton Of Trouble: A Ton Of Trouble; Perfect Specimen; Scheherazade; Salty Wine; Dance Me To The End Of Love; Red Hot Jazz; Small Stuff; There Is Love; Changing Winds; Monkishness; The Dove & The Bourbon; In My Life. (45:53)

Camden Session: Pre-Cut Interlude #1; Fiat; Street Pharmacy; Pre-Cut Interlude #2, Camden Square; 918. (28:38) Personnel: Devonne Harris, keyboards; Corey Fonville, drums; Marcus Tenney, trumpet, tenor saxophone; Morgan Burrs, guitar; Andrew Randazzo, bass.

NEW YEAR

Anne Sajdera New Year BIJURI 2083 ***

The graceful, fleeting original "Even The Sun Sets"—the penultimate track on Anne Sajdera's latest album, *New Year*—gives listeners a hint of the jazz pianist's classical orientation. Decades of training are apparent in her well-practiced touch, her smooth legato, her confident attack on the keys. What Sajdera builds with this masterful technique, though, is sturdy post-bop constructs.

The appeal of Sajdera's new release doesn't lie in technique, but in the clarity of her intention. The bandleader is in command on "Bright Lights"—where each soloist cycles briskly through the head, against a measured rhythm section—and the title cut, a swinging jazz waltz with duet sections for flugelhorn (Miroslav Hloucal) and alto saxophone (Jan Feco).

Sajdera conceived of the project, which explores cross-cultural themes, during a trip to the Czech Republic, the home of her forebears, where she first met Hloucal and Feco in 2014. Feco's modern jazz interpretation of the traditional Roma folk song "It Depends On That" is in keeping with Herbie Hancock's "call for international dialogue through jazz," Sajdera writes in the liner notes.

Beyond the bandleader's five originals, Hloucal contributes three to the recording, including the opener, featuring saxophone heavyweight Bob Mintzer. "Pictures" contains all the elements that can ignite borderless *bonhomie* in its listeners: an irresistible groove, resounding solos and a straightahead melody that nods to jazz masters. An apropos lead-in to this winning sophomore release.

-Suzanne Lorge

Personnel: Anne Sajdera, piano; Miroslav Hloucal, trumpet, flugelhorn; Jan Feco, alto saxophone; Bob Mintzer, tenor saxophone (1); Dan Feiszli, bass; (1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 9); Jason Lewis, drums (1, 4, 5, 7, 9); Alan Hall, drums (2); Deszon Claiborne, drums (3, 6); Erik Jekabson, trumpet, flugelhorn (3, 6); Lyle Link, alto saxophone (6); Rita Thies, flute (3); Joyce Lee, violin, cello (3), Gary Brown, bass (3, 6).

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New Year: Pictures; New Year; Treasure; Butterfly Effect; Changeling; Bright Lights; It Depends On That; Even The Sun Sets; Azul. (46:57)

BOOKS / BY CARLO WOLFF

Behind the Kit with Cobham

Brian Gruber's *Six Days At Ronnie Scott's: Billy Cobham On Jazz Fusion And The Act Of Creation*, a self-published book framed by the fusion drummer's June 2017 residency at the iconic London club, is an unusual and welcome addition to the jazz bibliography. It's also a granular look at Cobham's work and development.

"The drummer can be the leader in the orchestra," Cobham says in the book, citing such influencers as Sonny Payne and Louis Bellson. "Even though the instrument appears to not sustain and control sounds in the way of intonation, it's not just the sounds and the pitch, it's the personality and the way that the drum is played."

Gruber paints a fascinating sonic and emotional picture by interviewing people connected to the stand at Scott's, including executives from the club, along with Cobham associates from his long career.

Gruber is a strong interviewer, and his affection for Cobham's music seems to have granted him exceptional and unusually fruitful access to players in Cobham's world. Written in question-and-answer form, *Six Days* is slim, but it's packed with illuminating anecdotes and commentary, primarily from Cobham, who left the United States when, he says, disco drowned out jazz. He lives in Zürich and, in one of his more provocative pronouncements, says that, according to their body language, the "Swiss believe you are trying to take something from them."

While written by a jazz aficionado for other jazz aficionados—Cobham's discussion of how and why he tunes his drums is quite technical—*Six Days* also is more broadly engaging. With input from Cobham's drum tech, Scott's executives, Barker's regulars and former colleagues like bassist Ron Carter and keyboardist Jan Hammer, Gruber effectively has tracked Cobham's development from his childhood in Bedford-Stuyvesant to his exalted position as a jazz innovator.

Trumpeter Randy Brecker—who worked with Cobham in the proto-fusion band Dreams, which also counted guitarist John Abercrombie in its ranks—says Cobham "literally created that style of jazzrock—later known as fusion—drumming by combining several sources." Indeed, Cobham values and keeps accurate time, no matter how complex the rhythms he rolls out.

There are many stories of Cobham's work in Dreams, with Miles Davis, with the Mahavishnu Orchestra and as leader of his own bands. Gruber also has included



a Cobham discography and put together a Spotify playlist keyed to each chapter of the book. The one element this vibrant and organic project lacks, though, is photography. How cool it would have been to include pictures from the Scott's gigs and other signature concerts in Cobham's long career?

Besides expected names, Gruber drops some unusual ones. There's the time Muhammad Ali, then starring in the shortlived Broadway play *Big Time Buck White*, taught Cobham what being in shape really meant; they have similarly fast hands. There's the time the Panama-born, New York-bred drummer played under conductor Leonard Bernstein, taking visual cues from the maestro. And then there was an Armory gig in the Bronx he worked with "upside-down guitarist" Jimi Hendrix at the dawn of the 1960s.

While he admired him, Cobham had issues with Mavavishnu Orchestra founder John McLaughlin. When Gruber suggests Cobham's precision kept that group grounded, Cobham graciously acknowledges bassist Rick Laird's role in keeping it on course, but adds, "McLaughlin had no sense of time, always getting faster and faster. Reach God as quickly as possible. The problem was the bus only ran so fast, so he had to learn how to cope."

The book affirms Cobham's status in modern jazz history, as well as making you wish you'd caught at least one of those gigs at Ronnie Scott's.

Ordering info: grubermedia.com



The E.J. Strickland Quintet Warriors For Peace JAMMIN'COLORS 18-006 ***1/2

E.J. Strickland earned top sideman cred with the likes of Ravi Coltrane, Cassandra Wilson and Wynton Marsalis, his drumming combining a classic sense of swing with strong influences from the Latin, r&b and funk worlds. On his third disc as leader, *Warriors For Peace*, Strickland again shows keen compositional skills, favoring melodicism, hip harmonies, strong rhythmic drive and an exploratory—yet never "out"—framework.

Strickland spearheads a quintet fronted by tenorist Jure Pukl and altoist Godwin Louis, their full-bodied blend bringing the bandleader's melodies to expressive blossom. Pianist Taber Gable contributes dramatic contrasts of power and delicacy, while Josh Ginsburg is an ideal bassist for Strickland, with his urgent rhythmic drive. Right out of the gate, the bandleader kicks off "Uvumilivu" with a fiery drum solo, then launches into a soaring Afro-Cuban-tinged 6/8 groove. In contrast, the title track grooves with a subtle r&b undertow, supporting the head's soulful saxophone harmonies.

The ensemble's ease with tricky, shifting odd meters shines on the exhilarating "Coexistence," while "Understand What I Mean" expands upon an irresistible soul-jazz riff. The aching melody of the tender ballad "Let It Go," as beautifully stated by Louis, later is reprised with additional understated vocals, leaving listeners with a message of serenity and hope.

Strickland said his disc is dedicated to "those who break the silence and stand up for what is right." But the titular "warriors" actually could be this fearless quintet. —Jeff Potter

Warriors For Peace: Uvumilivu; Warriors For Peace; Midnights Clearing; Eclipse In 5 (Interfude); Let It Go, Abandoned Discovery; Understand What I Mean; For Those Who Break The Silence (Interlude); When Time Passes By; Coexistence; Let It Go (Vocal). (59:53) **Personnel:** E.J. Strickland, drums; Godwin Louis, alto saxophone; Jure Pukl, tenor, soprano saxophone; Taber Gable, piano; Josh Ginsburg, bass; Ulrich Edorh, vocals (11).

Ordering info: jammincolors.com

Harold Mabern The Iron Man: Live At Smoke SMOKE SESSIONS 1807 ***1/2

During 2018, pianist Harold Mabern faced the challenge of compressing about 60 years of performing into a three-week run at the New York jazz club Smoke. A complete retrospective of Mabern's career would include all



of the albums he's recorded to date, as well as contributions to hard-bop, soul-jazz and post-bop, and notable gigging with a litany of jazz greats too fulsome to list. For all of this heavy lifting, Mabern has been dubbed the Iron Man, the moniker crowning his latest release.

The album captures select tunes from his Smoke engagement, when Mabern and his longtime bandmates were at their freest and most relaxed. On each tune, no matter pace or mood, the group was locked into the kind of sure grooves that only coalesce after years of playing together. The record opens with the funky "A Few Miles From Memphis," Mabern's own tune and the title of his 1968 debut. By the time he closes with another selfpenned composition, "Rakin' And Scrapin'," he's burned through some standards, traditional blues and honeyed ballads. Like the gig, the record runs wide and deep—one listen hardly is enough. —*Suzanne Lorge*

The Iron Man: Live At Smoke: (Disc 1) A Few Miles From Memphis; I Get A Kick Out Of You; I Know That You Know; I Remember Cilfford; T-Bone Steak; Almost Like Being In Love; Dear Lord. (Disc 2) Nighlife In Tokyo; She's Out Of My Life; How Insensitive; Mr. P.C.; On A Clear Day (You Can See Forever); You Are Too Beautiful; Rakin' And Scrapin'. (53:51/70:42)

Personnel: Harold Mabern, piano; Eric Alexander, tenor saxophone; John Webber, bass; Joe Farnsworth, drums.

Ordering info: smokesessionsrecords.com

Nilsson/Cowherd After Us BUMBLEBEE COLLECTIVE 001

One of the impressive qualities about *After Us*, an album of duets by flutist Elsa Nilsson and pianist Jon Cowherd, is how adaptable the music is. The austere nature of these two instruments in tandem, playing hum-



ble, understated melodies, could provide the perfect backdrop for a host of different settings. A quiet night in, the soundtrack to a quirky indie comedy, the ambient soundtrack for a quaint boutique—these songs fit all shapes and sizes.

But that pliable nature has its risks. The softness of their sound easily could float into the background, unnoticed. Attentive listeners, though, will be rewarded with their subtle variations on jazz idioms and the splendor of their playing. On "How To Keep Moving, How To Stay," Nilsson and Cowherd shift between a stately mood and playful swinging, with the flutist's solo slipping into a bit of fluttering dissonance. The album's tone recalls the spirit of early ECM releases, which often stood out due to a marked use of negative space. Nilsson and Cowherd don't go quite as far, but there's enough openness within each song to allow for moments of quiet reflection. The two play off one another well in this manner, their solos refusing flash and dazzle, replaced by an understanding of how a light spray of notes and chords can have as much impact as a fleet-fingered run. —*Robert Ham*

After Us: Same Trees; How To Keep Moving, How To Stay; Distant Dawn; Crimson; With A Smile; Blessings; Practice Patience; Baltica; After Us. (55:32). Personnel: Elsa Nilsson, flute, alto flute, bass flute; Jon Cowherd, piano. Ordering info: bumblebeecollective.com



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Anthony Fung Flashpoint TINY 1 ****

L.A.-based drummer, composer and producer Anthony Fung, 25, is an emerging bandleader worth noting.

His polished, solid drumming drives *Flashpoint*, Fung's sophomore album, on eight original compositions over nine tracks



amid colorful, sharp and creative arrangements. A catchy, pulsating Panamanian *tambor norte* rhythm with well-crafted horn melodies enhances the superhero-themed opener, "The Flash." The mesmerizing "Ilekun" features a soaring solo from alto saxophonist Josh Johnson, and Alex Hahn's arrangement of "A Call For Peace (For Puerto Rico)" convokes strings with a modern-jazz ensemble behind his fiery soprano saxophone. And powerful pianist Isaac Wilson is well-paired with Fung's exceptional drumming on the majestic, uptempo "Walk The Walk." The collective interprets with clarity and thoughtful musicality, and Fung's motifs tease, resolving through strong melodic statements rife with bewitching, hypnotic rhythms. With musical maturity beyond his years, Fung seems on the verge of something significant on *Flashpoint.* —*Kerilie McDowall*

Flashpoint: The Flash; llekun; A Call For Peace (For Puerto Rico); Guanabana; Sea Of Glass; Walk The Walk; Forever (Prelude); Forever; St. Augustine & The Devil. (51:53) Personnel: Anthony Fung, drums; Edmar Colon, tenor and soprano saxophone; Josh Johnson, alto saxophone; Alex Hahn, soprano saxophone (3); Jon Hatamiya, trombone (1); Simon Moullier, vibraphone; Erin Bentlage, vocals (8); Isaac Wilson, piano, synthesizer; Mats Sandahl, bass; Oscar Cruz, percussion (1, 4); Manolo Mairena, percussion (2, 4); Yu-Ting Wu, Jonathan Tang, violin (3, 7, 8, 9); Lauren Baba, viola (3, 7, 8, 9); Niall Ferguson, cello (3, 7, 8, 9).

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Joe Bonamassa Redemption J&R ADVENTURES 61069

★ ★ 1/2

A favorite whipping boy of the "not really the blues" crowd, Joe Bonamassa widely has been panned as soulless and derivative. He usually answers critics with another chart-topping, technically superior blues-rock disc. And on *Redemption*,



the guitarist extends a middle finger to those who question his bona fides. The opening quartet of songs, all co-penned by Bonamassa, veer from Led Zeppelin re-riffing to generic '60s horn-driven rock and Spinal Tap-style parody. Just about the time you're sure Bonamassa is taking credit for tunes written by some lost blues-rock band, Nashville songwriter James House arrives with contributions to five infinitely more interesting numbers. Taking in the deep, murky title track, you realize that the guitarist isn't all about over-emoting and pretense in the name of virtuosity. That track sets the stage for the loser's lament "Tve Got Some Mind Over What Matters," musically and lyrically the best cut here. It helps that Bonamossa's band is rock solid, and with judicious use of the fast-forward button, there's more than enough to merit absolution for *Redemption.*

Personnel: Joe Bonamassa, vocals, guitar, Anton Fig, drums; Michael Rhodes, bass; Reese Wynans, keyboards; Kenny Greenberg (1, 3, 4, 10), Doug Lancio (1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 10), guitar, Gary Pinto (3, 5), Mahalia Barnes, Jade Macrae, Juanita Tippins (1, 2, 5, 9), vocals; Lee Thornburg, trumpet, trombone (2, 8, 12); Paulie Cerra, saxophone (2, 6, 8, 12); Kate Stone, handpan (11).

Ordering info: jbonamassa.com

Marco Pignataro Almas Antiguas ZOHO 201807 ****½

Some albums speak only to musicians' collective talent and skill, the fruit of their labors worn like battle scars or trophies. Infrequently does music speak only to the joys of life, to calm, rest and love. But saxophonist Marco Pignataro's second release, *Almas Antiguas*, is such an album.



Joined by a heavyweight and empathetic cast performing select covers and his original material, Pignataro tells stories bursting with emotion and vibrance. The album opens with "Panarea," underpinned by the bandleader's keening soprano saxophone, which has all the yearning and organic intensity of a siren's call. Plaintive and imbued with the air of the ancients, the song introduces *Almas Antiguas* as Mediterranean-inspired, yet tilted by Latin-esque rhythmic pleas. "Xalapa," which refers to the mountain capital of Veracruz, Mexico, is a wistful ballad propelled by Adam Cruz's brushwork and Alan Pasqua's sparse, elegant piano cadences. Cruz drives the bubbly "Calle Mayaguez," named for the Puerto Rican street where Pignataro visited his grandparents as a child. *Almas Antiguas*—which closes with "Song For Lucy," a reverie dedicated to Pignataro's wife—is so heartwarming as to be dreamlike, invoking love and passion as life's true goals, the heart as the only organ that matters. *—Ken Micallef*

Almas Antiguas: Panarea; Voce E' Notte; Otranto; Alfonsina Y El Mar; Vou, Veri, Vou; Xalapa; Almas Antiguas; Letter To My Son; Samba Em Preludio; Calle Mayaguez; Song For Lucy. (69:21) **Personnel:** Marco Pignataro, tenor, soprano saxophone; George Garzone, tenor saxophone (1, 2, 9); Alan Pasqua, piano; Eddie Gomez, bass; Adam Cruz, drums.

Ordering info: zohomusic.com

Redemption: Evil Mama; King Bee Shakedown; Molly O'; Deep In The Blues Again; Self-Inflicted Wounds; Pick Up The Pieces; The Ghost Of Macon Jones; Just 'Cos You Can Don't Mean You Should; Redemption; I've Got Some Mind Over What Matters; Stronger Now In Broken Places; Love Is A Gamble. (64:52)



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Ron Carter's Alternate Routes to Standard Destinations

By Bill Milkowski

Ron Carter is one of the most influential bassists of the past 50 years, an NEA Jazz Master (Class of 2011) and a Guinness World Record holder. His incredible total of 2,221 individual recording credits as of Sept. 15, 2015, ranks him as the most recorded jazz bassist in history. Carter is also a distinguished professor of music, emeritus, at the City College of New York with hon-

orary doctorate degrees from the Berklee School of Music, Manhattan School of Music and New England Conservatory.

> **B** ut he is perhaps most well known for his unerring walking bass lines that anchored the freewheeling Miles Davis Quintet from 1963 to 1968 (documented on a string of crucial albums as *Seven Steps To Heaven, E.S.P., Miles Smiles, Sorcerer, Nefertiti, Miles In The Sky* and *Filles De Kilimanjaro*).

> Carter's 1998 book *Building Jazz Bass Lines* (Hal Leonard) went into depth on that subject. Now, the secret of his innovative harmonic approach is revealed in *Behind the Changes* (Heights Music), a unique instructional book that gets inside the master bassist's head, showing students (with the use of transparent overlays) some alternate routes to take on familiar standards. It's something that Carter has been doing all his career, going back to his days with Davis. Now, readers of this informative new book can get an inside look into that intuitive process.

"How this all came about was from a session I was doing a couple of years ago for Chesky Records with [saxophonist] Javon Jackson and [drummer] Billy Drummond," Carter recalled. "We were recording at a church in the Chelsea section of New York, and during one of the takes Billy Drummond turned to me and said, 'Sir Ron, how do you do that?' At first I wasn't sure what he was talking about, but then he explained, 'We played the first take, and then on the second take, you played a whole different set of changes. How did you do that?' And because I had never really thought about it myself, I just said, 'Let me think about that and give you an answer that sounds reasonable.'



Heights Music Masterclass Series - Ron Carter

The Music of Ron Carter Behind the Changes



"So, I tried to explain to him that when I'm seeing a song and the changes themselves, I'm seeing something other than the choices that the composer has given me," Carter continued. "Once I hear the melody and once the soloist starts to play these changes that go with this melody, I'm already seeing something behind the lead sheet that tells me these other changes are also very possible."

What Carter and Penny Kjellberg, of Heights Music, have come up with in *Behind the Changes* is a way of actually showing those alternate harmonic routes that have been inside his head for half a century.

"So, a student reading this book can see the lead sheet of a song, and then in the darker print or lighter print that is superimposed over the old changes, they can see exactly what I'm hearing while I'm playing the original set of changes," Carter explained.

"This is more than just an example of theme and variation. I'm not varying the changes of the tune; I'm replacing those changes with a whole new set of harmonic information that only I could come up with."

Think of Charlie Parker coming up with new melodies on existing chord changes (the contrafact). Instead, *Behind the Changes* has Carter coming up with new chord changes on existing tunes. "The point is, Bird made these great melodies that freed up things from the original tune using the same changes. What I'm doing is I'm changing those changes. I'm freeing up the harmony."

For his book, Carter and Kjellberg picked three standard tunes to illustrate these examples—a blues, "Rhythm" changes and a Carter composition called "Saguaro" (from his 1999 album *Piccolo*), which itself is a kind of variation on "Autumn Leaves." "We have a 20-page booklet that has three tunes, each having four optional choices on the original set of changes," he explained.

The transparent overlay system that Carter employs on *Behind the Changes* is reminiscent of the '60s Golden Book Encyclopedia depiction of the human body with separate overlays for the circulatory system, the skeletal system and internal organs.





Behind the Changes uses colored overlays to show alternate harmonic pathways on existing tunes and common chord progressions, as demonstrated above: Example 1 is the first four bars of a standard blues in F. Example 2 is an overlay with Carter's new chords shown in red. Example 3 presents the combined view of both sets of changes.

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"I want it to be ear-opening," Carter said of the new book, which has a January 2019 publication date. "I want them to know the other choices that they're missing because no one has showed them these choices yet. And this format not only shows them the original changes, but it shows them three choices that I came up with for each chorus for one of these three tunes."

While Carter has been utilizing this system for decades, imposing his harmonic instincts on sessions with late legends like Davis, Hank Jones, Jim Hall, Joe Henderson and Freddie Hubbard as well as living artists like Bill Frisell, Javon Jackson, Gerry Gibbs and David Hazeltine, it took Drummond's query during a session for their 2016 Three's Company album, *We'll Be Together Again*, to get the great bassist to finally document these ideas.

Carter says he had hinted at some of these harmonic concepts with his students at City College, where he taught for 18 years. "We talked about it, but I never laid it out in any par-



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ticular format because no one asked me how I came up with these possibilities," he recalled. "We would talk about constructing bass lines, which I address in my book *Building Jazz Bass Lines*. But *Behind the Changes* goes a lot deeper. It's a much more advanced level of my previous book."

The idea for using the transparency overlays came along in the process of putting the new book together for Heights Music. "I had to figure out how I could best show someone what I had to talked to Billy Drummond about on that Three's Company session and help them understand," Carter said. "And what I came up with in trying to explain to him in a fashion that he could envision—basically the changes I was seeing behind Javon's lead sheet on whatever tune that was—led to this whole overlay process we utilized in the book.

"You reach these choices after playing the songs for a very long time," Carter continued. "And only after you've played these songs for a while are you able to come up with these other choices that fit the melody. These are the choices that saxophone players like to hear when they're playing their solo because they can't keep playing the I–IV–V blues all night. But here's a guy behind him, a bass player, who's playing these notes with the same form they know but in a continuously different stream of chord replacements for him.

"For example, if a guy is used to hearing C– B_{b} -F–D and I play Dm–G–C7–F, now that's a whole different sound from what this guy is used to hearing, so for him it's clearly radical. And for us, it's fun."

Carter said he hopes that his book will help trigger young minds to open up to new ways of thinking on the bandstand in real time. "Saxophone players, trumpet players, whoever ... if they realize that this person behind them, the bass player or pianist, is coming at them with a whole wealth of chord choices to be fooling around with rather than always playing the same changes, it'll make it more interesting for them. They're exercising a different side of the brain than they do by just transcribing. And it's giving them more opportunities to think on their feet.

"What I hope this does is show the student, whatever age level, that once you have an understanding of how the song works within the basic changes, there's a whole set of options for them to consider.

"Let's hope that they sit down and try to develop this concept that I stumbled on by happenstance 60 years ago by being curious, by being a scientist. And through this book, maybe they can see that they, too, can become scientists and come up with a new way to play a song with a different set of changes from the changes they've used. And hopefully, it'll be rewarding and fun for them."

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The Big Transcription Myth

The following excerpt from Ron Carter's book Behind the Changes *addresses a question commonly posited by students of jazz bass.*

I hear all the time from students who ask me which bass lines are most worth transcribing. I always have the same answer. "Don't waste time transcribing-it won't teach you how to do what they did."

Here's why:

The beautiful tune that would be a transcription-worthy event was a happy accident that occurred on the spot and under perfect conditions. That bass line was something that was developing in real time.

The bassist made a harmonic choice in his or her bass line and the group picked up on it and developed it. In doing so the bassist took a risk-that the rest of the band would like it, and be able to run with it and develop it themselves.

Transcription-worthy tunes are the result of a perfect storm occurring as the band plays together. There was no winning formula anyone could use to reproduce the same event under different conditions with different players.

So the musician who transcribes it has no more of a clue of how to create that in the first place than they did when they just listened and appreciated it ... unless he or she has a plan or method that allows him or her to create interesting and possible "transcription-worthy" bass lines, chorus after chorus.

The core of this book:

That's the core of this book ... examples of harmonic variations (alternate changes) using common song forms to show you just how these substitute chords look against the backdrop of the original chord changes of these song forms.

Spend time studying this book and you will gradually gain confidence in taking risks in making your own great harmonic choices that will inspire and lift the band to music that others want to transcribe.

Tips For Bassists

Ron Carter shares the following tips in Behind the Changes:

Each note I play has these points of interest. Consider them all as you begin to experiment in finding the right notes:

PITCH: Is it in tune?

SOUND: How is the sound of that note?

LOCATION: Where is that note located on the instrument and what notes are in that position?

HARMONIC VALUE: What chord(s) does that note imply?

IS THIS THE BEST/RIGHT NOTE? Don't alienate the melody!

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Finding Your Dream Sound on Saxophone

uke Ellington said, "A musician's sound is his soul." I personally believe that at least 25 percent of your practice time should be devoted to working on your sound. In this article, I'm going try to show you how to move your sound from where it is to where you would like it to be. You can't just be playing long tones; you must be searching and striving for something.

Three-Part Breathing

Filling your body with as much air as possible before you blow the horn is step one, so I advocate practicing breathing away from the horn first. This also can be used as a relaxation exercise with the eventual goal that playing the saxophone is as relaxing as breathing.

• Inhale through your mouth, first putting the air down low in the stomach area. Then, keep inhaling, filling the chest area. Finally, fill up the throat area until you are completely full of air and can't inhale any more.

• Exhale through your mouth first, letting the air leave your throat, then chest and finally emptying your stomach area.

Make sure that when you inhale you are able to separate the three areas, and pay particular attention to getting air down low in the stomach area. If you are not feeling the air down there, you can practice getting control of this part of your body by lying on the floor and putting something of moderate weight-like a very heavy bookon your stomach and breathing. When you lie down, you will be putting the air down low. You now need to do that when you are standing.

When you become accustomed to inhaling and exhaling in three parts, then you can put them all together in rapid succession, so that they become one big inhale and exhale.

Deep Breathing & Relaxation

Make a practice of exhaling all of your air at once. Don't slowly dole out the air. Get rid of it as fast as you can, and as you expel this air, completely release all the tension in your body.

I have found that it's possible to practice long tones using this concept of releasing tension while exhaling. It can give you the same relaxing feeling as practicing your breathing without the saxophone.

Long Tones

When you are trying to change bad playing habits, long tones are absolutely necessary. They allow you to think only of tone production and prevent you from becoming distracted by fingerings. When I practice long tones, I first like to connect my breathing and relaxation exercises to the long tones and make sure that I am just as relaxed when I play the horn as I am when I'm just breathing. Next, I like to concentrate on one aspect of tone production at a time while playing the long tones. Techniques to work on and isolate could include embouchure, tongue position (how high in the mouth), throat (relaxed or constricted), steadiness of tone, varying volumes and anything else you can think of.

Tone Goals

Long tones are necessary to promote good habits, but long tones alone might not lead you to your dream sound. Some of your favorite players have a sound that might be close to your dream sound, and that is why we practice long tones inspired by our heroes. I'll use "Soul Eyes" (see example on the following page) as performed by John Coltrane to illustrate how to prac-

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"Soul Eyes" Solo Transcription (B, part)





tice this idea of "tone goals." This transcription for B_b tenor saxophone, the E_b version and other helpful PDF files can be downloaded for free from JodyJazz.com under the headings "Resources" and "Free Online Lessons."

The idea here is to listen to a recording of someone with a sound that inspires you preferably a ballad, so that you can pause the recording on a long note. Then, play that note while striving to sound like that player as much as possible. For example, in "Soul Eyes," pause on the dotted half note of the first measure and try to sound like Coltrane on that note. If you keep doing this every day for a month, you will figure some things out and begin to move your tone in that direction.

You need to push a lot of air to sound like Trane. Once you feel you are using enough air, you will need to figure out where the tongue is in the mouth, the embouchure and, very importantly, the reed strength. If your reed is too soft, it will be difficult to get that certain quality that Trane has. Having said that, when playing a ballad by Cannonball Adderley, if the reed is too hard you will never get that buttery, wet Cannonball sound.

By the way, this transcription of "Soul Eyes" (which also is available as a transcription for alto/baritone saxophone) is an excellent way to learn how to use embellishments in playing a jazz ballad. I give my students the exercise of playing a different ballad using the devices that Coltrane uses on "Soul Eyes," such as grace notes, glissandos, chromaticism, etc.

Harmonic Matching

The use of harmonics as compared to standard note fingerings is demonstrated for the purpose of achieving a fuller, more in-tune sound. The position of the throat, tongue and airstream are explored.

A harmonic is when you finger a fundamental note, such as low B_{β} , B, C or C#. Those are the main notes that we work off of. While fingering the fundamental note, we actually play notes that are higher than the fundamental, based on the harmonic series. For example, if we finger low B_{β} , the first harmonic note in the series is B_{β} one octave above. The next note in the series is a fifth higher, which is F on the top line of the treble clef staff. The next note is a fourth higher, which is high C.

The idea here is that when you are playing a harmonic note, the sound is very full, because you are using the entire saxophone to play that note. The reason you achieved that note is because your throat, tongue and embouchure are in the correct position to make that note come out instead of the fundamental note. Now the idea is to play that note with the normal fingering and imagine that you are actually fingering the fundamental—meaning that while using the normal fingering, make sure that you do everything physically with your throat, tongue, embouchure and airstream that you did to achieve that note before, while you were fingering the fundamental. Try to make the normal note sound just like the harmonic note. You usually will have to work on this quite a bit, but it is one of the best things you can do for your overall sound concept and your saxophone playing in general.

Embouchure

You can change the sound greatly with your embouchure. In general, to get that "jazzy" sound (as some people who write to me call it), you need to use a relatively medium strength reed and drop that jaw and let the air do the work. With a looser grip and a fatter lip, you will move away from a classical sound and toward a jazz sound. Look at pictures and videos of your favorite players and take notice of how much mouthpiece they take in their mouth and what they are doing with their bottom lip.

Reeds

Reeds affect the sound to a huge degree, and their importance in the sound is not often talked about. If your sound is too airy and dry, try a softer reed. If your sound is too buzzy and sounds weak, thin or flat on the higher notes, then go to a harder reed.

If you want to sound like Stan Getz and Paul Desmond, use a harder reed. To sound like Cannonball Adderley and Ben Webster, use a softer reed. The key is to experiment. There's a common misconception out there that the longer you have been playing, the harder the reed you should use. That is totally false. I know of many legendary saxophonists who play $#2\frac{1}{2}$ reed strengths, and just as many who play on harder reeds.

Mouthpieces

The mouthpiece is the piece of equipment that makes the most difference in your sound, so obviously you should spend time finding the right one for you.

Everyone has a unique physical structure in the mouth, jaw, lips, tongue, throat, lungs etc. That means that the mouthpiece that your hero plays might not be the one that works for you. You need to try as many mouthpieces as you can to find the best one for you—one that gets you as close as possible to the sound you are going for. The best mouthpiece for you will help a lot, but don't expect it magically to give you your dream sound. Your dream sound only will come if you are willing to put in the work and don't quit until you have arrived at your destination.

Finally, I would like to thank all of my main teachers for sharing their knowledge with me: Junie Ferrell, Santy Runyon, Joe Viola, John LaPorta, George Garzone, Joe Allard, Dave Liebman, David Gross and Joanne Brackeen. I would be nowhere without them, and I encourage everyone to pass along their musical knowledge in a similarly generous fashion.

Jody Espina is the founder, president and designer of JodyJazz Saxophone & Clarinet Mouthpieces, a company he founded in 2000. He is a highly regarded jazz saxophonist, clarinetist and flutist with a unique and personal sound. Espina is also a respected jazz educator. Until 2005, he was the director of the jazz department at the prestigious Hoff Barthelson Music School in Scarsdale, New York, where he taught jazz theory, improvisation, ensembles and private lessons. He was also adjunct professor of saxophone and clarinet at Concordia College in Bronxville, New York. In Barcelona, Spain, Espina was a professor of saxophone/ clarinet/flute and the director of the big band at the Aula de Musica i Moderna Jazz. While in Barcelona, he also taught at Taller de Musics and at the Lutier School of Fine Arts. Espina is a conductor in the musical sign language system called Sound Painting and has given seminars and workshops in Europe and the United States teaching it. He has been involved with the Grammys in the Schools program and has written and performed "What Is Jazz?," an entertaining educational concert for children. Espina currently gives master classes and clinics around the world on subjects ranging from sound production, improvising, practice techniques and mouthpiece technology. He occasionally gives private lessons. His main goal in teaching, aside from sharing his music knowledge and inspiring young musicians to be creative, is to carry on the tradition he learned from his teachers: kindness, warmth, patience and a love for his students.



JAVON JACKSON, DIVISION DIRECTOR Bachelor of Music: Jazz Studies, Composition, Music Management, Music Production and Technology

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Organizing Chordal Vocabulary: Inversions, Chord Cells, String Sets

y favorite sound for comping behind a soloist, arranging chord melodies and chord soloing is the product of my experimenting with inversions of chords.

You can play all three chords of a ii–V–I progression in four distinct locations on the guitar neck, which I call "Chord Cells." It can help to think of these cells as geographic locations. Each of the four cells are built from the inversion of the ii chord as it moves up the neck and covers string set 6, 4, 3, 2. String sets are a concept I was first introduced to in my lessons with Pat Martino. For a study of improvisation ideas based off of the inversions of a minor seventh chord, check out his method book *Linear Expressions* (Hal Leonard).

The root-inversion voicing of a Gm7 chord shown in Figure 1 should be familiar to any guitarist interested in jazz. We see the chord tones—G, B_b, D and F—spread over two octaves, and we clearly can see how the notes

occupy string set 6, 4, 3, 2. Therefore, we are playing a four-note voicing that omits string 5 and string 1.

Identifying the string set is an empowering concept, because it provides a structure to create our inversions on.

What is an inversion of a chord? It is a rearrangement of the notes to create a new voicing. On the guitar we clearly can see the notes ascending as we move from one inversion to the next.



In progressing from the root-inversion voicing in Figure 1 to the first-inversion voicing in Figure 2, we observe the root on string 6 moving up to the flat third of the chord. Since the lowest sounding tone of this voicing is now the flat third, it is named 1st inversion; in other words, we have inverted the Gm7 chord one time.

We have kept the same four notes—G, B_{p} , D and F—and we have rearranged them by taking each note in the inversion and moving it up to the next note in the chord. The important element to notice here is that in addition to keeping the same four notes, we also have kept the same string set.

The G on string 6 moves to B_b on string 6.

The F on string 4 moves to G on string 4. The B_{\flat} on string 3 moves to D on string 3. And the D on string 2 moves to F on string 2.

This progression from root inversion to first inversion creates the beginning of a nice bass line on string 6, and herein lies the exciting element of deriving the chords of a ii–V–I progression in this fashion.

Figure 3 shows the Gm7 chord in second inversion, and Figure 4 shows the same chord in third inversion.

Now that we have established the four inversions of the Gm7 chord, we can use them as the ii of a ii–V–I progression. Here is where I like to think of the four different ii–V–I Chord Cells as occupying four different geographic locations on the guitar neck.

The idea of chord cells and the geography of the neck help me organize not only my chordal vocabulary but also my soloing options.

I will name each of the ii–V–I cells from the degree of the ii chord inversion. Figure 5 is a ii–V–I progression in F major, root inversion. Figure 6 is a ii–V–I in F major, first inversion. Figure 7 is a ii–V–I in F major, second inversion. And Figure 8 is a ii–V–I in F major, third inversion.

In Figures 5–8, we can see how the inversions of the V and I chords occupy string set 6, 4, 3, 2. The inversions of these two chords fol-



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Figures 5–6



Figures 7–8





low the same formula we used in deriving the inversions of the ii chords in Figures 1–4, in that as we ascend from one inversion to the next, we simply move to the next note in the chord while remaining on the same string. This movement automatically allows the inversions to reveal themselves.

I have integrated these ii–V–I cells, what I call my Dark Chords, into my playing. They work particularly well with standards, Great American Songbook tunes and on some blues tunes.

As a different concept—taken one chord at a time in a modal approach—these voicings can open up the neck of the guitar for comping and

playing chord-melody ideas similar to the way we might hear a pianist playing on modal tunes.

The next step in adapting these voicings to your chord vocabulary is to write them out over the chord progression to a tune that contains ii–V–I cells, as I have done on the tune "Solar" by guitarist Chuck Wayne in Figure 9. DB

New York-based guitarist Charlie Apicella is the founder of the organ group Iron City (ironcityjazz.com). His sixth CD as a leader, *Groove Machine*, is slated for release on April 1. Apicella is on the faculty of the New York Jazz Workshop and teaches online via the TrueFire channel Charlie Apicella's Solid Guitar. He is an Eastman Guitars featured artist, a Guild Guitars sponsored artist and a ZT Amplifiers official artist. Apicella can be reached at contactironcity@comcast.net.

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Examining Jimmy Smith's Licks in '56

nyone with even a fleeting interest in jazz organ has heard the legendary story of Jimmy Smith's intense period of woodshedding in a Philadelphia warehouse. There are many contradictory versions of this story, even those told by Smith himself. The exact truth is lost to history.

The most impressive version has him purchasing an organ in late 1955 and setting the jazz world on fire a mere three months later. However, the recordings Smith made on organ with Don Gardner's Sonotones during 1953– '55 disprove this, and make it evident that Smith adopted "Wild" Bill Davis' organ-asbig-band concept for around two years.

What is obvious from listening to Smith's first few albums on Blue Note Records, however, is that an amazing transformation did take place for James Oscar Smith, whose musical expression grew way beyond the rhythm 'n' blues gigs he had been doing since playing in a segregated Navy band as a teenager during World War II.

Many have wondered what happened in that warehouse: What was he practicing that made all the difference? The answer, as they













say, is on the records. The transcribed examples in this article occur so often during Smith's solos of 1956 that these snippets of his vocabulary are likely to form part of the answer to the question, "What did he practice?"

Smith's extended solos on his hit recordings of Dizzy Gillespie's "The Champ" and Horace Silver's "The Preacher" are fertile ground for examination. The blues lick shown in Figure 1a appears 19 times throughout the 28-chorus solo that Smith takes on "The Champ." (Let's call this figure "The Champ Blues Lick.") Smith uses it at several points within the 12-bar form, but most often during bars 5–7. The smaller notehead in the last bar is used to indicate the unique sound of Smith's blues grace notes that come after the beat—a *succedent* grace note.

Smith recorded Silver's "The Preacher" twice in 1956, with the later version from *At Club "Baby Grand*" (Blue Note) being a great example of Smith's virtuosity, drive and stamina. By this stage, the musical relationship between Smith and drummer Donald Bailey was six months old, and Bailey's unique accompaniment supports Smith perfectly. "The Preacher" is performed at half the tempo of "The Champ," enabling Smith to double-time an extended version of "The Champ Blues Lick" several times throughout his solo. See Figure 1b.

"The Champ Pickup Lick" (Figures 2a–2c) is named for Smith's first phrase of his solo on "The Champ" and consists of an anticipated arpeg-

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gio and succedent grace notes on the "Blue Tonic Triad" (see Figure 3a). This lick often is recycled (in another key) throughout Smith's solo on "Get Happy" from *Live At Club "Baby Grand.*"

Smith's "Blue Tonic Triad" is a simple phrase that outlines the key center perfectly with a blues tonality via the succedent blues grace note. During his solo on "The Champ," Smith repeats and displaces this "Blue Tonic Triad" across several chord changes—see Figure 3b.

Named for its vocal-like quality, Smith uses "The Champ Yodel Lick" several times during his solos on "The Champ" and "The Preacher." Figure 4a is from the last four bars of the blues form, while Figure 4b is an extended double-time version taken from "The Preacher," preceded by arpeggios.

Smith's new melodic concept on the organ sits upon a rock-solid left-hand bass line, informed by two years of double bass study in college, courtesy of the G.I. Bill. As a result, Smith played much better bass compared to his predecessors, something pointed out by saxophonist Lou Donaldson, a veteran of numerous jazz organ combos. His bass line has more forward motion than "Wild" Bill Davis', using chromatic movements to imply tritone substitution. Note the neat ergonomics in Figure 5—this bass line spans just one octave.

Smith was the first jazz organist to include more modern harmonic concepts in his performances, with a penchant for using harmonically tense material as an introduction. Smith's eight-bar introduction to "The Champ" (see Figure 6) is completely unrelated to the blues form that follows—his harmonic progression is constructed of minor and augmented triads that descend chromatically, resolving to an F minor triad (in second inversion).

These examples highlight just a few pieces of Smith's early improvisatory vocabulary, and only fleetingly describe the paradigm shift in performance style from his forebears—Davis, Milt Buckner and Marlowe Morris.

While inspired by Davis, Smith redefined Davis' organ-trio concept, applying the stylistic traits of hard-bop, with its single-note phrases and deep rhythm 'n' blues/gospel roots, creating a nationwide movement within the African-American community in the process. **DB**

Darren Heinrich is an Australian jazz organist, pianist and educator based in Sydney. He holds a 1st class honours degree in jazz from the Sydney Conservatorium of Music. Heinrich has recently completed the world's first practicebased Ph.D. research into jazz organ improvisation. He has studied extensively with Hammond B-3 organ masters Dr. Lonnie Smith and Tony Monaco in person. He regularly gigs with his own trio and freelances with a variety of both local and international acts. Heinrich also teaches privately—for more information, visit his website (dazziazz.com).



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JAZZ SCHOOL Woodshed > SOLO



Jamie Baum's Alto Flute Solo on 'In Another Life'

ometimes it's the slow songs that make lets (sometimes notated as sextuplets). And she for the most difficult transcriptions. At slower tempos, soloists are more prone to take liberties with the time, stretching and bending it over the groove. Though this also can happen on medium and faster tempos, intention is usually clearer in those situations, making it easier to decide whether to write a line as triplets or 16ths, for example. Flutist Jamie Baum, on "In Another Life," from her 2013 Sunnyside album, In This Life, plays with the time in such a way that sometimes it's difficult to determine the best way to present the rhythmic material. She plays G alto flute on the track; this transcription of her solo has been transposed to concert key in order to accommodate all instruments.

When reading a transcription such as this, it's helpful to view the rhythms as approximations of what was played, and play along with the recording to assimilate Baum's temporal approach. But it's instructive to note how she varies her subdivisions. We hear not just eighths and 16ths, but even smaller subdivisions, such as 32nds and 16th-note tripdoesn't randomly move between these. These are used to build the energy, starting with mostly longer subdivisions, like eighths, and adding some 16ths and hinting at triplets. As the improvisation progresses, the denser subdivisions become more prominent, and we even have some foreshadowing of the 32nds (measures 8-10).

At bar 17, Baum goes full out, hitting us with strings of 32nds, and keeping this pace up for most of the next five measures. For the final two bars, Baum drops all the way back to long tones and space, releasing the rhythmic tension she's developed.

Aside from the temporal ambiguity, Baum also explores harmonic ambiguity. The vamp she improvises over has some of that ambiguity built in, as the two chords don't really form a key, mainly due to the C natural (on the F chord) versus the C# (on the A/E). Though this does make for some strong voice-leading (along with the E to F), there is a lack of harmonic clarity. Baum mainly deals with this in two ways.

She starts by restricting herself to a handful

of notes that work well over both chords: mostly A, B, D and E. It isn't until bar 7 that we hear a G, completing the E minor pentatonic scale. Two things that stand out about this. First, the scale choice, even if viewed as G major pentatonic, doesn't share its tonic with either chord. Baum is making an already muddy situation even more opaque. Second, she tends toward the intervals of fourths, fifths and whole steps, so her lines don't produce a chord sound.

On one hand, this increases the lack of clarity, but on the other, it prevents her improvisation from clashing with the underlying harmonies. She doesn't always stick to this, and measure 18 is a brilliant example. Baum not only plays the E minor pentatonic in a more conventional manner, but also adds in a B_b, the flat fifth "blue note" that turns minor pentatonic into the blues scale. This makes the line very clearly an E minor line, played over chords that are not E minor. Baum is exploring multiple ways of sounding undefined.

At bar 7, Baum unveils another means of exploiting this tension: playing off the C/C# discrepancy. For many measures she plays the C# against the A/E chord and waits for the F to play the C natural (7, 9, 16, 17 and 21), which

makes sense as these are chord tones. But it's interesting that in some bars (10, 11, 13 and 20) Baum goes against this. The end of bar 13 is a great example, where we hear a C# on the F chord, resolving to a C natural in anticipation of the A chord. This is so the opposite of how improvisation over changes is taught that one would expect it to sound "off," but instead it seems to create more of this sense of murkiness in the harmony.

Further out is the lick that crosses measures 20–21. Baum plays a four-note-group, the root, second, third and fifth of a scale (basically a triad with the second added). This note grouping has a long history in jazz, but here Baum plays it as a B chord, which is not only neither of the underlying harmonies, but half the notes (D# and F#) actually conflict with them. So, why doesn't it sound wrong? It could be because B is the V of E minor, a key she's set up with her scale choices. However, Baum doesn't play E minor pentatonic after this. Maybe it would be too obvious, or maybe she didn't want to disrupt the ambiguous quality of her improvisation. DB

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





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'Addario Woodwinds' Select Jazz Mouthpiece for alto saxophone, introduced in July 2014, drew its inspiration from the balanced feel and tone you get from a vintage New York Meyer or a Selmer Soloist. Since its launch, Select Jazz has become the go-to mouthpiece for alto players who are drawn to its nostalgic sound, superb response, low price point and widespread availability. The subsequent tenor version has proven equally popular with professional players.

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my ability to achieve various tonal nuances and chops-controlled effects over the course of the night. The dry, dark alto sound I often strive for on bebop standards, show tunes and jazz ballads was always within immediate reach, but there was also a decent amount of sizzle to the Select Jazz Marble, which exuded a lively vibrancy and projected powerfully enough to be heard through the suffocating din of a crowded room. This mouthpiece sang with ease and clarity, and intonation was perfect across the full range of the horn.



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NEW JAZZ HIGHLIGHTS

Ibanez Artcore Expressionist AS93FM *Big on Quality, Small on Price*

etermined to provide customers the best bang for their buck, Ibanez has released the Artcore Expressionist AS93FM, a semi-hollow guitar offering professional-grade sound and workmanship with an attractive price tag of \$649.

Ibanez offers semi-hollow guitars offered at four distinct levels, ranging from standard Artcore models, which are manufactured in Indonesia and sell in the \$300–\$400 range, up to the top-of-the-line Artstar Prestige models, which are manufactured in Japan and start at about \$2,300. The Artcore Expressionist is Ibanez's newest addition. Also manufactured in Indonesia, these guitars represent the mid-grade option and include several different models ranging from full hollowbody to semi-hollow. They are built in the tradition of classic hollowbody guitars.

The Expressionist AS93FM is a shining example of Ibanez's expertise in manufacturing a good semi-hollow. While it definitely borrows from vintage designs, it has some distinctive touches of its own and comes in either transparent cherry red or violin sunburst finishes. I play-tested a sunburst model. The flame maple on the top, back and sides is stunning, and the ivory-colored binding really helps the tobac-

co stain pop. The hardware is all gold-plated, and the f-holes, which are quite a bit larger than the classic
335 design, are also tastefully bound. Overall, it's a very pretty guitar that has the look and feel of a much more expensive instrument.

The AS93FM is constructed with all laminate woods on the body, and the set-in neck features three-piece maple and mahogany construction with an ebony fingerboard. With its standard semi-hollow center block design, the guitar has a little weight to it but is fairly comfortable to hold while sitting or standing. Ibanez adds some nice convenience features to this guitar, like its Quik Change III tailpiece, which allows for easier string changes, and a clever swivel truss-rod cover for quick access to neck adjustments. The AS93FM Expressionist utilizes the standard semi-hollow two-pickup configuration and wiring but features Ibanez's own Super 58 pickups. These give the guitar a clear tone with lots of sparkly top end and work extremely well with tube amps and effects pedals. The AS93FM is also

quite versatile. Utilizing the individual Sure-Grip volume and tone knobs along with the three-way pickup selector, you can dial in an entire spectrum of tones—from biting twang to velvety smooth.

> The Artcore Expressionist AS93FM is a professional-quality instrument that is easy on the eyes and the wallet. It's a great choice for players looking to upgrade, or for gigging musicians who simply need a good axe that they consistently can rely on. —*Keith Baumann* **ibanez.com**

6

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Back in 2003, Roger Sadowsky started his made-in-Japan MetroLine of bass guitars in an effort to make his high-quality instruments more affordable to the public. The new MetroExpress is a response to the overwhelming success of the MetroLine, with Sadowsky forging a relationship with one of the top factories in Japan to make even more affordable instruments.

Available in four- and five-string versions (both with street prices just shy of \$2,000), each MetroExpress bass comes standard with the same stellar strings, hardware and electronics found in Sadowsky's New York instruments (including the company's legendary pre-amp). In addition to the cost-saving factors of the new factory setup, pricing has been reduced by limiting finish options to the most popular six finishes (the four-string test bass had a super-cool ice-blue metallic finish) and offering only maple necks and two body/fingerboard combinations. All MetroExpress bass necks have graphite strips inserted to reduce dead spots and create more responsiveness. The test bass featured an ash body and maple fingerboard, the other option being an alder body with a morado (similar to rosewood) fingerboard. This bass is very light. In fact, all MetroExpress basses are guaranteed to be under 8.9 pounds—goodbye, shoulder fatigue!

I played the MetroExpress through several rigs, including Aguilar, Ashdown, Ampeg and Trickfish. Results were consistent—response and clarity are absolutely stellar. Setup out of the box was perfect, and the nitro

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finish on the neck helped it play fast and feel comfy. String tension was spot-on—not too loose, not too tight. Fit and finish were predictably superb. The Sadowsky bridge is a thing of genius, allowing for quick string changes by inserting the ball-end from the pickup side, then anchoring.

Two Sadowsky J-pickups are on board, and controls include master volume, pickup pan, passive treble roll-off (pull for passive mode), and stacked active treble and bass circuits that are boost-only. I'm a huge fan of this pre-amp. It's so musical, offering incredible tonal flexibility at your fingertips. Passive mode exhibits some great classic J-growl and is not just a "throw-away feature" for when your battery dies. In live settings, this bass really shows off.

A little over five years ago I had the pleasure of reviewing a Sadowsky NYC 24-fret five-string bass and was truly blown away. Not surprisingly, the new MetroExpress is also an absolute killer, offering all of the playability and sound quality expected out of a Sadowsky bass but at a fraction of the cost. —Jon Paul sadowsky.com

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Jazz On Campus >



UCLA Program Recognizes Jazz as Multicultural Music

THE NAMES OF GUITARIST KENNY Burrell and trumpeter Herb Alpert are synonymous with jazz in Southern California. Now, both musicians are enshrined at UCLA.

Created in 2016, the UCLA Herb Alpert School of Music was built on the foundation of the institution's jazz studies program, established in 2007 as part of the UCLA School of Arts and Architecture with a \$30 million gift from the Herb Alpert Foundation. More recently, UCLA has announced the formation of the Kenny Burrell Chair in Jazz Studies, which received an additional \$500,000 from the Alpert foundation as part of overall funding of \$1.2 million. This new endowed chair, which is expected to be filled by next fall, will be an important component of the institution's new Global Jazz Studies bachelor's degree program.

"From the beginning, we have sought to strike a good balance of performance and scholarship," said Judi Smith, the music school's dean. "UCLA is a high-powered research institution, and we have the advantage of being able to attract top instructors. That allows students to craft their skills within a place that is committed to really stretching their minds as well."

"It's a vision that was developed in the 1950s," said Steve Loza, a trumpeter who has been involved with UCLA for 34 years and now heads the Global Jazz Studies program. "It's a different approach from that of a conservatory, and yet it's not a liberal arts approach, either."

The approach is rooted in the idea that you can't study what you can't play, and vice versa, Loza explained.

By the 1960s, UCLA's music department was combining studies in ethnomusicology and musicology with a more traditional focus on performance. Those three disciplines form the base of the Global Jazz Studies program, which was championed by James Newton, the veteran flutist who holds a distinguished professorship in the department of ethnomusicology.

"The Global Jazz Studies program recognizes that, from its inception, jazz has always been multicultural music," Newton said. "Secondly, we embrace the contributions of our great women composers and performers. Another crucial factor for us is to not exclude early jazz and the music of today from our scholarship and performance."

Introducing the global jazz program within the nascent school of music also has attracted students with a broader range of interests.

"Affinity for music in general is now a driver," Loza said. "Our recruiting now has to go beyond jazz players who are focused on bebop."

"We look for students who can listen carefully to other players, and who are risk-takers who demonstrate the potential of developing an original voice," Newton said. "Scholars and performers who can face their weaknesses and fit into diverse environments will thrive at UCLA."

Creating an endowed chair within the new program marked an important milestone. "An endowed chair has always been the marker of success," Smith said. "And a jazz-related chair is so unusual that there was real excitement when we announced it at Kenny's 85th birthday celebration. Kenny has always felt that jazz should be elevated to the level of Western classical music, and what he created within our music department when it was under the auspices of the School of Arts and Architecture was the blueprint for the Global Jazz Studies program." —James Hale

School Notes >



Pride in lowa: A collaborative effort between the University of Iowa's School of Music, African American Studies program and Hancher Auditorium brought bassist and educator Rufus Reid to campus for an Oct. 9–13 residency. Numerous educational events and performances took place during his residency, including a concert featuring Reid's suite Quiet Pride, which was inspired by the work of sculptor, civil rights activist and University of Iowa alumna Elizabeth Catlett. Upcoming events at the university include a concert by the school's Voices of Soul Gospel Choir on Dec. 2 at the Iowa Memorial Union, and Iowa City Bass Day on April 20, 2019, at the Voxman Music Building. Bass Day is designed for double-bass players at the elementary school, middle school and high school levels. music.uiowa.edu

New Scholarship: The Jazz Education Network has established the Jamey Aebersold Endowed Scholarship in honor of the acclaimed jazz educator. The \$1,000 scholarship will be awarded annually at the JEN Conference to a college student "exhibiting genuine passion and dedication to jazz education," beginning with the network's 10th annual gathering in Reno, Nevada (Jan. 9–12, 2019). JEN has committed to raising \$100,000 during the next three years to endow the scholarship, and is reaching out to the public to help reach that goal through donations and pledges.

jazzednet.org/jameyaebersoldscholarshipfund

Cultural Heritage: Author Ed Sarath's *Black Music Matters: Jazz and the Transformation of Music Studies* (Rowman & Littlefield) promotes the reform of music studies with a centralized presence of jazz and black music. His goal is to help American musicians become grounded in a core facet of their cultural heritage. Sarath applies a consciousness-based worldview called Integral Theory to music studies, while drawing upon overarching conversations on diversity and race and a rich body of literature on the place of black music in American culture.

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John Clayton

A the 61st annual Monterey Jazz Festival, DownBeat invited bassist/ bandleader John Clayton to take the Blindfold Test before a capacity crowd at the Pacific Jazz Café. He had performed earlier at the festival in a tribute to bassist Ray Brown. DownBeat challenged him with several large-ensemble recordings, which was appropriate, given that he co-founded the Clayton-Hamilton Jazz Orchestra and that he crafted a brilliant orchestrated work, *Stories Of A Groove: Conception, Evolution, Celebration*, in celebration of Monterey's 60th anniversary in 2017.

Quincy Jones & His Orchestra

"Hard Sock Dance" (*The Quintessence*, Impulse; 1997/rec'd 1961) Quincy Jones, bandleader, arranger; Thad Jones, Freddie Hubbard, Snooky Young, trumpets; Melba Liston, trombone; Phil Woods, Frank Wess, Oliver Nelson, reeds; Milt Hinton, bass; others. That was Quincy Jones. I know every note on this record. It's a Desert Island disc. I believe this came at the end of his big band period. Even though there were touring issues he faced with the big band, the music here is one of the high points of his large-ensemble career until years later with his [1969] *Walking In Space* record. From a writer's standpoint, this is a great example of the tension-and-release of contrasts and textures.

The Royal Krunk Jazz Orkestra

"Sybil's Blues" (Get It How You Live, Ropeadope, 2018) Russell Gunn, Theo Croker, trumpets; others.

This was interesting to me, to hear a more youthful approach to music I grew up with. It's a retro vibe with a bass line that has a funk groove. It's basically one chord. The groove is simple, with interaction between the drums and horns in the ensemble. It's the same with the bass line that keeps the groove. It's creating a hypnotic vibe that's really effective.

I like how the horn parts were written out, so the playing is vertical with everyone playing at the same time—instead of horizontal, where one sax plays one line and another sax plays another. I heard a New Orleans vibe in the trumpet solo. Is it Christian Scott? I feel the strong Southern vibe, so I'm thinking it's Theo Croker.

Gerald Wilson Orchestra

"Love For Sale" (*In My Time*, Mack Avenue, 2005) Gerald Wilson, bandleader, arranger; Jon Faddis, Jeremy Pelt, Jimmy Owens, Sean Jones, trumpets; Kamasi Washington, tenor saxophone; Renee Rosnes, piano; Russell Malone, guitar; Peter Washington, bass; Lewis Nash, drums; others.

I'm listening to try to identify elements such as the bass sound, the drum sound, the writing. Does it sound like Basie or Duke or maybe even before that? And then the mic. Is it direct or more ambient? I'm listening for the style. My first thought is the Kenny Clarke/Francy Boland Big Band, but then I dialed back to hearing a more modern sound. Writingwise it was more vertical. ... [*after*] That's Gerald Wilson? What surprises me is the bass sound. On some of his recordings he had the bass recorded direct, so that it has a more electronic sound. But that's not the case here. Gerald Wilson is my hero. He was always throwing in something that was surprising.

Sun Ra & His Arkestra

"We Travel The Spaceways" (*Greatest Hits: Easy Listening For Intergalactic Travel*, Evidence, 2000, rec'd 1960) Sun Ra, piano; John Gilmore, tenor saxophone, Marshall Allen, alto saxophone; others.

Sun Ra? It's amazing that more people aren't playing music like this right now—especially with what's going on in our society. We're all feeling a lot of tension and a lot of anger. Sun Ra brings layers to his music. First, there's intensity with the ostinato and then there's beauty. But then he



stimulates our aural senses and our minds. He brings in lyrics. And then on top of all that, there's the hollering, the screaming and calling. I hear all of these components coming together beautifully.

As human beings, when our emotions are tapped the way they are right now, all of us have a lot to express. You can deal with it by playing introverted, in an almost cleansing, prayer-like way with a beautiful melody. But this is the way Sun Ra approached it.

Michael Leonhart Orchestra

"In The Kingdom Of M.Q." (*The Painted Lady Suite*, Sunnyside Records, 2018) Leonhart, trumpet, French horn, mellophonium, bass trumpet; Donny McCaslin, tenor saxophone; Charles Pillow, bass clarinet; Nels Cline, guitar; others.

I'm looking for personality in the sound. The drums aren't giving much of an idea of the touch and groove. Same with the bass. I didn't hear the keyboards, and the horns are just playing licks. ... I didn't hear the personalities in the horns. You think of Duke and how you could hear the sound of Cootie Williams or Clark Terry or Johnny Hodges.

There wasn't a lot of room for the sonic textures of each individual because of the way the music is written and the way the musicians are playing it. I was looking for personalities until the tenor saxophonist player comes in. I don't know who that person is, but I could hear a personality with the vocabulary, the kind of notes played and the lines. I was also surprised by the strings. Darcy James Argue? John Hollenbeck? Michael Leonhart? [*after*] Cool, bravo. I like it.

Jenny Scheinman

"I Heart Eye Patch" (*Crossing The Field*, Koch Records, 2008) Scheinman, violin; Ron Miles, cornet; Doug Wieselman, clarinets; Jason Moran, piano; Bill Frisell, guitar; Tim Luntzel, bass; Kenny Wollesen, drums.

Wow, I like this a lot. This is great writing by a person who is paying attention to the mixing. There's a balance of all the instruments to present the music in an effective way. As a musician, when we write we're thinking of controlling the air or directing the air. Where do we want the air to go? This was very melodically driven, so they wanted us to hear the melody. That was most important.

The support of the melody was a little lacking in the piano and bass. I would have liked to hear a different mix to give those voices more presence. But I loved the writing and the arrangement and what they did with it. I'm not sure if the violinist overdubbed their part over and over to make it sound like there was a large string section—which can have its problems with the same vibrato and same timbre. [*after*] It's Jenny? This is great. Bravo. Thanks for introducing me to this.

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 then is 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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