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President Kevin Maher  
 Publisher Frank Alkyer  
 Editor Bobby Reed  
 Reviews Editor Dave Cantor  
 Contributing Editor Ed Enright  
 Creative Director Žaneta Čuntová  
 Assistant to the Publisher Sue Mahal  
 Bookkeeper Evelyn Oakes

## ADVERTISING SALES

**Record Companies & Schools**  
 Jennifer Ruban-Gentile  
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[ritchd@downbeat.com](http://ritchd@downbeat.com)

**Advertising Sales Associate**  
 Grace Blackford  
 630-359-9358  
[graceb@downbeat.com](mailto:graceb@downbeat.com)

## OFFICES

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

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## CONTRIBUTORS

### Senior Contributors:

Michael Bourne, Aaron Cohen, Howard Mandel, John McDonough  
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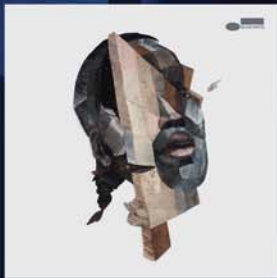
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# BLUE NOTE®



**KENDRICK SCOTT ORACLE**  
**A WALL BECOMES A BRIDGE**

Drummer and composer **KENDRICK SCOTT** returns with a 12-track song cycle titled, *A Wall Becomes A Bridge*. Produced by **DERRICK HODGE**, *A Wall* is a musical and metaphorical journey exploring many themes: innocence ("Archangel"), acceptance ("Windows"), and insecurity ("Voices"). Scott is joined by his **ORACLE** band: pianist **TAYLOR EIGSTI**, bassist **JOE SANDERS**, guitarist **MIKE MORENO**, and saxophonist/flutist **JOHN ELLIS**.



**WAYNE SHORTER**  
**EMANON**

A **GRAMMY-WINNING** musical & visual experience, *Emanon* is **NOW AVAILABLE DIGITALLY** or as a box set. The triple-album features **THE WAYNE SHORTER QUARTET** & 34-piece **ORPHEUS CHAMBER ORCHESTRA** and was named **#1 JAZZ ALBUM OF 2018** by *NYTimes*, *NPR Critics Poll*, and *Billboard*. *Rolling Stone* hailed, "Shorter's ideas have always been bigger than jazz; what *Emanon* shows is that they've also been bigger than music itself."



**NORAH JONES**  
**BEGIN AGAIN**

On April 12, nine-time GRAMMY-winning singer-songwriter **NORAH JONES** will release *Begin Again*, a collection of singles that gathers seven eclectic songs that Jones has recorded over the past year with collaborators including **JEFF TWEEDY** and **THOMAS BARTLETT**.

## BLUE NOTE REVIEW

### VOLUME TWO— SPIRIT & TIME

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MAY 2019

# Inside

## ON THE COVER

### 28 Branford Marsalis

#### *Speaking His Truth*

BY DENISE SULLIVAN

In a lively, wide-ranging interview in San Francisco, the saxophonist weighs in on Miles Davis, John Coltrane and the classical composer Saint-Saëns, and discusses his namesake quartet's new album, *The Secret Between The Shadow And The Soul*.



Craig Taborn's new album is a duo project with fellow pianist Vijay Iyer.

Cover photo of the Branford Marsalis Quartet shot by Scott Chernis at SFJAZZ Center in San Francisco on Jan. 19. From left: Joey Calderazzo, Eric Revis, Marsalis and Justin Faulkner. Info for this venue is at sfjazz.org.

## FEATURES

### 36 Vijay Iyer & Craig Taborn

#### *Building Something Majestic*

BY JOSEF WOODARD

### 40 Cyrille Aimée

#### *Rekindled Energy*

BY TERRY PERKINS

### 44 Johnathan Blake

#### *Born To Play*

BY PHILIP FREEMAN

### 83 2019 International Summer Festival Guide



53 Etienne Charles



57 Joyce DiDonato



58 John Pizzarelli



63 Samantha Boshnack

## SPECIAL SECTION

65 Reed School

66 Developing Great Dynamics  
BY JOSH SINTON

70 Master Class  
BY ANDREA BRACHFELD

72 Pro Session  
BY MATT SHEVITZ

74 Transcription  
Tia Fuller  
Saxophone Solo

76 Toolshed

## DEPARTMENTS

8 First Take

10 Chords & Discords

13 The Beat

49 Reviews

134 Jazz On Campus

138 Blindfold Test  
Sullivan Fortner



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## First Take > BY BOBBY REED



Branford Marsalis at the 2017 Newport Jazz Festival

# Borrowing Ideas

**WHEN IS IT OK TO STEAL? IN JAZZ, THEFT IS RAMPANT. BUT IS** that *always* a bad thing? In the amorphous realm of creative impulse, there can be blurry lines between such things as an intentional tribute to a master, an homage that is performed in the style of a jazz icon, a composition that is unconsciously influenced by years of studying the classics, and the blatant “theft” of an element that the musician heard somewhere—maybe last week, maybe 10 years ago on a famous album.

What one musician might describe as “stealing,” another musician might describe as “borrowing a great idea.”

In the world of stand-up comedy, my understanding is that stealing jokes is forbidden. In general, every comic is expected to deliver wholly original material. But that doesn't mean comics aren't heavily influencing one another. After all, everyone has seen a hackneyed comic at work. As we in the audience sit there chuckling intermittently, in the back (or front) of our minds, we think, “I've heard this kind of stuff before.” That is precisely why innovative comedians are so rare—and so revered.

And there are analogous situations in the jazz world. All of this is partially what makes Branford Marsalis' comments in our cover story so entertaining and thought-provoking. The saxophonist says, “I don't know any good music that isn't borrowed from somewhere else. It has nothing to do with where the data comes from; it's about how the data sounds. ... So, I've been stealing since I joined Blakey's band and understood the interconnectivity of all these guys when they start talking about who they listen to, and how they grew up, and what their influences were.”

Marsalis' lively comments got us thinking about the notion of musical influences. There are dozens of great jazz musicians nowadays whose major influences are identifiable—but not in a way that drastically dilutes the power of their art.

We'd like to hear your thoughts on this topic. We're inviting readers to send us a 300-word essay on a living jazz musician who is creating brilliant work, even though that artist's influences are discernible. We're not talking about players who, say, frequently interpret Monk tunes. We're talking about musicians whose style and aesthetic have been deeply influenced by previous music, and yet the result is a musical voice that feels original.

Email your essay to [editor@downbeat.com](mailto:editor@downbeat.com) by May 1. (Please put the word “influences” in the subject line.) We'll publish some of these responses in either Chords & Discords or the First Take column.

For every essay that we publish, the writer will receive a DownBeat T-shirt. Plus, they'll have the right to ask their friends, “Hey, did you see my work in DownBeat?” So, we're inviting you to aim to join a jazz journalism tradition that has spanned 85 years. We look forward to reading about artists who “borrow” (or even “steal”) in creative ways.

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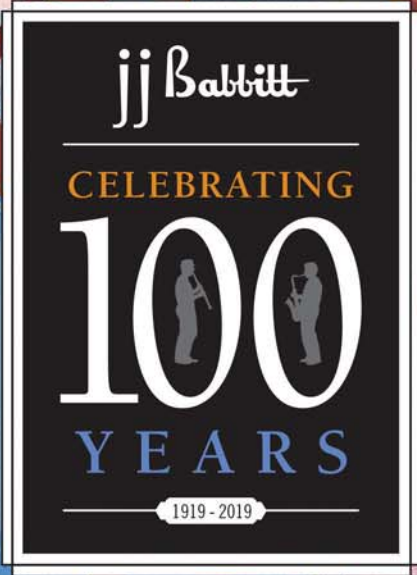
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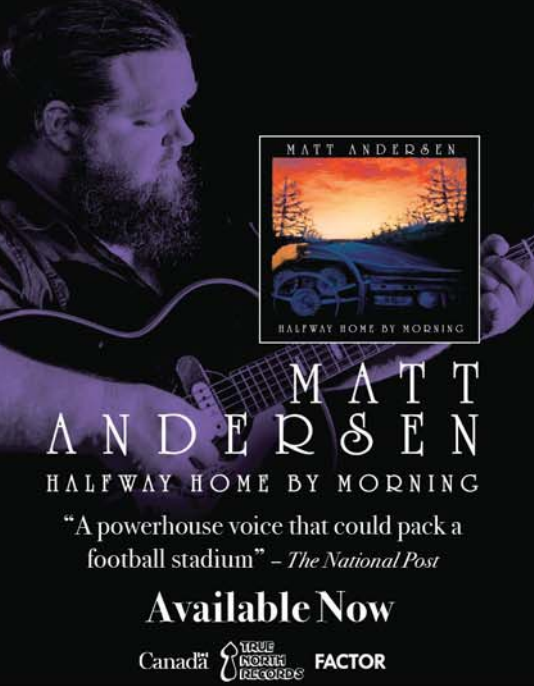
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**Linus April 5**



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– *Billboard Magazine*

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## Chords & Discords >

### Plentiful Jazz in Charm City

I enjoyed your excellent feature “World’s Best Jazz Cities” (February). However, I feel strongly that Baltimore should have been included. We have a thriving jazz scene, full of excellent players, from teens to octogenarians. We have the highly rated venue An die Musik, which presents jazz artists from all over the world, and we have other outstanding venues, such as Caton Castle, Jazzway 6004 and the Cabaret at Germano’s Piattini.

Any night of the week, a listener has multiple options to hear great jazz, from concerts to clubs, lounges to jam sessions.

Not only is there a wealth of offerings, the shows here receive strong publicity from the nonprofit Baltimore Jazz Alliance (on whose board I serve). Visitors, as well as locals, can always find jazz in Baltimore. How many cities have that much support for live jazz?

Although Baltimore lacks a major jazz festival, we have a variety of smaller festivals, including the nascent Baltimore Jazz Fest, presented by the BJA. Furthermore, the city annu-



ally hosts what is billed as the largest free arts festival in the country, Artscape, which always features a variety of jazz.

Baltimore’s proximity to larger cities like Washington and New York may cause it to stand out less, but I urge you to take another look. I am sure that you will be surprised by the wealth of jazz to be found in Charm City.

IAN RASHKIN  
BALTIMORE JAZZ ALLIANCE  
BALTIMORE

### Music That Inspires Hope

I just read Michael J. West’s review of the Lori Henriques Quintet’s album of songs about Nobel laureates, *Legion Of Peace* (Reviews, January).

It’s great that you guys reviewed such a talented singer/songwriter, but I’m afraid West missed the fact that this incredibly sophisticated album is for children. Its lyrics are aimed, and perfectly, at elementary school kids.

Lori has won numerous awards—including the ASCAP Foundation’s Joe Raposo Children’s Music Award—is a Grammy nominee for Best Children’s Album, and has gotten lots of popular recognition for making really confusing subjects understandable for kids.

Nobel Peace laureates battle war, famine and genocide. Telling their stories to children in song requires care and tact. I know all of you at DownBeat know this, and can applaud Lori’s work in making those stories manifest in a way that brings hope, not despair.

NICK RAPOSO  
PRESIDENT  
THE JOE RAPOSO MUSIC GROUP, INC.  
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*Jazz Tonight* since about the year 2000. All those years, while my life in Japan was filled with huge uncertainties, he was there on Saturday nights on the radio, always reliable, keeping me connected to the world’s music. He opened my ears to music from Japan I would not have discovered without him.

Listening to him—with his intriguing track selections, and his musician guests in the studio—always made me feel good, no matter what had happened in my life during that week or what was coming up in the weeks ahead. That respite is something I still need, and yet ... he is gone. How can I replace the comfort he gave?

Koyama-san, thank you for helping this foreigner feel good in Japan. Please rest well in jazz heaven.

NHK Radio, thank you for giving Koyama-san a way to connect with us. Please encourage other DJs to continue doing what he did so well.

DAVID GREGORY  
CHIBA, JAPAN

### Correction

■ In the April issue, the review of vocalist Carolyn Fitzhugh’s album *Living In Peace* misidentified Bart Platteau, who plays alto flute on the album. Platteau and Amina Figarova, who contributes keyboards on the album, are married.

DOWNBEAT REGRETS THE ERROR.

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

### Farewell to an Icon

Journalist and radio personality Kiyoshi Koyama passed away on Feb. 3. My wife and I live in Chiba, Japan, and we attended his funeral in Kashiwa. At the funeral, there were messages read aloud from musicians, music company executives, club owners and radio listeners from all over Japan, each conveying how much Koyama-san had touched their lives.

I had listened to Koyama-san on the show

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Inside >

14 / PDX Jazz Festival  
15 / Claudia Villela  
17 / Magela Herrera  
18 / Ralph Alessi  
21 / Kassa Overall  
26 / Ira Gitler

# Beat



Eric Harland (left), Chris Potter and James Francies have recorded a new album, *Circuits*.

DAVE STAPLETON

## Potter Rewires His 'Circuits'

Saxophonist Chris Potter's new album, *Circuits*, simultaneously is a step forward and a return to earlier territory.

His first release on the Edition label, *Circuits* showcases some of the groove and r&b feel that marked Potter's Underground group. With its miles-deep cybernetic synth bass and hissing, rattling hi-hat, "Green Pastures" sounds like it could be from an old Hank Crawford or Stanley Turrentine album on CTI.

"I guess for every project I do, I think about which aspects of my musical personality to bring out more, but a lot of it comes out on a subconscious level," the bandleader said. "I grew up listening to Stevie Wonder and Earth, Wind & Fire, so it's a big part of my musical perspective."

The new trio that electrifies *Circuits* originally was assembled for a tour. Potter wanted to pursue an electric project, and brought in a longtime sparring partner, drummer Eric Harland, who in turn recommended pianist James Francies. The live shows went so well that the saxophonist decided a studio session was in order.

"The idea was to do some stuff in trio, which was one reason Eric mentioned [James], because he can really deal with playing the keyboard bass and soloing," Potter explained. "It's pretty remarkable. There's not a lot of people that could really pull that off. It was at the rehearsal that I realized, 'Wow, this guy really has something to say.'"

Francies' contributions to *Circuits* often seem to come from the world of abstract electronic music. His synths add whooshes and ambient hum in addition to zapping, high-energy melody lines and the occasional bit of conventional pianistic playing.

"Chris is very hands-off," Francies said. "He trusts my musical choices and intuition. I've worked with a lot of artists outside of the jazz world, so being able to bring those sonic ideas/elements and experiment even more was a lot of fun."

The album—which also includes bassist Linley Marthe on four tracks—isn't just about jamming with mics on. It's tightly edited, and

Potter overdubs multiple layers of reeds throughout, harmonizing with himself. He's done that on other recordings, just not to the extent found on *Circuits*.

"It was always something I had to plan out pretty carefully ahead of time, because you only had two days in the studio," Potter said. "But now, since I have a [recording] setup here at home that I can use, I was able to take my time and do as many takes and experiment with as many different things as I wanted."

Led by Potter's bass clarinet, the trio turns "Koutomé," a tune originally by the Beninese group Orchestre Poly Rhythmo de Cotonou, into a slow, layered polyrhythmic journey. "I thought it was an interesting kind of groove," Potter said, noting that the song originally was brought to his attention by guitarist Lionel Loueke, with whom he plays in bassist Dave Holland's quartet Aziza. "It has that African two-against-three thing in there. But it's a little bit different than some other music that I had heard, so I thought that would be a nice flavor to bring in."

*Circuits* "didn't seem like an ECM kind of project—[label head] Manfred Eicher and I both kind of agreed on that," Potter continued, referring to the label on which he released the acclaimed 2017 *The Dreamer Is The Dream*. Potter was pleased that Edition, a British label with an international roster, embraced the recording and is striving to reach "the kind of audience that might appreciate it."

Potter's debut as a leader, *Presenting Chris Potter* (Criss Cross Jazz), was released in 1993. So, more than 25 years later, with a reputation as one of the most influential saxophonists of his generation, how does that early recording relate to his current work?

Potter replied: "Some things I hear and I go, 'Yeah, that sounds a little young,' and other things I hear and say, 'Oh, that's the same decision that I would make now.'" —Philip Freeman



Eric Reed

JIMMY KATZ

**A Reflective Blues:** Eric Reed delves into the human condition on *Everybody Gets The Blues* (Smoke Sessions), set for release April 12. The pianist is joined on nine tracks of contemplative straight-ahead work by saxophonist Tim Green, bassist Mike Gurrrola and drummer McClenty Hunter. The program also features a keys-saxophone rendition of John Coltrane's "Naima."

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

**In the French Quarter:** Marking its 36th anniversary, the French Quarter Festival is scheduled for April 11–14 in New Orleans. This year's festivities include performances by Irma Thomas, Kermit Ruffins, Quiana Lynell, Jason Marsalis and the Rebirth Brass Band.

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

**Final Bar:** Famous for his soundtrack work and his place in the classical music world, **André Previn**, who died Feb. 28 at the age of 89, recorded with jazz luminaries like Shelly Manne, J.J. Johnson and Barney Kessel. ... **Hal Blaine**, one of the most prolific drummers of all time, died on March 11 at age 90. In addition to studio sessions with the Beach Boys, he worked with Frank Sinatra, Herb Alpert and Steely Dan. ... Vocalist **Ethel Ennis**, a Baltimore mainstay, debuted in 1955 with the amusingly titled *Lullabies For Losers*, tossing off a casual, but powerful, delivery. Ennis died Feb. 17 at the age of 86. ... South African vocalist **Dorothy Masuka**, who died Feb. 23 at age 83, is as well regarded for her jazz-inflected pop performances as for her determined political stances that began during the apartheid era. ... **Kiyoshi Koyama**, a Japanese jazz journalist and radio DJ who was editor of *Swing Journal*, died Feb. 3 at the age of 82. Koyama also worked for a short-lived Japanese edition of *DownBeat*, and he produced box sets for record labels. ... In addition to producing dozens of jazz albums, **Horst Liepolt** helped define Australian jazz programming at festivals and had a hand in a pair of New York clubs, *Sweet Basil* and *Lush Life*. Liepolt died Jan. 9 at age 91.



MARK SHELDON

Pharoah Sanders performs during the first weekend of the Biamp PDX Jazz Festival, which ran Feb. 20–March 3 in Portland, Oregon.

## Biamp PDX Jazz Festival Pays Tribute to the Past

**WITH BOTH BLUE NOTE AND ECM RECORDS** celebrating anniversaries this year, booking the lineup for a major jazz festival would seem like an easy task, especially with the deep bench of talent both labels have fostered and supported over the decades. Give some credit, then, to Don Lucoff and the team that put together the Biamp PDX Jazz Festival, which ran Feb. 20–March 3 in Portland, Oregon, as they resisted the urge to pile on tributes to those venerable imprints. Instead, they stuck to their core principle of providing a showcase for Portland jazz fans to enjoy the work of both new artists and unassailable legends.

Festival organizers didn't entirely turn away from such commemorations, but they took a much different tack than they might have been expected to. Beyond an appearance from saxophonist Eli Degibri in support of his recently released album-length tribute to Hank Mobley and a set from one of the label's current roster of artists, trumpeter Terence Blanchard, the Blue Note tributes were handled primarily by Portland players and held at Al's Den, a snug basement venue that recalled jazz's history as the music of speakeasies and rowdy theaters.

What tributes the festival did partake in were much more large-scale. During a fantastic opening weekend that included a set from National Endowment for the Arts Jazz Master Pharoah Sanders and the first Portland performance by the new lineup of The Bad Plus, Lionel Cole stopped by to celebrate the 100th birthday of his uncle Nat "King" Cole with a smart, understated set of smoky standards. Later that evening, the switch was flipped courtesy of drummer Ralph Peterson, who gave another baby born in 1919—Art Blakey—a properly sweat-soaked, bop-heavy blowout.

The closing days of the festival connected together a handful of shows with thread that hung a bit more loosely. In this case, it was nod-

ding to the jazz legacy of Philadelphia. It was a nice framework, but an unnecessary one. The crowd that packed Revolution Hall to hear Stanley Clarke, one of Philly's most beloved native sons, was the most boisterous and animated of the festival, reacting to every splashy solo by the bassist and his sometimes-too-sleek ensemble with a rising intensity throughout the evening. They would have been there no matter what festival or schema the show was connected to.

The same applies to the lovely evening of appreciation for the work of Michael Brecker, the Philly-born saxophonist who passed away in 2007. His birthplace wasn't the attraction. Brecker's name and legacy were enough to send the crowd into peals of rapture. The night honed in on the musician's 2003 large ensemble album *Wide Angles*, with a set of music culled from that recording and a revolving door of soloists who added their own angle to the night. Marcus Strickland came closest to reviving Brecker's blend of '50s cool and '70s funk, but it was Maria Grand who put the boldest stamp on the music, with a restraint and tone that felt like a spiritual balm.

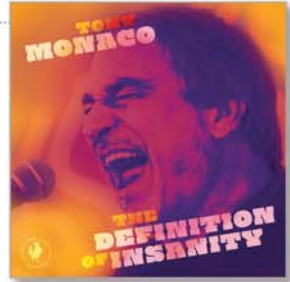
Alongside the tributes, there was plenty of local fare to partake in across the festival's 12-day schedule. But if there was one player who exemplified the best of what this annual event tries to do to highlight homegrown talent, it was Darrell Grant. Anointed this year as a Portland Jazz Master, the pianist was given a hero's welcome from the crowd, responding with humility and some awe. Grant poured those same qualities into a set that revisited his still-thrilling 1994 album, *Black Art*, finding new shades of melody and taking a bolder swing at solos in a way that spoke to the years of experience and wisdom he gained during the quarter-century since he recorded the tunes.

—Robert Ham

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ALOIZIO JORDÃO

Following a fire in her Rio de Janeiro home, improvising vocalist Claudia Villela has found a renewed interest in releasing music.

# Revelations of Villela's Voice

**CLAUDIA VILLELA WAS ALL SET TO CATCH A** December 2017 return flight to California from her native Brazil when a fire broke out in her Rio de Janeiro apartment. The singer and composer suffered several severe injuries that day, and the computer that held years' worth of her unreleased recordings were destroyed.

The catastrophe prompted Villela to reassess her career path. The loss of so much creative output impelled her to think about how to get her extensive catalog of mostly improvised compositions out into the world, and "it made me more passionate about what I'm releasing now," she said during a recent phone conversation from Santa Cruz, her home in the U.S. since the mid-'80s.

Her latest album, *Encantada Live* (Taina), is Villela's seventh release since her now little-known 1992 debut of originals, *Nosso Abacaxi*. In the intervening years, as Villela's reputation as a preternaturally gifted improviser rose, she performed and recorded diligently, but only occasionally released albums. Whether by default or by design, *Encantada Live* fills in some of the regrettably empty space in Villela's discography: The collection derives from multiple live performances during the past 10 years, featuring Villela in concert variously with solo guitar or piano, a quartet or a septet. None of these divergent performances is about a specific group sound, however. What they hold in common is an unwavering commitment to the highest level of improvisation.

All discussions about Villela's singing and songwriting necessarily start with a nod to the dizzying scope and depth of her improvisatory skill. In one tune (say, "Cuscus," from the new record), she'll run through several registers, shift vocal qualities, allude to familiar riffs and keep unswerving time. Oh, and improvise a full set of

lyrics in Portuguese. It must be said, hardly anybody can do this.

The bebop singers come closest, perhaps. And though Villela studied at the prestigious Manhattan School of Music with scat master Sheila Jordan—a fitting guide for the naturally intuitive singer—bebop is only one of Villela's sources. In addition, she culls references from Western classical music, lullabies, traditional Brazilian sambas, bossas, choros and the like.

"I don't know where [all of the ideas] come from," she admitted. "When I sing, I'm in a spell and that's where the magic happens."

Villela found a likeminded improvisational musician in pianist Kenny Werner, who recorded Villela's fourth album, *dreamtales*, a completely unrehearsed, all-improvvised 2004 duo recording.

"I think of what Claudia does as spontaneous composition—you feel like you're hearing a composition that's being revealed in the moment," explained Werner when queried about the approach they used on "Minas," a 14-minute modal duet on the new album. "She is the only singer I've met who not only can play free for a whole set, but can bring enough textures to make it feel like spontaneous composition."

Today, Villela often travels back and forth to Rio, still busy rebuilding after the fire. The effort depletes her energy, even as she feels galvanized to produce more music.

"I will record again this year for sure," she avowed, describing a studio album that would include Latin American poetry set to her music, as well as a live album with guitarist Romero Lubambo. But Villela's renewed interest in record releases isn't about pushing out product.

"My next album is going to be better, deeper and stronger," she concluded. "I have this feeling now that we haven't much time." —Suzanne Lorge



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European Scene / BY PETER MARGASAK

## Galvin, Hardly Conservative

London keyboardist Elliot Galvin is a musician of implacable, nonchalant curiosity. Since emerging at the start of this decade as a member of the springy, lushly melodic fusion quartet Dinosaur, he's followed his interests this way and that, toggling from groove-oriented jams with trumpeter Emma-Jean Thackray to woolly free improvisation with drummer Mark Sanders, with innumerable stops in between.

No single ensemble conveys Galvin's personality as much as his agile trio with drummer Corrie Dick and bassist Tom McCredie, which is as wildly inventive as it is effervescently fun. On the group's third album, last year's *The Influencing Machine* (Edition), its penchant for delightfully corkscrewing mechanisms achieved its apotheosis. The leader's crisp grand piano figures were complemented by all manner of electronic accents, toy piano licks and playful smears of spoken word on a cassette, sped up and reversed, to say nothing of McCredie doubling on electric guitar. A collision of Bach-like counterpoint and post-bop propulsion might hit a wall and suddenly bounce off into a new tangent, all of its schizophrenic mayhem achieved with pop-like concision.

There's little doubt that the trio had absorbed some valuable lessons from The Bad Plus, but it also refused to stick to that particular script—or any other. Galvin's peripatetic tendencies looked like they were going to push his nimble combo in a radically different direction.

"I had been making more and more music with a lot of electronic instruments and I was becoming a bit disengaged with making acoustic music," said Galvin, 28.

But then he caught a solo concert by pianist Jason Moran at the 2018 Montreux Jazz Festival, and it stopped him in his tracks: "It reminded me why I loved making jazz and acoustic music. It was so immediate and human."

With the trio's superb new album, *Modern Times* (Edition), he pared things down to the bone. "I wanted to make something very honest and stripped back," he said.

Indeed, the trio recorded each side of the album direct to vinyl in two uninterrupted stretches, with zero post-production, that "felt like a quiet act of rebellion in a world of increasingly commodified music." The new record retains Galvin's idiosyncratic, indelible compositional style, and the trio still shifts easily between disparate episodes. But the bells and whistles are gone, letting the listener connect directly with the music's essential core.

Galvin hardly has gone conservative,



DAVE STAPLETON

Elliot Galvin

though. Earlier this year, he dropped *Ex Nihilo* (Byrd Out), an engrossing duo album with saxophonist Binker Golding (half of Binker and Moses) where the pianist reveals his free-improv chops, as well as showing off his facility with extended techniques—hammering, scraping and damping strings inside of his instrument in a dazzling onslaught.

"From as early as I can remember, I've been experimenting with how many different sounds you can get out of a piano," he said, citing musicians as diverse as Jon Balke, Helmut Lachenmann and Huw Warren as influences. But he also credits his mother with instilling an interest in the avant-garde from a young age. "She had read somewhere that if you didn't expose a child to dissonant music before the age of 7, then they would never appreciate it," so he was immersed in it. "Apparently when I was about 5, I refused to go to bed because I wanted to stay up and watch a Harrison Birtwistle opera on TV."

In fact, Galvin has become increasingly interested in writing for classical ensembles—he's already composed music for the London Sinfonietta and Ligeti Quartet. But ultimately he rejects any urge to categorize his work.

"I try to only play music I like and not be too compartmentalized about it," he explained. "The best ideas are sometimes when you take something from one context and place it in another. In any given setting, I try and just respond with a sound I think will work, rather than analyzing it too much and limiting my options by placing them in a box."

DB



# Herrera Finds Influence in Nordic Landscape

**IT'S SURPRISING TO HEAR HAVANA-BORN** flutist, composer and vocalist Magela Herrera talk about inspiration drawn from Norway's white landscapes, forests and fog. But she explains that living in the Nordic country amid six years of studies afforded her a different way of seeing music. And it allowed her to bring the best of all worlds together—classical, European, Afro-Cuban—on *Explicaciones* (Brontosaurus), her debut album.

Moving to Miami from Oslo two years ago, Herrera continued navigating a journey that began with a music-loving father and a highly musical extended family, including her uncle “El Guayabero,” a well-known traditional Cuban singer. Her childhood eventually led Herrera to dreams of joining an orchestra and a bachelor's in classical music from the Instituto Superior de Arte in Havana in 2006. After completing her studies, though, Herrera left the classical world behind to join Mezcla, a renowned Havana fusion band.

Her tastes again shifted. After performing in 2009 at Norway's Oslo Jazz Festival, and completing an additional bachelor's, as well as a master's in jazz/improvised music performance from the Norwegian Academy of Music, Herrera found herself moving away from “traditional

and conventional” jazz.

Her background, she said, made her an artist centered on melody and rhythm with a tendency toward complex chord changes, and as she puts it, “a lot of information.” Norway, Herrera said, taught her “a new way of seeing music.” She was enchanted by the idea of moving away from more traditional jazz and notation: “I was not used to that style of music—free improvisation is so different. I didn't have to follow a strict pattern as to how music should sound or what music should be.”

As a result, Herrera left behind her charts, and went “deeper into style,” focusing her musical expression on other details: dynamics, texture, mood and, most of all, the idea of creating landscapes—describing images with sound.

As an example, she mentioned a cut from the new album, “Ahora,” for which she took inspiration from Norway's natural landscape and beauty: the mountains, the smell of the air, the vibe of the city and people, and even Norwegian folk music. Her musical worlds, though, frequently are in collision mode. Other tracks on *Explicaciones* directly counter the Nordic vibe, including one composed for her father, “Danzón Para Papá,” a tune highlighting the centuries-old Cuban dance genre.



Magela Herrera perceives her music to be the result of a musical and cultural collision.

Now, Miami's tropical grooves, steeped in funk, hip-hop, r&b, as well as jazz, are allowing Herrera to explore a new set of colliding worlds, and she describes “Two Sidewalks,” a vibrant track from the new album, as a juxtaposition of Norwegian jazz and Miami's brightly hued rhythms.

“I don't just want to be considered just a jazz flutist,” she said. —Catalina Maria Johnson

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Ravi Coltrane (left), Drew Gress, Ralph Alessi and Mark Ferber perform Jan. 11 at Le Poisson Rouge in New York.

# Alessi Reconvenes Longstanding Ensemble for 'Imaginary Friends'

**TRUMPETER RALPH ALESSI'S THIRD ALBUM** for ECM, the post-bop, neoclassical, subtly disjunctive *Imaginary Friends*, reunites the band-leader with a quintet founded in 2002, appropriately named *This Against That*. As for the group's appellation, Alessi, sitting in the green room at Le Poisson Rouge before a Winter Jazzfest showcase, reflected that it was "a name that just popped into my head."

He added, "It's about how opposites interact with a typical kind of music that has varying things happening simultaneously. It's fast versus slow, high against low. Plus, I like the way the words sound, so it stuck as *This Against That*."

Onstage at LPR, Alessi and his bandmates—Ravi Coltrane on tenor saxophone, Andy Milne on prepared piano and the simpatico duo of bassist Drew Gress and drummer Mark Ferber—found a tonal balance in the bandleader's melodic compositions and surprising harmonies. Coltrane served as the perfect foil, mirroring the trumpet lines and navigating the counterpoint inherent in the music. On trumpet, Alessi didn't flash or riff, but rather coaxed the lyrical soul and fire out of his horn with fluidity and a relaxed pace. On the tune

"Fun Room," Alessi played different improvisational trumpet voicings. "That song came about when I decided to use a slide in the studio to see what it would sound like," he recalled. "I have to say that I stole that idea of using extended technique from Nate Wooley."

Another highlight of the show was Alessi's new gem "Oxide," which opened mysteriously with Milne on piano and later featured trumpet-sax harmony that grew into a gentle conversation. "This started out as a piece that wasn't fully fleshed out," Alessi said. "But on our two-week European tour before going into the studio, it gradually began to tighten up at the soundchecks. The melody evolved over a period of time. It started as an ostinato kind of thing. When I found the melody, then I heard the harmonies."

After the concert, Alessi said that when he discussed the idea of going another round with *This Against That* to ECM principal Manfred Eicher, he talked about the trust the band enjoys. "I told Manfred we have a history, and I know the sound of the band," the trumpeter said. "And I knew that the way Manfred records, he would capture all the nuances, particularly Andy as a dynamic harmonic pianist

and the way he prepares the piano. I loved the way Manfred captured the sound on 'Oxide,' which was almost tailor-made for him."

A veteran of the M-Base collective days—when he was a colleague with Milne and saxophonist Steve Coleman, among others—Alessi enjoys a deep connection with the members of his quintet. "We all have strong voices, and we have history," he explained. "We're friends and spent a lot of time playing the music and just hanging out. What we do speaks to my interest in making music. We play over song forms, we improvise in ways that sometimes are more sonic, others more rhythmic. We've developed a strong rapport over the years."

The key figure in the band is Coltrane, one of Alessi's best friends since 1986, when they met at the California Institute of the Arts. They became roommates and later moved to New York and lived in a house together in Queens, where Coltrane's label RKM recorded the first TAT album. "We've played a lot of music over the years," Alessi said. "We have a sonic connection. I love his sound. People have told us about our blend. I think that comes from our friendship and the similar synergy we bring to the music. It transcends words. We play off each

other, pushing and pulling the melodies.”

“Yes, it is our special blend,” Coltrane said over the phone. “It’s like we’re having a conversation. We’re like brothers, so we’re just hanging out and having fun. It’s reached a point where all Ralph has to do is play one note and I know his sound. After all, I listened to him practicing for a long time. One of Ralph’s great strengths is playing trumpet with a killer instinct. He has three generations of brass in his blood and has become a master. Equal to that is Ralph’s compositions. His music is unique in a melodic sense. He has a distinct ear for a lyrical line. He hears all these melodies and is confident that he can take them to a different place.”

Case in point: the captivating leadoff track on *Imaginary Friends*, “Iram Issela” (Alessi’s 8-year-old daughter’s name spelled backward), which stretches for nearly 10 minutes with reflective improvisations of inventive instrumental shapes by him, Coltrane and Milne.

“It’s an older tune that we’d been workshoping,” Alessi said. “I wrote the first part and let it sit for a while. It didn’t have a second section, but as we played it each night, with Ravi opening with Andy, the band dictated how it would finish. We finally got to a place where it all came to fruition. I’m pretty open to following the lead of my musicians to see where they’ll go.”

Referring to the album title (named for the tune “Imaginary Friends,” which features trumpet-tenor interplay in a dreamlike-to-frenzied setting), Alessi said, “I liked the ambiguity of it. It’s by design that my music is idiosyncratic, sometimes to a fault. I don’t allow myself to just write something that’s a little more familiar. Actually, I veer away from that. I may be wanting to offset my comfort zone. I’m a hybrid musician, and I have a lot of references from different streams. I played a lot of classical trumpet—études and melodies, tonal and atonal. But Stevie Wonder is also an influence, as are Afro-Cuban folk and Steve Coleman.”

While he’s motivated to concentrate on *This Against That*, Alessi still enjoys being a sideman. “I feed off it,” he said. “I’m always learning something new as a player and composer. It keeps things flowing in me. When I played in Jason Moran’s Monk project at the Orvieto festival in Italy in 2017, he really informed me. He’s the quintessential bandleader for my taste. He keeps things every minimal and he’s very open about my ideas. Over the years that we’ve recorded together, he’s influenced me in the way I play and write and lead a band.”

After three years of teaching as an assistant professor of jazz studies at the University of



Nevada-Reno, Alessi is set to return to New York in May. “If circumstances were different, I would have stayed longer,” he said. “But I have a daughter in New York. It’s time for me to come back. And I’ll also be putting my energy back into the School for Improvisational Music that I started as a nonprofit in 2001. Year 18 is coming up. My original idea to have such a place blossomed into a school. It’s now housed in the Brooklyn Conservatory. I’m looking forward to getting back and expanding it into something bigger.”

—Dan Ouellette

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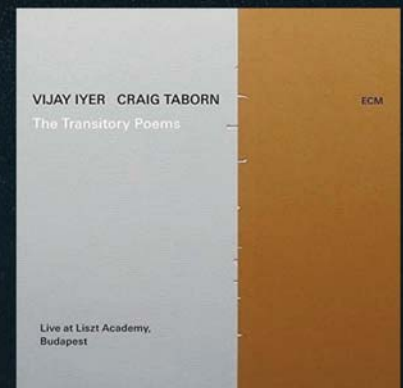
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Derek Trucks (left) and Susan Tedeschi, co-leaders of the Tedeschi Trucks Band



# Tedeschi Trucks Band Digs Deep

FROM ITS 2011 DEBUT, *REVELATOR*, TO *Signs*, its current release on Fantasy, the blues-rock group Tedeschi Trucks Band has bared its roots and influences onstage and in the studio. These include the Allman Brothers legacy, which encompasses guitarist Derek Trucks and singer/guitarist Susan Tedeschi, his spouse, directly.

Throughout its career, the band has focused on the idea of entertaining simply by making music. Their concerts include no strobe lights, no filmed bits on a video screen, no backing tracks, no choreography—just a few puffs of smoke here and there. The musicians stand there and play. That's it.

This works for them, because each concert is informed by what's on everyone's mind that day. Solos are all about spontaneity, not regurgitation. Even the three-piece horn section cooks up charts in the moment, conferring among themselves when a groove is emerging and then concocting new riffs or staccato stabs.

"There's a lot of communication before we go onstage," said Tedeschi. "If something political is going on, Derek might say to me, 'Hey, when you start ad-libbing in that Bobby Bland song, 'I Pity The Fool,' why don't you say something about building bridges, not walls?' So, I'll add that into my rant and people will react. Or

during the immigration controversy I might say, 'Why don't we do 'Lord, Protect My Child'? The lyrics are so moving that people are like, 'Oh, my gosh, how can someone take a kid away from its parents?' They might feel more sympathy and empathy for each other, because the music makes it real. We're not trying to be political—but we are trying to be human."

Their recordings are similarly of the moment, with each song born from whatever is going on in bandmembers' lives. For example, feelings of love and loss permeate *Signs*. The album's last track is specifically an elegy for their close friend and mentor, Col. Bruce Hampton (1947–2017). Titled "The Ending," it stands out from the rest of the album in its simplicity, with Tedeschi's sensitive vocal backed by Trucks on National guitar and Oliver Woods on Trucks' 1930s vintage Gibson L-00.

"If I feel a connection to a song, sometimes I have to stop myself from crying as I sing," Tedeschi said. "But the words in 'The Ending' are more like a laugh/cry for me. There are joyful parts of the lyric, like, 'His guitar is laughing, filling the room.' He was so silly and over the top that it doesn't feel sad to think about him. Really, the song reminds me of so many good things about him."

Ironically, on Feb. 15, the day *Signs* was

released (and before the *DownBeat* interview), the Tedeschi Trucks Band suffered another loss. Band member Kofi Burbridge—who contributed keyboards and flute to the album, and who also played in Hampton's band—died in Atlanta, following a series of heart problems.

But there are plenty of uplifting moments on the new record. Whether brushed by strings on "Strengthen What Remains" or driven by a steady crescendo and a blaze of wailing guitar on "Still Your Mind," *Signs* draws from the uncertainties of our time and turns them into messages of hope and assurance. "Mike Mattison [one of TTB's three backup singers] wrote 'Strengthen What Remains' about his aunt," Tedeschi said. "Here's a woman who worked really hard all her life. She had to give up her baby when she was really young. The opening line is 'A world where dreams come true wasn't meant for you.' It's so sad.

"But it goes on to tell about how beautiful a life she had. Maybe everything isn't always perfect. Not everything works out exactly as you want. But it's not that bad at the end of the day. So, strengthen what you have left. That sentiment is so fitting now, when it feels like we're all at the lowest of the low. But we're gonna get through this. It's gonna get better."

—Bob Doerschuk

STEVEN SUSSMAN



Kassa Overall's leader debut is titled *Go Get Ice Cream And Listen To Jazz*.

## Kassa Overall's Disc Defies Today's Playlist Culture

**IN A SMALL PARIS HOTEL ROOM, KASSA** Overall lies across an unmade bed, praying for a sign. For months, he'd been sitting on an album's worth of new music, passively finding reasons not to go into production. The next day, Roy Hargrove passed away.

"It was like a slap in the back of my head," Overall said. "I was like, 'What are you doing? People are out here dying, and you're trying to decide whether to put this music out?'"

Hargrove's passing in November sparked motivation, and Overall immediately began tracking *Go Get Ice Cream And Listen To Jazz*—the drummer's first full-length release as a leader—while grappling with the challenges that led him to put off going into production for so long.

Months earlier, the shy artist-composer and producer reached out to a label with several tracks of what would become *Go Get Ice Cream* and a few of his older tunes. In the email message, he mentioned his multiplicity of creative roles: drummer, rapper, DJ, beat maker. A rep soon responded.

"She gave it the old labeling college try and said, 'It's a producer album,'" said Overall, reflecting on the brief exchange. "I wasn't even offended, because she was right. That is what I do. At the same time, it was like—if you take out everything special about something, what's left over is: 'It's a producer album.'"

The reality of *Go Get Ice Cream's* release is staggering. Overall worked through sketches and loops, calling on different artists for each composition—and compositional layering. Certain tracks underwent multiple studio session cycles. And the resulting release is an album that begs

active listening from start to finish, in stark contrast with the current playlist climate perpetuated by streaming services and social media.

"My favorite albums are like that," he said. "Bob Marley and the Wailers' *Burnin'*, *A Love Supreme*, *Doggystyle*—they all have this kind of movie quality to them. If I'm going to make a body of work, then let's make all these joints fit together and feel like a journey. Jazz is a refuge in the industry. It's not always seeking the trend. So, if the mainstream thing is about the singles and playlist, then the full-length concept seeks refuge

in jazz. It sounds like I'm saying jazz is this left-overs place, but I'm trying to say its main objective isn't to fit in with mainstream needs."

Featuring established and emerging artists including Arto Lindsay, Sullivan Fortner, Judi Jackson, Mike King and Hargrove himself, *Go Get Ice Cream* challenges the perceived relevance of trends, genres and labels, and collaborators took notice. Fellow artist-composer and producer—and longtime confidant—Theo Croker, who appears on "Do You," has been working alongside Overall for the past 15 years.

"[The album] really shows the culmination of everything Kassa has been cultivating [since] I've known him," the trumpeter said. "Instead of being an artist that haphazardly puts out pieces, he gives you a whole picture, which really reflects where he is musically and spiritually in life: He's a complete man. It takes a confident artist and grown person in this industry to put out a statement of who they are, fully, and not something that fits into some type of category."

Mentor and collaborator Terri Lyne Carrington offered Overall tips and notes along the way to *Go Get Ice Cream's* production and release. "Kassa represents the next generation of people successfully doing what I've always tried to advocate for: knowing the tradition while pushing toward new territory, genre bending and having the courage to express your artistic truth," the drummer said. "I'd love Kassa if he were only a drummer, but he is an artist with depth and understanding of what is happening in our society and culture."

Asked for an assessment of the entire creative process, Overall paused, then responded: "There are no rules, but hard work pays off. Work hard, and do whatever you want. Go get ice cream and listen to jazz."  
—Stephanie Jones

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Joe Fiedler's new album is *Open Sesame*.

# Fiedler's Deep Playfulness

**JAZZ MUSICIANS HAVE TAPPED ALL KINDS** of sources for material—folklore, hymns, Broadway—but Joe Fiedler has found his inspiration in a rather unexpected place: *Sesame Street*.

For Fiedler, the choice was obvious—and perhaps inevitable. For the past nine years, the 54-year-old trombonist has served as the musical arranger for the children's TV show. On his playful new record, *Open Sesame*, Fiedler interprets some of the program's most famous tunes, including "Sing," "Rubber Duckie" and the show's theme song, as well as lesser-known but equally

enjoyable numbers, like "Doin' The Pigeon."

"I really wanted to do something that was not so serious," said Fiedler, wearing polka-dotted socks, in an interview at a Brooklyn recording studio, where he was wrapping up the final session for the 49th season of *Sesame Street*.

His intentions, though, were far from juvenile, and the album reflects Fiedler's diverse aesthetic, as he blends elements of funk, rock, free-jazz and New Orleans polyphony into a potent mix that gives depth and texture to the light-hearted compositions, most of which were writ-

ten by Joe Raposo (1937–'89), the show's first music director.

A Pittsburgh native, Fiedler moved to New York in the early '90s and insinuated himself into the downtown scene, while actively gigging in Latin music bands, because, as he joked, "There is no such thing as making your living as a jazz trombonist."

In 2008, Fiedler was playing in Lin-Manuel Miranda's Broadway musical *In the Heights* when he met Bill Sherman, now the music director for *Sesame Street*. Sherman was impressed with Fiedler's abilities, so he brought him on to write, arrange and orchestrate cues and incidental music for the children's show.

It was a good match for Fiedler, whose favorite characters are Grover and Cookie Monster, because they both make him chuckle. Like the show, Fiedler—known for his extensive range and impressive command of multiphonics—has managed to retain a mainstream audience while striving for weirdness, a trait that comes through gloriously in his expressive all-brass quartet, Big Sackbut. "I like being more the 'out' guy in the in world," said Fiedler, who grew up watching the show.

At the beginning of his run, Fiedler set about establishing a signature sound that would distinguish his tenure at *Sesame Street*, which is now broadcast on HBO. He opted for the vibraphone instead of the glockenspiel, for example, in an effort to give his young audience a slightly more sophisticated sonic experience. "Vibes really sweeten the sound without sounding childish," he explained.

"Because he's fluid in so many styles, he's got a lot of different bags to draw from," said bassist Sean Conly, who plays on *Open Sesame* along with Jeff Lederer on saxophone, Steven Bernstein on trumpet and Michael Sarin on drums. "It's insane what the guy is capable of."

On a February evening at Dizzy's Club Coca-Cola in Manhattan, Fiedler demonstrated his trombone wizardry in a concert that featured guest appearances from both Wynton Marsalis and the beloved puppet Elmo. Though there were some children in the audience, Fiedler said that at most of the shows he's done in this vein, those who turn out often tend to be adults who grew up watching *Sesame Street* on public television in the 1970s.

Fiedler has taken a number of liberties with the material, but said that audience members still appreciate his work because they recognize the tunes. As long as the melodies are at least faintly discernible, he said, he can do a fair bit of experimentation on the margins.

With this in mind, it's amusing that, after nearly a decade composing music for kids, Fiedler has produced a tribute to *Sesame Street* that is decidedly not intended for children's ears.

"I'm not sure that kids would get it," he said.

—Matthew Kassel



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# Gillece Explores a 'Parallel Universe'

**PARALLEL UNIVERSE, THE FOURTH ALBUM** by New Jersey-based vibraphonist and composer Behn Gillece, blasts out of the gate like a thoroughbred. The program is performed by a sextet of New York City-based musicians who devour the 37-year-old's memorable compositions.

"Behn's writing is definitely a unique voice of his own," noted pianist Art Hirahara, who played on the sessions alongside tenor saxophonist Stacy Dillard, trumpeter Bruce Harris, bassist David Wong and drummer Rudy Royston. "It's inspiring to play Behn's tunes because his music is accessible. But at the same time, it also has little twists and turns that make it interesting to play."

Gillece is, by nature, eclectic, counting drummer/vibraphonist Joe Chambers, pianist Cedar Walton and guitarist Steve Giordano as his composer's trifecta.

"In the current era, there are so many musicians trying to do things that are radically different, because everybody's looking for the next thing," Gillece said. "And in a sense, I have that desire also. I'm not trying to recreate a different era. ... I've tried to not force anything. If I learn a couple new things from record to record, I try those [ideas] and work at

my evolution in that way."

There's certainly an element of hard-bop familiarity present on *Parallel Universe*, but thanks to vivid arrangements, intriguing melodies and unusual stylistic choices, the music captures a listener's imagination as it swings—hard.

The opening track, "Break The Ice," does just that: It's a high-flyer, featuring rousing solos from Gillece and Dillard, and boisterous accompaniment from Royston. "Bossa For RM" maintains a simmering pace and features breezy harmonic interplay. The brisk title track suggests a meeting between Bobby Hutcherson and Harold Land—no coincidence, considering the pair worked on countless recordings that influenced Gillece's development. Royston's knotty pocket opens "Smoke Screen," a popping funk tune enhanced by radiant solos from Gillece and Hirahara. High-speed vigor propels "Eviscerate"; Afro-Cuban rhythms drive "Shadow Of The Flame"; "Evening Glow" provides repose within a lovely ballad.

Maintaining a busy teaching schedule at Rowan University and New Jersey City University, Gillece also contributes to the website [vibesworkshop.com](http://vibesworkshop.com), has a weekly residence



Vibraphonist Behn Gillece

SARA PETTINELLA

at Chris' Jazz Cafe in Philadelphia and plays on an upcoming Posi-Tone project by the newly convened ensemble Out To Dinner. *Different Flavors*—an homage to Eric Dolphy's classic 1964 album, *Out To Lunch*—is slated for a summer release.

"Behn's compositions allow the band to interact and actually play, rather than purely serve the composition alone," Hirahara said. "He's coming out of the tradition, the swing feel, the language of bebop and post bebop, and you can really hear that." —Ken Micallef

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PHOTO: JIMMY KATZ



Lewis Porter, whose new album is titled *Solo Piano*, is in a prolific phase of his career.

## Porter Goes Truly Solo

AFTER FLIRTING WITH A CAREER IN PSYCHOLOGY, Lewis Porter, the jazz educator and pianist, turned to music full time during his twenties. But if his new album, *Solo Piano* (Next To Silence), is any indication, Porter, 67, has not lost his psychologist's passion for exploring states of consciousness.

"Ragtime Dream," one of six originals on the album, is a case in point. The song is distinguished by a precisely balanced, purposefully disorienting bitonality—the left hand sketches

ragtime chords in one key, while the right hand counters with a melody in another—that conjures an improbable pianistic hybrid of James P. Johnson-meets-Paul Bley. Tellingly, the tune came to Porter in his sleep.

"The truth is, I'm a Hollywood-style composer," he explained. "You wake up in the middle of the night and say, 'Oh, my god, I've got it!' That's how this piece happened. Only after I wrote it down did I find a title for it. I thought, 'It's kind of like a ragtime piece, only ragtime gone crazy.'"

A dreamlike state also is induced by the original tune "Through The Clouds." Appearing midway through the album, the track—built around a vaporous mass of lightly clustered chords against which single-note lines alight in the upper, lower and middle registers of the keyboard—engenders a detached sense of floating, as one might feel in the throes of a consciousness-altering meditation.

In that, the tune, which Porter described as the album's centerpiece, seems an apt metaphor for the collection as a whole. "There is something intensely meditative about just being at the piano and only thinking about what you're playing and finding the next sound," he said.

The album, Porter's first all-solo effort, is so evocative that one wonders what he might have achieved had he not devoted much of his life to academic pursuits, which often took him away from the piano. The time has been well spent, though. Beyond his early interest in psychology studies, Porter has taught jazz at several universities, pioneering a master's degree program in jazz history at Rutgers. He also has written authoritative biographies, notably 1998's *John Coltrane: His Life and Music* (University of Michigan Press). But he's had regrets about not spending more time at the keyboard. "I do say to myself all the time, 'You really should have worked on this 50 years ago,'" Porter said.

Around the time the Coltrane book came out, the pianist resolved to spend time practicing every day. Now, having given up full-time teaching, he is enjoying the fruits of those labors: "I have a saying: 'If you like where you ended up, you cannot regret how you got there.'"

By any measure, Porter is experiencing a late-career musical flowering. Last year, he released both *Beauty & Mystery* (Altrisuoni)—featuring bassist John Patitucci and drummer Terri Lyne Carrington, with saxophonist Tia Fuller as a guest—and *Longing* (Cadence Jazz), with regular bandmates Joris Teepe on bass and Rudy Royston on drums, augmented by guitarist Ray Suhy. And lately, Porter has been playing more high-profile concerts, among them duos with pianists Vijay Iyer and Ethan Iverson.

Through it all, his life as a scholar brings context to his musical interpretations—not least when he tackles Coltrane. In discussing the saxophonist's "Central Park West," which closes *Solo Piano*, Porter noted that the tune comes out of the "Giant Steps" period, circa 1960, when Coltrane was producing highly structured, change-heavy work. It thus invites patterned improvisation. But Porter (a Manhattanite who lives a block from the title street) manages to escape the trap—stretching the form, altering the chords and spinning chromatic lines around them. All of this is driven, in psychologist's lingo, subliminally.

"I'm certain that the scholarly side informs the playing side," Porter said, "but it's not in a conscious way."  
—Phillip Lutz

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# Drummer Lomax Examines the Past 400 Years

**MUSIC BORN OF THE AFRICAN DIASPORA** is ever-present in the mind of Dr. Mark Lomax II, an Ohio scholar, drummer and composer. But Lomax's latest effort, *400: An Afrikan Epic* (CFG Multimedia), holds significant meaning for him.

"This album is my 40th album, and it [was] released on my 40th birthday," said Lomax, who earned a doctorate in composition from The Ohio State University and previously was an artist-in-residence at the institution's Wexner Center for the Arts.

But three years ago, Lomax was "drinking from the proverbial fire hose" at his job in philanthropy. "I didn't feel like I was being as creative as I would have liked," he said, noting that music has been part of his life for as long as he can remember. Then, while working in his home studio, it dawned on Lomax that America was only a few years removed from marking a deeply significant part of its history.

"The number 400 generated in my spirit," he said. "I realized that we were only three years from the 400-year commemoration of the transatlantic slave trade," which brought the first enslaved Africans to American shores in 1619.

That pivotal piece of history provided a thematic backbone for the massive project, a 12-album collection of music emanating from

African diasporic traditions. Each album contains various movements that represent aspects of the cultural legacy shared internationally by black people, and the drum provides the project with its pulse and purpose.

"Rhythm, in essence, is African," Lomax said. "There is a belief across the continent, in various forms, that in the beginning, there was the drum. The drum gave birth to vibrations that created the world, the cosmos, people—all of that. For Africans, for black people, rhythm is intuitive."

The project is broken into three parts, each containing four albums. The first portion of these is titled *Alkebulan: The Beginning Of Us*, and tells the story of pre-colonial Africa through percussive music, Lomax beating in rhythm with the Ngoma Lungundu Drum Ensemble.

"As blacks on the continent and in the diaspora, we've experienced incredible highs of civilization; we were pioneers in science, math, technology," a period of innovation represented in the project's first suite of albums. "But we've also experienced the absolute low of human bondage. I wanted to express ... the strength that we have gained from coming through that experience."

*Afro-Futurism: The Return To Uhuru* is the final component of the project, which speaks of a spiritual homecoming, as Lomax envisions black



A sense of unrealized creativity led Dr. Mark Lomax to devise the 12-album set *400: An Afrikan Epic*.

people, individually and collectively, returning to ancient cultural belief systems, transforming themselves and, ultimately, the world.

In its totality, *400: An Afrikan Epic* memorializes the experiences, brilliance and sacrifices of black people and the contributions they've made to the world, of which rhythm-centered music is singular, said Lomax.

It's an ambitious and far-reaching project years in the making, the composer admitted. It required a great deal of personal introspection, historic study and creative energy. "The ancestors gave me a job," the drummer said. "And it was up to me to see it through." —Samantha Willis

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# Jazz Critic, Author Ira Gitler Dies at 90

**IRA GITLER, WHO CLAIMED THE TITLE “JAZZ activist”** for his multifaceted, seven-decade career and was named a National Endowment for the Arts Jazz Master in 2017, died Feb. 23 at the age of 90, having been hospitalized after a five-year struggle with heart disease. According to his son, Fitz Gitler, Ira was wearing a DownBeat T-shirt and listening to Art Tatum with his wife of 46 years, Mary Jo Schwalbach, when he died.

“Ira was the ideal critic of the bop era,” historian Gary Giddins said, “less dogmatic than some and a whole lot wittier than most. He kept the faith, reporting on the New York scene for decades, long after jazz went into directions he didn’t much like, invariably reliable on what he did like.”

A longtime resident of Manhattan’s Upper East Side and a familiar figure to musicians, Gitler’s work ranged from cub reporter and jazz record label go-fer to freelance writer credited with more than 700 album annotations, as well as program notes, articles, poems and lyrics. He produced classic bebop recordings and countless festivals, was a columnist, editor, author and encyclopedist, radio show host, lecturer and adjunct professor at City Colleges of New York, Manhattan School of Music and The New School. His books *Swing to Bop: An Oral History of the Transition in Jazz in the 1940s* (1985) and *Jazz Masters of the ’40s* (reissued as *The Masters of Bebop: A Listener’s Guide*) remain key documents of the era. And *The Biographical Encyclopedia of Jazz* (2007), the sixth edition of a work he’d come to in 1954 as an assistant to Leonard Feather, its original author, is acknowledged as a standard reference.

Simultaneous to his work in jazz, Gitler was a professional sports journalist, specializing in ice hockey, publishing several books on the topic and coaching a highly regarded amateur team.

His first production credit came in 1951 on a Sonny Rollins session. And although he famously coaxed a superior version of “Round Midnight” from a recalcitrant Miles Davis front line that featured Charlie Parker and Sonny Rollins, he told Jazz Forum’s Paweł Brodowski in a 1989 interview that in recording studios, “I was a liaison between the musicians and the engineers.”

Nonetheless, Gitler’s constant presence on the scene in the ’40s and ’50s heyday of 52nd Street and backstage at clubs, concert halls and festivals into the 21st century, plus his respectful curiosity about newcomers, support-players and established leaders, resulted in well-informed opinions that he delivered in clear and vivid prose: “There is a school of thought that says ‘All sound is music,’” Gitler wrote for a 1975 reissue that paired the mid-’50s Prestige recording *Gil Evans & Ten* and *A Study of Dameronia*, “but if

Cannonball Adderley (left), Ira Gitler and Dave Brubeck circa 1967



DOWNBEAT ARCHIVES/JAMES H. ALLEN

this were true then you would have to classify the early-morning grinding of a garbage truck or a fingernail running down a blackboard in this category. ... Music is sound but sound is not necessarily music.”

As he told Brodowski, “I choose to write about the things I feel are good and important and that I feel should be publicized. Maybe my role has switched from merely a critic to a jazz activist.”

Born in Brooklyn in 1928, Gitler took piano lessons from a cousin at age five, was soon introduced to jazz by his older brother’s record collection and wrote his first performance review of a Dizzy Gillespie gig at the 52nd Street Spotlight Club for the Columbia Grammar School newspaper in 1946. Already an ardent fan, Gitler led a record-listening group, scat sang and played alto saxophone, and filed jazz reports for the student newspaper at the University of Missouri, which he attended, but did not graduate from. Having formed a close relationship with Prestige founder Bob Weinstock while on school breaks, Gitler joined the label full time in 1950, and in ’51 wrote his first album liner notes for Zoot Sims’ *Swings The Blues*. He also swept floors, packed boxes, designed album covers and promoted releases to DJs.

As news of Gitler’s death spread, some of the genre’s best-known veterans were effusive about

the writer and producer.

“I knew and admired Ira for many years,” tenor saxophonist Benny Golson wrote in an email to DownBeat. “His veracity-filled rhetoric was always well thought out. His writing was never a dalliance, jejune or pell-mell. His mission always seemed to be placing readers inside of things with great understanding. His metaphoric fingers were always on the pulse of surrounding activity. I saw him symbolically retrieve Excalibur from the rock many times. He was a most valuable stitch in the fabric of journalism. We will miss Ira Gitler, who was often joyously ineffable.”

Dan Morgenstern, former director of the Institute of Jazz Studies at Rutgers University, editor of DownBeat during Gitler’s ’60s stints as New York editor, and himself a Grammy-winning record annotator and NEA Jazz Master, mourned Gitler as more than a colleague.

“Ira was my oldest friend. I could not count the times we shared the music, live or recorded, that was our passion,” Morgenstern said. “He loved Charlie Parker and even took up alto—but soon decided this was not his strength, and took up a pen instead. Miles would laughingly reminisce about Ira telling him, ‘You ain’t playing shit,’ one of the anecdotal highlights from Ira’s long career in jazz. He was the dean.”

—Howard Mandel



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BRANFORD MARSALIS

# Speaking



# His Truth

BY DENISE SULLIVAN | PHOTOS BY SCOTT CHERNIS



The Branford Marsalis Quartet's latest album, *The Secret Between The Shadow And The Soul*, features compositions by the bandleader, pianist Joey Calderazzo and bassist Eric Revis. Drummer Justin Faulkner rounds out the ensemble.

## Listening to Branford Marsalis in conversation is like hearing an accomplished improviser take a solo to the outer limits: You're confident he'll find his way back, but you have no idea when or how he'll get there.

Whether riffing on his new quartet album, his recent work with singer Kurt Elling, his dynamic jazz family, his formative experiences in Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers, his teaching experiences (at institutions such as North Carolina Central University), his interest in science or his love of sports, Marsalis speaks his truth.

"We're all music listeners," the saxophonist said of his quartet with pianist Joey Calderazzo and bassist Eric Revis—who have been with him for nearly 20 years—and drummer Justin Faulkner, who joined the fold 10 years ago, filling the chair formerly occupied by Jeff "Tain" Watts. "If you see us on a plane, every guy in the band has headphones on."

The quartet's new album, *The Secret Between The Shadow And The Soul* (Okeh/Sony Masterworks), is as immediately intimate as it is infinitely expansive, reflecting a deep interconnectedness between the players. Marsalis contributed just one composition to the set, the gloriously moody "Life Filtering From The Water Flowers." Revis wrote the album's more adventuresome pieces: the exuberant opener "Dance Of The Evil Toys" and the more somber "Nilaste." Calderazzo brought in "Cianna" and "Conversation Among The Ruins," two songs he'd been performing with his trio between road gigs with the Marsalis quartet and Elling.

All of the song selections mutually were

agreed upon by the quartet, including the reanimations of Keith Jarrett's "The Windup" and Andrew Hill's "Snake Hip Waltz."

The album serves as a snapshot of where the quartet currently stands: at the top of its game. The same can be said for the band's onstage presentation, as evidenced by a Jan. 20 concert during an SFJAZZ residency in San Francisco. The quartet worked collaboratively, respectfully and intuitively, and the trust between the musicians was palpable. Marsalis led, but didn't dominate, giving his bandmates plenty of space to shine.

During the past four decades, Marsalis has traversed vast musical territories. Whether leading his own groups on stages and in studios across the globe; playing alongside artists as diverse as Public Enemy, Tina Turner and the Grateful Dead; appearing on Broadway, in films and on TV; and pursuing a classical music career, his ability to shape-shift and improvise remains central to not only who he is, but who he's becoming.

DownBeat caught up with Marsalis over breakfast on the third day of his recent residency. Below are edited excerpts from the conversation.

**You've performed in San Francisco many times. How would you characterize the city and its audience for jazz?**

You know, in all places there are several audiences. I remember when I moved to New York,

they'd say, "There's not a lot of jazz fans." And then they'd say, "There's not a lot of blacks who like jazz." Then we did a free concert and there were black people, white people, tall people, short people—everybody, and they were enthusiastic.

When we were younger we were here a lot. It's changed. There are several San Franciscos, never more than now. I remember when we were playing The Great American Music Hall, and it was packed. The cover was 10 to 15 bucks. That's not what it is anymore. There's always going to be a situation where there are audiences more apt to afford it and less likely to enjoy it. It's the same in sports: The most expensive seats in the stadium sit empty more often than not. The average fan is priced out of the reality. People have always had to decide what they can and can't spend their money on. I was a Mets season ticket holder. I remember when they were in old raggedy-ass Shea Stadium. You could go to a professional baseball game for \$25. Now, that's the price of popcorn and a Coke. So who is jazz for? Music is for everybody, but there are market realities.

There were some guys in New York that had a jazz meeting, and they were [reminiscing] about 52nd Street: "We need to get back to that, gigs for everybody." I was talking to Blakey about all sorts of things, I talked to Roy Haynes, and Benny Golson, and all these guys were like, "We need to bring back 52nd Street."

It's really easy, I said. All we have to do is sign a pact and say we will agree to play from 9 p.m. till 4 a.m. every night—45 minutes on, 45 minutes off, and agree to play for 40 bucks. There will be clubs as far as the eye can see. That was 52nd Street. You talk to the old guys about it, and they say the music part was great. Every other aspect of it sucked.

One advantage I think I have over a lot of

people I meet is I'm not a fan of anything, except New Orleans sports teams: I cheer for the Saints. I want them to win. Notice I don't say I want *us* to win. I want *them* to win. I love those guys. I used to sell programs in the stadium just to watch the games. But my father helped me understand that "we" benefits the team, but it doesn't really benefit you since you don't receive any of the largesse of their success. So you need to create a line that delineates what you support from what you actually are.

**Is your team the jazz lineage—the musical tradition that will carry on after you're gone?**

Despite all of the prognostications to the contrary, yes, it shall carry on. But I'm not working for that team. I love jazz. I love music. And I've learned how to play all styles of music. I don't take a one-sound-fits-all approach, learn five unique licks that are mine and impose them on everything. I avoid that way of thinking. We get caught up in all this useless crap. The word "innovation" in jazz is a joke. None of this shit is innovative. The only thing that can be innovative in music, anyway, is sound.

Wynton said something once in a discussion that knocked me out, talking about innovation in jazz. Jazz didn't invent harmony: All the harmony jazz guys use has been used in one iteration or another in classical music in the last 100 years. True. The two things that jazz contributed to the world were consistent use of the flatted third and the flatted seventh in the melodic context and the swing beat. That's it. Now, you think about modern music, and they employ neither technique. So, they bandy this word "innovation" around, and the innovation is based on structure. It's all been done! So, then to make it unique, a lot of modern music is ostinato bass lines on odd meters.

And songs are no longer called songs; they're called vehicles for improvisation—as though improvisation is the provenance of jazz. Every culture has improvised over the last 5,000 years. You can hear improvisation in klezmer music, in Balinese music, Indian music, in bluegrass music, in the blues. And the irony is that most of the people who are called improvisers aren't really improvisers. They're just regurgitating. And at the same time, with a straight face, they say, "I wonder why no one likes jazz anymore." [laughs]

**Could you talk about the way you've pulled from classical, New Orleans and jazz and put it together in new way?**

Think about it this way: If the goal of playing jazz is to be new, and new means you're playing things that no one's ever heard before, then if you were really interested in being new, it'd be in your benefit to learn no jazz at all. Because then anything you play will sound new because it is disconnected from any sem-

blance to tradition. ... I just want to be good. I want to be in a musical situation where, if our band fell into a time machine, people would say, "I don't know what that shit is, but they're really good at it." The goal is *good*; I don't really care about *new*. Sometimes that stuff winds up being new, but that's to be decided later.

Think about [how] John Coltrane plays "Impressions," and you read all these reviews where they're saying, "This is new, this is new, this is new," when the whole piece was composed chapter-and-verse by a guy named Morton Gould in 1939. I don't know any good music that isn't borrowed from somewhere else. It has nothing to do with where the data comes from; it's about how the data sounds. And, yes, he took "Impressions" from American Symphonette No. 2: "Pavane." It sure don't sound like American Symphonette No. 2: "Pavanne" when he plays it. And that's all that really matters. So, I've been stealing since I joined Blakey's band and understood the interconnectivity of all these guys when they start talking about who they listen to, and how they grew up, and what their influences were.

**You've been playing the songs on the new album for a couple of years live; how did you winnow it down to the seven on the album?**

Those are the songs I like. Those are the songs the guys in the band like.

**Was "The Windup" something you'd been doing in the set?**

We played it two years ago. And then we started playing with Kurt [Elling], so we switched into that gear. I'd been wanting to play the song for years. I went through a lazy period where I was listening and practicing a lot of saxophone, but what I hadn't done in a long time was sit down with a set of headphones and listen to a song and just write the song out. I'm not a fan of fakebooks, except in emergency situations, because every time I commit to writing a song down, that makes me better. It doesn't make me better to download it. I wrote down "The Windup" chart and said, "Here you go, let's do this tonight." And they all said yea! Because we all know the record. We've heard the record a million times.

**When you teach, can students keep up with your ideas about sound, listening and learning?**

No. Because they're not old like us. They're 19. Most of my students come in with a completely separate idea of what jazz actually is.

**And what is that?**

That it's learning how to play certain kind of repetitive licks and patterns over chord structure.

I say two things to the students: "Why are



**BANDMATES AS COMPOSERS**

Bassist Eric Revis and pianist Joey Calderazzo, both longtime members of the Branford Marsalis Quartet, each contributed two songs to *The Secret Between The Shadow And The Soul* (OKeh/Sony Masterworks).

Revis' "Dance Of The Evil Toys" is a piece that was inspired by Russian classical composers. "Prokofiev in particular," Revis explained. "It came fairly quickly." He described his other contribution, "Nilaste," as "an extended tone poem."

Revis wrote the songs during a 2018 residency at The Jazz Gallery. "Usually, my process is to write, revise, and write more—but this was two weeks of no distractions," he said.

In contrast, Calderazzo had been playing "Cianna" and "Conversation Among The Ruins" with his trio since 2016.

"Branford and I did 'Cianna' as a duo, too, and I said, 'This will work good in the quartet; it's not a really great trio song,'" Calderazzo recalled. "There's a way, when Branford plays the melody, I kind of play it with him, and we do things to stretch out a little. We actually play the melody different every night, but we do it together."

Calderazzo's other ballad, "Conversation Among The Ruins," originally was titled "Free," and has been reworked with a new arrangement for the quartet. Calderazzo recalled, "I'd played it with Eric, and he said, 'You should bring this to Branford—it's the perfect song for him.'"

—Denise Sullivan



The quartet's current lineup, featuring Faulkner, Marsalis, Revis and Calderazzo, has been together since 2009.

## How is the Musicians' Village in New Orleans doing?

It's doing great. Harry [Connick Jr.] and I did two fundraisers. All across the country, when it comes to poor neighborhoods, they've got basketball programs and all these other things—which is good for basketball and football teams because they're always looking for talent. It's great for us to be able to get the kids who aren't physically gifted but intellectually gifted and have them do something other than watch cartoons until their parents get home from work.

One year in, the parents asked us, "How come y'all don't teach adults?" So, the parents forced us to start adult classes, and now you've got parents and kids playing together. It doesn't matter if they become musicians or not. New Orleans proved that. Musicians become musicians. You don't have to get a school to create musicians. They just show up. It's just a matter of giving them information that can make them better. The whole idea is to teach a kid to self-correct, identify problems, solve it though logic.

## When you tour outside of the U.S., do you have a sense of being regarded as representative of jazz, America and African Americans?

I don't think they put that much thought in it. Why should they? I got off a plane: There are some musicians from Dresden with traditional instruments playing Bach's St. John Passion.

I sat in the audience and I fucking loved it. And not one time did I think they are representing the German people; they are representing Dresden. It's either good or it's not. They either like it or they don't.

## I was thinking of the State Department's jazz diplomacy campaigns.

Back then? Yeah, they did that. It was mostly in Communist and African countries. Louis Armstrong going to Africa. It was done to improve the image of the United States, which was starting to be known around the world as a racist place. The Soviets were more than willing to exploit Jim Crow for their own purposes. But there was no fervent belief in the United States that we had to represent African Americans in a better light in 1952. It was to create a valuable counter-narrative to what the Soviets were putting out. And it was pretty easy to do: Just grab films of Bull Connor spraying pregnant women with water hoses, dogs biting people, and beating them with truncheons. The State Department's idea wasn't pure, but it was awesome. Politically, it makes perfect sense. Musically, it makes sense.

We did State Department tours. The gig is on YouTube. It's Wynton in Warsaw, 1983. They didn't want the musicians to fraternize with us. We met these musicians and stayed up almost all night and we talked about music in America and they talked about music in Poland. They said, "We can't get records here. Can you send

you here?" They don't have an answer. Then, "Play a C scale two octaves up and down." They play it. [I ask,] "What does that sound like?" They have no idea. So, we've established, in less than a minute, you have no idea why you're here and you have no idea what you sound like. The lesson's pretty much over. "When you figure out one of those, come back and we can start." Some of them tell me, "Go screw yourself," and they don't come back. Which is a win for me. The majority of them come back, and from that point forward, we're about to have real lessons about what it means to play music. People want to go to school and hear they're good. They should want to go and hear they suck. They don't go for information; they go for affirmation.

## You mentioned posting scientific and other articles on Twitter. Do you find that reading about a variety of subjects helps to rest or work your brain differently than music does?

I don't know. Most musicians I know tend not to be that way. When you go to music sites, they just post about music. It's not for me. There's a one-dimensionality to it that's not to my liking. My dad and I didn't agree on that, but I've always had that kind of holistic thinking. We were forced to live in multiple worlds. We were living in a predominantly black neighborhood at that time and I was going to predominantly white schools. So, especially growing up post-segregation, which meant it was still there although not in law but in mindset, you had to negotiate these worlds. One of the things my dad said that was really helpful: "You don't allow other people to define you. Because if you don't believe what they say, then what they say really doesn't matter." That really helped me when I moved to New York.

People were joining all these music camps, people saying what is and isn't possible, what's good and not good based on absolutely nothing other than their personal opinion. I started lis-

tening to music for hours and hours and hours. And I started hearing things in music that I didn't hear before. And then you say something like, "It's really interesting when you listen to the [1967] Miles Davis record *Sorcerer*. On the first song, "Prince Of Darkness," Miles gets lost in the middle of the solo and he's a half beat off about the entire second half of the solo." And everyone says, "Man, that's bullshit." No, it's not, really. I heard it. You can hear the band bring him back to where the beat is; you can hear Tony Williams banging out the tempo. And in the end, they just go where Miles goes. Because he is Miles. As you get older, you realize, Miles was an old man, born in the '20s, grew up listening to Louis Armstrong, trying to stay modern. It's not like he could hear all that stuff they were playing. What he did was masterful. Wayne Shorter starts creating all these complex structures, Miles can't hear the structures, so he just tells Herbie to stroll. Herbie doesn't play the chords, so anything Miles plays sounds right. And what he mostly plays are a couple of chromatic scales and a couple of phrases and things he'd done in his prior musical lifetime. And I've been there, and I use that technique sometimes [laughs].

When you talk to other people: "Miles had the vision and the forward thinking and he hired these guys and he taught them." He didn't teach them anything. Nothing. Because he didn't know it. So, to say that, people go, "This is heresy!" It's really not. It's on the record. It's right there. You can check it out if you're listening. Most people think that I'm a contrarian because I don't agree. I don't agree not because it's cool to not agree. I put on this record: It doesn't matter how many hundreds of you can't hear it. I hear what this shit is. I'm saying it's this because it is that. Not because I want to make a name for myself by going against the grain. Hell, in modern jazz, aural scholarship is against the grain. You start talking about hearing and they start talking about knowing.



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us tapes?" The list was so long it took us weeks to buy these TDK cassette tapes and record all this music, put it in a box, and send it to these guys. The State Department didn't plan on that.

[Calderazzo and Revis approach Marsalis, and the bandmates exchange greetings.]

**Marsalis:** Sleepy, huh? I've been up since 6. I went and washed clothes.

**I was going to ask you about the earliness of the hour.**

They don't get up. I do. My son was born in 1985, and that was it for me. I was up at 6. "But you're a jazz musician, you must sleep in late." No. My entire life is a series of stereotypes. Sure, I'll be up at 6, but you come around at noon, so you can feel better about your stereotypes. I got into it with a jazz writer a couple of days ago. We were talking about styles of music, and I kept talking about [how] you have to find a way to communicate with people in the music you play. Modern musicians are more interested in communicating with other musicians, which is useless. And he said, "A lot of people don't agree

with you." People respond to sound. It's just that simple. If you play a ballad and somebody's affected by it, they're not going to come to you and say, "When you just played that super lydian scale, I just lost it." It's never going to happen. If it's real, it's unexplained, it's just a sound.

#### What pieces take you there?

"A Love Supreme" does it. The Billie Holiday record *Lady In Satin*. The Sinatra record *Only The Lonely*. Mahler's Ninth. Glenn Gould, Brahms' Intermezzo In A Major. I heard that once, and Glenn Gould plays it so exceptionally well that when they went back to the recapitulation, I was driving with my wife and I just started crying and she said, "What happened?" And I said, "Didn't you hear it? It's so beautiful." Peter Lieberston and his wife, Lorraine Hunt Lieberston, *Neruda Songs* [2006]. She was dying of cancer, and he wrote these songs, and she sang them with the Boston Symphony just before she died. You can hear the joy in her voice amidst the pathos, very similar to what Neruda writes about, anyway. The duality. It's never one or the other. It's not happy or sad. It's like the blues: Yes, it has a flatted third and, yes, it has a flatted seventh, but it is not a minor sound. You have to make the minor sound major. And that's the trick. It's a mixolydian scale, I think they call it.

The sound of the blues is happy. Louis Armstrong sits on the flatted third and it makes you want to jump up in church and scream from the mountain. Tchaikovsky did this really funny thing where he would write things in a major [key] and make you want to slit your wrist. It's about how it sounds.

If you listen to *Carnival Of The Animals* by Camille Saint-Saëns, he names all the pieces after animals. ... It sounds like ... animals. Then he does this one called "Aquarium," and it sounds like somebody swimming. It sounds aquatic. That's the power of sound. How are you going to talk about that technically, to get that to happen? You have to have a great musical imagination to make that happen.

#### What do you think is going to happen to jazz in the future?

Look, I've got three dudes in my band. I only need three. I don't need a 100; I don't need 300. The world doesn't need 300. Those kinds of discussions are silly—not with you, because you listen to jazz. I'm being interviewed perpetually by people who don't listen to jazz, who are asking me if jazz is going to survive. What kind of question is that? [They say,] "Fewer and fewer people like jazz. ... Jazz is dying; people aren't listening." Yet it still exists. We are still here. There will always be one-half of a percent of the country that will like it. And one-half of a percent of the country is like 1.5 million people. We're good. We'll be all right. We don't need 300 guys. We just need five really, really good ones.

DB

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**BUILDING SOME**



**A spirit of camaraderie and collaboration permeated the room when Vijay Iyer and Craig Taborn took the stage of Greenwich Village's Le Poisson Rouge during this year's Winter Jazz Fest.**

Before a densely packed house, and in a coveted time slot during a two-night focus on artists who record for the ECM label, the two vibrant pianists bravely faced off on Steinway grands.

They embarked on a wholly improvised concert, blending thematic and atmospheric ideas, moving fluidly between dissonance and consonance. Though cooked up on the spot, a certain compositional logic readily was apparent. As a whole, the pianists generated a palpable sense of a duet with an ensemble sensibility, creating a spontaneous musical entity.

Although Iyer and Taborn have been performing as a duo intermittently for more than a dozen years, their first official album just has been released. *The Transitory Poems* (ECM) was recorded at the Liszt Ferenc Academy of Music in Budapest on March 12, 2018.

Though each pianist is distinctive in his own right, commonalities bind the pair, including having worked with and/or been heavily influenced by AACM artists such as Roscoe Mitchell and Muhal Richard Abrams. Both pianists also are bright,

# THING MAJESTIC

BY JOSEF WOODARD | PHOTO BY MONICA JANE FRISSELL



Craig Tabor (left) and Vijay Iyer pay tribute to artists and pianists who recently have passed on *Transitory Poems*.

sophisticated lights of the rebolstered New York contingent of ECM's diverse roster. In 2017, the label released Iyer's sextet album, *Far From Over*, and Taborn's quartet recording, *Daylight Ghosts*.

The duo debut, though, is something unique. The album's title is taken from a 1994 interview that Chris Funkhouser conducted with Cecil Taylor (1929–2018). The album's program includes memorial tributes to Taylor, along with other important jazz pianists who recently have passed—including Abrams (1930–2017) and Geri Allen (1957–2017).

As Iyer explained, "We decided, in retrospect, that it would be an homage, essentially to Geri and Muhal and Cecil, and the [visual] artist Jack Whitten. They all passed [away recently], and they were all on our minds and directly impacted us."

Early on a Sunday afternoon following their triumphant festival show, the pair faced off in a very different context, speaking across a boardroom table in ECM's New York office. During a rangy interview, they swapped ideas, theories, jokes and piano talk from various angles. Below are edited excerpts from the conversation.

**DownBeat:** Do you have any reflections on last night's performance at Le Poisson Rouge?

**Vijay Iyer:** It felt like it added up nicely to something. Every concert is really its own thing. Having made the album and listened to it enough times now, it's almost like, "I have to not do that, to not think in that way." The focus is on process for us and on just managing the energy as the time passes, and creating a certain spectrum of energies, a certain kind of variety, and also having a trajectory. But we don't often sit, in retrospect, and say, "Oh, we should have

done this."

I've learned a lot from Craig, since he's been doing something similar in a solo context for many years, before we started together. [to Taborn] I remember a question I asked you early on: "How does one think about form in that context, when you're starting from scratch?" I know how I do it with a trio, for example. That's more about selecting from repertoire. All the set lists for my band are spontaneous, and you probably do something similar. That's about, "OK, where are we right now and what needs to happen? How do we want to redirect the flow of energy?"

But in the context of something where you're just building from scratch, it's something else. We've used different strategies over the years, to force the process. But maybe that just trained us to think about it efficiently.

**Craig Taborn:** One of the biggest differences, even though both contexts are driven by improvisation, is that when you have pieces or those information sets, they are a sort of armature around which you can improvise. You can either really use those strongly, as nodal points, or use them to redirect a flow, but they are actual things, so whatever you're draping over them is already formed.

But with what we're doing, it's almost the opposite. It's the inverse, where you have to discover what the armature is. Sometimes, it's very evident that we've arrived at a thing that is the strong statement that is buttressing everything that had come before and probably will with everything after. We're making an aesthetic determination that we've arrived at something, and maybe it's time to move to another space.

It has been interesting, especially with two

people. When you do it solo, you have that awareness and then dismiss it—or not. But with the both of us, we're aware of that together. That's the challenge and also the art of this process. Every time we've done it, there has been a unified sense of what this emerging structure is. As you go on through the evening, it's established: OK, that happened, and you can determine pacing.

I use, in the most abstract sense, the term "narrative," almost more architecturally. It describes just how things are unfolding, the pacing and sound and register—all the kinds of elements of music go into that. But it's really about determining what form emerges from these structural points. Toward the end of the concert, this structure has emerged and there have been strong points. These possibilities have opened themselves.

**So, it really is a musical entity built "from scratch" at this point?**

**Iyer:** Yeah, it is. It is also about, "How do we key into what each other is doing?" [laughs] Sometimes, one of us lays something down and the other encounters it and interacts with it. Maybe it can be in a soloistic way or a co-constructive way. Out of those different logics or different relational maneuvers, something starts to accumulate out of all of that.

But we also have the sense of, "OK, that's probably enough." Often, sooner rather than later, we'll decide, "OK, let's take a turn here."

**Taborn:** That's the biggest danger for all improvising of that sort. In the attempt to figure out what one is doing, once you determine, "Oh, this is what we're doing," you almost start to fall behind the process of improvisation. It's really dangerous to say, "OK, this is it!" So, we're done? [laughs] You also have to ask to invite an interrogation and a development. That's what's great about improvisation.

It was probably already there for both of us, but playing with Roscoe really gets you into understanding that, so you don't bog down.

**I first heard this duo perform in Norway, at the Moldejazz festival. Where did that concert fall, in terms of this project's overall life span?**

**Iyer:** That was in 2017. We'd been playing duo concerts for about 10 years by then. It started inside of Roscoe Mitchell's Note Factory, in the early 2000s. So, that dates it back about 18 years, actually. It has been an evolving process. Even the process of listening and relating in this particular way was born, basically, in the apprenticeship mode with Roscoe Mitchell.

The first duo concerts were at the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton. We built it over a week and then we did a couple of nights' worth of concerts. That really felt like the beginning of something.

**You both appear on the epic, 21-disc Art Ensemble box set released by ECM last year.**

**Iyer:** Oh, yes, with *Far Side* [recorded in 2007 by Roscoe Mitchell's The Note Factory, featuring both Iyer and Taborn on piano]. And [Wadada Leo Smith's 1979 album] *Divine Love* is on there—that's one of the greatest albums of all time, without a doubt.

**You belong to the group of musicians connected to ECM and the AACM.**

**Iyer:** That's right. I started recording for ECM in 2013 and people kept asking me, "What's it like to be on the same label as Chick Corea

and showed me two things about where to voice things in the register. It was like a light bulb. It was about the overtones. He was saying, "See, these are doing that, so you might put that here. ..." It was just a little thing and he wasn't being invasive. I was saying, "Oh, of course, that's it." I was freaked out. That was within the first year of my moving to New York [from Minneapolis].

**Was Muhal a guiding light for both of you?**

**Iyer:** Certainly. I met him when I was visiting New York in '96 or '97. I had talks with him. He gave me some recommendations and just sort of kept me in the mix. He was always open and

**interview with Muhal, who spoke simply, yet profoundly.**

**Iyer:** Yes, always. Then the concert on Sunday with The Trio [Abrams, Mitchell and Lewis]. That was one of Muhal's final performances. People were in tears after that. We were lucky to share the planet with him in those years.

**The *Transitory Poems* was recorded last year in Budapest. What was special about that particular show?**

**Iyer:** It was a beautiful place to record. The instruments were really nice. Things added up in a nice way. Each night [on that tour] had its own discoveries, but a lot came out of this Budapest concert. We had some nice, compact statements of certain ideas that made sense to piece together. I think we reordered a few things and maybe there were a couple of things we cut, but it was mostly that concert. It's nice to have a whole evening intact, so you get a sense of the arc of a performance.

**Craig, how different is the context between a solo piano setting and a duo with the same instrument? Is it exponentially different?**

**Taborn:** It is, but the more relative factor is the other pianist. I've done other piano duos.

**Iyer:** So have I.

**Taborn:** From the outside, people seem to wonder, "Oh, there are two pianos. How do you negotiate that?" But it's really about negotiating two pianists [laughs]. That's the real key factor.

**Iyer:** Because the two-piano problem has basically been solved already. We've had centuries of that. Stravinsky and Stockhausen have dealt with that.

You just want people to think orchestrationally and compositionally—one of the things we learned from Roscoe. [to Taborn] I remember you described early on "a strategy of avoidance." One of Roscoe's pet peeves is when people follow each other. That has a way of bogging things down. It means you're second-guessing someone and not really contributing to the music. Then it becomes more about how you tune into these different streams of information and hear it all as counterpoint, rather than try to play each other's shit back at them.

But then there are moments where we just merge. It's beyond imitation: We're building this thing and we're reinforcing something. Then it's actually more orchestrational.

**Taborn:** Absolutely. That kind of coincidence occurs through a process of actually thinking the same way, not that I'm listening to Vijay and then aping his thing. It's like, "Oh, we've arrived at that because there is some synchronicity in our ..."

**Iyer:** Process.

**Taborn:** Our process. That's a wonderful thing. That's not following, by definition. It's something else [laughs].

**DB**

**"EVERY SOUND YOU MAKE IS A CHOICE, AND IT'S A CHOICE MADE IN RELATION TO EVERYTHING HAPPENING AROUND YOU." — CRAIG TABORN**

and Gary Burton and Pat Metheny and Keith Jarrett and so on?" I would say, "Well, I'm on the same label as Lester Bowie." That, to me, was very important. What about [Bowie's] *Avant Pop*, or what about Wadada [Leo Smith] and his *Divine Love*? There were all those seminal Art Ensemble albums I loved—*Nice Guys*, *The Third Decade*.

What defined ECM, to me, before anything else, was all of that stuff. There was a sense of continuity that made sense to me, because I had apprenticed with all these guys and collaborated with them—and continue to. I learned so much about music in their presence. Certainly, seeing the Art Ensemble live and seeing Roscoe and Malachi [Favors Maghostut] and all of them in different guises in the '90s was formative for me. I wouldn't be the musician I am without all of them. Getting to work with them in different ways over the years has been critical.

I hear that mode of listening and that mode of collaborative creation as one of the defining elements of ECM records. When the history is told, people tend to foreground all of this other stuff, but to me, that [AACM-affiliated] stuff is key. I think if you asked Manfred [Eicher, ECM founder and head], he'd probably agree.

**Taborn:** It's also evident to me. My first work with Roscoe, for instance, was on the *Nine To Get Ready* recording [made in 1997]. I was playing Roscoe's music for the first time and beginning to learn that approach to improvising, while working with Manfred. The whole thing is of a piece for me, in my memory.

I also met Muhal then. He attended the rehearsal, just to show support. He came over

always had some very insightful things to say about music and about the world. Also, I was working with Steve Coleman in the '90s, and that was around the time when Steve was getting to know Muhal, so he was often around.

I was also very close with George Lewis, starting in '94. He became an informal and formal mentor. He was on my doctoral committee [for a Ph.D. earned at the University of California, Berkeley]. We've been in league ever since.

But Muhal was really important. He had this way of making all these connections across disparate fields of inquiry. He could make philosophical utterances in very plain-spoken language that would stay with you. There was something he told me, in the '90s, about Monk. He said, "Yeah, Monk was always creating." I still think about that phrase almost every day. Monk was a composer and an improviser and a bandleader and a piano player. All of those things were somehow one thing. Even as the decades went by and he was playing the same music, he was still creating in every moment.

You can understand that sensibility and see how it carries over into someone like Muhal or Roscoe or Wadada. Even when you have fixed elements in your music, the way you relate to them and the process is very open. Every sound you make is a choice, and it's a choice made in relation to everything happening around you and everything that's part of the fabric of your music.

**Vijay, the 2017 Ojai Music Festival, which you directed, featured a memorable performance by The Trio and also an AACM-themed onstage**





CYRILLE AIMÉE

# Rekindled

# ENERGY

BY TERRY PERKINS | PHOTOS BY NOÉ CUGNY

As she sat in a rocking chair sipping tea on the front porch of her New Orleans apartment on a recent rainy morning, singer Cyrille Aimée reflected on the major changes she'd made in her musical career and personal life during the previous 18 months.

"2017 was a crazy time for me," she said. "I broke up my band and with my boyfriend, and I decided to leave New York after 10 years there and move to New Orleans. And during that time, I was also trying to work on my new album, which was all songs by Stephen Sondheim."

Breaking up the band she had worked with for four years involved ending a romantic relationship with Michael Valeanu, who played guitar and contrib-

uted arrangements and compositions to Aimée's Mack Avenue albums *It's A Good Day*, *Let's Get Lost* and *Live*.

"I loved my band," she continued. "But the music we were playing was all about the band sound on our recordings, and it was the band sound that counted most. And I really knew I wanted to move away from that and focus more on songs and lyrics—with a variety of orchestration possibilities for different songs in everything I did."



For *Move On: A Sondheim Adventure*, vocalist Cyrille Aimée selected a bevy of Stephen Sondheim compositions she felt resonated with her own experiences.

The French native's decision to move to New Orleans initially was motivated by a visit there three years ago with friends, a trip that left her with an appreciation of the city's unique culture and a strong attraction to its fertile music scene.

"When I first came here, I fell in love with the place," Aimée, 34, said. "I had traveled across the U.S. many times, but this was really different. And the music scene was very different from New York. Here in New Orleans, music is fun. And in New York, it's more about the mind over the heart—the drive to be the best. You have a tendency to forget that music is fun. Moving here helped me find my gypsy energy again."

Aimée's reference to "gypsy energy" nods to her most lasting musical influence while growing up in the village of Samois-sur-Seine. The town is the site of an annual music festival honoring the guitarist Django Reinhardt (1910–'53), who moved there in 1951.

"Every June in the village, they hold a festival named after Django Reinhardt," she said. "Bands of gypsies come from all over and camp out for the week of the festival. I used to sneak out at night and go to hear the gypsies play their music, and that's when I first fell in love with jazz. There was a real feeling of freedom in the music and the improvisation of the musicians. That was when I knew that I wanted to be a jazz singer."

Aimée's dream of becoming a jazz singer has taken her around the world. That path now has led to New Orleans, to a less band-defined, more individual musical focus, and to the challenge of recording the new album *Move On: A Sondheim Adventure* (Mack Avenue). And that path is root-

ed in her early experiences hearing and singing Reinhardt-style "gypsy" jazz; and the inspiration it gave her to improvise her own path as a professional musician.

As she grew older, Aimée's musical path took her to Paris, where she enrolled in the American School of Modern Music and began to perform with friends on the streets of the city, eventually playing small clubs.

At age 19, Aimée sent a video of herself singing to *Star Academy*, a French TV show similar to *American Idol*. She was one of 16 finalists chosen from more than 5,000 applicants. But just before the first show was to air, she was told to sign a restrictive contract that dictated exactly what songs she could perform. Because she wouldn't be able to sing jazz, Aimée refused, creating a media controversy with her decision.

More determined than ever to pursue a career in jazz, Aimée left France and enrolled in the Conservatory of Music at Purchase College, part of the State University of New York. Located 30 miles from New York City, SUNY–Purchase proved to be an ideal location for an up-and-coming jazz vocalist. At the university, she met musicians such as keyboardist Assaf Gleizner and trumpeter Wayne Tucker, both of whom she would work with repeatedly in the ensuing years.

Aimée soon began to sit in and eventually get regular gigs in New York at clubs like Smalls, but her first major break came back in Europe during 2007, when she was named the winner of a jazz vocal competition presented by the Montreux Jazz Festival.

The prize included financing and studio time

for a recording, and the result was her 2008 debut, *Cyrille Aimée And The Surreal Band*, recorded in Switzerland.

"I convinced some of my musician friends to take a backpacking trip to Europe in 2006, and we busked in cities we visited," she recalled. "We went back again in the summer of 2007, but that time we decided to contact jazz festivals and see if we could play in exchange for a place to stay and meals. I also took a chance and entered the Montreux competition, and I got to do my first recording."

Things began to happen quickly upon her return to the States. Aimée recorded a 2009 duo album, *Smile*, with Brazilian guitarist Diego Figueiredo, and followed with a 2010 album, *Live At Smalls* (SmallsLIVE), which featured trumpeter Roy Hargrove, tenor saxophonist Joel Frahm and pianist Spike Wilner.

That same year, Aimée placed third in the Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz International Vocal Competition. Aimée released another duet album with Figueiredo, *Just The Two Of Us* (Venus), and further established her credentials by winning the inaugural Sarah Vaughan International Jazz Vocal Competition in 2012.

Aimée signed with Mack Avenue Records and released her debut album for the label, *It's A Good Day*, in 2014. But an earlier event, in November 2013, would lay the foundation for her love of Sondheim's music: a theatrical show in New York that included 24 of his compositions.

The production, *A Bed and a Chair: A New York Love Affair*, was a coproduction of New York City Center and Jazz at Lincoln Center. It fea-

tured the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra backing Aimeé and Broadway performers such as Bernadette Peters and Norm Lewis.

"I discovered Sondheim when I did that show with Bernadette Peters," Aimeé recalled. "And after that experience, I thought, 'Wow I want to get deeper into his repertoire.' I ended up doing one of his songs that I sang in that show, 'Live Alone And Like It,' on my *Let's Get Lost* record, but I wanted to cover more.

"Sondheim's songs just grabbed me," Aimeé continued. "They are very today, very modern,

ed it to be my own interpretation. And it turned out that the songs I chose were a reflection of my story—everything that happened to me then. It turned out to be a really amazing way for me to move on." The next step in the process was developing appropriate arrangements for the tunes. Aimeé knew she didn't want to use the same instrumentation for the entire program. She wanted to place each song in a setting that would work for that individual melody and set of lyrics.

"I wanted it to be orchestrated to add different colors for the songs on the record by vary-

derful that he likes it."

During the phone interview, Aimeé was clearly looking forward to performing the Sondheim songs on a U.S. tour that started in February at Birdland in New York. (Upcoming dates include the Dakota in Minneapolis on April 3, City Winery in Chicago on April 5 and World Cafe Live in Philadelphia on April 14.)

In addition to the new album and tour, Aimeé is focused on taking the opportunity to perform as much as possible in her new hometown whenever she's not on the road.

"I had no issues connecting with local musicians here," she said. "There's really a lot of energy around the music scene. I've been sitting in at different clubs and I've also started a monthly series here at a club called SideBar NOLA. I'm going to be playing in a duo with Nicholas Payton tonight, and we're getting together this afternoon to rehearse."

Judging by the performance that night at SideBar, the rehearsal must have gone well. Payton, alternating between Fender Rhodes, trumpet and acoustic bass, accompanied Aimeé's vocals for a crowd that entirely filled the small club and had people standing outside the doors just to hear the music.

The set featured plenty of standards, such as "After You've Gone," "All Of Me" and "How Deep Is The Ocean?" The approach the two musicians took was fresh, featuring plenty of scatting from Aimeé and strong solos by Payton as he moved smoothly among instruments.

During the second set, Aimeé used a looper to record vocal tracks, play them back and scat over them as Payton crafted a funk groove that brought the crowd to its feet.

During a phone interview, Payton talked about his performances with Aimeé in New Orleans: "The first time I played with Cyrille was November last year with Trumpet Mafia in tribute to Roy Hargrove," Payton recalled. "We kept in touch after that, and she invited me to play with her at SideBar, and I really enjoyed that. We just did another duo performance in early February, and that went well, too.

"Cyrille is a complete musician," Payton added. "What she does with the looper is entertaining, sure, but the fact that she hears all the parts orchestrally is pretty brilliant. She's also a true improviser, which is rare these days. Her processing speed is fast, so when she hears something, she can jump on it and take it to another level instantaneously."

New Orleans seems like the perfect place for Aimeé to reside.

"Music is such a vital part of life here," she said. "It's a necessary part of life in New Orleans—like eating and sleeping. There's a deep emotion in the music that comes through very strong. And it's the same feeling I had when I was singing with the gypsies at the Django Festival back in France."

DB

"I knew that one of the things I wanted to do at some point was to record a whole album of Sondheim songs."

and are easy to relate to. It seemed super strange to me that jazz musicians weren't playing more of his songs, since they are melodically incredible and so rich in harmony.

"I knew that one of the things I wanted to do at some point was to record a whole album of Sondheim songs. So, I wanted to see what other songs he had that might work for me. I started by looking online. But I couldn't find many recorded versions of his songs that I really liked. Except for Bernadette Peters, I thought the other versions of his songs done by Broadway singers didn't appeal that much to me. I wanted to hear the melody without really being yelled at."

Aimeé then acquired a four-volume set of Sondheim's music and studied the songs to find material that would fit her vocal style.

"I went through all his songs," she said. "And I especially paid attention to the lyrics. I marked the ones that really connected with me. Then I went through everything I had marked and made a smaller list. After that, I went online and listened to the versions of those songs, then cut the list even more based on that."

Aimeé actually began the process of choosing songs for her Sondheim project before she decided to break up her band, end her relationship and move to New Orleans. After those events took place, she began to view the songs she had chosen in a new light.

"When I originally chose them, it was before all this crazy stuff happened," she explained. "Then, when I was finally here in New Orleans and began seriously working on the songs, I discovered that they were really about me.

"When I first chose all the songs, I deliberately didn't watch videos any of Sondheim's Broadway shows. I didn't want to be influenced by what the songs meant in those shows. I want-

ing the size and instrumentation of the backing groups for each one," she said. "And I knew someone I met at SUNY-Purchase and who had played on my first album, Assaf Gleizner. He was actually working in the Broadway world, but still played jazz. So, he had one foot in each world."


"Sondheim is one of my favorite composers," Gleizner said in a phone interview. "So when Cyrille contacted me, of course I said yes. We agreed that we needed to avoid the trap that people can fall into when they try to 'jazz up' musical theater songs by taking the song and making it swing. So, we asked ourselves, 'Imagine if someone like Dexter Gordon was alive today. If he was walking out of a performance of *Sunday in the Park with George*, what would inspire him to put one of the songs on his next record with Kenny Drew?' That's kind of what we were looking for."

Aimeé and Gleizner worked through each song, and discussed not only specific instrumentation for each, but thoughts about specific musicians to play on the recording.

"For example, if we agreed that we needed a gypsy guitar on a song or a trumpet solo on another, we knew the musicians who could play that," Gleizner said. "So, we ended up using quite a few different musicians to maximize the potential of each song."

After listening to the final mixes, both Aimeé and Gleizner were pleased. But they wondered how others—especially Sondheim himself—would react. Aimeé sent a copy to Sondheim, and after returning from a trip to Europe, he replied.

"Here's what Stephen wrote back," Aimeé said during a follow-up phone interview. "He said, 'I finally had a chance to sit down uninterrupted and listen to your album today, and it's just terrific, not just you but the band and the arrangements. Congratulations.' It was so won-



**It's a biting-cold January day in Manhattan. The wind howls around corners and between the buildings with enough force, seemingly, to peel your skin off. Five stories up from the street, though, there's enough heat coming off the Jazz Gallery's stage to warm the whole block.**

**D**rummer Johnathan Blake is guiding a student, a young man in his twenties, through a Thelonious Monk tune, showing him how to be expressive while maintaining the solid swing of the legendary pianist's era. The student takes a turn at the kit, and then stands up at his teacher's signal. Blake, a tall, stocky player, moves to the drum throne and offers a demonstration of what he's looking for: a slow, rumbling shuffle beat that seems to wander and explore, but never goes fully off the path. The student nods thoughtfully, absorbing it all.

The lesson ends, and Blake descends from the stage, sitting at one of the Jazz Gallery's small tables, a calm smile on his face. A 42-year-old Philadelphia native, he's the son of John Blake Jr. (1947–2014), a violinist who worked with McCoy Tyner, Cecil McBee, Archie Shepp and others, and made a string of albums as a leader, beginning in 1984.

"My first exposure to live music was through my father, of course," Blake recalled. "When I was born, my dad was playing with Grover Washington Jr., and Grover was using a drummer by the name of Pete Vincent, a great drummer from Philly. I was really young, 1 or 2 years old, but my parents said when the music started I would just lock in. I was in a trance, nothing could break my attention, and I was always focused on rhythm."

**JOHNATHAN BLAKE**

**BORN TO**



# PLAY

*BY PHILIP FREEMAN  
PHOTO BY MICHAEL JACKSON*



JIMMY KATZ

Johnathan Blake takes musical cues from his late father, John Blake Jr., a violinist who performed with McCoy Tyner and Archie Shepp.

Despite that, Blake followed in his father's footsteps at first, picking up the violin at 3 and studying at home, then at Settlement Music School, an organization with multiple branches throughout Philadelphia. It wasn't until fifth grade that he became a drummer in his elementary school band. By the time he was a teenager, Blake was gigging and sitting in at local jam sessions, and connecting with as many elders as possible. He'd also added another instrument to his arsenal.

"When my dad saw that I was really gravitating to the drums, he made it a point to tell me, 'All right, if you're gonna play the drums, I need you to also learn about the piano,'" he said. "So, I started taking piano lessons at 11 or 12. I never really felt that I was great at it, but I could figure out chords and read. I write at the piano; I have keyboards sometimes, and I use them to figure out chords. Sometimes, I'll sing into my phone—I'll sing an excerpt or a piece of something that enters my head, and later on, when I have time to sit at the piano I'll try to flesh it out. I'll play the melody and try to figure out some chords that go with it."

Blake enrolled in the jazz program at William Paterson University and later earned his master's degree in composition from Rutgers University, where he studied with Stanley Cowell. The pianist was able to pull Blake out of a compositional rut by setting challenges for him. Each week, the drummer had to compose a piece for piano using a particular set of parameters, like making the left and right hands play patterns that were a mirror image of each other. "I composed nine or 10 tunes, not that I'd play all of them publicly," he chuckled, "but it did get me started writing again and flushing out those ideas that I couldn't get out."

But it was a gig Blake landed in his late teens that put him on the New York jazz scene's radar. He became the drummer for the Mingus Big Band, which played every week at Fez, a small

room beneath Time Café in Greenwich Village. Blake found it a thrill, as well as a major learning experience.

"When I started getting inside that music, it opened up a whole new world for me. I really learned how the drums are supposed to function in a band. You're talking about 15 other guys, so you have to learn how to push the band. ... When [the arrangement featured] a soloist, I started thinking about it like a quartet was inside the big band, and really trying to focus on how the soloist was going to shape his solo."

Blake first encountered saxophonist Chris Potter in the big band, and they've continued to work together—Potter is on Blake's 2014 album, *Gone But Not Forgotten* (Criss Cross Jazz), and his new release, the live two-CD set *Trion* (Giant Step Arts). "He had been playing with the band for a couple of years before I joined, and I thought, 'This dude is special, the way he's hearing chords and how he's playing off the harmony,'" Blake recalled. "He really had a unique approach, even back then. It was coming out of Michael Brecker and Joe Lovano and Trane, so he was still developing his own sound, so to speak, but it was really fascinating to hear him."

"The core of what makes Johnathan great is the depth of his jazz swing feeling," Potter said. "He literally grew up in it, and you can tell that he feels it and he lives it with his entire self. His ride cymbal beat, the way he approaches it, just feels right—there's no way you can't connect with that."

The Mingus gig led to a unique opportunity for Blake in 2001, when he met hip-hop icon Q-Tip, then breaking out as a solo artist after achieving success with A Tribe Called Quest. The Mingus Big Band's weekly performances were routinely packed and attracted a crowd of celebrities and other musicians: Members of Metallica or rapper Mos Def might show up

to check out the music. "The first time I met [Q-Tip]," Blake recalled, "he was there with Robert De Niro, and he called me over to his table." The rapper was looking to move in a new direction, and he needed a creative partner. "He was like, 'I have this idea of doing a live band with me emceeing.' It was organic, 'cause he was trying to figure it out himself."

Blake assembled a band that included some of his fellow students and some well-known jazz names, including alto saxophonist Kenny Garrett and guitarist Kurt Rosenwinkel. "We kind of did an audition at my place, and he dug the musicians I put together. We grooved out on some stuff and Q-Tip dug the way we played together, so we would go to his house and start rehearsing. He didn't have any music, so we would come up with ideas and start recording."

The resulting album, *Kamaal The Abstract*, was rejected by Arista Records and sat on the shelf until 2009, when it was released by Jive/Battery. "The timing was a little weird," Blake recalled. "[Q-Tip] had just put his first record out as a leader [1999's *Amplified*], so the label was saying, 'We can't put out a record with you singing and a live band. We'd have to change your whole fan base.'"

Since then, Blake has become one of the most in-demand drummers around. He regularly works with trumpeter Tom Harrell, pianist Kenny Barron and organist Dr. Lonnie Smith, among others. He's also a member of the band the Black Art Jazz Collective. Each setting demands something different, but it's a testament to Blake's abilities that he makes his presence felt in any context.

"With Doc, he's all about the groove," the drummer said. "Whether we're playing straightahead or more funk and r&b stuff, he wants that pocket to remain there. And he wants it to be full—he wants it to sound like a big band almost, even if it's a trio. So, some of the challenges for me [are] how to make that band sound really full without necessarily overpowering it, but still complementing guitar and organ. He's not so much about chops or anything. He really wants it to be about the groove and finding the pocket, so for me, it took editing some of my own way of playing and thinking to really blend in, and I like those kind of challenges. I like to remain true to myself, but give the leader what he wants out of the band."

With Barron, Blake's role is very different—more engine than foundation. "Kenny doesn't really say much at all. I think I can count on one hand the number of times we've rehearsed," he said with a laugh. "One of the things I've learned from being in his band all these years is really pacing myself, and really telling a story. Kenny's 75 now, so there's an energy that a younger musician brings that an older musician might not bring, that he looks for. Because he has to play off that. He needs that to give

him the fuel to play. If it's somebody that's just gonna be as relaxed as him, it's not gonna work," he said, laughing again. "He didn't want me to come in and play all my bebop licks that I studied. He could get somebody that grew up in that tradition and be more authentic. He wanted me to stretch out and play how I normally play and just give him energy."

As a leader, Blake prefers to let music marinate on the bandstand before it's committed to tape—another lesson he learned from his father. "Right after my father passed, I was helping my mother clean out the house, and he had kept an old calendar and I found it. One of the first things he did when he joined McCoy Tyner's band was, he went out on tour for what seemed like a month in Japan. This was summer of '79 or something. When they came back, that's when they recorded [*Horizon*, on which Blake's violin and compositions are featured]. They had been playing night after night; when they went into the studio, he said it just felt so natural. It was almost like playing another show."

Blake chose the title of his 2012 debut, *The Eleventh Hour* (Sunnyside), because he'd waited so long to record it, playing its tunes in public until the band had them down cold. His second release, though, came together quickly. *Gone But Not Forgotten* was recorded after a make-shift performance at the Jazz Gallery. Blake was

asked to put a band together to cover a cancellation, and he recruited Potter, saxophonist Mark Turner (who'd played on *The Eleventh Hour*) and bassist Ben Street.

"I've always been a huge fan of Mark's, and saxophone players don't always get a chance to play together," Potter recalled, "so that was nice to get that experience, to feel like you're bouncing ideas off him while he's actually standing next to you."

*Trion* showcases Blake in a trio with Potter and bassist Linda May Han Oh, and was recorded at the Jazz Gallery by photographer, recording engineer and Giant Step Arts founder Jimmy Katz, a frequent DownBeat contributor.

The new album includes four Blake compositions, a version of his father's "Blue Heart," two by Potter, one by Oh, a version of Charlie Parker's "Relaxin' At Camarillo" and a 17-minute take on The Police's "Synchronicity I," which Potter and Blake have played together on tour. "It was a great opener [live] and a way to engage people, 'cause if you listen closely you'll recognize it [and say] 'Now I'm engaged, now I'm in a trance, now I want to see what they're gonna do next.'"

While many pieces are muscular and hard-swinging, verging on free at times, Oh's "Trope" is a throbbing mood piece that begins in near silence. "For me, that particular tune was something a little mysterious," Oh said.

"The way I wrote it was, the melody's relatively simple, but it starts super low on the tenor, and then it has some other twists and turns, but it's a simple, relatively open tune. They did such a great job with it—everyone was super sensitive with it.

"I can't remember the first time I played with Johnathan, but I've played with him in quite a few contexts—including with Kenny Barron's trio on various gigs and in slightly augmented versions of that—as well as with Dave Douglas and some other musicians," Oh continued. "[Blake] has such an incredible feel—a beautiful, wide beat, but the snap to his playing is just incredible. It's exciting to play with, super malleable but such a strong vibe. And Chris, he's out of this world, such an incredible musician—incredible ears, but so quick. It was a great experience."

Blake expressed a sense of astonishment at Giant Step Arts' support of his new work: "Jimmy is really encouraging us to make this artistic statement—he really wants us to showcase our music. Record companies don't want you to do that all the time, and people producing records don't want you to do that—they want you to play tunes that everybody knows, and they don't want to hear your original music. So, to have somebody give us so much space to do what we want to do was very special." **DB**

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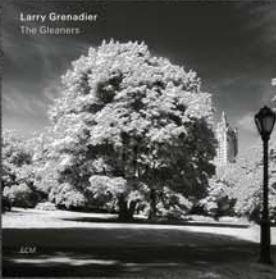
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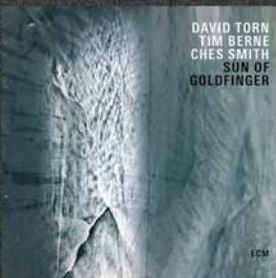
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- 56 / Blues
- 58 / Beyond
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# REVIEWS >



Snarky Puppy's 12th album is titled *Immigrance*.

STELLA K

## Snarky Puppy *Immigrance*

GROUNDUP 0319

★½

On a first listen to Snarky Puppy's *Immigrance*, you might wonder if you hadn't accidentally downloaded a sample bank—one of those collections of prepared tracks and 30-second blasts that sound designers use to score commercials. It's the horde of guitars, at once creamy and crunchy, loud and low-impact; the frictionless synthesizers; and the direct-to-digital sound of the recording.

Effective commercial soundtracks will flare up and grab your ear in the time it takes a YouTube ticker to count down from 5 seconds, but they won't fully distract you from the product being advertised. With Snarky Puppy, a loosely assembled team of instrumental whizzes led by bassist Michael League, there's no product being pushed. But there is usually a thematic conceit to League's records, and when writing the tunes for *Immigrance*, Snarky Puppy's 12th album, he was thinking about migration and movement. There are anti-Trump overtones to that, for sure, but subtly suggesting your dis-

agreement with the 45th U.S. president no longer feels bold on its own. And by and large, this album does little to show any emotional context or solidarity with social concerns.

Snarky Puppy developed as a live band driven by a studio technician's ethic, and during the past dozen years, its music has become a genre of its own—one with remarkable popular appeal, but also a kind of grandiose banality that scuttles both the live energy and the richness of detail that ought to make this band stand out.

It's difficult to focus hard on music like this, to really climb inside of it. But what happens when you try? Pretty soon, ear fatigue. Throughout *Immigrance* there are usually three or four electric keyboards, three guitars, League's electronically juiced-up electric bass, horns and a violin all slathered across the center of your ear-space. Despite the virtuosity of each player and the precision of the recording, the music sounds fogged up—whether on a jouncing, groovy tune like “Chonks” or a Turkish-music-tinged “Even Us.” (The latter nearly is saved by a pensive flugelhorn solo by Jay Jennings, a rare moment of intimacy on this record.)

The brief “While We're Young” rests on a shrugging '70s-funk beat, and the twisty horn

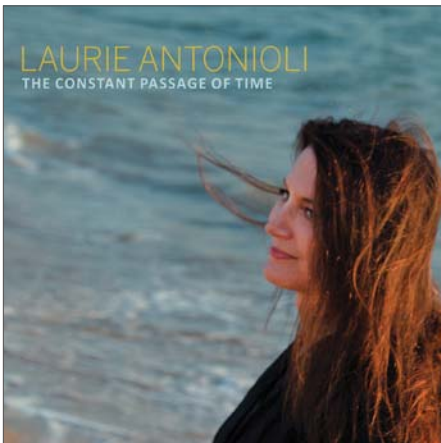
line has plenty of potential. But everything is doused with a frizzy, echoing effect, as if spraying a row of healthy, emerald crops with pesticide. There are moments on “Coven,” a slow, drifting piece, when the curling bass line creeps up on something close to plangency or wistfulness. But Snarky Puppy's melodies almost never declare an emotional intention; they're soft and rounded, and end up feeling utterly general, even when sourced from a specific music tradition. And no matter what they're playing, the musicians seem haunted by a too-complete awareness of what they're aiming at, and how to get there. Playing with metronomic exactitude, they execute what's asked of them—and that's it.

—Giovanni Rusonello

**Immigrance:** Chonks; Bigly Strictness; Coven; Bling Bling; Xavi; While We're Young; Bad Kids To The Back; Even Us. (54:23)

**Personnel:** Bob Lanzetti, electric guitar, electric sitar; Chris McQueen, electric guitar; Mark Lettieri, electric guitar, baritone guitar; Michael League, electric bass, minimoog bass; Moog Prodigy bass, oud; Bill Laurance, Fender Rhodes, Roland Juno, piano, clavinet, Mellotron, Prophet; Justin Stanton, Mellotron, Fender Rhodes; Moog Prodigy, Prophet, piano, minimoog, trumpet; Bobby Sparks, clavinet, Hammond B-3 organ, minimoog; Mike “Maz” Maher, Jay Jennings, trumpet, flugelhorn; Chris Bullock, tenor saxophone, flute, alto flute, bass clarinet, soprano saxophone, bansuri, metal pipe; Bob Reynolds, tenor saxophone; Zach Brock, violin; Nate Werth, Keita Ogawa, Marcelo Woloski, percussion; Jason “JT” Thomas, Larnell Lewis, Jamison Ross, drums; Shaun Martin, minimoog bass, keyboards, clavinet.

**Ordering info:** [groundupmusic.net](http://groundupmusic.net)



**Laurie Antonioli**  
*The Constant Passage Of Time*  
 ORIGIN 82777

★★★★

Can you dig a vocalist even if the tone of their voice doesn't sit well in your ear? It's a question I considered while listening to Laurie Antonioli's seventh album. While the scope and sources of her material are broad, and she brings her own vision to much of the material by writing her own lyrics, the timbre of her voice sometimes is jarring.

It goes directly to the question of what makes

**Jessica Jones Quartet**  
*Continuum*

REVA 1001

★★★★

The avant-garde comes in different shapes, sizes and temperaments. Here Jessica Jones deploys her dry, stoic tenor to temper the sometimes-restless bedlam of the genre in a gentle chamber collection of warmth, structure and—dare I say—orderliness.

Jones has been silent these past eight years, attending to music education and mentoring. Even before that, however, her output was modest, amounting to fewer than 20 sessions during a 30-year career, much of it in the company of Joseph Jarman and Don Cherry.

Jones and her husband, Tony Jones, fill out Thelonious Monk's sparse "Evidence" with an airy counterpoint that's never crowded. The bandleader solos with a slightly jagged phrasing, while Tony comes floating in with a graceful disregard for tempo. The original "Wither Without You" breathes softly, like a Calderesque mobile suspended between stillness and chance breezes. "Continuum" has a boppish feel, though neither Jones nor alto saxophonist Devante Dunbar chase its classic intricacies. And vocalist Ed Reed celebrates the certainties of the status quo with optimism and catchy vigor on "Just As It Is."

a singer connect with a listener. Neil Young's "Don't Let It Bring You Down" is a song where some people bail on his nasal delivery and shaky intonation, but Antonioli's voice brings its own sour quality to her version. Similarly, she seems to have consistency issues on some of the notes she chooses to hold. But, like Young famously said once, "That's my sound, man."

It's easier to get onboard with Antonioli's delivery of a propulsive version of Sheryl Crow's "Riverwide," which includes attractive tabla work by drummer Jason Lewis and an energetic solo by guitarist Dave MacNab. She also glides through three Joni Mitchell songs—a seamless medley of "Harry's House" and "The Arrangement," and "Love"—continuing the devotion she expressed to the songwriter on her 2014 album *Songs Of Shadow, Songs Of Light* (Origin). Best of all is the pairing of her voice with Sheldon Brown's bass clarinet on the evocative "Moonbirds."

A sturdy LP-length recording, *The Constant Passage Of Time* illustrates Antonioli's passion for her work, and the joy she exudes flows through her voice, whatever the listener might make of the sound itself. —James Hale

**The Constant Passage Of Time:** Longing For You; Riverwide; Layla; Moonbirds; Harry's House/The Arrangement; Love; Highway; And So It Is; Don't Let It Bring You Down. (41:17)

**Personnel:** Laurie Antonioli, vocals; Sheldon Brown, clarinet, bass clarinet, saxophone; Dave MacNab, guitar; Matt Clark, piano; Dan Feiszli, bass; Jason Lewis, drums, tabla.

**Ordering info:** [originarts.com](http://originarts.com)



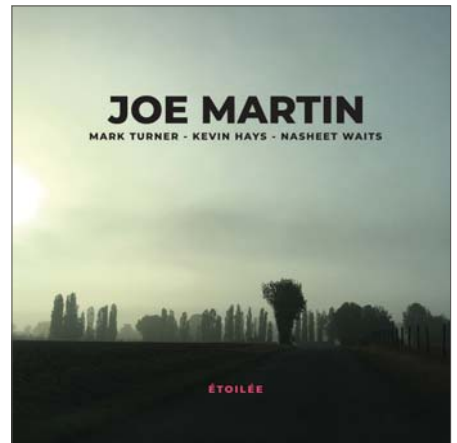
"Higher Than" is the only piece that really takes advantage of the assembled reed power, resulting in a seductive blend of velvety texture that frames Jones' solo. And Ambrose Akinmusire cameos on the closing track as the third voice in a fragile weave of tenor and ngoni. Like much that is experimental, though, Jones seems more focused on process than outcome

—John McDonough

**Continuum:** Evidence; For All The Cats On The Continent; Wither Without You; I Want To Talk About You; Continuum; Just This; Just As It Is; Higher Than; Continuum Reprise. (50:24)

**Personnel:** Jessica Jones, Tony Jones, tenor saxophone; Stomu Takeishi, bass; Kenny Wollesen, drums; Devante Dunbar (2, 5, 8), alto saxophone; Ambrose Akinmusire, trumpet (9); Mamadou Sidibe (9), ngoni; Ed Reed (7), vocal.

**Ordering info:** [revainc.org](http://revainc.org)



**Joe Martin**  
*Étoilee*

SUNNYSIDE 1540

★★★★

From the first notes of the album-opening "A World Beyond," Joe Martin's bass is deep in the pocket, laying a funk line that's profoundly intertwined with Nasheet Waits' drums and Kevin Hays' Fender Rhodes. The sound is redolent of early-'70s fusion, but as Mark Turner's astringent tenor enters with the melody, it becomes clear this is no throwback. Instead of sticking with the funk, they let the time turn free and the tempo meander before returning to the initial groove, a strategy that makes "A World Beyond" less a tune than a journey.

*Étoilee* is Martin's third album as a leader, and by far his most confident. It helps that he's in familiar company—Turner and Hays also played on his first recording, *Passage*—but the real magic has to do with his approach to time. Apart from a few boppish moments on "Safe," Martin avoids the conventions of a walking bass line, opting instead for a freer, more contrapuntal approach. There are moments—the solo intro to "Malida," for instance—when he seems to be strumming the bass like a guitar. But he infrequently puts himself out front, preferring to leave his bass subsumed in the sound of the drums, an effect that's partly a function of the album's very natural room sound, but mostly a reflection of the rhythmic chemistry between Martin and Waits.

For that matter, the whole quartet seems remarkably simpatico, and the music changes tempo, texture and intensity with breathtaking ease. From the off-kilter shuffle that launches "Prospecting" to the lush string coda (Martin playing arco and massively overdubbed) that closes "Long Winter," *Étoilee* is an ideal blend of stylistic variety and artistic consistency.

—J.D. Considine

**Étoilee:** A World Beyond; Malida; Prospecting; Two Birds; Safe; Long Winter; Étoile; 5x3. (61:30)

**Personnel:** Joe Martin, bass; Mark Turner, tenor saxophone, soprano saxophone; Kevin Hays, piano, Fender Rhodes; Nasheet Waits, drums.

**Ordering info:** [sunnysiderecords.com](http://sunnysiderecords.com)

# The Hot Box

Critics	J.D. Considine	James Hale	John McDonough	Giovanni Russonello
<b>Snarky Puppy</b> <i>Immigrance</i>	★★	★★½	★★½	★½
<b>Laurie Antonioli</b> <i>The Constant Passage Of Time</i>	★★★½	★★★★	★★★½	★★★½
<b>Jessica Jones Quartet</b> <i>Continuum</i>	★★★★½	★★★★	★★★★	★★★½
<b>Joe Martin</b> <i>Étoilée</i>	★★★★	★★★½	★★★½	★★★★

## Critics' Comments

### Snarky Puppy, *Immigrance*

The thinking person's smooth jazz.

—J.D. Considine

The band seems unable to land on a cohesive sound. Big riffs abound and catchy gestures emerge, but the final notes leave me wondering what I just listened to.

—James Hale

The future of jazz or a '70s fusion fire? Maybe both. A lot of moving parts keep this huge boulder of rhythm rolling along its bumpy way. Some glimpses of the jazz spirit in "Bad Kids To The Back" and the moody "Even Us."

—John McDonough

### Laurie Antonioli, *The Constant Passage Of Time*

There's no denying the supple persuasiveness of Antonioli's singing, which echoes Norma Winstone in its uncluttered authority. Her band does an impressive job of obliterating the boundaries between jazz, pop and rock, but I wish I cared more about the songs.

—J.D. Considine

Antonioli trades jazz for soft rock with its poetic musings, winding melodies and Joni Mitchell influence. Her elegant contralto exudes a calming tranquility, even when some of the lyrics wander quietly into the woods.

—John McDonough

Combining her own compositions with a handful of rock tunes from the past 50 years, Antonioli and her sextet have crafted an album that invites the listener into questions about patriarchy and capital, and the ties that bind us as Americans. Her voice, tall, proud and unpretentious, deserves to be more widely heard.

—Giovanni Russonello

### Jessica Jones Quartet, *Continuum*

The real continuum here is the ever-unspooling thread of African-derived American music, a tradition that encompasses Monk and Eckstine, free-jazz and calypso, and a gorgeous tribute to the griot tradition with guests Sidibe and Akinmusire.

—J.D. Considine

The twin tenors and Takieshi's liquid bass give the quartet a distinctive signature, but the schism between its freer playing, the hipster word-jazz guest spot by vocalist Reed and the closing acoustic tone poem with a different lineup is jarring on such a short album.

—James Hale

Jones' fluent, approachable improvisations guide the repartee here, and the heterodox bass playing of Takeishi opens things up further. But mark the young alto saxophonist Dunbar, who leaves an indelible mark on the three tracks where he's featured.

—Giovanni Russonello

### Joe Martin, *Étoilée*

Steaming post-bop never grows old, especially with a rhythm section this exceptional and Turner upfront. Interest wanes when the tempo slows.

—James Hale

A fine but not exceptional quartet. Still, Turner's light, cool-headed tenor radiates a sturdy Tristano-esque intelligence. His swing is poised and pointed on "Safe," which is the one keeper.

—John McDonough

Elegant but unmannered, poised and precise, but constantly slashing in multiple directions, this quartet of old pals clearly is guided by good, collaborative instincts. The compositions don't do a whole lot to distinguish themselves, but Martin and Waits' tousling interplay keeps things lively.

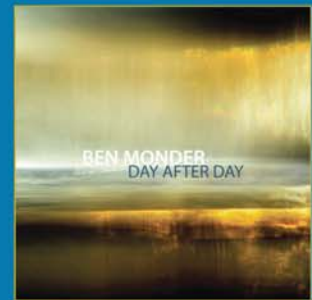
—Giovanni Russonello



## ANAT FORT TRIO COLOUR

SSC 1550 - IN STORES April 5

Colour shines a new light on the trio for listeners, fully incorporating Fort's pop and rock inspirations and opening ears to the full potential of the trio's dynamic breadth on a program of original compositions by Fort. With drummer Roland Schneider and bassist Gary Wang.



## BEN MONDER DAY AFTER DAY

SSC 1549 - IN STORES April 12

Guitarist Ben Monder new recording, *Day After Day* (a two disc set), provides a look at two distinct sides of his artistic nature, the highly analytical, structural side and the more freely improvisational side, through a series of interpretations of cover material.



## GREG REITAN WEST 60TH

SSC 1542 - IN STORES April 19

It was during an October 2017 appearance at New York's Dizzy's Club Coca-Cola that the spark for Reitan's new recording, *West 60th*, was ignited. With long time collaborators, bassist Jack Daro and drummer Dean Koba.



iTunes.com/AnatFort  
iTunes.com/BenMonder  
iTunes.com/GregReitan  
www.sunnysiderecords.com





## Giovanni Guidi *Avec Le Temps*

ECM 2604

★★★★½

Pianist Giovanni Guidi's *Avec Le Temps* opens with a penetrating take on the title cut, a somber French chanson by composer/lyricist Léo Ferré. But Guidi's touch on the keys is so light, and his interplay with bassist Thomas Morgan and drummer João Lobo so thoughtful, that a quiet optimism subsumes the tune's doleful message. ("In time, all love fades.") By opening with such a known song, the only non-original here, Guidi establishes melodic sensibility as the album's

precedent.

On this record, as on his two earlier ECM releases with his trio, Guidi demonstrates an astute propensity for emotive melodies, a skill that he honed during his years with two of Europe's finest creative musicians, trumpeters Enrico Rava and Tomasz Stańko—both masters of space, tone and tension. Similarly, the additional instrumentation on *Avec Le Temps*—guitarist Roberto Cecchetto and saxophonist Francesco Bearzatti contribute to most tracks—only heightens the kinetic intensity of the album's originals. Bearzatti, doubling Guidi's riffing on the group composition "No Taxi," strengthens the tune's bebop feel, and Cecchetto's gentle picking on Guidi's ballad "Ti Stimo" introduces the theme from which Bearzatti and Guidi launch satisfyingly out solos.

Like the album opener, the last tune here tugs at the heart. "Tomasz," an homage to Stańko, who passed away in July 2018 at age 76, features the trio in an affecting melodic contemplation with an extended outro. The tune, a reluctant goodbye to an honored musician, seems to have trouble concluding. If in time all love fades, for Guidi that time hasn't yet come. —*Suzanne Lorge*

**Avec Le Temps:** *Avec Le Temps*; 15th Of August; Postludium And A Kiss; No Taxi; Caino; Johnny The Liar; Ti Stimo; Tomasz. (41:58)

**Personnel:** Giovanni Guidi, piano; Thomas Morgan, bass; João Lobo, drums; Francesco Bearzatti, tenor saxophone; Roberto Cecchetto, guitar.

**Ordering info:** [ecmrecords.com](http://ecmrecords.com)

## Jennifer Wharton's *Bonegasm*

SUNNYSIDE 1530

★★★★½

Bass trombonist Jennifer Wharton has teamed with three of New York's finest fellow slide-wielders to bring us *Bonegasm*, a celebration of the delightful and quirky joys that arise when a bunch of trombone players gather to do their thing. A stalwart of the Broadway scene, Wharton has enlisted the help of Alan Ferber, Nate Mayland and her husband, John Fedchock, to showcase her skills in the jazz idiom. All three contribute first-rate arrangements that allow for the group to blend and also showcase Wharton's unique talents in the instrument's lower register.

Although this record certainly will please trombonists and other fans of the slide-heavy format, there's plenty here for more casual listeners—from slick arrangements over a variety of grooves, inspired solo improvisations and playful humor. Indeed, the album's title doesn't shy away from the instrument's sexual connotations, Wharton fully embracing this and making her vocal debut on the decidedly unsubtle double entendre of the final track, "Big Long Slidin' Thing."

By championing the erotic pleasure of music



making, Wharton lays claim to a long lineage of jazz and blues performers—but her first leader date also showcases her rightful claim to the jazz bass trombone tradition. Her gorgeous turns as a low-frequency melodist on "Softly As In A Morning Sunrise" and "North Rampart" are breathtaking, and her pitch-perfect pedal blasts anchor exciting ensemble work throughout the album.

—*Alex W. Rodriguez*

**Bonegasm:** *The Year Of Two Summers*; Low Ball; Stellar; North Rampart; Softly As In A Morning Sunrise; Other Angles; Tricotism; Impromptu; Big Long Slidin' Thing. (59:42)

**Personnel:** John Fedchock, Nate Mayland, Alan Ferber, trombone; Jennifer Wharton, bass trombone, vocals (9); Michael Eckroth, piano; Evan Gregor, bass; Don Peretz, drums; Mauricio Herrera, percussion (1).

**Ordering info:** [sunnysiderecords.com](http://sunnysiderecords.com)



## Stephan Crump's *Rosetta Trio*

*Outliers*

PAPILLON SOUNDS 91819

★★★★

The fourth Rosetta Trio album comes six years after its last, 2013's *Thwirl*, and nearly 15 years since bassist Stephan Crump first assembled the group. The trio's minimal sonic palette—one acoustic guitar, one very clean electric guitar, one upright bass—forces the collected players to rely on technique and thoughtful interaction, rather than sonic effects. Acoustic guitarist Liberty Ellman is in the left speaker, electric guitarist Jamie Fox is in the right, and Crump is in between, a supportive mediator. The bandleader writes all but one piece, and his compositions have a moonlit, eyes-half-closed quality. The first track, "In Waves," has a tumbling momentum reminiscent of early-'70s folk-rock as the forcefully strummed guitars march side-by-side with the deep, booming bass taking up equal space in the mix. By contrast, the title track is a staccato eruption of bent notes that might remind some of Mary Halvorson's work. Crump is singing along with his bass, but it's subtle, more like slightly melodic breathing.

The only piece composed by another group member, Ellman's "Cryoseism," has a shimmering quality, with both guitarists releasing quick, pinging lines that nod to West African music and the percussive, tapping explorations of Beninese guitarist Lionel Loueke. The album ends with the fast, bouncing "Esquima Dream" and returns to the '70s soft-rock feel—almost reminiscent of a song from the band America—before the fleet unison melodies start to unspool.

Rosetta Trio sounds like nothing else any of its members do, and for that reason alone, it's great to have them back. —*Philip Freeman*

**Outliers:** *In Waves*; *Re Eyes*; *Middle March*; *Outliers*; *Synapse*; *Dec. 5*; *Cryoseism*; *Away From*; *A Way To*; *Esquima Dream*. (48:10)

**Personnel:** Liberty Ellman, acoustic guitar; Jamie Fox, electric guitar; Stephan Crump, bass.

**Ordering info:** [stephancrump.com](http://stephancrump.com)

## Ashley Daneman

### *People Are Fragile*

FLOOD MUSIC 007

★★★★½

Michigan-based “jazz-folk” singer Ashley Daneman has found an intriguing balance between the soaring virtuosity of Joni Mitchell and the earthy Americana of Becca Stevens. In a nutshell, the material and arrangements incline toward the latter, Daneman’s vocal performance toward the former.

*People Are Fragile* is a showcase for Daneman’s nine fine originals, set alongside three tradition-steeped covers. And as its title indicates, the album showcases vulnerability as well. It’s tempting to read it as a personal statement, but the fragilities are too diffuse to boil down to a narrative. On “I Alone Love The Unseen In You,” she stands stoically in protection of a wounded loved one; and on the country-soul shimmy “Shake It All Down,” she chases away despair. None of these is particularly delicate: She saves that for the exquisite glimmers-of-hope “When You Break” and “Recall,” as well as the spiritual standards. But if there’s a throughline, it’s simply Daneman’s supple voice and a delivery both robust and mature enough to temper the whole affair. —Michael J. West



**People Are Fragile:** I Alone Love The Unseen In You; If I Knew Who I Was; Sometimes I Feel Like A Motherless Child; When You Break; Shake It All Down; Daddy’s Gonna Die Soon; Deep River; My Man’s Gone Now; The Feeling of Heavy; Pictures In The Atmosphere; Did Anyone Ever Sow You A Lie?; Recall. (42:42)

**Personnel:** Ashley Daneman, vocals; Rob Clearfield, piano, wurlitzer, organ; Rufus Ferguson, piano (3, 7); Andrew Vogt, electric bass; Quinlan Kirchner (1, 4, 5, 6, 10), Makaya McCraven (2, 8, 9, 12), drums; Matt Gold, guitar, lap steel (1, 4, 5, 6); Kevin Bujo Jones, percussion (8).

**Ordering info:** [floodmusicchicago.com](http://floodmusicchicago.com)

## Areni Agabian

### *Bloom*

ECM 2549

★★★★★

Singer/pianist Areni Agabian values emptiness and pulls lyricism from austerity. On *Bloom*, her low moans blend with silent passages; she seldom breaks from long airy spaces. Agabian used this approach on her debut, *Kissy (Bag)*, as well as when she worked with pianist Tigran Hamasyan. Here, her excellent pitch delivers new compositions alongside some ancient sources.

Throughout *Bloom*, Agabian delves intensely into Armenian culture, including a stunning take on the sacred hymn “Anganim Arachi Ko.” Breathing deeply, her vocal emphasizes sharp timing to convey a quiet minimalist power. Agabian also composed a new version of the country’s folk tale “The Water Bride” in which Nicolas Stocker’s percussion and her own singular piano notes seem to choreograph a ritualistic counternarrative. Still, *Bloom*’s most fascinating feature throughout is Agabian’s own voice as Stocker’s percussion highlights or frames its distinctive qualities. The thunder in Stocker’s bass drum sharply contrasts with her seemingly delicate moan on the folk melody “Garun A.” And without ever directly saying so, Agabian’s sparse intonation encourages deeper listening to her own music, as well as to the national sounds that she transforms. —Aaron Cohen



**Bloom:** Patience; Petal One; Rain Drops; Yearning; Petal Two; Light Effect; Anganim Arachi Ko; The Water Bride; Mother; Garun A; The River; Anganim Revisited; Sear; Full Bloom; Whiteness; Colored; Seeing More. (50:30)

**Personnel:** Areni Agabian, voice, piano; Nicolas Stocker, percussion.

**Ordering info:** [ecmrecords.com](http://ecmrecords.com)

## Etienne Charles

### *Carnival: The Sound Of A People, Vol. 1*

CULTURE SHOCK INC. EC007

★★★★★

Identity is a complicated thing. Shaped by our cultures, heritage and those around us, it seeps into everything we do—it is the foundation of our creativity and our urge to keep creating. And the most powerful of these creations are the ones that combine the unknowing journey of discovery with the importance of knowing where we come from. Such is the case with trumpeter Etienne Charles’ *Carnival: The Sound Of A People, Vol. 1*.

Born in Trinidad, Charles’ work is informed by the rich musical heritage of his upbringing. But rather than taking an anthropological view, he traveled through the country and immersed himself in his childhood traditions. The record’s centerpiece comes on the *Black Echo* suite, where Charles documents the British colonial repression of the Trinidadian skin drum on five tracks that move through subdued intimacy, choral polyphony and joyous defiance. Such rich history can be difficult to grasp on a first listen, but here Charles cements his status as a deeply expressive voice, one worth hearing not only for his story, but for his forebears who helped form it. —Ammar Kalia



**Carnival: The Sound Of A People, Vol. 1:** Jab Molassie; Dame Lorraine; Moko Jumbie; Bois; One For Señor; Black Echo I (Ordinance); Black Echo II (Tambou); Black Echo III (Bamboo); Black Echo IV (Iron); Black Echo V (Steel); Lullaby; Freedom. (67:20)

**Personnel:** Etienne Charles, trumpet, percussion; Brian Hogans, Godwin Louis (4), alto saxophone; James Francies, keyboards; Alex Wintz, guitar; Ben Williams (1, 3, 7, 12), Jonathan Michel (4, 9), Luques Curtis (2, 5, 6, 11), Russell Hall (8), bass; Obed Calvaire, drums; D’Achee, congas; Laventille Rhythm Section, percussion; Corey Wilcox, trombone, David Sanchez, tenor saxophone; Sullivan Fortner, Fender Rhodes (2).

**Ordering info:** [etienncharles.com](http://etienncharles.com)

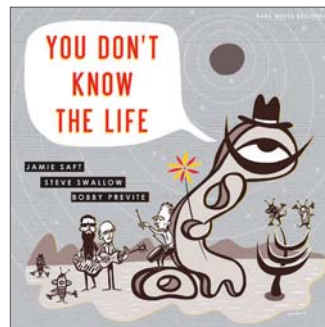
## Saft/Swallow/Previte

### *You Don’t Know The Life*

RARE NOISE 0101

★★★★½

Keyboardist Jamie Saft thrives upon treating tradition with irreverence, which in his case doesn’t mean disrespect so much as a refusal to pay strict attention to rules. He’s built a career from subverting convention and ignoring hierarchies even while understanding and adoring them. And his second recording with veteran bassist Steve Swallow and drummer Bobby Previte is Saft’s peculiar salute to jazz’s organ combo tradition. With typical perversity, he opens the record playing “Re: Person I Know,” a gentle Bill Evans ballad, using an electric harpsichord, over a shuffling, quasi-second line rhythm by Previte. Saft unleashes reverberant slabs of sound on his “The Cloak,” threaded by nimble, single-note runs from his right hand. But in some ways, his parts mostly are a cushion for the nonstop invention of Previte, who runs delightfully roughshod over the whole churning performance. The album concludes with relatively straight readings of “Alfie” and “Moonlight In Vermont,” a more superficial indication of Saft’s appreciation for jazz tradition than the chances he takes during the first 35 minutes here. —Peter Margasak



**You Don’t Know The Life:** Re: Person I Know; Dark Squares; Water From Breath; You Don’t Know The Life; Ode To A Green Frisbee; The Cloak; Stable Manifold; The Break Of The Flat Land; Moonlight In Vermont; Alfie. (41:14)

**Personnel:** Jamie Saft, Hammond organ, Whitehall organ, Baldwin electric harpsichord; Steve Swallow, electric bass; Bobby Previte, drums.

**Ordering info:** [rarenoise.com](http://rarenoise.com)

## Merging Classic and Modern

The personnel's ties to Italy across a spate of new releases from the Abeat label perhaps is the lone aspect of these recordings that connects one to the next. On each album, every player should be lauded for their individual gifts, but the varied approaches to composition and performative techniques offer a broad view of the current straight-ahead jazz landscape.

Drawn from contemporary vernacular, the title **Selfie (Abeat 189; 59:32 ★★★)**, mirrors in words what **The Claudio Fasoli N.Y. 4ET's** album does through music. An unabashed embrace of traditional songwriting and performance elements—naturally imperfect unison saxophone tones on “Kammertrio” and designated space for an improvised drum solo on “Pauly”—exist within crisp production aesthetics, shrewdly embodying both the conventional and contemporary styles that saxophonist Fasoli champions. That said, the idea of sonic newness is calmly balanced with the genre's past on a date that features the stalwart crew of pianist Matt Mitchell, bassist Matt Brewer and drummer Justin Brown.

The piano-focused beginning of the track “Fit” works as a ballast to the minimalist melody and clean chord changes that should resonate with fans of a neoclassical take on jazz. However, sonic subtleties, like audible key strokes and Fasoli's breathing, conjure the feel of classic live jazz recordings, something captured at a tiny, smoke-filled club.

The strangely natural sounding portmanteau encompassing the names of **Ira Coleman**, **Dado Moroni** and **Enzo Zirilli** for **Enzirado (Abeat 186; 51:56 ★★★½)** fits an album featuring a wealth of unhurried musical simpatico.

A carefree temperament permeates the record—with a Latin jazz influence scattered throughout—but the tempo and dynamic level of the music aren't stuck in one monotonous gear. Surprises like bassist Coleman's rattling pizzicato on the title track inject suspense. And even if “Blue Or What?” never fully diverges from the ensemble's established lighthearted emotional direction, the song still transitions from a mellow bass solo to eerie, metallic scrapings and off to a spirited Rhodes line that drives the melody. The nuanced compositional development easily demonstrates the trio's astute command in balancing creativity and emotional intent.

Hosting repertoire of peers and predecessors like McCoy Tyner and Nacio Herb Brown, **The Guido Manusardi Trio's Swingin (Abeat 191; 51:53 ★★★)** is per-



Sheila Jordan

haps the most traditional recording of the bunch. “Mr. G,” the album's lone original, swings lightly and offers a pleasant introduction to the pianist's writing without taking listeners into choppy waters.

Manusardi's interpretation of the standard “I'll Remember April”—a tune that's been covered by everyone from Charlie Parker to Cannonball Adderley, but might be most recognized because of Judy Garland's rendition—takes a peaceful approach, again adhering to a traditional ethos that courses through the album. It's more sprightly than Parker's take, but breezier than Adderley's.

**Sheila Jordan's** musical fortitude aside, the treasure to be cherished on **Lucky To Be Me (Abeat 185; 75:34 ★★★½)** is something more than just taking in a live performance recorded in Milan, which includes an enthusiastic batch of introductory praise in Italian and Jordan's subsequent, amusing quips. This dense program of beloved vocal standards shines most when Jordan displays the myriad ways she's been able to make these familiar songs her own.

The bandleader sings with constant vibrancy, enlivening songs in a way completely unrelated to technique; maybe it's just sheer will. On the Broadway classic “Oh, Lady Be Good,” the vocalist doesn't shy away from the more demanding portions of the song, tackling the melody's loose, bluesy nature during the verses with confidence.

If anything, **Lucky To Be Me** showcases a singular performance that most weren't able to experience, but hardcore fans surely will wish they had. **DB**

Ordering info: [abeatrecords.com](http://abeatrecords.com)



### Laurence Hobgood *tesseterra*

UBUNTU 019

★★½

Laurence Hobgood—one of the most underrated pianists in the business—does some superb work on *tesseterra*. So does his trio (with bassist Matt Clohesy and drummer Jared Schonig). But they wrap it all in string quartet arrangements so florid that they actually diminish the should-be magic at the music's heart.

Each arrangement here is serious, ambitious and intelligently crafted stuff. And the problem is not the standard cliché complaint that strings albums drown improvisers in schmaltz. The problem is that their ambition and the complexity of the arrangements is unnecessary for the “new standards” Hobgood presents. Is Lennon-McCartney's “Blackbird” really uplifted by three introductory minutes of a darting pizzicato violin and latticework? Does the self-consciously “down home” setting add new dimensions to “Suite: Judy Blue Eyes”? The strings' role on “Every Little Thing She Does Is Magic” apparently is to turn it into a wedding recession; their swinging call-and-response with Hobgood is too cute by half, and since the quartet's responses are in precise harmony, there's obviously no spontaneity.

This goes on for an exhausting 74 minutes, 12 of which are allotted solely to the opening of “Wichita Lineman.” That one has an intro even longer than “Blackbird,” and while Hobgood's playing latter on in the song is tender and impeccably fingered, part of its pleasure is of the thank-God-you're-finally-here variety. It's a shame, because this and the trio interplay—as elsewhere—in the song's final third truly are worthy. *tesseterra* has a solid framework; the upholstery is just too much. —Michael J. West

**tesseterra:** Wichita Lineman; Blackbird; Georgia On My Mind; Suite: Judy Blue Eyes; We Shall Overcome; Waltz In C# Sharp Minor Op. 64, No. 2; All Of You; Every Little Thing She Does Is Magic. (73:42)

**Personnel:** Laurence Hobgood, piano; Matt Clohesy, bass; Jared Schonig, drums; Kip Jones, violin; Corin Lee, violin; Ralph Farris, viola; Dorothy Lawson, cello.

Ordering info: [weareubuntumusic.com](http://weareubuntumusic.com)



## Seamus Blake *Guardians Of The Heart Machine*

WHIRLWIND 4735

★★★★½

## Bridges with Seamus Blake *Continuum*

AMP 050

★★★★½

Saxophonist Seamus Blake has been open to performing as part of sundry ensembles with varied

instrumentation going back to before he started recording as a leader 25 years ago. Recently, he took this questing spirit a step further in establishing connections with musicians from across Europe. He enlisted a group of French players for his *Guardians Of The Heart Machine* and has continued to collaborate with Norwegian group Bridges. His tone and everyone's combined compositional strengths sail over national borders.

Throughout *Guardians* the saxophonist sounds self-assured, whether he's blowing hard or whispering through his mouthpiece. On Blake's title track, pianist Tony Tixier and drummer Gautier Garrigue push the band-leader through a series of surprising changes, and the saxophonist responds with a sharp run in the higher register. Blake also messes around with conventional tonality on his somewhat appropriately titled "Lanota" (read it backwards); its reworking of standard harmonies is expressed through a palpable sense of fun. Bassist Florent Nisse also serves as an anchor while simultaneously redirecting the free-flowing "Wandering Aengus." But Blake also retains a firm hold on classic swing, especially during his runs on Tixier's "Blues For The Real Human Beings."

For *Continuum*, Bridges features band members' compositions along with two tracks of collective improvisation. Mostly, the pic-

es strike a low-key tone, but myriad gentle exchanges happen at this low volume, especially on bassist Jesper Bodilsen's subdued ballad "No Road For Readers." Espen Berg's piano opens his "Andromeda," which blends into a warm exchange between Blake and trumpeter Hayden Powell. The horns move in slowly, but they gradually create an overarching, almost enveloping, warmth; occasionally, the approach echoes Blake's duos from years back while recording with trumpeter Dave Douglas. Blake also sounds initially subdued on the more spontaneously written "Two," but then the saxophonist finds all sorts of ways to get between Berg's notes, the pianist then offering his response. Blake's sole composition here, "The Jupiter Line," cranks up the velocity, with some added fuel from drummer Anders Thorén's cymbal crashes. And a light crescendo as the coda to "Fanfare" is the ideal send-off. —Aaron Cohen

**Guardians Of The Heart Machine:** Guardians Of The Heart Machine; Vaporbabe; Sneaky D; I'm Okay; Lanota; Wandering Aengus; Betty In Rio; Blues For The Real Human Beings; The Blasted Heath. (56:49)

**Personnel:** Seamus Blake, saxophone, vocals (9); Tony Tixier, piano; Florent Nisse, bass; Gautier Garrigue, drums.

**Ordering info:** [whirlwindrecordings.com](http://whirlwindrecordings.com)

**Continuum:** Introduction; The Clues; Andromeda; Slightly Behind; Mareel; The Jupiter Line; Two; No Road For Readers; Fanfare. (49:16)

**Personnel:** Seamus Blake, saxophone; Hayden Powell, trumpet; Espen Berg, piano; Jesper Bodilsen, bass; Anders Thorén, drums.

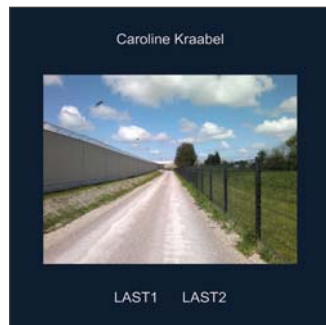
**Ordering info:** [ampmusicrecords.com](http://ampmusicrecords.com)

## Caroline Kraabel *LAST1 LAST 2*

EMANEM 5048

★★★★

The core inspiration of *LAST1 LAST 2*, an album orchestrated by Caroline Kraabel, was pure altruism. The 2016 and 2017 concerts where these pieces were recorded raised funds to support stranded migrants in Calais, France, who were hoping to gain entry to the UK. And proceeds from album sales will go to support a pair of nonprofits that work closely with the Calais refugees. The two pieces here play like a fascinating theoretical exercise, with two very different ensembles performing live improvisations that react and respond to a prerecorded vocal by the inimitable Robert Wyatt. For "LAST1," which was performed by a group of 15 musicians, the players hadn't heard the song ahead of time, but swell and wrestle until Wyatt's plaintive voice and pleading lyrics cut through the chaos. The same build on "LAST2" occurs, but stretched over almost the full length of the piece. That has everything to do with how the work was presented: The four musicians went on stage one after another, so they're playing together only briefly. The open space feels luxurious in comparison to the other side of the album, and remarkable for how, even playing solo, the musicians maintain a consistency of tone and temperament. —Robert Ham



**LAST1 LAST2:** LAST1; LAST2. (55:58)

**Personnel:** Caroline Kraabel, alto saxophone; Sue Lynch, tenor saxophone; Cath Roberts, baritone saxophone; Varyan Weston, piano; Philipp Wachsmann, viola; Hannah Marshall, cello; Neil Metcalfe, flute; Alex Ward, clarinet; Tom Ward, bass clarinet; Jackie Walduck, vibes; Roland Ramanan, trumpet; Caroline Hall, David Jago, trombone; Seth Bennett, Guillaume Viltard, John Edwards, bass; Mark Sanders, Richard E. Harrison, percussion; Maggie Nicols, Robert Wyatt, vocals.

**Ordering info:** [emanemdisc.com](http://emanemdisc.com)

## Camilla Battaglia *EMIT: Rotator Tenet*

DODICILUNE 412

★★★★½

On Camilla Battaglia's first two albums as a leader, one can't help notice the conspicuous absence of piano. It would be unusual for any vocalist, and even more so given the artist's famous father, Italian piano virtuoso Stefano Battaglia. Camilla also is an accomplished keyboardist, but relegates the instrument to mostly textural considerations, helping to highlight her astute sense of harmony and pitch. Her clear and supple voice frames the words of Sylvia Plath, Martin Heidegger and Friedrich Nietzsche within winding modal and chromatic melodies, delivered with gorgeous fearlessness. The multitude of melodies swirl around innovative rhythmic cycles, heavily punctuated by raucous grooves from bassist Andrea Lombardini and drummer Bernardo Guerra. Clever ostinato patterns break down into poignant pauses only to erupt into new sections of fiery drama, accentuated by virtuosic sparring between altoist Michele Tino and trumpeter Ambrose Akinmusire. But there's an underlying order to the cacophony, each piece folding in on itself, keeping with the album's overarching theme exhibited in titular palindromes. Clearly a great deal of thought went into constructing this album, and the results couldn't be more disorienting, in a spectacular way. —Gary Fukushima



**EMIT:** Rotator Tenet; EMIT: Rotator Tenet; Be Still In Motion; Same Difference; Event; Crossing The Water; You Don't Exist; You Don't Exist II; teneT rotatorR. (47:09)

**Personnel:** Camilla Battaglia, vocals, keyboards; Kaospad; Michele Tino, alto saxophone; Andrea Lombardini, electric bass, electronics; Bernardo Guerra, drums; Ambrose Akinmusire, trumpet (2, 5, 6).

**Ordering info:** [dodicilune.it](http://dodicilune.it)

# Constant Search for Respite

**Manx Marriner Mainline, *Hell Bound For Heaven* (Stony Plain 1404; 38:28 ★★★★★)**

Working together off and on since the early 2000s but only now recording, Canadians Harry Manx and Steve Marriner enjoy as strong a rapport as any creative partners in roots music. An outstanding bluesman, Manx employs his distinctive singing voice and significant skills on several stringed instruments, including an Indian mohan veena, for music that finds resolve in sorrow. He has a gentle soul, prone to shining gospel light on blues darkness. Manx personalizes Charlie Patton's hardcore "Rattlesnake," while at the same time suggesting a sense of glorious release. Marriner, a less riveting singer, showcases his prowess as a guitarist and harmonica player on strong originals and choice covers. The two sometimes call on a drummer, an organ player or backup singers to thicken the sparse duo sound.

Ordering info: [stonyplainrecords.com](http://stonyplainrecords.com)

**Mighty Mike Schermer, *Bad Tattoo* (Finedog/VizzTone 61041; 51:30 ★★★★★)**

A member of Marcia Ball's current band and previously employed by Elvin Bishop and other big names, Schermer maintains a solo career of considerable interest. His seventh album—a dozen originals of blues orientation infused with Texas rock, soul and country—is yet another winner. From Johnny "Guitar" Watson grooves to Sir Douglas Quintet Tex-Mex territory, the Californian adapts and controls his vocal and guitar lines with authority, never lacking for imaginative range. His unconventional singing brims with honesty. Also to Schermer's advantage is a smart, wry sense of humor.

Ordering info: [vizztone.com](http://vizztone.com)

**Baldori & Migliazza, *The Boogie Kings: Disturbing The Peace* (BluJazz/Spirit; 52:11 ★★★★★)**

Bob Baldori and Arthur Migliazza, who have been collaborating for seven-plus years, embrace boogie-woogie piano with the conviction that they were placed on earth to memorialize greats like Albert Ammons and Jimmy Yancey. This studio romp manages to communicate the buoyant four-handed excitement of a live concert, its blitzes of cross-rhythms rumbling through a program of originals, boogie classics and New Orleans r&b. Eclectic Baldori capably wields a harmonica on Chicago standbys "Got My Mojo Working" and "Blues With A Feeling." *The Boogie Kings* also offers a few vocals, but just passably.

Ordering info: [boogiejazz.com](http://boogiejazz.com)

**The B.B. King Blues Band, *A Tribute To The King* (Ruf 1268; 60:16 ★★½)**

With sincere appreciation for the music of B.B. King, three former bandmembers and three outsiders are joined by mercenaries like Kenny Wayne Shepherd, Joe Louis Walker and Diun-



Harry Manx (left) and Steve Marriner

na Greenleaf in a ghost band that reanimates King repertoire, while also debuting originals. The big deal is young Texan Michael Lee performing "The Thrill Is Gone," as he did on *The Voice*. He's passionate, but devoid of any of the emotional depth and seriousness of purpose natural to King. James "Boogaloo" Bolden, a trumpeter who spent about 30 years with King, supplies the most rewarding track, vocalizing his swinging r&b tune "Here Today Gone Tomorrow."

Ordering info: [bbkingbluesband.com](http://bbkingbluesband.com)

**Harpdog Brown, *For Love & Money* (Dog House 6902; 54:39 ★★½)**

Brown looks for inspiration in Chicago blues and music of the late 1940s and early '50s that threaded blues, jazz, swing, boogie and jump. On his sixth release, the Vancouverite sings and plays harmonica with soul, expressivity and Tom Waits-graininess, finding the fun in creditable new songs about booze, reefer and quirky misfortune. The hip-cat vibe extends to well-chosen material by Memphis Slim, Louis Jordan and Wynonie Harris.

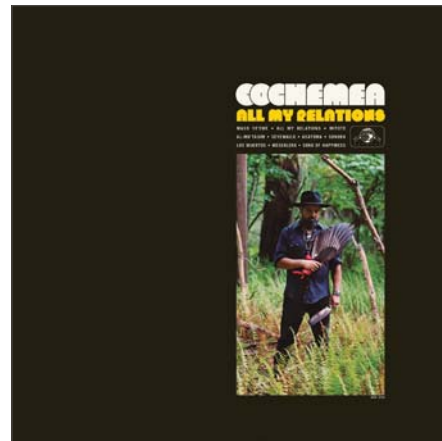
Ordering info: [harpdogbrown.com](http://harpdogbrown.com)

**Benny Turner & Cash McCall, *Going Back Home* (Nola Blue 007; 35:27 ★★★★★)**

Septuagenarians Turner and McCall do an impressive job of rekindling the camaraderie they had decades ago when on the Chicago blues scene. (The former was the bass player in his brother Freddie King's band, among other things, and the latter was both an r&b one-hit wonder and a guitarist-songwriter at Chess.) Though making this album almost entirely in Memphis and New Orleans with the backing of soul-blues studio pros, the two sculpt confident vocal deliveries that are appropriate to Windy City fare, like "Spoonful," "Poison Ivy" and "It Hurts Me Too." Chicago harmonica star Billy Branch contributes to two tracks.

DB

Ordering info: [nola-blue.com](http://nola-blue.com)



**Cochemea  
*All My Relations***

DAPTONE 055

★★★★

After touring for 15 years with Sharon Jones and The Dap-Kings, it's possible that the group's slick approach to songwriting rubbed off on saxophonist Cochemea Gastelum. On an album that sometimes can wander, the bandleader here uses cues from indigenous traditions to tie together this new work and his time in that funky ensemble.

On "Maso Ye'eme," *All My Relations'* opening track, Gastelum briefly rises above the ensemble's interplay to articulate an emphatic, longing refrain. Then a cascade of staccato drumming jolts up in the mix. The bandleader exchanges bars with the drummers before the song abruptly segues into the title track, where group improvisation remains the focus.

A few tracks, though, flirt with the poppy, melodic appeal of smooth jazz. On "Seyewailo," Gastelum does his best to get the electric saxophone to emote. It ends up sounding like the score to a lingering, soft-focus PG-13 movie scene of coitus between two big-haired actors partially obscured by silk curtains. Nonetheless, it's really good, buoyed by a bright, memorable melody and more driving percussion.

The last quarter of the album feels scattered, unfortunately. "Asatoma," "Sonora" and "Los Muertos" seem particularly incomplete, ambient percussion waiting for an enlivening idea. Thankfully, "Song Of Happiness" finishes the album strongly, its bridge building a potent harmonic tension—in welcome contrast to the preceding songs' more static nature—which resolves into a joyous major-key hymnal melody.

—Andrew Jones

**All My Relations:** Maso Ye'eme; All My Relations; Mitote; Al-Mu Tasim; Seyewailo; Asatoma; Sonora; Los Muertos; Mescalero; Song Of Happiness. (35:06)

**Personnel:** Cochemea Gastelum, alto saxophone, electric saxophone, flute, bass clarinet; Elizabeth Pupo-Walker, congas, bongos, cajón; Brian Wolfe, bass drum; Reinaldo De Jesus, congas, kanjira; Sunny Jain, tabla, dhol; Neil Ochoa, congas; Giancarlo Luiggi, shekere; Fernando Velez, congas; Bosco Mann, bass, guembri; Victor Axelrod, calivnet, pianet, talking drum.

Ordering info: [daptonerecords.com](http://daptonerecords.com)



## Johnny Griffith Quintet *The Lion, Camel & Child*

GBRECORDS 108109

★★★★★

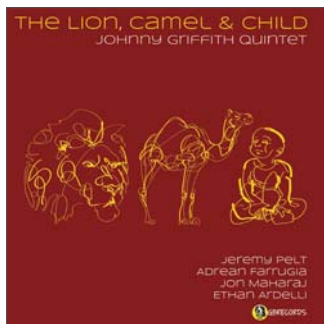
Honestly, the notion of “Nietzschean jazz” doesn’t sound like much fun. “Solos which do not kill us make us stronger,” and all that, right? Well, don’t get the wrong idea: The suite at the center of *The Lion, Camel & Child* is based on Nietzsche’s concept of the three metamorphoses from *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. There, the philosopher offers the characters as metaphors for the spiritual stages of wisdom, perseverance and innocence, qualities Toronto saxophonist Johnny Griffith tries to capture. Representing a philosophical concept through music is a tough trick, but between Griffith’s command of motivic development and his quintet’s ability to spin ideas into emotionally simpatico solos, it’s not hard to “hear” the ideas at play. Pianist Adrean Farrugia is particularly adept, shading the harmony, so the circular themes remain in play, even as soloists move beyond them and trumpeter Jeremy Pelt embraces Griffith’s melodic syntax. Despite the lack of underlying narrative, the rest of the album handily maintains the joyful and cohesive performances, informed by a conversational interplay that suggests a great live band. Could it be that solos which kill us listeners only make the players stronger?

—J.D. Cosidine

**The Lion, Camel & Child:** The Lion; The Camel; Cadenza; The Child; Narcomedusae; Strawberry Qwik; Amarone; For A Derailed Painter; Deliciously Ambiguous; The Corridor; Last Say. (60:52)

**Personnel:** Johnny Griffith, tenor saxophone; Jeremy Pelt, trumpet; Adrean Farrugia, piano; Jon Maharaj, bass; Ethan Adrelli, drums.

**Ordering info:** [grecords.ca](http://grecords.ca)



## May Okita *Art Of Life*

ORIGIN 82771

★★★½

Tokyo-born May Okita spent several years living in Los Angeles, where she studied clinical psychiatry at UCLA and sang in area jazz clubs. Shortly before she returned to Tokyo, Okita recorded *Art Of Life* in a trio with pianist Josh Nelson and guitarist Larry Koonse.

She has a pleasant voice, obviously loves the material here and takes most of the melodies pretty straightahead, other than scating a bit during the closing vamp of “Let’s Face The Music And Dance” and singing wordlessly on Duke Ellington’s “Blue Rose.” And while “Blue Rose” and Randy Newman’s “When She Loved Me” aren’t covered often, and “Art Of Life” was co-written by Okita and Nelson, all of the other songs have been recorded countless times. These renditions, despite the sincere treatments, don’t stand out from the crowd; Okita doesn’t take any real chances in her singing. Nelson and Koonse modernize many of the songs, though, and highlights include the pianist’s accompaniment on “Both Sides Now,” a transformation of “Detour Ahead” into a waltz and a swinging version of “What A Difference A Day Made.” But with the focus squarely on Okita, *Art Of Life* mostly is predictable, pleasing but uneventful.

—Scott Yanow



**Art Of Life:** Let’s Face The Music And Dance; Both Sides Now; Detour Ahead; Art Of Life; Blue Rose; When She Loved Me; Some Other Time; Smile; What A Difference A Day Made; Ev’ry Time We Say Goodbye. (45:24)

**Personnel:** May Okita, vocals; Josh Nelson, piano; Larry Koonse, guitar.

**Ordering info:** [originarts.com](http://originarts.com)

## Ken Fowser *Right On Time*

POSTI-TONE 8189

★★★★½

Tenor saxophonist Ken Fowser’s latest is a pleasantly rollicking, worn-in effort. No one’s reinventing the wheel here on these straightahead jams, but that’s not necessarily the point.

Grooves are the trenches over which Fowser floats, with Ed Cherry ably keeping order on rhythm guitar, as Willie Jones III sits behind the kit. Functioning more as a rudder for the group than as an additional melodic element, Brian Charette’s organ seems to be as much a leader as Fowser’s tenor, which occasionally finds itself subsumed in the horn section. It’s all a seemingly balanced recording, but something elemental about the instruments and arrangements just throw things out of whack a smidge.

“No Filter” is a good ride for all involved, coasting along gently with each player getting in a solo—and pulling them off. “Don’t Let Life Pass You By” is a gentle little ballad, but one might think Fowser would take more of the lead on a song like “Fowser Time” that uses his own name.

This isn’t to say the album doesn’t cut up at all. By closer “Knights Of The Round,” Jones contributes a drum solo so rambunctious, listeners might wonder where that vibrancy was during the previous 50 minutes.

—Anthony Dean-Harris



**Right On Time:** Stand Clear Of The Closing Doors; Samba For Joe Birn; Duck And Cover; No Filter; Don’t Let Life Pass You By; On My Way; Keep Doing What You’re Doing; Fowser Time; A Poem For Eliane; Knights Of The Round. (58:02)

**Personnel:** Ken Fowser, tenor saxophone; Steve Davis, trombone; Joe Magnarelli, trumpet; Brian Charette, organ; Ed Cherry, guitar; Willie Jones III, drums.

**Ordering info:** [posti-tone.com](http://posti-tone.com)

## Joyce DiDonato *Songplay*

WARNER CLASSICS/

ERATO 0190295534387

★★★★★

Several of *Songplay*’s selections are staples from *24 Italian Songs and Arias*—repertoire that lives in near infamy among classical vocal students for its universally familiar stagnancy. Yet, both these and selections from the Great American Songbook fit well with the underlying drivers of Joyce DiDonato’s latest work: remembering not to take things too seriously and musing over the ever-discussed, but often forgotten, meaning of love.

From the opening seconds of the aria “Se Tu M’ami/Star Vicino,” DiDonato’s intent to revive the playful, liberating potential behind singing about love immediately is apparent. A conventionally delivered piano motif teases dread of an uninspired performance before giving way to a flourish of light percussion, spanning gentle floor toms, shaker and woodblock alongside a subtly plucked bass. All of these parts jump in under Craig Terry’s fluid piano, instantly transforming the aria from stiff to sultry—a quality only enhanced by DiDonato’s pristine vocals. The ensemble’s performance is nothing short of exemplary, too, begging return plays of DiDonato’s adventurous exploration of the canon.

—Kira Grunenber



**Songplay:** Se Tu M’ami/Star Vicino; Tu Lo Sai; (I Am Afraid) The Masquerade Is Over; Lullaby Of Birdland; Will He Like Me?; Amarilli, Mia Bella; Lean Away; Col Piacer Della Mia Fedè; Vedrò Con Mio Diletto; (In My) Solitude; Quella Fiamma; Caro Mio Ben; Nel Cor Più Non Mi Sento; With A Song In My Heart. (70:49)

**Personnel:** Joyce DiDonato, vocals; Craig Terry, piano; Chuck Israels, bass; Jimmy Madison, drums; Lautaro Greco, bandoneon; Charlie Porter, trumpet, flugelhorn.

**Ordering info:** [warnerclassics.com](http://warnerclassics.com)

# Sounds of the Past, Today

Modern music, no matter how far out an artist might try to take it, always will bear the mark of influence, something created by sounds of the past.

One of the most transparent examples of this is within the work being done by musicians hailing from Africa. During the past five decades, those artists have embraced the instrumentation and styles coming out of the U.S. and Europe, but continue to feature the same floating melodies and rolling rhythms that have flowed from the continent for centuries.

**Doko Mien (Merge 665; 41:03 ★★★★★)**, the third album by London-based ensemble **Ibibio Sound Machine**, provides a perfect test case for this theory. The group's music pulls its grooves from the rich pool of dance music history, with the sashaying spirit of disco infecting tracks like "She Work Very Hard" and a bit of electro throb cutting through the title track, while also paying homage to more traditional fare like the spare, highlife-inspired "Kuka." But it's the presence and vocals of the ensemble's Nigerian frontwoman, Eno Williams, that helps center the music's intent. Singing, as she often does, in the *Ibibio* language, Williams vividly calls back to the impact that her homeland has had on her lyrics of spiritual and emotional longing.

Ordering info: [mergerecords.com](http://mergerecords.com)

Connections to the past are a little more visible within the work of **Hama**, a producer and musician from Niger. On his new album, **Houmeissa (Sahel Sounds 049; 38:09 ★★★★★)**, he adapts Saharan folk songs for the modern age, using a bootleg copy of the digital production software FruityLoops and an old synthesizer to turn them into something that wouldn't feel out of place soundtracking a 32-bit video game. In doing so, Hama effortlessly hits on a nostalgic approach that artists like Tycho and Toro Y Moi have been straining to tap into. The difference is the resilience of the melodies, rendered here as electronic squiggles and chirps, and the ingenuity of someone who uses the limitations of his equipment to his advantage. Hama has the urge to make art and doesn't let the apparently erratic electrical system in his hometown of Niamey stand in the way of sonic expression.

Ordering info: [sahelsounds.com](http://sahelsounds.com)

The most celebrated sounds to come out of Africa in recent years have been the guitar music being made in the Western part of the continent, in countries like Mali and Niger. And one of the biggest



stars in that region is **Mdou Moctar**, an ambitious and talented player who first came to the attention of the world through his contributions to the *Sahel Sounds* compilation **Music From Saharan Cellphones**. This year, Moctar looks poised to break big with the release of two albums—one live and one recorded in the studio—that offer a glimpse into how the guitarist has taken the traditional pulse of African music into more psychedelic realms.

The studio album **Ilana: The Creator (Sahel Sounds 051; 41:10 ★★★★★)** is a little more tempered at times, with the music at the mercy of post-production effects and the clear snap of the recording work by Chris Koltay. But what's at the center of each song here is Moctar's mercurial approach to guitar playing, with liquid lead lines dancing around each song like the sparks floating free from a bonfire. The shredding hard-rock influence that sneaks into "Tarhatazed" only gives him another tool in his musical arsenal.

Ordering info: [sahelsounds.com](http://sahelsounds.com)

By contrast, **Blue Stage Session (Third Man 565; 43:32 ★★★★★)** feels truer to the way Moctar got started as young musician, practicing surreptitiously on a homemade instrument. Recorded at Jack White's Third Man Records outpost in Michigan, this live set opens with a blaze of notes that calls to mind former Quicksilver Messenger Service guitarist John Cipollina, before settling into a groove that easily slips between the complexity of Malian *takamba* rhythms and the comparatively simple 4/4 beat of a Western rock band. The differences between the two musics, Moctar and band suggests throughout, are not so vast. **DB**

Ordering info: [thirdmanrecords.com](http://thirdmanrecords.com)



## John Pizzarelli Trio For Centennial Reasons: 100 Year Salute To Nat King Cole

GHOSTLIGHT DELUXE

★★★★½

Nat King Cole fans will appreciate the title pun of this homage disc, brimming with wit, warmth and smooth, irresistible old-school swing.

As a Great American Songbook flame-keeper, vocalist and guitarist John Pizzarelli's unpretentious, song-centered approach has earned wide crossover success during a career that includes numerous tribute recordings honoring both jazz and pop artists. But Pizzarelli never is more at home than when covering his early idols, like Sinatra and Cole, whom he spotlighted on a pair of discs from the '90s, *Dear Mr. Cole* and *P.S. Mr. Cole*.

Sparks fly most brightly here when the drummer-less unit channels uptempo numbers from Cole's trio period, driven by Pizzarelli's urgent four-to-the-bar comping. But the ballads succeed also, notably the understated and heartfelt "When I Fall In Love." Though the bandleader's vocals don't have that smoky, sonorous feel that Cole possessed, his relaxed phrasing, focused pitch and knowing way with lyrics makes for compelling renditions of these standards.

Two quirky food-themed obscurities are included, too: "Save The Bones For Henry Jones ('Cause Henry Don't Eat No Meat)" and "I'm Such A Hungry Man," a lesser Bobby Troup number that overstays its welcome by relentlessly rhyming locales with dishes. It's fun, nevertheless. But Troup's greatest tune serves as a fitting finale: "(Get Your Kicks On) Route 66," a Cole signature and longtime Pizzarelli staple showcasing the spirited trio at its well-oiled swinging best.

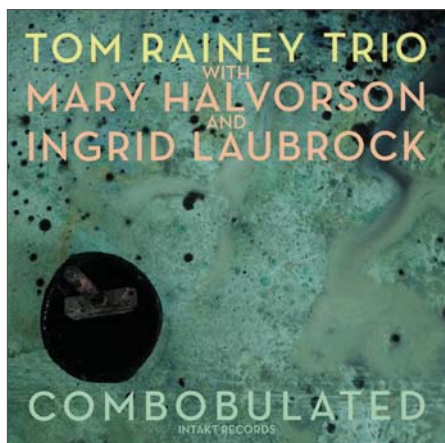
—Jeff Potter

**For Centennial Reasons: 100 Year Salute To Nat King Cole:**

Straighten Up And Fly Right; A Hundred Years From Now; The Very Thought Of You; (I Would Do) Anything For You; I'm Such A Hungry Man; It's Only A Paper Moon; Body And Soul; Nat King Cool; When I Fall In Love; Save The Bones For Henry Jones ('Cause Henry Don't Eat No Meat); Hit That Jive, Jack; Could-Ja; Red Sails In The Sunset; (Get Your Kicks On) Route 66. (56:33)

**Personnel:** John Pizzarelli, guitar, vocals; Mike Karn, bass; Konrad Paszkudzki, piano.

Ordering info: [ghostlightrecords.com](http://ghostlightrecords.com)



## Tom Rainey Trio *Combobulated*

INTAKT 316

★★★★★

Versatile enough to swing with pianist Fred Hersch and propel the long marches of saxophonist Tim Berne, drummer Tom Rainey remained a consummate accompanist for the first three decades of his career. Then in 2010, the Tom Rainey Trio debuted with *Pool School*.

*Combobulated* is Rainey's sixth record as a leader and fourth with this trio, which includes saxophonist Ingrid Laubrock and guitarist Mary Halvorson. While his Obligato ensemble plays standards, including "Stella By Starlight" and "What Is This Thing Called Love?," the trio adheres to a very specific M.O. Everything is freely improvised, but played so cohesively that whether it's improvised or composed is beside the point. The players forge into the heat of invention on the album's title track, with Laubrock essaying substantial, melancholy phrases over Halvorson's liquid tones as Rainey tends a slow-boiling pot of rhythmic possibilities. Over the course of 18 minutes, the improvisation morphs organically from vigorous rhythmic excavation to slowly winding melody and into effects-refracted space music, all united by a persistently cultivated tension that keeps the listener invested.

The way Laubrock slowly squeezes high pitches past ragged, breathy cries defines the hallucinatory reverie of "Point Reyes." But her reserved long tones provide a skeptical counter-argument to Rainey and Halvorson's battering attack on the distortion-laden "Fact."

In the past year, Rainey's accompanists have made bold and possibly career-transforming statements. *Combobulated* might lack the formal ambition of Laubrock's orchestral *Contemporary Chaos Practices* or Halvorson's song cycle, *Code Girl*, but demonstrates that closely attuned free-improv can be just as satisfying.—*Bill Meyer*

**Combobulated:** Combobulated; Point Reyes; Fact; Isn't Mine; Splays Itself; Tom Road. (53:17)

**Personnel:** Tom Rainey, drums; Ingrid Laubrock, saxophone; Mary Halvorson, guitar.

**Ordering info:** [intaktrec.ch](http://intaktrec.ch)

## Chad Lefkowitz-Brown *Standard Sessions*

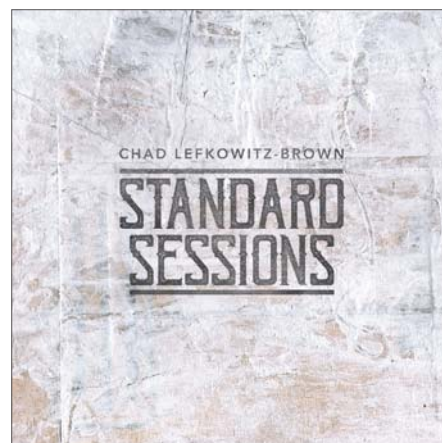
SOUND FRAME

★★★

At 29, tenor saxophonist Chad Lefkowitz-Brown seems a bit young to be nostalgic for the jazz jams of his youth. Nonetheless, his third album, *Standard Sessions*, stems from his desire to recreate the impromptu blowing sessions he enjoyed when he was fresh out of music school, living in Harlem and trying to break into the Manhattan jazz scene. To recreate that, he put together several rhythm sections and recorded a series of "standard sessions," first for YouTube (where he already hosted a series of instructional videos), and then as this download-only album.

Not having been there, I can't attest to how well *Standard Sessions* recaptures Lefkowitz-Brown's past. But as an exercise in exploring the Great American Songbook, it's definitely a mixed bag. The songs here include well-worn show tunes and lesser-known jazz chestnuts (Hank Mobley's "This I Dig of You," Ornette Coleman's "When Will The Blues Leave?"), which the musicians approach with an easy authority. Lefkowitz-Brown's solos, in particular, are masterfully structured, alternating elongated, bluesy phrases with breathless bursts of boppish sixteenth notes, and it was nice to hear him laying back in the pocket on "Scrapple From the Apple" and "Almost Like Being In Love."

But for all the polish and poise these performances reveal, they don't deliver much in the way of wit or insight. The playing



is supremely competent, but rarely transcendent, and what flash the rhythm sections show comes mainly in passing, as with Michael Piolet's bass drum flourish at the end of his solo on "When Will The Blues Leave?" In that sense, *Standard Sessions* is not unlike a well-assembled album of vacation photos; however admirable the effort involved, in the end you probably had to have been there. —*J.D. Considine*

**Standard Sessions:** This I Dig Of You; Scrapple From The Apple; Alone Together; On Green Dolphin Street; Old Folks; When Will The Blues Leave?; Almost Like Being In Love; I'll Remember April; Out Of Nowhere; What Is This Thing Called Love; Yardsbird Suite; You Stepped Out Of A Dream. (86:52)

**Personnel:** Chad Lefkowitz-Brown, tenor saxophone; David Meder (1, 2), Manuel Valera (3), Steven Feifke (4, 6), Takeshi Ohbayashi (5, 11), Adam Birnbaum (7, 8), Josh Richman (9), Victor Gould (10), Carmen Staaf (12), piano; Barry Stephenson (1, 2), Ben Tibero (3), Yasushi Nakamura (4, 6), Tamir Shmerling (5, 11), Eric Wheeler (7, 8), Raviv Markovitz (9), Jonathan Michel (10), Ricky Rodriguez (12), bass; Charles Goold (1, 2), Allan Mednard (3), Michael Piolet (4, 6), Bryan Carter (5, 11), Chris Smith (7, 8), Jeremy Dutton (9), Damian Douglas (10), Kush Abadey (12), drums.

**Ordering info:** [chadlefkowitz-brown.com](http://chadlefkowitz-brown.com)



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## Kiermyer's Ecstatic Devotion

More than two decades separates a pair of releases on Dot Time Records, each helmed by veteran drummer **Franklin Kiermyer**. But listening to both recordings, a very specific and sacred understanding of the music is revealed.

Originally issued in 1994 by the Evidence Music label and long out of print, ***Solomon's Daughter* (Dot Time 7103; 72:20 ★★★★★)** is a scorched-earth touchstone in the avant-garde jazz canon whose reissue is long overdue. Cut from the spiritually informed jazz cloth of John Coltrane, the album, which features the monolithic presence and brute force of tenor saxophonist Pharoah Sanders, is again seeing the light of day at a very specific moment.

This year marks the recording's 25th anniversary, but as Kiermyer tells it, it's purely coincidence, a "wonderful" one. In fact, trying to get the album reissued wasn't even on his agenda when the drummer was attending the 2018 jazzhead! Festival in Bremen, Germany. At the suggestion of his co-producer, longtime friend and mentor Michael Cuscuna, Kiermyer met with Jerry Roche, a jazz historian who works with Dot Time and was a fan of Kiermyer's 2016 set, *Closer To The Sun*.

Scouting potential label homes for his current quartet, ***Scatter The Atoms That Remain*** and its debut recording, *Exultation*, was actually the priority for the drummer. But *Solomon's Daughter* came up in conversation.

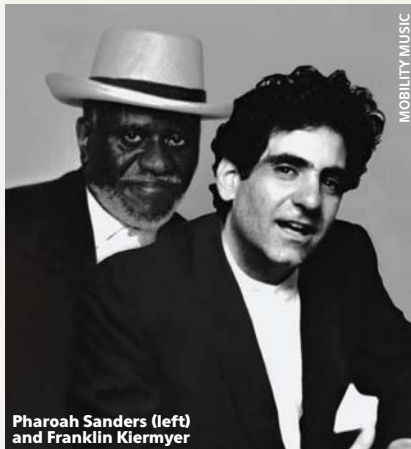
"Jerry mentioned how much he appreciated that album and that he had known about it for a long time," Kiermyer said.

With the rights having reverted back to the drummer, Roche expressed excitement at the prospect of reissuing the album. Kiermyer? Not so much: "Well, that's cool, but all I'm really interested in is my band, Scattered The Atoms That Remain," he said.

Ultimately, Kiermyer, 62, warmed to the idea of *Solomon's Daughter* undergoing the reissue treatment. The addition of three unreleased bonus tracks from the original sessions—including "I Pray My Soul To Take," a duo number with Sanders that the bandleader's particularly fond of—was key, he said.

"From the get-go, what excited Dot Time was that the focus would be Scattered The Atoms That Remain and what would hopefully create an opening for that to percolate to the surface would be the reissue of *Solomon's Daughter*," Kiermyer said.

Whether one thinks of the album with Sanders as a companion piece to *Exultation*, or vice versa, the two programs are a testament to Kiermyer's transcendental and volcanic approach to his role as leader



Pharoah Sanders (left) and Franklin Kiermyer

and composer.

On *Solomon's Daughter*, the drummer—under the soul-searching influence of Coltrane's classic quartet—proves a relentless polyrhythmic force of nature, directing the traffic for Sanders, pianist John Esposito and bassist Drew Gress. Kiermyer even coined a fitting name for his part-structured, mostly improvised aesthetic: "Ecstatic American Music."

And ecstatic it is, primarily due to the devastating screams, emotionally wrought lyricism and sensitive passages that Sanders wrangles from his tenor. From start to finish, he seemingly was on a mission, and the seismic opening track, "If I Die Before I Awake," and the following "Three Jewels" achieved stunning—and earsplitting—results. His playing here hearkens back to the saxophonist's time with Coltrane, as well as his own peak material as leader. Even publications outside the jazz mainstream, like Rolling Stone and Entertainment Weekly, published reviews of the album at the time of its initially release.

"I knew that in terms of the heart and the spiritual focus of 'transcension,' let's call it, and the power and the sanctified faith of his playing, there was no doubt that he would be the best choice," said Kiermyer of Sanders' inclusion on the set.

Kiermyer's nature is to look forward, but he does see a link between the monumental *Solomon's Daughter* and the just-as-bold ***Exultation* (Dot Time 9085; 60:44 ★★★★★)**, manifested by a spiritually focused vision that has remained a constant throughout his career.

"I think the intention is the same, and from my point of view, more fulfilled," he said, lionizing *Exultation*. "Well, I don't want to say that, but that's how I feel." **DB**

Ordering info: [dottimerecords.com](http://dottimerecords.com)



## Rosa Brunello Y Los Fermentos *Shuffle Mode*

CAM JAZZ 7943

★★★★½

This unpredictable and entertaining album by bassist Rosa Brunello and her group boldly appropriates progressive rock and jazz fusion styles in its complex tunes. The atmospheric created by the troupe provides the arc that carries *Shuffle Mode* from its open-ended start to its peaceful conclusion.

But the recording is incohesive by design, and its title suggests that the Italian bandleader wants listeners to experience it in any way they see fit. Brunello's tunes cover character sketches like "Il Barone Rampante" and the haunting "Titus Rocks," two of the more leisurely and linear works. But she's also comfortable luxuriating in cacophony on "Before Falling Asleep" or going guileless and elastic on "Pure," a showcase for tenor saxophonist Michele Polga and drummer Luca Colussi.

"White Hair" sums up Brunello's approach to composition: Polga and Martino start deliberately, only to be interrupted by the bandleader's synthesizer. A melody struggles to break through the rhythm, punctuated by Brunello's enthusiastic bass thwocks; Martino finally prevails to deliver a pyrotechnic guitar solo. Each iteration of the ascending melody adds to its assertiveness, though toward the end, the musicians seem to wander off, retreating into electronics. Yet the tune is not over, thanks to Martino's effects and Colussi's fevered drumming. Brunello doesn't give up easily, either.

The album ends pensively—and all too soon—as Polga and guitarist Frank Martino intertwine on "Running In The Clouds," bringing calm after all turbulence. —Carlo Wolff

**Shuffle Mode:** Shuffle Mode; Be Human; Pure; White Hair; Titus Rock; Before Falling Asleep; New Chapter; Il Barone Rampante; Running In The Clouds. (42:38)

**Personnel:** Rosa Brunello, bass, electric bass, synthesizer, vocals; Luca Colussi, drums; Frank Martino, guitar, drum machine; Michele Polga, tenor saxophone.

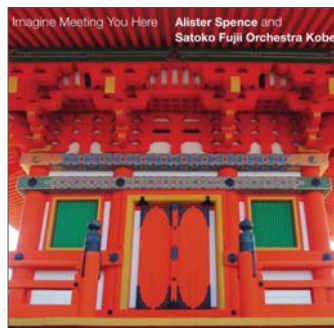
Ordering info: [camjazz.com](http://camjazz.com)

## Alister Spence and Satoko Fujii Orchestra Kobe *Imagine Meeting You Here*

SELF RELEASE

★★★★

On *Imagine Meeting You Here*, Australian composer Alister Spence takes full advantage of the possibilities afforded by pianist Satoko Fujii's improvising big band, Orchestra Kobe, and the results are pretty exhilarating. Throughout the album-length composition's five sections, the band turns on a dime, moving from noirish high drama to playful, Arkestra-inflected group improv. Spence designed the album giving equal weight to the compositions and improv, sometimes resulting in the pushing of "serious" musical boundaries: Out of context, portions of *Imagine* easily could be mistaken for the homemade vernacular improv championed by the likes of the Nihilist Spasm Band. But hearing those sections bump up against the piece's more controlled sections reveals a discipline in Orchestra Kobe's playfulness. It's no small challenge to corral any big band, and that goes double when they're performing a composition that leaves so much room for play. But Spence has the chops to make it happen. —*Dustin Krcatovich*



**Imagine Meeting You Here:** *Imagine Meeting You Here 1 (Imagine); Imagine Meeting You Here 2 (Meeting); Imagine Meeting You Here 3 (You); Imagine Meeting You Here 4 (Here); Imagine Meeting You Here 5 (Postscript).* (49:16)

**Personnel:** Alister Spence, conductor; Ko Iwata, Yasuhisa Mizutani, alto saxophone; Eiichiro Arasaki, tenor saxophone, shakuhachi; Tsutomu Takei, tenor saxophone; Keizo Nobori, baritone saxophone; James Barrett, Shojiro Yokoo, Natsuki Tamura, Rabito Arimoto, trumpet; Yusuke Imanishi, Yasuko Kaneo, trombone; Takumi Seino, guitar; Satoko Fujii, piano; Hiroshi Funato, bass; Yoshikazu Isaki, drums.

Ordering info: [alisterspence.com](http://alisterspence.com)

## Pedro Martins *Vox*

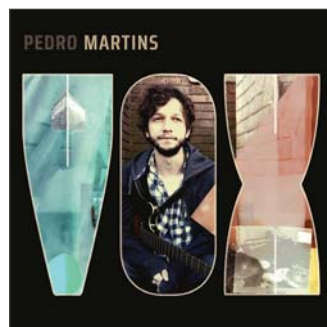
HEARTCORE

★★★★½

Brazilian musician Pedro Martins is 25 years old, but his sound emanates from somewhere much further back. Hailed by label boss Kurt Rosenwinkel in 2015 as the next big thing at the Montreux Jazz Festival, here Martins bends genres and strings into a curious force of jazz and new-age soul, featuring bouts of indigenous Brazilian percussion and modern electro-pop.

"Esqueça" has a broad appeal, Martins' warbling, multitracked vocals evoking indie band Grizzly Bear with moody shifts and a tasteful application of strings. Martins' melodies sometimes are a hard follow, twisting and turning off the beat and into clever crevices that resolve in unexpected ways. His music closely evokes the work of another under-appreciated Brazilian musician, Arthur Verocai. Maybe it's the Portuguese. Maybe it's the almost-disco vibrations that surface from time to time.

Though Martins recorded most of the instruments on the album himself, he's joined by a few notable musicians, including saxophonist Chris Potter on "Faces" and pianist Brad Mehldau, who crops up on "Origem," jolting across the keyboard, unmistakable in prowess and confidence. A welcome addition. —*Sean J. O'Connell*



**Vox:** *Esqueça; Faces; Nova Maneira; K7 Dreams; Horizonte; Vida; B Side; Nao Me Diga Nao; Verdade; Venus 13; Origem; Sertão Profundo; Quem Eu Sou.* (64:53)

**Personnel:** Pedro Martins, guitar, piano, synths, drums, bass, percussion, flute; Kurt Rosenwinkel, guitar; Brad Mehldau, piano; Chris Potter, tenor saxophone; Kyle Crane, drums; Frederico Heliodoro, bass.

Ordering info: [heartcore-records.com](http://heartcore-records.com)

## Scott Robinson *Tenormore*

ARBORS 19462

★★★★

As longstanding multi-reed specialist in the Maria Schneider Orchestra, Scott Robinson has been showcased on numerous instruments over the years, including such oddball axes as ophicleide and theremin. On *Tenormore*, his 20th outing as a leader, Robinson exclusively performs on the silver 1924 Conn tenor saxophone he's had since 1975. In the company of pianist Helen Sung and the veteran rhythm tandem of bassist Martin Wind and drummer Dennis Mackrel, he swings effortlessly and delivers a singing quality on several originals, while also incorporating some unconventional twists on three standards and one familiar pop tune. Robinson kicks it all off in daring fashion with an unaccompanied reading of The Beatles' "And I Love Her," which he opens in the altissimo range of his horn, before detouring into the Dolphy zone on one "out" interlude during his unhurried reading of the ballad. "Tenor Eleven," a boppish 11-bar swinger, gives Sung plenty of room to stretch harmonically on her propulsive solo and also features a kinetic breakdown between tenor and drums. "Tenor Twelve" is an angular tune that again turns Sung loose on her solo and features more fiery group interplay. A winning set by a copacetic crew. —*Bill Milkowski*



**Tenormore:** *And I Love Her; Tenor Eleven; Put On A Happy Face; Morning Star; The Good Life; Tenor Twelve; Rainy River; The Weaver; The Nearness Of You; Tenormore.* (67:19)

**Personnel:** Scott Robinson, tenor saxophone; Helen Sung, piano, Hammond B-3 organ (7, 9); Martin Wind, bass, acoustic bass guitar (9, 10); Dennis Mackrel, drums; Sharon Robinson, flute (8).

Ordering info: [arborsrecords.com](http://arborsrecords.com)

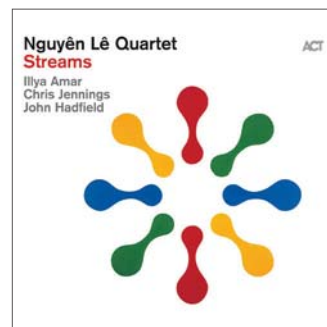
## Nguyễn Lê Quartet *Streams*

ACT 9876

★★★

The title of Nguyễn Lê's *Streams* refers to the tributaries of global-music influence that the guitarist attempts to guide his quartet through. On paper, it's an intriguing idea, one that guitar paragons like Pat Metheny certainly have employed. Unfortunately for Lê, the references to Indian, African and Vietnamese traditions are crushed by the guitarist's smooth-adjacent sound.

Lê contributes a bevy of originals that attempt a kind of grooving funk-rock, reminiscent of Miles' explorations; it works, occasionally. The problem mainly lies in Lê's riffing, which aims to build beds over which he and others can improvise. There's little development to push the music forward, though, and as a result, it often sounds like the band's merely carrying the tunes along, rather than really delving deep into them. *Streams'* real star is vibraphonist Illya Amar, by now a known quantity to Lê's fans of the past 20 years, whose clear, fresh tone cuts through the sap and stickiness of the bandleader's. It'd be like Gary Burton joining Return to Forever during its densest jazz-rock period, providing an ideal foil to the ensemble's increasingly baroque work. Amar's heavenly ringing almost makes it worth wading through the murky musical stream here. Almost. —*Jackson Sinnenberg*



**Streams:** *Hippocampus; Bamiyan; Swing A Ming; Subtle Body; 6h55; Mazurka; Sawira; The Single Orange; Coromandel.* (47:47)

**Personnel:** Nguyễn Lê, guitar, electronics; Illya Amar, vibraphone; Chris Jennings, bass; John Hadfield, drums, percussion.

Ordering info: [actmusic.com](http://actmusic.com)

## How the Maestro Saw Jazz

"[Jazz] covers a multitude of sounds, all the way from the earliest blues, to Dixieland bands, to Charleston bands, to swing bands, to boogie-woogie, to crazy bop, to cool bop, to mambo, and much more. ... It is all jazz and I love it all."

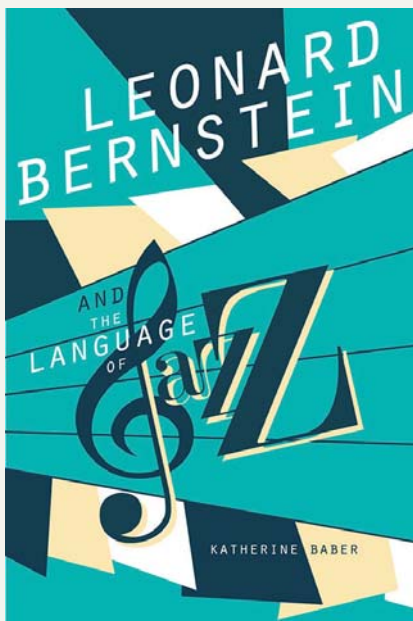
Speaking in October 1955, on the groundbreaking CBS program *Omnibus*, Leonard Bernstein described jazz in language that many current fans might happily acknowledge. Bernstein was clearly a big-tent man. His view of the music might have been a bit dated, but a decade after taking the helm of the New York City Symphony he had no doubt about his enthusiasm for anything he considered jazz. As **Katherine Baber**, an associate professor of music history at California's University of Redlands, writes in ***Leonard Bernstein and the Language of Jazz*** (University of Illinois Press), Bernstein considered jazz a core element of the American experience.

"Jazz was a significant part of Bernstein's aesthetic," she writes, "not just as a source or symbol of American quality, but as a part of the three major threads in his philosophy: tonality, communication, and nationality."

If you're a jazz fan with a passing interest in Bernstein and his role in popularizing high-brow art, Baber's book might not satisfy your desire to simply delve a little deeper into how he helped bring the classical and jazz worlds closer together. It's a densely written, meticulously argued work of research, as interested in its subject's theories regarding language and American society at large as it is in jazz itself. While the chapter on Bernstein's work on *West Side Story* is a relatively straightforward study of how he used elements of Latin music, r&b and blues to transfer *Romeo & Juliet* to Hell's Kitchen, the sections on the development of Bernstein's philosophy of music as language and dissections of some of his lesser-known, jazz-inflected works will be tough sledding for anyone unaccustomed to reading academic work.

Look past the desire to delve into Bernstein's compositional process or to learn anything directly related to the staging or filming of the works themselves, and there's much to consider about how the conductor viewed what he called jazz and how his far-reaching influence in the 1950s and early '60s might have shaped the way that his audiences came to think about the genre after World War II.

As Baber writes, Bernstein felt that all jazz was improvisation—presumably leaving Duke Ellington, for one, out of his thinking—and that it contained five core elements: "Negro melodic peculiarities, Negro rhythmic patterns, Negro tone color, the 4/4 base,



and (though not in all cases) a contrapuntal approach." Like the act of composition, Bernstein gave little credence to the role of harmony in jazz. Given those tenets, it's easy to see that he was an important proponent of the "Magical Negro" trope. While he recognized the instrumental genius of Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie—those crazy boppers—he believed their main contribution was in bringing jazz to the broader American populace.

So, is Bernstein's use of jazz language in works for a predominantly white audiences anything more than cultural appropriation? Did he push a severely constrained version of what jazz was and wasn't on an American public that soaked up his Sunday afternoon lectures?

Baber brushes past those types of questions, raising issues, but moving away without a serious consideration that the language Bernstein created contained little more than an aura of jazz: a blue note here, a horn arpeggio there.

In the end, she believes that whether Bernstein actually understood the full breadth of jazz is immaterial. Instead, she argues that his entire musical persona—his ability to confound expectations, his embrace of an essential American-ness in music, his ability to pluck sounds and experiences out of his environment, among other characteristics—was the essence of jazz.

"Even if Bernstein's music is still 'not jazz'" she concludes, "the musical self he created and the music we call jazz are American in many of the same ways." **DB**

Ordering info: [press.uillinois.edu](http://press.uillinois.edu)



## Human Feel Gold

INTAKT 322

★★★★

Twelve years have passed since *Human Feel* released a full-length album. And despite that lag, none of the quartet's sparkling accord, which dates back to the late 1980s, has been dampened. Spending the past four years working on new material and touring Europe, though, helps explain *Gold's* emotional heft and its rambunctious execution.

The new album exudes the energy, heart and wit of four people who met during their formative years. It's apparent on the opener, "Alar Vome," as alto saxophonist Andrew D'Angelo and tenor saxophonist Chris Speed blow a stately chorale melody that Jim Black soon propels with his combustive drumming, while Kurt Rosenwinkel throws another layer of high-jinks energy into the mix with his jangly guitar accompaniment. The energy of "Alar Vome" quickly reaches a tingling ferocity, but *Human Feel* doesn't use sonic onslaught to conceal any of the song's intricate contrapuntal melodicism, striking harmonic invention or brisk interplay. But it's the more serene moments—and they are plentiful—when *Human Feel* strikes finer gold: On D'Angelo's hymnal, "G\_D," his inner-Julius Hemphill is summoned; Rosenwinkel's "Bass Place" is a stunning masterclass in slow-moving harmonic ingenuity; and Black's "Martens" finds the guitarist and reedists delivering languid passages across suspenseful drumming.

But *Human Feel* is at its most capricious on D'Angelo's stubborn "Numer" and the collectively composed "Lights Out." On both, the ensemble stretches its free-jazz tendencies the furthest without allowing the pieces to snap completely apart. It's another testament to the ensemble's assiduous musicianship. —John Murph

**Gold:** Alar Vome; Imaginary Friend; G.D.; Stina Blues; Bass Place; Eon Hit; Martens; Lights Out; Numer; Ology. (49:47)

**Personnel:** Andrew D'Angelo, alto saxophone, bass clarinet; Chris Speed, tenor saxophone, clarinet; Kurt Rosenwinkel, guitar; Jim Black, drums, ROLI.

Ordering info: [intaktrec.ch](http://intaktrec.ch)

**Yaniv Taubenhause**  
**Perpetuation:**  
*Moments In Trio, Vol. 2*  
 FRESH SOUND 567

★★★★

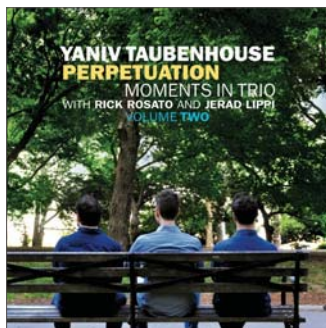
If repertoire can tell us something about where a musician's head is, pianist Yaniv Taubenhause's latest release lets listeners know that he's in touch with the past. Selections like Frederick Loewe's "The Street Where You Live" signal that the bandleader's work easily will be metabolized by people in their golden years. And yet, the trio's relative youth might help it serve as a gateway for a younger generation.

The pianist's grandfather was indeed his guide through the material here, and the set, which also includes Cole Porter's "Ev'ry Time We Say Goodbye" and Thelonious Monk's "Introspection," is dedicated to his father. But Taubenhause's light touch is well-suited to Monk's breeziest writing; the number also gives the trio a chance to work out, letting listeners know that all involved are serious about forging their own way. Bassist Rick Rosato arranged Chico Buarque's "Paratodos" into something quite adventurous, and among the originals, "Fairytale," with its four-note theme, is arranged in 13/8 time. All of this might serve as a bridge from today to the past, but still leaves listeners wondering about the future. —Denise Sullivan

**Perpetuation:** Moments In Trio, Vol. 2: Perpetuation; On The Street Where You Live; Fairytale; Paris; Introspection; Pigeon House Blues; Brother, Can You Spare A Dime?; Paratodos; Ev'ry Time We Say Goodbye; Ilaria. (63:31)

**Personnel:** Yaniv Taubenhause; piano; Rick Rosato, bass; Jerad Lippi; drums.

**Ordering info:** [freshsoundrecords.com](http://freshsoundrecords.com)



**Samantha Boshnack's**  
**Seismic Belt**  
*Live In Santa Monica*  
 ORENDA 0059

★★★★

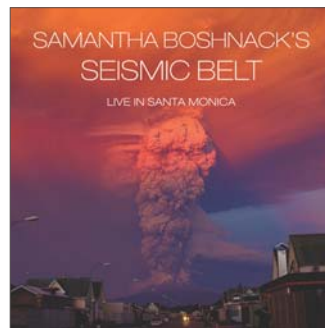
Seattle-based trumpeter Samantha Boshnack draws creative inspiration from the Earth's most dramatic displays of power on *Live In Santa Monica*.

Fascinated by the Ring of Fire, the span of volcanoes that hem the entirety of the Pacific Ocean, Boshnack set out to compose musical allegories for the grand seismic movements that have sculpted the Earth's surface. She carefully avoids mere aural representations here, instead using meticulously crafted post-bop composition to contemplate destruction from an artistic remove. To help summon the desired textures for each composition here, she constellated a new ensemble to cover the distance that lies between her avant-garde quintet and her large symphonic group, B'shnrchestra: a standard rhythm section brightened with horns and tempered with strings. The ensemble finesses Boshnack's experimental motifs, subtle Latin grooves and contrasting temperatures fluently, even during sudden changes in compositional direction. At times, the group synergy is so disarmingly serene that it's easy to miss the fire burning underneath. —Suzanne Lorge

**Live In Santa Monica:** Subduction Zone; Kamchatka; Tectonic Plates; Summer That Never Came; Convection Current; Choro; Fuji; Submarine Volcano. (66:40)

**Personnel:** Samantha Boshnack, trumpet, flugelhorn; Ryan Parrish, tenor saxophone, baritone saxophone; Paris Hurley, violin; Lauren Elizabeth Baba, violin, viola; Paul Cornish, piano, keyboard; Nashir Janmohamed, bass; Dan Schnelle, drums.

**Ordering info:** [orendarecords.com](http://orendarecords.com)



**Scopes**  
*Scopes*  
 WHIRLWIND 4736

★★★★

Scopes' co-leaders, bassist Tom Berkmann and drummer Mathias Ruppning, are an indivisible rhythm section, while pianist Tony Tixier emits one upward current after another to support the flights of alto saxophonist Ben Van Gelder. When the latter bows to Tixier's synthesizer, the effect is akin to splicing an animated scene into a live-action film. Tixier takes that eagle-eyed vision and runs with it, traversing all manner of terrain with a free and easy step. The mood is smooth, yet barbed enough to find purchase in some unexpected places.

"Aquaponies" is a calm forest through which Van Gelder's trail of melodic breadcrumbs mark the promise of return. Ruppning gives the scene a 3D quality it might not otherwise have, as does Berkmann on "Balance." So much of what follows, be it the vistas of "Whistle" or the gesture of farewell that is "Mode," is infused with a refreshing collectivity. That said, Tixier deserves credit as the band's central nervous system. Whether priming the canvas of "Alter Ego" or threading the needle of "Nostalgia," he brings just the right amount of color to monochromatic landscapes—and vice versa. The result is a sound that, given some time to age, wouldn't be out of place on ECM. —Tyran Grillo



**Scopes:** Echo Of Their Own Prejudices; Chamberlain; Aquaponies; Balance; Whistle; Alter Ego; Lakeview; Nostalgia; Mode. (53:38)

**Personnel:** Ben Van Gelder: alto saxophone; Tony Tixier: piano, synthesizer; Tom Berkmann: bass; Mathias Ruppning: drums.

**Ordering info:** [whirlwindrecordings.com](http://whirlwindrecordings.com)

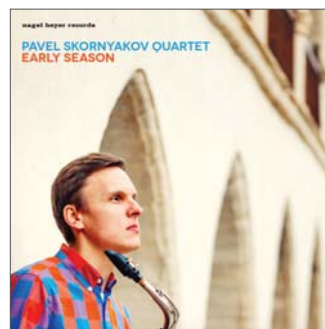
**Pavel Skornyakov**  
**Quartet**  
*Early Season*  
 NAGEL HEYER 2108

★★★★

Russian alto saxophonist Pavel Skornyakov has a sweet, longing tone, verging on syrupy, that evokes the likes of David Sanborn and perhaps Kenny Garrett. That's meant as a compliment, though Skornyakov still has a bit of maturing to do before joining their ranks. On his first album, *Early Season*, the bandleader proves to be a versatile leader, playing a series of impressively athletic solos that zip and dart all over the place.

Skornyakov, 31, assembled eight original compositions here, all of which he wrote between the ages of 19 and 25. And while his quartet plays a form of bright, energetic post-bop that doesn't feel all that stylistically risky, it's sturdy and self-assured nonetheless. On the faster numbers, Skornyakov brings each of his solos to a satisfying peak, wailing away with gutbucket intensity. But he's at his best on the album's only ballad, "Breeze," a wistful composition displaying the full dimension of the bandleader's sound.

It's unclear why Skornyakov chose not to include more recent compositions on *Early Season*. The best possible answer might be that he's saving them for future albums, which certainly would be welcome from this volatile saxophonist, who seems as if he has a lot more to say. —Matthew Kassel



**Early Season:** Early Season; Blues Mood; Short Movies; Circling; Breeze; Hard Work; Monk In Van Gogh Museum In Amsterdam; Walk. (55:07)

**Personnel:** Pavel Skornyakov, alto saxophone; Paul Kirby, piano; Martin Zenker, bass; Alexander Zinger, drums.

**Ordering info:** [nagelheyer.de](http://nagelheyer.de)

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## INVESTIGATING DYNAMICS

BY JOSH SINTON

Josh Sinton (Photo: T.J. Huff)



**ANDREA BRACHFELD**  
*Master Class*  
Page 70



**MATT SHEVITZ**  
*Pro Session*  
Page 72



**TIA FULLER SOLO**  
*Transcription*  
Page 74

**TOOLSHED**  
Page 76



# DYNAMICS:

## An Overlooked, Under-Investigated Dimension

By Josh Sinton | Photo by T.J. Huff

**Harry Carney of the Duke Ellington Orchestra is often cited as one of the earliest exemplars of great baritone saxophonery. I would never argue with this point of view, as it's one that I wholeheartedly embrace.**

Carney is one of the only baritone players that I can say I am jealous of. His sound was unique, all-enveloping and exciting.

Feeling the way I do, it only made sense to rigorously study Carney's playing. I have only listened to a fraction of this work—documentation on him is almost entirely confined to the large sphere of Ellington recordings, a voluminous resource offering countless examples of Carney's playing as both a soloist and section player extending from the late 1920s until his death in 1974. But I can say after close study of what I have heard that one thing Carney exhibited throughout his lifetime was absolute *control* of the baritone saxophone, an asset that was especially evident in his mastery of *dynamics*.

I wouldn't say dynamics gets short shrift in creative music discussions as much as they get *no* shrift. Our aesthetic plates already are full simply trying to get a grip on playing the right sound at the right time. With all the study and imagination required to adequately handle pitch and rhythm, volume level often becomes an afterthought in our artistic self-realizations. And that's a shame, because learning to control this dimension of sound-art pays huge dividends when it comes to the thing we all prize so highly: having a unique, individual *sound*.

After hearing how Carney could play any note of the baritone saxophone at any dynamic level, perfectly in tune, I knew this was an obtainable goal. I also had a hunch that pursuing this goal would lead me into new territory. In this essay, I'm going to outline the methodical approach I developed over the course of about five years of study in the acquisition and implementation of a wide, varied dynamic palette on the baritone saxophone. These concepts aren't bari-specific—the following information (both technical and methodological) can prove useful to any creative musician.

### Defining Dynamics

The first goal I set was to be able to play every note in a two-and-a-half-octave range of my horn (from written low B $\flat$ /A to altissimo F#) at eight different dynamic levels (*fff*, *ff*, *f*, *mf*, *mp*, *p*, *pp* and *ppp*), relatively in tune and in any part of a rhythmic grid. As preparation, I did some research on what exactly dynamics are. That is, what's happening in my saxophone when a note is played loudly versus when it's played softly?

What I discovered was very interesting. When you make a "sound," you are creating sound waves. Sound waves are simply regularly alternating moments of increasing density (compression) and decreasing density (rarefaction) of the molecules of something. In the case of music, that "something" is almost always air. You can map this movement from high density (or pressure) to low density as a curving line that moves up and down from a midpoint. The midpoint represents air in its undisturbed state. We've seen this curving-line map many times in our lives, as it's usually what we think of when we say the words "sound wave."

A sound wave has two measurable components: length (the amount of time elapsed between two equidistant nodes) and amplitude (how high or low the curve goes—in other words, the amount of compression and decompression of air molecules). For clarity's sake, these terms are referred to as *wavelength* and *wave amplitude*. Our ears are evolved to register changes in wavelength and wave amplitude in very distinct ways. Wavelength changes result in hearing a sound as being higher or lower (in other words, pitch). A shorter wavelength—that is, a shorter amount of time between peaks or low points—results in a higher-pitched sound, a longer wavelength in a lower-pitched sound. A change in amplitude—how much the air is compressed—results in a change of volume, or the dynamic. The higher the amplitude, the louder the sound; the lower the



Harry Carney of the Duke Ellington Orchestra exhibited absolute mastery of dynamics.

amplitude, the quieter the sound. So, how do I, as a saxophonist, change these two factors: wavelength (pitch) and amplitude (dynamic)?

The answer to the first question is very simple: I wiggle my fingers. That is, as I press down more and more keys on my instrument, I effectively am playing a longer and longer instrument. The bigger the volume of air being vibrated, the longer the wavelengths get.

But I was surprised when I learned that wave amplitude is a result of air *speed*, not air *volume*. This surprised me, because up until then, I always had assumed the volume level (or wave amplitude) of my sound was determined by the *amount* of air I dumped into my horn. The more air I huffed, the louder I got. But science told me the amount of air I huffed had little effect on the sound (pitch or dynamic). It was the *air speed* or *breath speed*, rather, that resulted in louder or quieter sounds.

This was a welcome revelation: If I put my mind to how fast or slow the air moved through my horn, I'd be able to control the volume

level. I didn't need to worry about how much air I used (or didn't use). All I needed to do was make sure I developed a sufficiently supportive column of air to get a sound going and then figure out how to move that air faster or slower without changing the amount of air. If I wanted a nice, loud middle-D, then I should use a standard amount of air and learn to push it quickly through the instrument. If I wanted to produce this same middle-D at triple pianissimo, then I simply needed to *push the same amount of air as I would for a loud D, but much more slowly*.

### Dynamic Practice

I decided to integrate dynamic practice into my daily routine. Twenty minutes struck me as more than enough time to devote to this study on a daily basis, but with only that much time, trying to go through all 34 notes I was addressing was impossible. So, I decided to start with five notes. Five easy notes. The notes in the middle of my instrument: written B, C, C#, D and E♭. I started with D, since that was a very com-

fortable note for me. I also decided that I would start from the middle of my dynamic range and then work on getting louder first. "Middle of my dynamic range" meant a note that I blew with ease and without exertion. I decided to call that ease "mezzo-forte" (knowing that I would adjust the definition of mezzo-forte depending on whom I was playing with.)

I proceeded to play that D mezzo forte for a full breath, forte for a full breath, fortissimo for a full breath and triple fortissimo for a full breath. By "full breath," I mean playing until one runs out of air. This is an uncomfortable feeling, but wind players need to get used to it. That way, they have greater endurance and flexibility when playing with others.

In my first efforts with the D, I did pretty well from mezzo forte through fortissimo, but I couldn't tell much difference between my *ff* and my *fff*. I reminded myself that loudness was determined by air *speed* and not by the *amount* of air. I did all four notes again, but this time concentrating on how fast I was making the air move. I had more success, but it was tentative. I then repeated this procedure with the other four pitches. And that was it for my first day! Notice, I didn't worry about intonation, articulation or sound quality at this point. I just wanted to see if I could simply manipulate air speed.

I wrote down the notes I worked on in my practice journal and consulted that the next day. I wanted to do five new notes and not repeat the previous five (yet). I knew I didn't have to get those notes down perfectly, as I would be returning to them *many* times in the coming months and years. I couldn't decide if I should do lower notes or higher notes, so I decided to go in both directions. The next day I did mid-range, written A, B♭, E, F and F#. I did the same exercise as the day before: one breath per sound, each note played four times from mezzo forte to triple fortissimo. If I found a certain note wasn't happening at all at a certain volume level; I just made note to return to it the following day.

As the days went by, I managed to go from low A to high F# doing this exercise. I became much better at noticing the difference between air *speed* and air *volume*. As I learned to maintain equal air volume for each sound, the notes had greater resonance regardless of the dynamic level. The sound color changed, but the notes all had equal *weight*. This would be essential in my next pass when I worked on the pianissimo side of dynamics.

In the next stage, I proceeded through these five-note collections the same as before, but this time, I worked on slowing my air stream to affect a gradual diminuendo. Pitches would now go from *mf* to *mp* to *p* to *pp* to *ppp*. I included the extra step of starting from mezzo forte, so I could begin from a place of clarity and certainty. It took *much* longer to run through the 34-note gamut this time, particularly when I

reached the bottom of the horn. In my initial efforts, there wasn't a whole lot of difference among my gradations of piano dynamics, but as long as I got a *clear* and *discernible* difference, I persevered. I would console myself by remembering that I would return to these notes and do them better the next time around.

## In-Tune Dynamics

After I had worked on playing all these notes through each of the eight dynamic gradations, I was ready to bring out the tuner. I was careful at this stage to remind myself that I had plenty of time to work the kinks out, and that even when I could tune these notes properly, that didn't mean I could play them in tune *with other musicians*. For this exercise, I worked with smaller sets of notes, because I wanted to see if I could play all eight dynamic stages of a pitch and keep it in tune. I also allowed myself, when necessary, to practice this for a total of 30 minutes spread throughout my practice regime. So, I might start with working the tuning on my dynamic range on middle D. After I had finished, I would play some songs, or do a rhythmic exercise. Or anything else, really. Then I would return to the dynamic exercise, but this time on E<sub>b</sub> (C# is harder to tune under normal conditions, so I held off). Then I'd go back to doing something else. The point was for this exercise to provide an environment of discovery, not to be a millstone of repetition.

I would play a single note in eight different dynamic levels in this order: *mf*, *mp*, *f*, *p*, *ff*, *pp*, *fff*, *ppp*. Essentially, I was working my way from a comfortable middle space to progressively greater dynamic distances. I wanted to see if there was a correspondence in the amount my air speed changed in either direction. In other words, did the amount I sped up the air for forte equal the amount by which I slowed it for piano? (Sometimes it did, sometimes it didn't.) Before playing the note, I would put a tuner in front of me and then *shut my eyes*. I wanted to make the first sound *as I heard it in my imagination* and then see how it calibrated with an outside source. I would take a moment to hear the sound and dynamic in my head, and when I was ready, I'd start the sound.

After the note started, *but while I was still making it*, I'd open my eyes and look at the tuner. I'd take in that information, but wouldn't try to fix the note. I'd play the note again at the same dynamic, this time with my eyes open, and try a slightly different tongue position. I'd proceed in this way altering slight variables in my embouchure and breath placement. (Sometimes imagining the breath coming from my throat, rather than the base of my belly would help raise the pitch, etc.) When I felt like I had gotten the note in tune and at the desired dynamic, I'd close my eyes and take a mental "snapshot" of how I had set my body in relation to the saxophone.

Doing this across the range of the horn took *a long time*—I would say about two years or so of nearly daily attendance. But the colors I discovered on the instrument were unlike anything I had ever heard. And while my muscles (the intercostal muscles of my chest cavity, embouchure, etc.) got stronger, I also began to finally *relax*. I no longer was biting *at all* to produce high, quiet sounds or loud, low sounds. I was just concentrating on *pushing a large volume of air at different velocities*.

## Applied Dynamics

About a year into this study, I began to see if I could start using dynamics in a phrase or a gesture. Now that I was getting a handle on executing dynamics on a single note at a time, maybe I could do it while moving through several notes. My initial steps in this direction were *total and complete failures*. Everything I played sounded forced, I couldn't seem to vary the dynamics in any kind of compelling way and, worst of all, *I got really, really bored*. So, I took a step back from the phrase approach and tried to see if I could apply dynamics to an entire song or piece. This proved to be far more rewarding.

I chose several different pieces for my experiment: the first quarter of the first movement of J.S. Bach's "Partita for Flute in A Minor," Thelonious Monk's "Misterioso" and Steve Lacy's "Resurrection." I started by playing simple renditions of these pieces. By "simple," I mean all the right notes at the right time. No flubs, but, also no flash. Just neutral.

After that, I would take a mental note of what had happened. I would observe if the whole piece had been at the same dynamic level, or, if it did change, where and how did it change? Was there a dynamic shift between sections? Was it a gradual shift or a sudden shift? Sometimes I didn't get very far with this, because I discovered my dynamics were all over the place, as I never had given this component of my playing any thought.

Once I had a mental map of the dynamics for a "normal" rendition of the piece, I would play the piece again, but this time I would apply a single dynamic to the entirety of the piece. Just to get a feel for this, I often used an extreme dynamic. "Misterioso" frequently is played with a mezzo forte to forte dynamic, but this time, I would see if I could play it triple pianissimo (or at least pianissimo), *but keep everything else the same*. I still played the same exact notes, in time, but I stayed conscious of how slowly I was pushing the air. It was an incredible discovery. When I played quietly, I tended to slow down or bury tempos entirely. Likewise, when I played faster, I always got very loud. But in this one moment, by flipping the script, a whole new world of possibilities opened up to me. After this, I tried applying dynamic levels to a piece of music by mapping out ahead of time where and how they

would occur. Pretty soon, I started hearing how my favorite musicians were *always* attending to dynamics in their performances.

I found I was able to return to the single-phrase experiment and maintain my interest with just a shift in dynamics. Steve Lacy's music was especially helpful in this regard, as it involves lots of static rhythms and note choices, so dynamics are often the only variable left to improvise. I began to write dynamics into my own compositions and raise a stink in rehearsals when I didn't hear the dynamics being observed. My own improvising and interpreting became more confident and relaxed. Attending to this one seemingly insignificant detail made all the difference in the world to my artistic self-realization.

## Bandstand Dynamics

The final step to take with this research is to apply it in real-time while playing with other people. You can put together a session for the express purpose of trying it out, or try it in someone else's rehearsal. You don't have to tell anyone that this is what you're working on; if you execute it in the moment, they'll hear it. You'll want to spend some time visualizing the situation before the moment of playing. Imagine yourself counting off the tune, or the moment just before you begin soloing. Pick a dynamic level to play before your imagined moment has started, and when you execute it in your imagination, pay special attention to how your body feels as it's playing in this new way.

Take the time to notice the speed at which you're pushing your breath. Imagine the phrases and gestures you're playing at this dynamic. Are they sparsely arranged? Or densely massed? Is there a lot of intensity and push behind them? Or are they relaxed and laconic?

Don't worry about where this solo is going or the sound of the whole thing. You're simply thinking about the moment when you *begin* playing. That's because this is the moment when many of us tighten and tense our muscles in anticipation of what's going to happen. That muscle tension makes it *much* harder (almost impossible, actually) to execute subtle musical maneuvers like dynamic shifts.

When playing with other musicians, remember that it might take a moment for them to adjust to the dynamic level you assert. But *they will come to you*—you just have to wait for it. And when you find yourself in that unique kind of agreement that playing music with others affords, enjoy the moment. This is why all of us do what we do. It's why it's called *playing music*. **DB**

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Brooklyn-based Josh Sinton is a baritone saxophonist and bass clarinetist whose influences range from the Duke Ellington Orchestra's Harry Carney to avant-garde icon Julius Hemphill to Morphine's Dana Colley. Sinton's 10th album as a leader—*making bones, taking draughts, bearing unstable millstones proudly, idiotically, prosaically* (Iluso Records)—features his Predicate Trio with cellist Christopher Hoffman and drummer Tom Rainey. Visit Sinton online at [joshinton.com](http://joshinton.com).

Andrea Brachfeld



MAUREEN PLAINFIELD PHOTOGRAPHY

# The Art of Practicing and Self-Esteem

**W**e all need to practice, whether we are advanced students or working professionals. We first learn how to play our instruments. Then, depending on which field we decide to pursue, there is specific music that we need to learn in order to market ourselves as available working musicians.

Our teachers taught us how to produce a great sound, what the essential scales are and the necessary repertoire we need to learn. We learned all the necessary articulations, phrasing and general ways to create music.

But who taught us how to deal with those pesky voices and feelings of doubt that come up while we are trying to learn all of these tasks? Who even mentioned that these voices would affect us in a way that might prevent us from being successful in our field?

I have found that the single most important tool one can have in one's toolbox for success is self-esteem. The question is, what is self-esteem, and what does it look and feel like? How does one get it? It's very difficult to accomplish a task you set out to do and successfully reach a goal when

you lack self-esteem.

In life, every emotion essentially stems from either love or fear. Whether or not you were taught this as a child, there is still hope that you will be able to recognize these emotions and nurture yourself in a way so that it helps you in your practicing. I will call the fear factor your ego, and the love factor your self-esteem. The ego can be exaggerated on the positive or negative side. Self-esteem is just about feeling good inside, in the moment, regardless of what is going on in the outside world. The key is to be able to recognize each feeling and allow it to come up, so you can decide whether the emotion is helpful or harmful to your practicing session.

If your career isn't going exactly as you planned, then it's time to look at yourself honestly. Assess what's going on inside you, so that you might see yourself clearly and move forward to accomplish any goal you set your mind to.

Let's consider a specific situation. You have created a particular area in your living space where you practice. You have all the tools that you need: your instrument, your music, access to hearing any music you need, any music apps you need. You have designated a specific time to practice and are ready to go. Your best bet is to have a mini goal in mind as to what you'd like to accomplish in your practice session, so you have a particular focus. Maybe you have a performance coming up and need to learn the music. Maybe you recently heard a great tune that you'd like to master. Maybe you've recently gone to a jam session and they called a tune you didn't know. In any case, you're ready to practice.

To begin, take the time to see how your body feels before you start. Are you relaxed? Are you tense? Is the temperature comfortable in your space? Are the people you live with aware that you are getting ready to start your practice session, so that you won't be disturbed? Do you feel comfortable practicing in your space? Are you worried about judgments from people who will hear you practice? The answers to these questions are the portal to starting to create your self-esteem. As you try to answer these questions, you might realize that some of the changes you might need to make can be complex and might not be able to be remedied immediately. But this is a good beginning for becoming aware of how to practice self-esteem in your life.

When I moved to my current living space, I made sure everyone knew I was a musician and that I would practice for long periods of time. I didn't take the space until I was sure I would be able to practice. I also have lots of sayings posted all around my practice space, because I need the motivation and uplifting words as much as everyone else when those internal voices come up.

In my daily life, and especially when among my relatives, I'm very aware of people who might not be in tune with what I'd like to accomplish in my life. I very gently move away from them when it doesn't feel right. If I even have the slightest feeling that someone I choose to be close to will have any issues with who I am, I quietly move away from them. This is all part of increasing your self-esteem. Surround yourself with people who will be supportive for all the right reasons. Creating this inner and outer space will serve you well when it comes time to sit down for your practice session. I call it surrounding yourself with clean energy.

Most of us have been taught since childhood to always be involved in doing productive things. We're applauded for accomplishing tangible tasks, but often the inner tasks, which are less noticeable, are ignored. They are regarded as insignificant, until one day, you decide to be a musician and those inner tasks become the core of what you need to go forward. Those tasks are your connection to your feelings and who you are deep down inside. Those connections enable you to link the music you play to the deepest part of you and become your voice. Then those 12 notes of our Western music system become emotions you are playing and not just notes.

yourself, so that you answer, accept the gig and get right back to practicing. Whatever time you do devote to your practice—be present. Be right there playing that scale in that moment and try not to worry about the next moment.

- **Maybe no one is calling me, because I'm not good enough.** Our thoughts create our reality. Thoughts turn into words and words turn into actions. When those thoughts come up, go back to your practicing and tell that thought that at the moment you're not interested in it. You'll acknowledge it another time. You are busy right now, practicing.

- **I hope I'll be able to play on that gig that is coming up—those guys are so much better than me.** When you stay in the present and practice in the right way—using what I call the conscious, sub-conscious and super conscious method—you will be prepared. You might ask, what is this method? To me, it's pretty simple. When practicing during the conscious level, you are slowing everything down, learning the material, transcribing and examining solos, analyzing melodic lines and how they relate to the chord changes, etc. It is essentially the grunt work. During the sub-conscious level of practice, you are integrating the material to a point where you are memorizing it with continuous repetition and it is becoming second nature to you. The super conscious level is when you are allowing all the memorized material to just flow out of you when you play.

Getting back to the original ego-related thought: When you compare yourself only to yourself, then you are making progress in the self-esteem department. And here's a newsflash: Those guys are thinking the same thing.

If you have chosen the profession of being a musician, it's your responsibility to give to others. If you don't have the goods developed in yourself, you will have nothing to give. People want to feel good when they go out to hear music, and it is your job to make them feel good. But if you don't feel good about yourself, then what are you offering them?

There is a freedom you will experience once you negotiate your ego, tame it and allow your self-esteem to take over. Although your ego will rear its head again and again, you now will have the tools to soften it and learn to control it. The joy you will feel in playing again will be unsurpassed by nothing else in this world. **DB**

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Flutist, composer, arranger, producer and educator Andrea Brachfeld is a graduate of the Manhattan School of Music. Study with Hubert Laws, Jimmy Heath, George Coleman and Mike Longo helped her to develop her improvisational style. Artists Brachfeld has associated with include Wayne Wallace, Bobby Carcassés, Oscar Hernandez, Alfredo de la Fé, Tito Puente, Ray Barretto, Joe Newman, Hubert Laws, Nestor Torres, Dave Valentin, Paquito D'Rivera, Hilton Ruiz, Steve Turre and Wycliffe Gordon. She currently tours with her own group, Andrea Brachfeld and Insight; with the Wallace Roney "Universe" Orchestra; and with the Bill O'Connell Quartet/Dave Valentin Tribute Band. In June 2017, Brachfeld was awarded a grant from Chamber Music America and the Doris Duke Foundation to compose a new jazz work. The resulting CD, *If Not Now, When?* (Jazzheads), was released in May 2018.

## When you compare yourself only to yourself, then you are making progress in the self-esteem department.

Once you begin your practice routine—starting with long tones, playing scales with different articulations—ask yourself if any of those discouraging voices are coming into your head: What's the use of practicing if I don't have a gig? Shouldn't I be trying to get a gig instead of practicing? Maybe no one is calling me, because I'm not good enough. I hope I'll be able to play on that gig that is coming up—those guys are so much better than me.

Sound familiar? If not, read no more. You've got the self-esteem and confidence needed to be entirely successful. If this scenario sounds all too familiar to you, I can offer you the following advice, which has proven to work for me.

Stop playing once those voices come up. Breathe, and ask yourself where they are coming from. Did anyone ever tell you that you weren't good enough? Did anyone discourage you from playing? Any great musician will tell you that they have gone through some similar stuff in their lives that added to the depth of their playing. So, know that you are not alone. The key is to allow all those emotions and voices to come up and not suppress them. Try to look at them as if they are outside of yourself—objectively. Then, once you identify the voices, be kind to yourself. Know that we all have those voices, those insecurities, the anxiety, the doubts. Tell the voices that right now you are going to practice and you'll deal with them later.

Self-esteem comes in when you are able to tame those voices—the ego—and acknowledge your feelings. Remember that the ego can be negative or positive, and taming those voices allows the inner voices of your heart and soul to come through.

You might want to ask yourself: "What is my relationship to my instrument?" "Do I really identify with my instrument?" Think about why you initially wanted to play. If any of those answers are: "I want to become famous and make a lot of money," you are not only in the wrong profession, but your ego needs a total makeover. Developing self-esteem will allow you to cultivate your talent to the utmost, and it comes from acceptance of your self and knowing your strengths and weaknesses.

My suggestion is to move into a state of mind where you feel good about playing, *just because*. Get into the vibe of producing a beautiful sound, *just because*. Think about serving and affecting people in a positive way with your music every time you play, *just because*. It's all about energy. If you want to become a successful musician, you must be aware of the energy you are transmitting to people you are with and the audience you are performing for.

Let's get back to those nagging questions:

- **What's the use of practicing, if I don't have a gig?** It's like the chicken and the egg. What comes first? You should practice because you love playing and it makes you feel good. That should be your priority. You love what you are practicing and you put as much emotion as possible into your practice session. That positive energy will be transmitted into the atmosphere and you will be surprised by the results.

- **Shouldn't I be trying to get a gig instead of practicing?** Be disciplined enough so that you set time aside to practice and you set time aside for the business. Try not to get distracted when you are practicing. Yes, I know your phones are always on, and they should be. But discipline



Matt Shevitz

## Using Jazz Vocabulary in Pop Music Contexts

The melodic, harmonic, rhythmic and compositional techniques used in jazz can provide us with a substantial amount of material to study. Some musicians choose to study these methods for months or years. Others spend a lifetime with them, and many often draw a line between what they can apply in a jazz context and what can be done in a popular music setting (e.g., over a funk, hip-hop or rock tune). Such a line does not have to be as strict as you might think, however. While it is important to know what the parameters are for each style of music you play, many of the techniques used in jazz can be applied to solos in other genres.

Before applying the jazz techniques you have studied to other settings, you need to have a good grasp of how to shape the tension and resolution of your melodic lines. Unresolved melodic tension is not as acceptable in most popular music styles as it is in jazz. To be clear, resolving melodic tension is important in jazz, but it is not something that always needs to be done. In popular music contexts, though, it is more important for melodic resolution to consistently happen. When applying tension to your line in this setting, try placing it in the beginning or middle of the phrase, rather than at the end.

Let's start with something that is common to all forms of music: the pentatonic scale. When soloing over a Gm7 in a rock tune, many musicians will stick with playing a G minor pentatonic (G-B $\flat$ -C-D-F). However, there

are other pentatonic scales that will contrast with the chord and can be applied. Example 1 shows a phrase that begins with this scale and then moves to a B $\flat$  minor pentatonic (B $\flat$ -D $\flat$ -E $\flat$ -F-A $\flat$ ), which is followed by a return to the original scale in G minor. The nice thing about this technique is that it retains the third (B $\flat$ ) and seventh (F) from the G minor pentatonic while introducing the flat ninth (A $\flat$ ), flat fifth (D $\flat$ ) and flat 13th (E $\flat$ ). While there are three notes that have changed, the two notes that remain are the guide tones (or some might say "critical" tones) for Gm7, which creates a sense of stability without the dissonance being used. The new notes are a half step above the ones in the G minor pentatonic that they are replacing. It's a small adjustment that makes a large impact.

Moving to more jazz-specific techniques, a lot can be done with enclosures, approach notes and the mixolydian bebop scale. As a reminder, the mixolydian bebop scale is the same as the mixolydian mode with the addition of a major seventh. When based off D, for example, the full scale consists of D-E-F $\sharp$ -G-A-B-C $\sharp$  and is most commonly used over a D7 chord. The last note is the major seventh—and what separates it from the traditional mixolydian mode.

An enclosure is a technique where you approach the note you want to play by playing just above and then just below it (or vice-versa). In Example 2a, our target note (the one we really want to play) is an A that is preceded (or "enclosed") by an A $\sharp$  and a G $\sharp$ .

Approach notes are so named because they

only move in one direction. Example 2b shows the same note with two approach notes (G and G $\sharp$ ) preceding it (in this case ascending to get to the A).

Finally, Example 2c puts all of this together. Here we have a line that begins with two notes approaching the third (F $\sharp$ ) of our chord (D7) and then arpeggiates a seventh chord from that note. From here, we go down a half step to begin an enclosure around the tonic (D), from which we then leap to the flat third (F), a common blues riff.

This example, though, does not provide very much melodic tension, as it stays within the chord for the most part. If you would like to add more tension, try thinking of an A $\flat$ 7, the tritone substitution for D7, so called because they both can resolve to G and are a tritone (a.k.a. an augmented fourth or diminished fifth) apart for part of the line. We begin in the same manner, with two notes approaching F $\sharp$ . But when we arpeggiate, we are thinking of A $\flat$ 7. So, instead of F $\sharp$ -A-C-E, we now are playing G $\flat$ -B $\flat$ -D $\flat$ -F, which contrasts much more with the chord. Notice that the line still concludes with the blues riff, which is begun by moving down to an E $\flat$  to enclose the D.

Now, let's address how our study of jazz melodic vocabulary can be applied to a solo over a pop tune's chord progression, rather than just one chord. Example 3a shows the classic I-V-vi-IV progression (in the key of C), which can be heard in dozens of pop songs. Despite the fact that a progression has more harmonic movement than a singular chord, the overall approach to tension-and-resolution doesn't change. It is still a pop tune after all, so you need to utilize dissonance in a manner that fits the song. What you do get with this type of situation is the opportunity to use more chord substitutions. The aforementioned tritone substitution method could be applied to the V chord even though the next chord is the vi. Example 3b shows this with a melodic line that implies a D $\flat$  chord instead of a G. Example 3c shows the same technique used over the IV chord. In this case, a B chord is implied instead of an F.

Another useful option is to generalize the progression and play one or two scales that you know will contrast with it since the overall tonality of this progression is C major. In Example 3d, the melodic line starts in C but then moves to a B $\flat$  minor pentatonic for the G, followed by resolving to the A minor chord. After this, the line uses a C $\sharp$  (a raised fifth) over the F chord. There are a few scales that will give us this alteration, but in this case we're just thinking of the alteration itself and using it to resolve our line into C. This might seem like a lot of odd sounds



for this progression, but it works, since we are resolving our line at the end. Notice that while our tension resolves into the C, the actual line ends on an E as the bass (and possibly the guitar or piano) is probably playing the C, so resolving to a different note in the chord makes the line a little more interesting.

No matter the technique used, it is important to keep in mind the style that is being played. Some situations do not lend themselves well to applying jazz alterations (e.g., a blues gig). Experiment with this method and see what you prefer. Keep in mind that these methods work for certain moments in your solo and

that, in order to make the moments of alteration more significant, you should be creating phrases that do not alter the harmony. If you alter everything you play, it will lose its appeal, and it might not fit with the song. Your solo is a *part* of the tune, not the tune itself. The goal is to be able to create an interesting melody that stays true both to yourself and the song. **DB**

Saxophonist Matt Shevitz is a professor of music at Harold Washington College in Chicago. In addition to teaching, he is actively involved in the music scene, frequently performing locally and around the Midwest. Shevitz's 2018 album *Forward Motion* is available online at [mattshevitz.com](http://mattshevitz.com).

### Example 1

### Example 2a

### Example 2b

### Example 2c

### Example 3a

### Example 3b

### Example 3c

### Example 3d

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JIMMY & DENA KATZ

Tia Fuller

## Tia Fuller's Alto Saxophone Solo on 'The Coming'

It's often said that a good solo should tell a story, and you can't tell a good story without interesting characters. In Tia Fuller's alto saxophone solo on "The Coming" (transcribed here in concert key) from her 2018 album, *Diamond Cut* (Mack Avenue), she

presents some colorful ones, and displays them in varied costumes and situations, telling a compelling tale.

One such character is the  $D\flat/C\sharp$  note Fuller likes to use on the  $F/D\flat$  harmony. This personality appears in every instance of this

harmony, but for most of them it's either a scale tone connecting the C and  $E\flat$  (creating a mixolydian flat-13 effect) or just an ornament on the fifth (as in bars 15, 19 and the beginning of 27).

In those situations, this pitch is treated like a  $D\flat$  (flat sixth), but in a few scenes, Fuller uses it more like a  $C\sharp$ , such as at the end of bar 19, where descending from A to E to  $D\flat$  ( $C\sharp$ ) and then on to C,  $B\flat$  and A makes it sound more like an altered A7 chord.

Measure 47, with its inclusion of the E natural, makes Fuller's line sound more like an A7, especially toward the end, where she states a descending A major triad. Measure 43 is an even stronger example, as Fuller pivots back and forth between the A and  $C\sharp$ , really driving home that this could be an A+ rather than an F chord.

Another personality Fuller alludes to is the  $D\sharp$  on the  $E/F\sharp$  harmony. This is a peculiar one as well: It's not really in the chord, but it is the major seventh of the E, and so it gives it a sweeter sound—especially since she often omits the E, making it sound more like a B major arpeggio. (Measure 12 actually starts out with a B major arpeggio.)

This particular character, however, fails to stick around. It doesn't appear in bars 24 and 28. It's de-emphasized in bars 32 and 36, and absent again in measures 40, 44 and 48, the final appearances of this harmony.

A contradictory pair that Fuller manipulates over this harmony are A natural versus  $A\sharp$ . Since the bass note is  $F\sharp$ , the  $A\sharp$  makes it sound a bit more like an  $F\sharp 11$ , as appears in measures 4 and 16. But at other times, Fuller uses the A natural to make it sound less like an  $F\sharp 11$ , as in bars 8, 24, 28 and 44. Using this tone to resolve to the  $G\sharp$  brings out the E character of  $E/F\sharp$ . She also utilizes a third approach in measures 12, 20 and 40, where neither the A nor  $A\sharp$  appear. Since we've heard it both ways, this leaves these measures sounding somewhat undefined.

Another idiosyncratic personality indispensable to Fuller's tale is a rhythmic one: the offbeat eighth note. This one is first only hinted at, with just one in measure 3, but then in bar 4, we get a sting of them. This becomes a motif, with Fuller returning to strings of upbeat eighths, as in measures 7 (at the end), 9, 13, 15 and 17, to name a few. Notice that this character is apt to appear on any of the harmonies.

There's also an evil villain (at least for any of us who attempt to play this transcription): measures 23, 27–28, 31, 32, 36 and 48 present dense strings of 16ths and finer rhythms. And

if that wasn't enough, these lines all cover at least an octave, traversing quite a lot of range within small timeframes. These whirlwinds of pitches really push the energy (as well as being a display of virtuosity), and, like a car chase scene, Fuller uses them judiciously, not overdoing it into a cliché, but making sure there's enough to excite the listener.

There are also intervallic characters, such as the perfect fourth. Making its first appearance in bar 5, it quickly (though briefly) steals the spotlight. We hear an ascending fourth every other interval. It is cleverly disguised, though, since there is more distance between the fourths than the other intervals. This makes them less salient.

The fourth becomes a bit more prominent in the next two bars, with the first phrase ending in measure 6 and the phrase that terminates on the downbeat of measure 7. Both end with ascending fourths. Having a phrase end with a fourth makes it more noticeable, but it's still fairly subtle. As is the answering descending fourth that crosses the bar line two measures later (over bar 9). This seems to answer the ascending fourth mentioned earlier.

The fourth leaves the scene for a while, but comes back in a very clever way in measure 13. Starting on beat 2, we have the pitches G, C, F, B $\flat$ , E $\flat$  and A $\flat$  (mostly on upbeats, pitting this character against an earlier one). Though some of these are played as descending fifths, notice that they spell out a circle of fourths (a descending fifth is the inversion of an ascending fourth).

There are some singular fourths in the interim, but at bar 25, we have the same circle-of-fourths lick, also from G to A $\flat$ , and also on offbeats (though this time played more legato). It's also on the same harmony, like a reference to an earlier scene (or a flashback, if you prefer).

And when this harmony is revisited again in bar 41, Fuller brings in the perfect fourth once more, but this time she plays it back and forth from C to G, making it rather prominent. There are other instances of fourths, but a particularly colorful one can be found in measure 28, where Fuller closes a scene with two ascending fourths, but a major third apart, putting the low note of the second fourth a half step below

the upper note of the first fourth. This sounds somewhat angular, but it's also the fifth, root, major seventh and third of the chord—a disguised arpeggio.

These are just some of the re-occurring personalities that Fuller makes use of to spin a dramatic tale over these changes. Look (and listen) carefully and you'll find even more colorful characters. **DB**

Jimi Durso is a guitarist and bassist based in the New York area. Visit him online at [jimidurso.com](http://jimidurso.com).

## Rampone & Cazzani Solista High-Flying Alto with Art Nouveau Aesthetics

Italy-based manufacturer Rampone & Cazzani has released the Solista alto saxophone, which represents a significant addition to the line. As with many R&C saxophones, the Solista is a work of art. The body, bow, bell and neck are solid copper, plated in gold. The brass keywork is also gold plated. The B-flat/B, low E-flat and low C keyguards, as well as the octave key and pants guard, are made of brass that is gold plated, then copper plated, and the bell engraving is an understated Art Nouveau design.

The first thing that caught my eye on the Solista was how slight the angle of the neck was. It reminded me of a vintage Buffet or SML alto, which brings the mouthpiece to a more clarinet-like angle. This was a deliberate choice that, according to company president Claudio Zolla, is intended to “let the player really fly.” With less angle on the neck, the thinking goes, the air column would be expected to experience less disruption and have less resistance. The Solista neck also starts to curve sooner than most necks, adding to the smooth flow of air.

I was able to compare the Solista with other pro altos, including a Selmer SBA, a King Super 20 and a Buffet SuperDynaction. The Solista more than held its own and had the best intonation of the lot. Both classical and jazz players will appreciate the spot-on pitch. And, fly it does. The sound is full, dark and resonant. I could play with more edge if desired, and the sound was full and lush at all tempi and dynamic levels.

As with its intonation, the Solista also compared favorably with the vintage horns in terms of sound. It is a smaller-bore horn, which might account for its speedy response. It certainly is not a small-sounding alto, and it has a big fun factor that will make you reluctant to put it down.

In terms of mechanics/construction, I’d like to see a brace added on the bottom of the neck for increased protection against damage. The low B spatula key was set a bit low for my taste, but this is a set-up issue that likely could be easily addressed by most saxophone techs. I felt that the posts

for the low C/E-flat keys could have been slightly shorter, keeping the keys closer to the body of the horn. Upon comparison with the three vintage horns, I noticed that the Selmer SBA low C/E-flat key posts were just as high as those of the Solista.

When I brought this up in a phone call with Zolla, he wondered if setting the C/E-flat keys at a lower angle (on the same posts) might achieve the result I sought. I’m sure that R&C will be fine-tuning the Solista based on user feedback from its very first production model, which at press time was being auditioned by top jazz and classical alto players across the U.S.

Rampone & Cazzani, those artistic souls of the saxophone manufacturing world, have come up with yet another wonderful new combination of materials and design in the Solista. U.S. retail price is \$6,399.

—John Bowes

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



## ReedGeek Klangbogen Increased Output, Stabilized Sax/Clarinet Tone

The Klangbogen from ReedGeek has abilities you might not expect from a simple bow-shaped device that attaches to a saxophone’s neck tenon. By helping to maximize air flow through the instrument’s conical tube, the Klangbogen improves efficiency by reducing air turbulence inside the horn. This has the effect of increasing output and depth of tone while stabilizing the extreme ranges of the instrument. It improves projection, intonation and focus. It has to be tried to be believed.

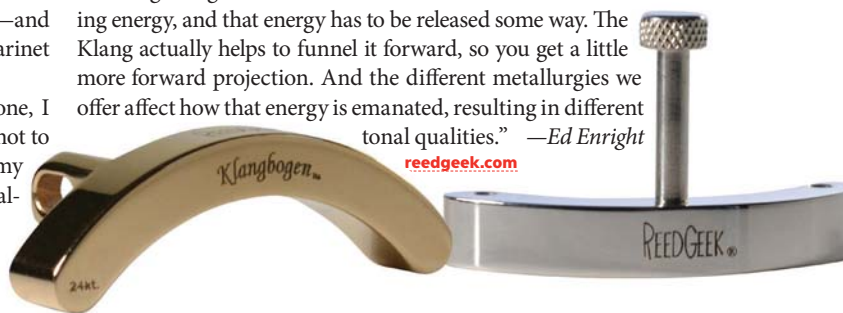
The Klangbogen comes in two versions to fit different types of saxophones. The original two-piece version uses a small pin to connect the device to the lyre holder, while a newer one-piece version attaches directly to the neck screw or the lyre screw. It’s offered in several different metallurgical finishes—including matte brass, gold plating and silver plating—and polishes, each with its own unique response and feel. A version for clarinet called the ClariKlang attaches via the ligature screw.

When I tried the Klangbogen on my low-A baritone saxophone, I noticed immediate improvements in the stability of my low B-flat, not to mention an astonishing ability to get altissimo notes to speak. On my old Selmer/Bundy tenor, notes slotted more clearly and my normal-

ly stuffy altissimo G cleared right up. On clarinet, I found it much easier to control throat tones with the ClariKlang. Something mysterious was clearly at work here, so I put in a call to ReedGeek founder Mauro Di Gioia to help explain the phenomenon.

“On a saxophone, after the sound wave is generated by the reed, amplified through the mouthpiece and propagated in the neck, it takes a sharp turn and hits the neck tenon, where the wave gets disrupted and loses energy,” Di Gioia said. “The Klangbogen keeps that energy in the horn by bouncing it back into the tube at that critical point. That stabilizes the tube, so the sound wave doesn’t break up as much. And once the Klang gets vibrating along with the air column inside the tube, it’s utilizing energy, and that energy has to be released some way. The Klang actually helps to funnel it forward, so you get a little more forward projection. And the different metallurgies we offer affect how that energy is emanated, resulting in different tonal qualities.” —Ed Enright

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



# NY Meyer Alto Saxophone Mouthpiece

## Revival of a Classic Choice for Lead Players, Soloists

JJ Babbitt has brought back the ever-popular NY (New York) Meyer hard-rubber alto saxophone mouthpiece.

The versatile mouthpiece, once a favorite of professionals but long out of production, is back by popular demand and is seen as completing JJ Babbitt's current Meyer lineup. I received a NY Meyer with a medium-length facing and #6 tip opening for play-testing. Accessories included in the shipment were a gold-plated Meyer ligature and plastic mouthpiece cap.

I auditioned the NY Meyer, both alone and in the company of other saxophonists, on my vintage Selmer Mark VI alto. For reeds I used #2½ and #3 Vandoren Java Red Box, as well as a medium-strength synthetic reed. For ligatures, I tried both the provided Meyer ligature and a Vandoren M/O ligature. Both ligs worked well with the mouthpiece, and I chose the Meyer lig with a #3 Red Box reed for a later big band performance. The synthetic reed with the Meyer lig really lit up the projection and altissimo playing for me and allowed for volume levels of rock-band proportions.

A fellow saxophonist who took the NY Meyer for a brief spin was ecstatic over the roar emanating from the bell of his King Super 20. In fact, the NY Meyer sounded great on multiple brands of pro altos, new and vintage.

The NY Meyer is a very comfortable, versatile option. I found the tone quality to be rich and round at all volume levels. It had plenty of power for projecting the sound, and softer passages came across as warm and pleasing. I was able to get immediate response and articulate cleanly using a slightly harder reed strength than I typically use. Intonation was good (to my ear and according to the tuner), with well-aligned, solid octaves. The NY Meyer has a balanced, centered core that's present throughout the horn's lower, middle and upper registers and allows the player to easily con-

trol various nuances of creative performance, like vibrato, timbral shading and pitch-bend.

In a big band setting, the NY Meyer mouthpiece provided solid power for lead alto work and soloing. Blending with the sax section, as well as the full ensemble, was a breeze. I felt a high level of comfort and control with the mouthpiece almost immediately.

The NY Meyer is made from black vulcanized rubber. Vulcanizing involves large pressure cookers that use water and pressure to draw sulfur and other unwanted elements out of the raw rubber. The process causes the mouthpiece to harden properly and become naturally darker in appearance.

The NY Meyer alto saxophone mouthpiece is the real thing. It's a fine choice for anyone looking for great sound, projection and comfort. JJ Babbitt really has a winner on its hands with this reborn mouthpiece, which will be produced throughout 2019, the company's centennial year. It's available in multiple tip openings: 5M (.071), 6M (.076), 7M (.081) and 8M (.086). Other sizes are available by request.

—Bruce Gibson

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



# Otto Link FL Tenor Saxophone Mouthpiece

## JJ Babbitt Pays Homage to a Distinctive Florida-Era Sound

JJ Babbitt has released a new tenor saxophone mouthpiece that's an homage to one of the most iconic jazz mouthpieces ever: Otto Link's Florida Super Tone Master, a highly sought-after vintage piece made when the company was located in Pompano Beach, Florida. The "Florida Link," as it's known, has been popular among tenor players for decades.

The new Otto Link Florida model Super Tone Master tenor saxophone mouthpiece is available in standard facings of 5\* (.085) through 8\* (.115). (Other tip openings are available on request.) Heavily gold plated, the mouthpiece has the finish work that players have come to expect from Otto Link mouthpieces. It will remain in production for the rest of this year in honor of JJ Babbitt's 100th anniversary.

Since I own several vintage Florida STMs, I was able to compare the new model to those. The window is shorter than my vintage STMs. There is a greater taper in the width of the side-rails as they reach the bottom (toward the shank) of the window, which narrows the window in comparison to the vintage STMs. For the new model, the taper of the body was increased toward the shank—that is, the body is wider toward the shank than on previous JJ Babbitt models (including the Tone Master 90th anniversary reissue), and definitely wider than the vintage models. Having that larger outer dimension at the bottom of the body, coupled with a wider, flatter ridge on top, makes it necessary to use the provided ligature. Other vintage ligatures, and even earlier Babbitt-made Otto Link ligatures, won't fit the new piece.

I play-tested a FL STM in a size 7, which actually measured a little smaller than the expected .100-inch tip opening for that designation. The

facing was nice and even. Given that I am used to playing on an 8\* (.115+) tip opening, this piece at first seemed restrictive. But as I experimented with harder reeds, it became easier to play, and more indicative of the Florida-era sound.

The vintage Florida pieces are known for having a pronounced roll-over baffle, which gives them a brilliant sound. The brightness is tempered by the large chamber, giving a fat sound with an attractive signature "buzz." The new model FL STM comes closer to that than any other modern Otto Link mouthpiece that I've tried over the years. Toward the end of my trial, the 7 was feeling more familiar, and I was able to enjoy the range of expression this piece affords. While that great, buzzy sound was there when I pushed it, the tone was beautiful and full when playing pianissimo. Also delightful was that at pianissimo, the sound did not get fuzzy and airy; it stayed full and clear at the softer volume levels. Articulation was very good, and intonation was as good as it gets.

The Florida model STM tenor mouthpiece is bringing back a distinctive sound that made Otto Link famous. Advanced students and pros alike will find this new model a great addition to their arsenal.

—John Bowes

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



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### JodyJazz Super Jet—Baritone *Giant Tone, Explosive Response*

With its hefty presence and timbral richness, the baritone saxophone is a powerfully expressive instrument. More than just a big-band sax-section anchor, the bari has played an increasingly prominent role in the horn sections of funk, rock and r&b bands. It also steadily has been emerging as the instrument of choice for jazz-combo frontmen who have found their voice on the “big pipe.”

But the bari can be vulnerable, too. Once you bring it onstage with electric keyboards, amplified guitars, oversized drumsets and thundering bass guitars, the instrument’s uniquely appealing sonics can get lost in the mix. The new Super Jet—Baritone mouthpiece from JodyJazz solves that problem by empowering the bari player with the right tool for the job.

My first live play-testing experience with the Super Jet was in the five-piece horn section of a high-decibel rock band. The mouthpiece gave me access to a huge dynamic range and provided me with power and projection to spare. My

sound was appropriately bright, clear and explosively loud, while retaining the sweet-and-punchy bottom end I always strive for on playing baritone.

Next, I played a raucous Mardi Gras gig where the Super Jet supported me in the roles of melodist, soloist and quasi-tubist. The mouthpiece not only got me wailing in the spirit of the carnival-like celebration, but its free-blowing small chamber and step baffle kept me going virtually fatigue-free all night. And I had outrageous fun up in the baritone’s altissimo range.

Made of silver-plated brass, the Super Jet—Baritone is available in 6 (.100), 7 (.110), 8 (.120), 9 (.130) and 10 (.140) tip openings. —Ed Enright

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### JodyJazz Super Jet—Soprano *Easy-Blowing Burner with Massive Power*

JodyJazz has added a soprano saxophone model to its Super Jet series of metal mouthpieces. The Super Jet—Alto and Super Jet—Tenor mouthpieces that the company released in recent years were outstanding players, and I’m equally impressed by this new addition to the line.

The Super Jet—Soprano mouthpiece I play-tested was a silver-plated #7 outfitted with a D’Addario Woodwinds H-style ligature. The mouthpiece shined as I pulled it from its purple drawstring pouch and removed the cap. I noticed the side of the box read “simply burning” in large print.

I play-tested the Super Jet on my vintage Selmer Mark VI soprano with #2½ Vandoren Java Red Box reeds, both in the practice room and in a large ensemble performance. The results were exciting, to say the least. My soprano was turbo-charged. High notes were soaring, flying out easily—simply burning, indeed. The lower register remained quite responsive and retained the well-rounded tonal qualities that distinguish the Mark VI

series of saxophones.

Intonation was excellent and articulation was comfortable throughout all ranges. The Super Jet’s thin tip-rail and side-rails assist in the mouthpiece’s ease of response at all dynamic levels. Tone and pitch inflections were readily available and easy to achieve.

This flexible and powerful mouthpiece should give soprano players everything they require to play lead on a Thad Jones big band chart or really let it rip with a funk/rock or Latin group. While the Super Jet—Soprano is designed for maximum projection, bright sound and enhanced altissimo range, it also allows for softer dynamic levels without loss of response or control. It’s a great option for the advanced saxophonist desiring a flexible, easy-blowing mouthpiece with massive power.

The Super Jet—Soprano is offered in the following tip openings: 5 (.050), 6 (.060), 7 (.070), 8 (.080), 9 (.090) and 10 (.100). —Bruce Gibson

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## 1. Pad Protection

Key Leaves makes small, leaf-shaped devices that protect saxophones from water damage by leaving the keys open to air-dry after playing. The brainchild of Seattle saxophone player Rulon Brown—who, like many saxophonists, ran into the problem of sticky pads causing embarrassing key malfunction and costly repair—Key Leaves keep key pads open and prevent the sticky biofilm that grows when closed pads trap bacteria and yeast inside the instrument. The product takes just one hand and four seconds to use. **More info:** [keyleaves.com](http://keyleaves.com)

## 2. 'The Sound' Transcribed

The *Stan Getz Omnibook* from Hal Leonard features 54 recorded solos from "The Sound," whose illustrious career included five Grammy Awards and induction into the DownBeat Hall of Fame. Songs include such signature Getz repertoire as "Desafinado," "Garota De Ipanema," "I Remember You," "One Note Samba (Samba De Uma Nota So)," "Quiet Nights Of Quiet Stars (Corcovado)," and "So Danco Samba." Editions are available for B-flat, E-flat and C instruments. All Hal Leonard Omnibooks feature accurate note-for-note transcriptions taken right from the recordings of iconic jazz artists. **More info:** [halleonard.com](http://halleonard.com)

## 3. Depth & Breadth

Vandoren's Large Chamber V16 mouthpiece for tenor saxophone is the latest evolution of the company's ebonite V16 line. The newly designed chamber adds breadth, depth and richness to the sound of the tenor. The Large Chamber V16 is available in T6, T7, T8 and T9 tip openings and is perfect for players searching for a vintage-type sound. **More info:** [dansr.com](http://dansr.com)

## 4. New Mantras

The Mantra 2 Tenor, Alto and Soprano saxophones from Theo Wanne are all new designs based on customer feedback. All models feature the company's custom neck, bore and tonehole designs; a triple neckstrap ring; and special bell-to body-braces. Each model has its own tonal profile. The Mantra 2 Tenor retains the fat, powerful tone of the original Mantra, but with refined keywork, better altissimo and better intonation. The Mantra 2 Soprano offers a big, clear and beautiful sound and comes in three versions: straight, curved neck and fully curved. The Mantra 2 Alto has a full, free tone, with plenty of core. **More info:** [thewanne.com](http://thewanne.com)

## 5. Darwin's Reserve

D'Addario Woodwinds has announced a new category under its Reserve line, Reserve Evolution, designed for those seeking a more dynamic modern sound. Reserve Evolution B-flat Clarinet Reeds are the thickest-blank reed under the Reserve line, offering a roundness of sound, a heavy spine for increased projection, a thicker tip for enhanced articulation and greater warmth and flexibility. Ideal for the advancing student and professional, Reserve Evolution Bb Clarinet Reeds are available now in half strengths from 2.5 to 5.0, with a special 3.5+ strength. **More info:** [daddario.com](http://daddario.com)







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# FESTIVAL GUIDE



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Theon Cross at the 2018 NN North Sea Jazz Festival in Rotterdam (Photo: Hans Tak)

## SPOTLIGHT ON MILESTONE ANNIVERSARIES

**Festival International  
de Jazz de Montreal**

Page 84

**Detroit Jazz  
Festival**

Page 105

**San Jose Jazz  
Summer Fest**

Page 111

**International  
Jazzfestival Saalfelden**

Page 125



Ray Charles at the Festival International de Jazz de Montréal in 1983

© FESTIVAL INTERNATIONAL DE JAZZ DE MONTRÉAL, ROBERT ETCHÉVÉRY



José James (left) and Takuya Kuroda in 2016

© FESTIVAL INTERNATIONAL DE JAZZ DE MONTRÉAL, BENOÎT ROUSSEAU



George Benson (left) accepts an award from André Ménard in 2010

© FESTIVAL INTERNATIONAL DE JAZZ DE MONTRÉAL, FREDÉRIQUE MÉNARD-AUBIN

# MÉNARD PLANS EPIC 40TH

**IT'S A FRIGID MID-WINTER DAY IN** Montreal, but in his eighth-floor office, André Ménard's mind is focused on the dates of June 27–July 6 as he puts the final touches on the last of the 40 summer jazz festivals he's programmed in the city. Along with his business partner, Alain Simard—who is also retiring this year—Ménard has seen the Festival International de Jazz de Montréal grow from an event that attracted 12,000 people its first year to a musical behemoth that annually draws more than 2 million visitors to 500 concerts.

Launched in an era before jazz festivals were ubiquitous in North America, FIJM stands apart for two unique accomplishments: Ménard's curation of the annual Invitation series—which has given free rein to the imaginations of featured artists like Charlie Haden and Jack DeJohnette—and its contribution to Montreal's reputation as a prime tourist destination.

"The image that Montrealers had in their minds of their city as a very unhip place where nothing ever happens, I think that has been transformed in the last 40 years," Ménard said. "And I'm very conscious that we've influenced other festivals in the city."

In the late 1970s, Montreal was suffering a financial hangover from hosting the 1976 Summer Olympic Games, a venture that resulted in the city taking on more than \$1 billion in debt. Disco music ruled most of the city's nightclubs, and the city's two founding cultures (the linguistic chasm that author Hugh MacLennan famously called the "two solitudes") were split east and west by St. Laurent Boulevard. Anglos seldom ventured east of the street that was universally called "The Main," and francophones predominated in the east end. The city's biggest English-language musical stars—Leonard Cohen, Oscar Peterson and Paul Bley—had all left for greener pastures.

Ménard and Simard were, separately, gaining experience booking and promoting one-off concerts or small, regional tours by artists like John Lee Hooker. In 1975, Ménard quit college to focus on stage production at a small theater, and two years later he partnered with Simard to bring music into the El Casino club in the heart of the city. Early in their partnership, they reached the conclusion that the key to making money in a small venue was to diversify. So, they founded a video production company and struck up

relationships with radio producers to broadcast concerts. By the time they moved across Ste. Catherine Street to open the Spectrum concert venue, their formula for success was firmly in place.

The programming at the Spectrum ran the gamut, from rock acts like Devo to adventurous jazz veterans like the Art Ensemble of Chicago, and after an aborted attempt in 1979—which turned into just two concerts by Pat Metheny and Keith Jarrett—in 1980 Ménard and Simard, along with two other partners, decided to launch their first jazz festival, featuring Chick Corea, Gary Burton, Ray Charles, Ramsey Lewis and others on the former site of the 1967 World's Fair.

"In our first program booklet, it says we have somewhat larger ambitions for the future," said Ménard, "but I can admit that we never had a vision of what it became. I could not foresee that we would take over an entire sector of the city or actually change the geography of Montreal."

Looking back on a city that had been torn apart by cultural tensions, and wracked by terrorist mailbox bombings and fatal, politically charged kidnappings in the late '60s and 1970s, Ménard acknowledges the legitimacy of the



Wadada Leo Smith in 2016

MICHAEL JACKSON



Miles Davis in 1982

© FESTIVAL INTERNATIONAL DE JAZZ DE MONTREAL, ROBERT ET CHEVERY



Norah Jones in 2003

© FESTIVAL INTERNATIONAL DE JAZZ DE MONTREAL, DENIS ALIX



Gilad Hekselman in 2018

MICHAEL JACKSON

# MONTREAL PARTY

skepticism that his nascent festival could succeed by moving to the predominantly francophone St. Denis Street in 1982.

“There was a longing on the part of the public for something that would resemble a big party, and we happened to offer this in the form of the jazz festival,” Ménard said. “When we set up shop on St. Denis Street, we didn’t think, ‘Oh, we might miss out on the Anglos.’ It was our natural playground, because we had opened the St. Denis Theatre as a concert venue in 1978, so we just didn’t think of it. The bar owners in the area were very surprised that the Anglos would come in to hear music, and they liked the money that came with them. We never had any unrest; it was all very peaceful.”

The first year on St. Denis elevated the festival into the international jazz consciousness. While Miles Davis, Sonny Rollins, McCoy Tyner, Ornette Coleman and others filled the indoor theater to capacity, free concerts drew massive crowds to the street itself. It was impossible to wade through the throng filling three city blocks and not realize that FIJM was a hit.

The success of the 1982 festival flowed into the successive three events, to the point that it became clear that FIJM had outgrown St. Denis Street. In

1986, an expansion to a second main site, closer to the city’s core, signaled the festival’s widespread success, but it also triggered a rocky financial period.

“We were kind of twitching in financial terms,” Ménard said, “and we ended up with deficits. They were not very spectacular losses compared to what it costs today to put on the festival. But at the time, they were quite concerning. We had to go to the bank and sign our houses as a guarantee.”

But even the hardest-nosed banker in a glass tower in Montreal’s financial district could not miss what happened on July 4, 1989—an event that announced FIJM had evolved to a new level. Pat Metheny, a frequent act at the festival since 1981, was scheduled to play a free outdoor concert on Ste. Catherine Street.

“That concert really struck people’s minds about the hugeness of the festival,” Ménard recalled. “There were far too many people, and at that time our crowd control was not all that great. They were cramming in and cramming in, and I was thinking, ‘Shit, what if we lose control?’”

Was it 100,000 people? More? Ménard was too worried to count heads.



Charles Lloyd in 2017

© FESTIVAL INTERNATIONAL DE JAZZ DE MONTREAL, BENOIT ROUSSEAU



Chick Corea in 1986

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Tony Bennett (left) accepts an award from André Ménard and Alain Simard in 2004.

©FESTIVAL INTERNATIONAL DE JAZZ DE MONTRÉAL, VICTOR DIAZ LAMICH

Meanwhile, among musicians, the festival was gaining the reputation as a great place to hang.

“Montreal is one of those festivals where, when you show up, you run into artist after artist,” said trumpeter Dave Douglas, who first played FIJM in 1987 as part of Horace Silver’s sextet. “Heroes, colleagues, new names: Everyone’s in the same space. It’s exhilarating, and I think that excitement makes for great music.”

A big part of the hang was the late-night jam sessions. Whereas many festival jam sessions fail to bring out the headliners and heavy hitters, Douglas said FIJM was different.

“I remember very well getting my ass kicked—deservedly—by Jeff Watts at the jam session. Also, I remember meeting Phineas Newborn at that same session. One-of-a-kind life lessons. That session used to be a big forum for ideas.”

Among Canadian musicians, FIJM also became known as an event that can kickstart a career.

Bassist Chris Tarry was a young bandleader based in Vancouver when he played at FIJM in 1995 as part of a competition for Canadian artists.

“I remember if you won, you got a record deal,” said Tarry, who now lives in the New York area. “That was the biggest thing that had happened to me up to that point, and I remember flying to Montreal for the gig and thinking I’d made the big time. So, there’s a general ‘largeness’ to a gig at the Montreal festival, which was pretty intoxicating as a young musician.”

More than just being big, FIJM also set itself apart by cannily showcasing artists whose careers were about to explode, such as Norah Jones, who played a festival gig just after her 2002 Blue Note Records debut, *Come Away With Me*, was released, and who returns to headline

the festival this year. Featuring non-jazz acts like Public Enemy, Prince and Patti Smith, and landing deals like the one that led to Miles Davis’ artwork being featured on a FIJM poster, also became hallmarks of the event.

Despite keeping its focus squarely on popular artists, the festival has not shied away from avant-garde sounds, such as a memorable 2010 concert by Lou Reed, Laurie Anderson and John Zorn that amazed some fans, but drove many attendees from their seats.

Above all, FIJM always has been definitively of Montreal. Even with a string of international corporate sponsors, ranging from Rio Tinto to General Motors, the festival has maintained its close ties to the city. That relationship has proven essential in gaining the level of cooperation that makes closing down a huge piece of the urban core possible for 10 days and led the city to create a permanent Festival Plaza in 2009.

“Sometimes the scale of big festivals can make one feel a little unnoticed,” Tarry said, “but FIJM has seemed to sidestep this. For whatever reason, I always felt appreciated by the festival, whenever I had the pleasure of playing there.”

Douglas, who participated in an 80th birthday celebration for Wayne Shorter in 2013, said FIJM has distinguished itself by honoring the jazz elders.

“Being able to celebrate our masters brings such warmth and satisfaction,” he said. “It’s an important thing to recognize leaders and living masters, and to acknowledge that the music always goes on, long into the future.”

“I’ve always felt like I belonged to a very privileged group of people that could make a living and enjoy being in the company of great musicians,” Ménard said. “I thought it was wonderful to be involved, to be in some kind of relationship with the artist. But, as much as I’m fascinated by the magic of what they can do, I’m

still very intimidated by it, too.”

A voracious musical appetite helps Ménard retain his youthful enthusiasm throughout the year. “I’m still on the street every night, like when I was 16,” he said. “I go see two, three things almost every night of the week because I’m still interested in it, and there’s so much diversity.”

Ménard has seen his city go from being known by the non-French-speaking part of the world primarily for hockey and its European vibe to being recognized as the home of Arcade Fire, Cirque du Soleil and countless other culture-shaping artists. While he dodges opportunities to trumpet FIJM’s role in changing perceptions, he acknowledged the recognition of what he and Simard have accomplished.

“We get requests from many festivals to learn how we’ve been so successful and copy our formula,” Ménard said. “I tell them, ‘It’s very simple. There’s no secret. You need the kind of city that supports you. You need the kind of people who want to go to see what you put on, and you need this great, concentrated inventory of venues that vary in size that Montreal has.’ We had all those things and we survived. We never went bankrupt. We always paid our bills. I’m pretty proud of that.”

Ménard shrugged off any notion that FIJM’s programming will change radically after his retirement. In recent years, he has begun to share much of the curating and booking duties with colleagues. Gesturing around his office at stacks of recordings, Ménard said he looks forward to having more time to listen to music.

“If I have more time to enjoy the music—ah—to me, records are as many windows on the world.”

Ménard has never tired of looking.

—James Hale



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## EAST

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### Berks Jazz Fest

*Reading, Pennsylvania*

April 5-14

The 29th edition of Boscov's Berks Jazz Fest is presented by the Berks Arts Council. Performances will include a tribute to Al Jarreau (featuring Chris Walker, Regina Belle and others) and a celebration of the music of Weather Report (featuring Randy Brecker, Bob Mintzer, Jason Miles and others).

**LINEUP:** Randy Brecker, Eric Marienthal, Terrell Stafford, Kirk Whalum, Take 6, José James, Lizz Wright, Bob James Trio, Brian Culbertson, Steve Smith & Vital Information NYC Edition, Jeffrey Osborne, Gerald Veasley, Walter Trout, Boney James, Gerald Albright, Brian Bromberg's Unapologetically Funky Big Bombastic Band, Will Downing, Richard Elliott, Rick Braun, Peter White, Regina Belle, Allman Betts Band, Big Sam's Funky Nation, U.S. Navy Band Commodores, U.S. Army Jazz Ambassadors, Kutztown University Jazz Ensemble I.

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

### Center City Jazz Festival

*Philadelphia, Pennsylvania*

April 27

The eighth edition of this festival will present blockbuster performers as part of Philadelphia Jazz Appreciation Month. Attendees should expect a jam-packed schedule of more than 20 bands performing at several venues over the course of six hours, all within walking distance of each other.

**LINEUP:** Last year's performers included Marcus Strickland, David Kikoski Trio, Arturo Stable, Sharel Cassity, V. Shayne Frederick, Nicole Sapphos, Danny Janklow, Leon Jordan Jr., Yesseh Furaha-Ali, Ken Foswer, Lena Seikaly.

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

### Plymouth Rock Jazz Fest

*Plymouth, Massachusetts*

May 3-5

The theme for the sixth edition of this festival is "Celebrating Women in Jazz." This year's festival (sponsored by Eastern Bank) features a little bit of something for every jazz fan, from traditional to contemporary. There will be a surprise guest for the Sunday matinee show.

**LINEUP:** Donna Byrne and the Marshall Wood Trio, Yoko Miwa Trio, Suede.

[spirecenter.org/events](http://spirecenter.org/events)

### Mary Lou Williams Jazz Festival

*Washington, D.C.*

May 10-11

For 24 years, the Kennedy Center has celebrated the influence of pianist, composer, educator and humanitarian Mary Lou Williams (1910-'81) with a festival featuring phenomenal guest musicians. A trailblazer who taught herself to play piano as a child, Williams wrote hundreds of compositions and collaborated with many jazz icons, including Duke Ellington. The host will be NEA Jazz Master Dee Dee Bridgewater.

**LINEUP:** Dee Dee Bridgewater, Dave Holland, Ravi Coltrane, Maurice Chestnut, Val Jeanty, Jason Moran, Terri Lyne Carrington, Renee Rosnes Quartet, Joanne Brackeen Quartet.

[kennedy-center.org](http://kennedy-center.org)

### New York Guitar Festival

*New York City*

May (Dates TBA)

Exploring virtually every aspect of the guitar's personality, this festival, which was founded in 1999, has presented many of





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Archie Shepp (left), Dave Burrell and William Parker at Vision Festival in Brooklyn



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the world's most influential guitarists at Carnegie Hall, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, National Sawdust, (Le) Poisson Rouge, Brookfield Place Winter Garden and the 92nd Street Y. From Grammy winners to emerging artists, festival performers have come from all genres: classical, jazz, blues, pop, indie rock, folk and world music, as well as genre-defying innovators. The festival's Guitar Harvest recording series supports outreach programs in public schools.

**LINEUP:** Last year's performers included Sharon Isbin with Romero Lubambo, Marija Temo, Pepe Romero, Adam del Monte with Sonia Olla and Ismael Fernández, Sávila, Shana Cleveland, Sterling Rhyne.  
[newyorkguitarfestival.org](http://newyorkguitarfestival.org)

### Delaney Chevrolet Westsylvania Jazz & Blues Festival

Indiana, Pennsylvania  
May 25

The sixth edition of this free festival will take place in IRMC Park. The event has featured nationally and internationally known musicians, regional acts and student musicians playing in a classic American small town.

**LINEUP:** See website. Last year's performers included Darmon Meader, Tubby Daniels Band, Shawn Maxwell's New Tomorrow, Jimmy Adler Band, Funky Fly Project, Nevin Saylor Big Band.  
[westsylvaniajazzandblues.org](http://westsylvaniajazzandblues.org)

### City Parks Foundation's SummerStage

New York City  
May to October (Dates TBA)

SummerStage is New York City's largest, free outdoor performing arts festival, taking place in Central Park and in more than a dozen neighborhood parks around the

city. There will be approximately 100 performances—the majority of which are free of charge—for more than 250,000 fans.

**LINEUP:** See website. Past performers include Mavis Staples, Robert Glasper Experiment, Vince Giordano & The Nighthawks, Jimmy Heath Big Band, Mulatu Astatke, Roy Ayers with Seun Kuti & Egypt 80, Elvis Costello, Kid Cudi.  
[summerstage.org](http://summerstage.org)

### Michael Arnone's Crawfish Fest

Augusta, New Jersey  
May 31-June 2

What started as a small crawfish boil for 70 people homesick for boiled crawfish in 1989 has turned into a celebrated event known as Michael Arnone's Crawfish Fest. It features the best music and food that Louisiana and New Orleans have to offer. There will be a variety of musical styles presented on three stages: jazz, Cajun, zydeco, Delta blues, New Orleans r&b, brass bands and gospel.

**LINEUP:** Neville Jacobs, Jesse Lege & Bayou Brew, Terrance Simien & The Zydeco Experience, Aaron Neville, Gene Delefose & French Rockin' Boogie, Cowboy Mouth, The Marcus King Band.  
[crawfishfest.com](http://crawfishfest.com)

### Burlington Discover Jazz Festival

Burlington, Vermont  
May 31-June 9

This 10-day celebration will feature more than 100 hours of free live music. With outdoor stages and more than 40 venues throughout downtown—plus headliners at the historic Flynn Theater and Waterfront Park—the festival has been a flagship event for this community for almost four decades.

**LINEUP:** Pharoah Sanders, Bobby McFerrin, Tia Fuller, Christian Sands, Patti LaBelle, Toots & The Maytals, St. Paul & The Broken Bones, Tank & The Bangas.  
[discoverjazz.com](http://discoverjazz.com)

## Blue Note Jazz Festival

New York City  
June (Dates TBA)

This festival features more than 150 shows at multiple venues around New York City during a month-long celebration of the genre, featuring some of the biggest names on the scene today. Presented by the owners of

the Blue Note jazz club, the festival celebrates its eighth anniversary this year.

**LINEUP:** Last year's performers included The Bad Plus, Keyon Harrold, McCoy Tyner, Paquito D'Rivera Ensemble, Jason Stein, Victor Wooten, Pablo Ziegler Trio, Chano Domingues Trio, Sergio Mendes, Average White Band, Sarah McKenzie.  
[bluenotejazzfestival.com](http://bluenotejazzfestival.com)

## Capital Jazz Fest

Columbia, Maryland  
June 7-9

Each year in early June, tens of thousands

of music lovers from throughout the country flock to the suburbs of Washington, D.C., to attend "the jazz festival with soul." Launched in 1993, this multi-stage outdoor music festival is more than just a concert. It's a place to people-watch, eat, drink, shop, mingle, relax, soak in the rays, make new friends and hear some of the coolest jazz and soul music on the planet.

**LINEUP:** See website. Last year's performers included Diana Krall, Snarky Puppy, Lizz Wright, Earth, Wind & Fire.  
[capitaljazz.com/fest/2019](http://capitaljazz.com/fest/2019)

## DC Jazz Festival

Washington, D.C.  
June 7-16

DC JazzFest (presented by Events DC) celebrates all things jazz with 150 concerts in 40 venues citywide, including its marquee weekend, DC JazzFest at the Wharf, to be held June 14-16. Home to DC's longest operating open-air fish market, The Wharf has transformed to become DC's most exciting waterfront destination.

**LINEUP:** Jon Batiste & Stay Human, Snarky Puppy, Joshua Redman Quartet, Cécile McLorin Salvant, José James, Terri Lyne Carrington & Social Science, Vijay Iyer, Marc Cary, Anat Cohen, Joey Alexander Trio, Michael Franks, Stefon Harris & Blackout, Sean Jones, Ralph Peterson & GenNext Big Band, Sharón Clark, Cornerstore, Brass-A-Holics, Anne Mette Iverson, Allyn Johnson & Sonic Sanctuary, Janelle Gill Trio, Laurin Talese, Etienne Charles, Georgia Anne Muldrow, Nasar Abadey & SuperNova, Gregor Huebner/EI Violin Latino, Tarus Mateen & Beyond Genre, Olli Soikkeli Trio, Witness Matlou Trio, Rosario Giuliani's Cinema Italia, Girls In Airports, Sasha Berliner, Evan Harris, The String Queens.

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

## Vision Festival

Brooklyn, New York  
June 11-16

The Vision Festival presents legendary and emerging stars of boundless improvised music. Now in its 24th year, this multi-arts festival returns to Roulette in Brooklyn. Opening night celebrates Andrew Cyrille for his Lifetime of Achievement, featuring the drummer in performance with musical associates spanning his 50-plus-year career. Plus, there will be tributes to Joseph Jarman, Alvin Fielder and Cecil Taylor.

**LINEUP:** Andrew Cyrille, Wadada Leo Smith, Cassandra Wilson, James Carter, Milford Graves, Peter Brötzmann, Jeff "Tain" Watts, Kris Davis, Ingrid Laubrock, Idris Ackamoor, David Virelles, Kidd Jordan, Tomeka Reid, Sylvie Courvoisier, James Brandon Lewis, Ava Mendoza, Melvin Gibbs, Marty Ehrlich, Darius Jones, Tomas Fujiwara, Jaimie Branch, Hamid Drake.




[artsforart.org/vision](http://artsforart.org/vision)

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Chris Persad at the Hudson Valley Jazz Festival in New York



### **Jazz in June** Camden, Maine June 14-16

The inaugural edition of this festival will include great music, delicious food and beautiful inns. Concerts will be held at the Camden Opera House, the Camden Snow Bowl and all around town during Father's Day weekend.

**LINEUP:** Kenny Barron Trio, Greg Abate Quartet, Peter Dembski.  
[jazzinjunecamdenme.com](http://jazzinjunecamdenme.com)

### **Berkshire Gateway Jazz Weekend**

Lee, Massachusetts  
(Dates TBA)

This event features concerts, al fresco jazz, food vendors, a jazz brunch and more—all in the beautiful Western Massachusetts town of Lee, known as the "Gateway to the Berkshires." In 2018, the festival took place in mid-June.

**LINEUP:** Last year's performers included Frank Vignola Trio, Jeff Holmes Big Band.  
[berkshiregatewayjazz.org](http://berkshiregatewayjazz.org)

### **DuPont Clifford Brown Jazz Festival**

Wilmington, Delaware  
(Dates TBA)

Each year, Wilmington honors the brilliant trumpeter and hometown hero Clifford Brown (1930-'56), an iconic jazz musician who departed far too soon. For decades Brown's work has given fans a moment to laugh, dance, sing and experience the ultimate joy that music can bring. In 2018, the festival took place in mid-June.

**LINEUP:** See website. Past performers include Marcus Miller, Hiromi, Rufus Reid.  
[cliffordbrownjazzfest.com](http://cliffordbrownjazzfest.com)

### **Pittsburgh International Jazz Festival**

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania  
June 20-23

Presented by Citizens Bank, this festival is a

labor of love for the August Wilson Cultural Center. Organizers invite people from around the world, speaking different languages, to share a common bond and love for jazz to spend the weekend in Pittsburgh. Everything the cultural center does is rooted in the complexities and brilliance of African American culture and the African Diaspora. The event includes jam sessions, a jazz crawl, food trucks and a craft beer garden.

**LINEUP:** Stanley Clarke Band, Joey DeFrancesco, Charles Lloyd with Marvin Sewell, Reuben Rogers & Eric Harland, War, Orrin Evans' Captain Black Big Band, Christian Sands, Nubya Garcia, Makaya McCraven, Butcher Brown, Keyon Harrold, Roger Humphries Tribute to Art Blakey, Christine "Kingfish" Ingram, Tamara Tunie.  
[pittsburghjazzfest.org](http://pittsburghjazzfest.org)

### **CGI Rochester International Jazz Festival** Rochester, New York June 21-29

This event is one of the world's leading jazz festivals, drawing 200,000 people annually. More than 1,500 artists will perform. Legends and rising stars from around the world will perform in more than 320 shows at 20 venues. The fest includes more than 90 free shows, as well as nightly jam sessions and workshops for young musicians (led by visiting artists).

**LINEUP:** George Benson, Stefon Harris & Blackout, Bill Frisell Trio, Yellowjackets, Randy Brecker, Joey DeFrancesco Trio, Stave Gadd Band, Trombone Shorty & Orleans Avenue, Catherine Russell, George Coleman Quartet, Bria Skonberg, John Pizzarelli Trio, Harold Mabern Trio, Lionel Loueke & Raul Midón, Patti LaBelle, Nubya Garcia, Bill Charlap, Steve Miller Band with Marty Stuart, Kandace Springs, Sullivan Fortner Trio, John Fedchock's NY Sextet, Jeff Goldblum & The Mildred Snitzer Orchestra, Veronica Swift, Cyro Baptista, Jake Shimabukuro, Marc Cohn & The Blind



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**NEWPORTJAZZ.ORG**

Angélique Kidjo at the Newport Jazz Fest Festival



Boys of Alabama, Southside Johnny & The Asbury Jukes, Over The Rhine, Kit Downes.  
[rochesterjazz.com](http://rochesterjazz.com)

### Freihofer's Saratoga Jazz Festival

*Saratoga Springs, New York*  
June 29-30

This festival features an extraordinary roster of 22 groups, highlighted by the SPAC Jazz Festival debut of Norah Jones, the return of jazz guitar legend George Benson and an appearance by festival favorite

Trombone Shorty & Orleans Avenue.

**LINEUP:** George Benson, Norah Jones, Trombone Shorty & Orleans Avenue, Antonio Sanchez & Migration, Joey DeFrancesco Trio, Joshua Redman Quartet, Allison Miller's Boom Tic Boom, Mercy Project (Jon Cowherd, Brian Blade, John Patitucci & Steve Cardenas), James Carter Organ Trio, Kandace Springs, Los Van Van, Joe Locke's Subtle Disguise with Raul Midon, Black Art Jazz Collective, Veronica Swift with The Emmet Cohen Trio, Lionel Loueke & Raul Midón, Django

Festival All-Stars with Grace Kelly & Edmar Castaneda, Kansas Smitty's House Band, Donna Grantis, Joel Harrison's Angel Band, Youn Sun Nah, Ruthie Foster, Cha Wa.  
[spac.org](http://spac.org)

### Briggs Farm Blues Festival

*Nescopeck, Pennsylvania*  
July 11-14

Since 1998, the Briggs family has hosted one of the nation's most revered blues festivals on its 250-year-old farm. Through the years, the event has grown in size, but it has maintained a small-festival feel. Loyal fans and amazing musicians return to "Briggs Fest" every year.

**LINEUP:** Donna The Buffalo, Kingfish, Southern Avenue, Slam Allen, James Armstrong, Vanessa Collier, Annika Chambers, Cedric Burnside, Alexis P. Suter & The Ministers of Sound.  
[briggfarm.com](http://briggfarm.com)

### Central PA Jazz Festival

*Harrisburg, Mt. Gretna & Hummelstown, Pennsylvania*  
July 11-14

The 39th edition of this festival, which is produced by the Central PA Friends of Jazz, offers a riverboat cruise, a jazz party, concerts in the Gretna Playhouse, master classes, jam sessions and the annual picnic at Indian Echo Caverns.

**LINEUP:** See website. Past performers include Benny Golson, Delfeayo Mar-

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Joey Alexander Trio at the CGI Rochester International Jazz Festival in New York

salis, Joshua Breakstone, Dwayne Dolphin, New World Parade.  
[friendsofjazz.org](http://friendsofjazz.org)

### North Atlantic Blues Festival

Rockland, Maine  
July 13-14

This event is an annual two-day blues music festival featuring national blues performers and considered one of the most prestigious on the East Coast. The festival is held at the Public Landing overlooking the picturesque Rockland Harbor. In addition to all-day live entertainment, the festival has vendors selling a wide array of food, drinks and crafts.

**LINEUP:** Rick Estrin & The Nightcats, Ruthie Foster, Carolyn Wonderland, Sugar Rayford, The Proven Ones, Sean Chambers, Annika Chambers, Al Copley & Friends, Joe Moss, Keesha Pratt, Angela Easley.

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

**92Y Jazz In July**  
New York City  
July 16-25

This annual event is one of New York City's longest-running jazz festivals. With pianist Bill Charlap serving as artistic director, this event features world-class jazz musicians in unique, once-in-a-lifetime performances.

**LINEUP:** Cécil McLorin Salvant with the Bill Charlap Trio, Renee Rosnes & Bill Charlap, The Brazilian Trio with Maucha Adnet, Curtis Brothers Afro-Cuban Jazz Quintet, "Melodic Genius of Clifford Brown" concert (Tom Harrell, Warren Vaché, Joe Magnarelli, Veronica Swift, Bill Charlap, Peter Washington, Kenny Washington), "Songs of Burton Lane" concert (Steve Wilson, Roxy Coss, Michael Dease, Sandy Stewart, Bill Charlap, Peter Washington, Carl Allen), "Standard Time" concert (John Pizzarelli, Harry Allen,

Bill Charlap, Jay Leonhart, Dennis Mackrel).  
[92y.org/jazz](http://92y.org/jazz)

### Caramoor Jazz Festival

Katonah, New York  
July 20

Now in its fifth year and presented in collaboration with Jazz at Lincoln Center, this festival offers exceptional music to enjoy throughout the stunning gardens and historical venues within Caramoor. A full day of jazz, interactive activities for the kids and an evening headliner are all part of the fun.

**LINEUP:** Eddie Palmieri Salsa Orchestra, Etienne Charles & Creole Soul, Lakeria Benjamin Quartet, Michela Marino Lerman's Love Movement, Sammy Miller & The Congregation, The Isaiah J. Thompson Quartet, Andrea Motis Quintet.

[caramoor.org/events/jazz-festival-2019](http://caramoor.org/events/jazz-festival-2019)

**Litchfield Jazz Festival**  
Washington, Connecticut  
July 26-28

Nestled in the picturesque Berkshire foothills, Litchfield Jazz Fest has presented the titans of jazz since 1996. This year's edition presents three days of world-class jazz music in an intimate indoor setting. In addition to concerts, there will be artist talks, arts and crafts exhibits and great food.

**LINEUP:** Mike Stern Band, Wycliff Gordon & Friends, Randy Brecker, Chad Lefkowitz-Brown, Duchess, Alexis Cole, Don Braden.

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

### Belleayre Music Festival

Highmount, New York  
July-September (Dates TBA)

Founded in 1992, this festival is produced by the not-for-profit Belleayre Conservatory as an effort to keep Belleayre Mountain Ski



Center open year-round. Phyllis and Mel Litoff raised the festival to prominence after becoming co-artistic directors in 1994.

**LINEUP:** See website. Past performers include Wynton Marsalis, Buddy Guy, Béla Fleck & The Flecktones, Vince Gill, James Blunt, Brian Wilson, Branford Marsalis, Dr. John, The Doobie Brothers.  
[belleayremusic.org](http://belleayremusic.org)

 **Newport Jazz Festival**  
*Newport, Rhode Island*  
 Aug. 2-4

The Newport Jazz Festival (presented by Natixis Investment Managers) is celebrating its 65th anniversary. This legendary event has served as the template for music festivals all over the world. Held at Rhode Island's Narragansett Bay, the festival will feature

more than 60 acts at Fort Adams State Park and the International Tennis Hall of Fame.

**LINEUP:** Herbie Hancock, Dianne Reeves, Kamasi Washington, Cécile McLorin Salvant, Terence Blanchard & The E-Collective, Dee Dee Bridgewater, Ron Carter Trio, The Bad Plus, Tia Fuller, Billy Hart Group, Aaron Diehl, Ravi Coltrane & David Virelles, Sons of Kemet, Christian Sands with Helen Sung & Tadataka Unno, Thundercat, Darcy James Argue's Secret Society, Camila Meza & Nectar Orchestra, Jenny Scheinman & Allison Miller's Parlour Game, Dafnis Prieto Big Band, Marcus Strickland Twi-Life, Spanish Harlem Orchestra, Walter Smith III, Sun Ra Arkestra, Joel Ross, Corinne Bailey Rae, Buika, Makaya McCraven, ELEW (Eric Lewis), Laurin Talese, Sammy Miller & The Congregation.  
[newportjazz.org](http://newportjazz.org)

**Scranton Jazz Festival**

*Scranton, Pennsylvania*  
 Aug. 2-4

This festival will celebrate its 15th year at the historic Radison Lackawanna Station Hotel and various downtown Scranton venues. Attracting international, national and regional jazz, blues and world-music artists, the SJF has become a highly regarded long-term musical event in northeastern Pennsylvania.

**LINEUP:** See website. Previous performers include Manhattan Transfer, Spyro Gyra, Jimmy Heath, Stanley Clarke, Jon Faddis, Tierney

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Donald Harrison (left) and Brian Lynch at the Pittsburgh International Jazz Festival

PJF

### **Rockport Jazz Festival**

*Rockport, Massachusetts*

**Aug. 8-11**

The eighth edition of this annual festival will feature world-class jazz artists performing in the intimate, seaside Shalin Liu Performance Center. Hailed by the New York Times as being “beautiful to the eye as well as the ear,” the hall provides an incomparable setting for jazz. This venue also will present jazz concerts throughout the year, including Kenny Barron (April 20), Pat Metheny (May 22–23) and Bobby McFerrin (June 2).

**LINEUP:** Kat Edmonson, Hot Sardines.

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

### **Springfield Jazz & Roots**

*Springfield, Massachusetts*

**Aug. 10**

This year’s festival will be the sixth edition of an annual celebration that draws approximately 10,000 fans to downtown Springfield. The internationally heralded festival draws visitors from throughout the Northeast and has become a powerful expression of civic pride, uniting the region’s diverse cultural communities through music and education.

**LINEUP:** See website. Last year’s performers included Maceo Parker, Pedrito Martinez, Avery Sharpe, Sweet Honey in the Rock, Wanda Houston, Jon Cleary.

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

Sutton, The New York Voices, John Pizzarelli.

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

### **Hudson Valley Jazz Festival**

*Hudson Valley, New York*

**Aug. 8-11**

This event showcases great jazz artists who reside in the Hudson Valley area, which has been called New York City’s “sixth

borough.” The festival includes several shows in the village of Warwick, with events taking places in galleries, cafes, restaurants and clubs throughout the valley.

**LINEUP:** Karl Latham, Joe Vincent Tranchina, Eric Person, Jeff Ciampa, John Arbo, Robert Kopec, Judi Silvano, Chris Persad, Mike Jackson, NY Swing Exchange, Bill Pernice.

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

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[www.artsforart.org/vision](http://www.artsforart.org/vision)



Cécile McLorin Salvant at the Caramoor Jazz Festival in Katonah, New York

### Montclair Jazz Festival

Montclair, New Jersey  
 (Dates TBA)

Held 13 miles outside New York City, this annual festival is the biggest free jazz event in the region. The festival is produced by artistic director Christian McBride and the music education nonprofit organization Jazz House Kids. In 2018, the event took place in mid-August.

**LINEUP:** See website. Past performers include Eddie Palmieri, Oliver Lake, Cyrus Chestnut Trio, Dee Dee Bridgewater, Christian McBride, Ted Chubb Band.

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

### Provincetown Jazz Festival

Cape Cod, Massachusetts  
 Aug. 15 & 19

Since 2005, this event has been held in Provincetown, sometimes called "the oldest continuous art colony" in the United States. The festival is a non-profit organization donating a portion of the proceeds to worthy causes, including jazz in the schools. Musicians from the United States, Canada, Brazil, United Kingdom, Switzerland, Australia, New Zealand and Japan have appeared at concerts on Cape Cod.

**LINEUP:** Katie Thiroux, Jessica Curran, Henry Acker, Kevin Harris, Victor Acker, Dana Acker, Jeremy Turgeon, Max Ridley, Lee Fish, Fabiano de Castro, Ron Ormsby, Bart Weisman.

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

### Norfolk Waterfront Jazz Festival

Norfolk, Virginia  
 Aug. 23-24

The 37th edition of this event is Hampton Roads' longest-running outdoor jazz festival. It will be held in Downtown Norfolk Waterfront. On a warm summer evening, fans can chill to the legendary sounds of top national jazz and r&b recording artists. This popular festival features a variety of seating and ticket options, including the New Journal and Guide VIP Club, reserved seating, designated tent areas, festival lawn seating, fine foods and beverages,



plus a festival marketplace with crafts, retail items and more.

**LINEUP:** Michael Lington, Paul Taylor, Vincent Ingala, Richard Elliot, Peter White, DW3, Sheila E, Lindsey Webster, Brian McKnight.

[festevents.org/events/2019-season-events/norfolk-waterfront-jazz-festival](http://festevents.org/events/2019-season-events/norfolk-waterfront-jazz-festival)

### Charlie Parker Jazz Festival

*New York City*  
Aug. 23-25

Each year, City Parks Foundation assembles some of the finest musicians in the world who reflect Charlie Parker's musical individuality and genius, to promote appreciation for this highly influential and world-renowned artist. The 27th edition of this free event will be a celebration of jazz in New York, bringing together storied, veteran players and the next generation of jazz artists.

**LINEUP:** See website. Previous performers include Gary Bartz, Jack DeJohnette, Buster Williams, Catherine Russell, Monty Alexander, Keyon Harrold, Matthew Whitaker.

[cityparksfoundation.org/charlieparker](http://cityparksfoundation.org/charlieparker)

### Delaware Water Gap Celebration of the Arts

*Delaware Water Gap, Pennsylvania*  
(Dates TBA)

Four decades ago, jazz fans in the Poconos decided to throw a jazz party, and over time, it evolved into a three-day extravaganza. Many of the best names in jazz have come to Pennsylvania to perform. In 2018, the festival took place in early September.

**LINEUP:** See website. In 2018, performers included Joey DeFrancesco, Dave Liebman, Jay Leonhart, Jim Ridi.

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

### JazzFest White Plains

*White Plains, New York*  
Sept. 11-15

Returning to Westchester County for its eighth year, this festival will be a five-day celebration of jazz for music fans of all ages. JazzFest has become a signature White Plains event, with free and affordable jazz performances attracting jazz enthusiasts from throughout Westchester and beyond. The 2018 edition included more than 20 performances.

**LINEUP:** See website. In 2018, performers included Rudresh Mahanthappa, Arturo O'Farrill, Veronica Swift, Emmet Cohen, Marquis Hill.

[artsw.org/jazzfest](http://artsw.org/jazzfest)

### Berklee Beantown Jazz Festival

*Boston, Massachusetts*  
September (Date TBA)

This event is Boston's biggest block party—a free, annual, outdoor public concert that has delighted hundreds of thousands of music lovers over the years. The musical styles presented include jazz, Latin, blues, funk and rock. There also will be a KidsJam, an instrument petting zoo and an array of food vendors. This festival is typically is held on the last Saturday in September.

**LINEUP:** See website. Past performers include the Chick Corea/Steve Gadd Band, Terri Lyne Carrington, Lizz Wright, Jazzmeia Horn, Camille Thurman.

[berklee.edu/beantownjazz](http://berklee.edu/beantownjazz)

### Pittsfield City Jazz Festival

*Pittsfield, Massachusetts*  
October (Dates TBA)

This year marks the 15th edition of this cultural event in western Massachusetts. There will be ticketed shows, as well as a number of free events. In 2018, the festival was held in mid-October.

**LINEUP:** Last year's performers included Christian McBride's New Jawn, Veronica Swift.

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



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ZACH SMITH PHOTOGRAPHY

### French Quarter Festival

*New Orleans, Louisiana*

**April 11-14**

Jazz fans can kick off the festival season in New Orleans with French Quarter Festival presented by Chevron. The event features more than 1,700 musicians on 23 stages. There are 60 food vendors from New Orleans' favorite restaurants, and numerous special events scattered throughout the neighborhood. This event is considered the largest showcase of Louisiana food, music and culture in the world.

**LINEUP:** Galactic, George Porter Jr., Chubby Carrier & The Bayou Swamp Band, Charmaine Neville, Irma Thomas, The Dixie Cups, Erica Falls, Lost Bayou Ramblers, Tim Laughlin, James Andrews, Jeremy Davenport, Little Freddie King.

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

### Festival International de Louisiane

*Lafayette, Louisiana*

**April 24-28**

This festival is a ticketless outdoor event that celebrates Louisiana, francophone and

other cultures through food, music and art. Downtown Lafayette transforms into a multi-stage extravaganza attracting more than 300,000 attendees. Fans can explore cuisine, crafts and music from around the globe, plus theatrical and street performances.

**LINEUP:** Robert Randolph & The Family Band, Steve Riley & The Mamou Playboys, Mike Broussard & Nu' Edition Zydeco, Keith Frank & The Soileau Zydeco Band, Tank and the Bangas, Anders Osborne, Gato Preto, Doctor Nativo, Moonlight Benjamin, Girma Bèyèné & Akalé Wubé, Motel Radio, The Pine Leaf Boys.

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

### Seabreeze Jazz Festival

*Panama City Beach, Florida*

**April 24-28**

This festival showcases stars from the smoother side of the jazz spectrum, as well as r&b legends. Brian Culberston performs on a dinner cruise on April 24, and he performs at Aaron Bessant Park Amphitheater on April 27. This festival, which supports music

education in schools, also presents Northwest Florida high school student bands.

**LINEUP:** Kirk Whalum, Jonathan Butler, Will Downing, The Jacksons, Jeffrey Osborne, Nick Colionne, Norman Brown, Lindsey Webster, Down To The Bone, Special EFX All-Stars, Ken Ford, Eric Darius, Damien Escobar, West Coast Jam (feat. Richard Elliot, Peter White, DW3 and the West Coast Horns).

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

### Jacksonville Jazz Festival

*Jacksonville, Florida*

**May 23-26**

Downtown Jacksonville comes alive with the sounds of jazz greats and modern favorites at the this festival over Memorial Day weekend. Fans can enjoy two stages of live jazz, local food, drinks, shopping and entertainment. Founded in 1981, this event has become one of the largest jazz festivals in the country, offering a fun and vibrant street festival atmosphere. Activities take place throughout 10 blocks of downtown—and all for free.

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Jon Batiste at Spoleto Festival USA in Charleston, South Carolina

WILLIAM STRUHS



CORY FONTENOT

Innov Gnawa at Festival International de Louisiane in Lafayette, Louisiana

**LINEUP:** See website. Past performers include Chick Corea, Snarky Puppy, Christian Scott aTunde Adjuah, Jon Batiste, Trombone Shorty, Yellowjackets, Gregory Porter, Jane Monheit, Gerald Albright, Lizz Wright, Somi. [jacksonvillejazzfest.com](http://jacksonvillejazzfest.com)

### Spoleto Festival USA

Charleston, South Carolina  
May 24-June 9

Established in 1977, Spoleto presents leading artists in jazz, as well as classical and popular music, dance and theater. The 2019 Wells Fargo Jazz series at Spoleto features four evening outdoor concerts in the picturesque Cistern Yard: two nights of Esperanza Spalding, a star-studded tribute to Geri Allen and a rare performance by Carla Bley's trio.

**LINEUP:** Esperanza Spalding, Geri Allen Tribute Quintet (Terri Lyne Carrington, Ravi Coltrane, Craig Taborn, Robert Hurst, Maurice Chestnut), Carla Bley, Steve Swallow & Andy Sheppard, Dafnis Prieto Big Band, David Virelles & Román Díaz; Mark Turner & Ethan Iverson. [spoletousa.org](http://spoletousa.org)

### Atlanta Jazz Festival

Atlanta, Georgia  
May 25-26

The Atlanta Jazz Festival, which takes place in Piedmont Park, is celebrating its 42nd anniversary as one of the largest free jazz festivals in the country.

**LINEUP:** See website. The 2018 performers

included Dianne Reeves, The Bad Plus, Jon Batiste with the Dap-Kings, Jazzmeia Horn, Tia Fuller, Yoko Miwa. In other years, the festival has presented Charles Lloyd, Robert Glasper and Macy Gray.

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

### Jazz in June

Norman, Oklahoma  
June 20-22

Marking its 36th anniversary, this free event returns to Norman for three days of jazz and blues.

**LINEUP:** See website. Last year's performers included The Chebon Tiger Band, Eric Gales, 145th Army Band, Smoochie Wallus, Huntertones. [jazzinjune.org](http://jazzinjune.org)

### Eureka Springs Blues Weekend

Eureka Springs, Arkansas  
(Dates TBA)

The lineups of this event have been described as featuring a "who's who of the blues." The festival has featured local, regional, national and Grammy-winning blues acts from all over America and around the world. Presenters are to proud to have helped launch the next generation of blues stars. In 2018, the festival was held in mid-June.

**LINEUP:** See website. Last year's artists included Selwyn Birchwood, John Nemeth, Mark Shields & Good Company, Coyote Claw, Blew Reed & The Flatheads, Brick Fields Band, Coco

Montoya with Carolyn Wonderland, Scott Garner & The Speedshift Band, Los Roscoes, Tom Baker, Tony Redman, Fast Johnny Ricker Band.

[eureka Springs blues.com](http://eureka Springs blues.com)

### W.C. Handy Music Festival

Florence, Alabama  
(Dates TBA)

Based in the hometown of W.C. Handy (1873-1958), the musician credited with being the first person to write down a composition and call it a blues, this festival marks its 38th year with an array of events. Fans can take a tour of Frank Lloyd Wright's Rosenbaum House, one of the few structures the architect completed in the South. In 2018, the festival was held in late July.

**LINEUP:** See website. Past performers include the University of Northern Alabama Jazz Combo, Mike Dillon, The Swinging River Jazz Band, Lillie Mae, Col. Bruce Hampton, Tommy Womack, Latimore, Trojan Drive Jazz Band, The Midnighters, Johnny Collier & The Misbehavers, Clara Belle & The Creeps. [wchandymusicfestival.org](http://wchandymusicfestival.org)

### Satchmo SummerFest

New Orleans, Louisiana  
Aug. 2-4

This event is the premier festival dedicated to celebrating the life, legacy and music of Louis "Satchmo" Armstrong. The annual festival, presented by Chevron, features

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contemporary and traditional jazz, brass bands, New Orleans cuisine and insightful seminars about the life of Armstrong and the history of New Orleans music.

**LINEUP:** The 2018 lineup included Ashlin Parker's Trumpet Mafia, Irma Thomas, Charmaine Neville, Corey Henry, Robin Barnes & The Fiyabirds, Yoshio Toyama & The Dixie Saints, Jeremy Davenport. [satchmosummerfest.org](http://satchmosummerfest.org)

**Amelia Island Jazz Festival**  
Fernandina Beach, Florida  
Oct. 6-13

Held annually during the first week of October and headed by Artistic Director Les DeMerle, the Amelia Island Jazz Festival promotes world-class jazz in various styles, including swing, bebop, Dixieland, big band, blues, Latin and contemporary. Concerts are staged in venues around Amelia Island, including the historic seaport of Fernandina Beach. The festival also awards a jazz scholarship yearly to an aspiring high school musician.

**LINEUP:** Delfeayo Marsalis, Jamil Sharif, Les DeMerle, Bonnie Eisele, Bill Prince, Mike Levine Dennis Marks. [ameliaislandjazzfestival.com](http://ameliaislandjazzfestival.com)

**Mighty Mississippi Music Festival**  
Greenville, Mississippi  
(Dates TBA)

At its core, this festival is centered on the blues, which makes sense given the locale's importance in the development of the genre. But festival planners also highlight the ways that the blues wound up influencing virtually every strain of popular music today. Festival attendees can camp out for the weekend and participate in late-night jam sessions. In 2018, the festival was held in mid-October.

**LINEUP:** See website. Last year's perform-

ers included Lucinda Williams, The Dirty Guv'nahs, Ashley McBryde, Dwayne Dopsie & The Zydeco Hellraisers, Steve Azar & The King's Men, Cedric Burnside Project. [mightymississippimusicfestival.com](http://mightymississippimusicfestival.com)

**Clearwater Jazz Holiday**  
Clearwater, Florida  
Oct. 17-20

This collaboration between the Clearwater Jazz Holiday Foundation Inc., the City of Clearwater, Visit St. Pete/Clearwater and Ruth Eckerd Hall will be a joyous 40th anniversary celebration. Crowds relish this popular fest's colorful, diverse musical lineup, from jazz to jam, funk to fusion and more. Many attendees return year after year.

**LINEUP:** See website. Past performers include Herbie Hancock, Esperanza Spalding, Christian McBride, Trombone Shorty, Marcus Roberts, Count Basie Orchestra, Boney James, Brian Culbertson, Buddy Guy, Sheryl Crow, Brandi Carlile, Gladys Knight, Commodores, Kool & The Gang, UB40, Bonnie Raitt, Lake Street Dive. [clearwaterjazz.com](http://clearwaterjazz.com)

**Jazz for All Ages Festival**  
Hilton Head Island, South Carolina  
(Dates TBA)

Bob Masteller's Jazz for All Ages Festival is charity event to support the preservation of jazz education in schools. Several scholarships, programs and instruments are provided to students and schools as a result of this event, specifically benefiting the Junior Jazz Foundation. Special room rates are available. In 2018, the festival was held in early November.

**LINEUP:** Last year's performers included Joey Alexander, Christian Tamburr, Clint Holmes, Ronnie Leigh. [jazzforallages.com](http://jazzforallages.com)

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Sonny Rollins at the Detroit Jazz Festival in 2012



Charlie Gabriel (left) and Clint Maedgen of the Preservation Hall Jazz Band with Donald Harrison in 2012



Danilo Pérez in 2017

# CARETAKERS HELP DETROIT FEST THRIVE

**ROBERT MCCABE, FOUNDER OF THE** Montreux-Detroit International Jazz Festival—known since 2011 as the Detroit Jazz Festival—always harbored major aspirations for the four-day event.

McCabe arrived in Detroit in 1971 to run the organization Detroit Renaissance and to revitalize the city's economy. After completion of the Renaissance Center building project, the city's then-mayor, Coleman A. Young, asked McCabe to put together a free jazz festival.

McCabe died in 2013 at age 86, but lived long enough to see the festival become an enormous event, drawing hundreds of thousands of fans to Detroit's Hart Plaza every Labor Day weekend.

"Bob's vision from the beginning was that the festival could become one of the great jazz festivals in the world—one that could eventually grow to be globally significant," said saxophonist Chris Collins, the festival's artistic director.

The event's 40th edition, which runs Aug. 30–Sept. 2, will feature bassist Stanley Clarke as its artist-in-residence. Other superstars in the lineup include guitarist Pat Metheny, bassist Ron Carter, saxophonist Kenny Garrett, pianist Chucho Valdés and the quartet Yellowjackets with guest vocalist Luciana Souza.

Back in 1979, McCabe, modeling the event after the Montreux International Jazz Festival in Switzerland, established an exchange program wherein U.S. high school jazz bands would perform in Switzerland. He also booked the greats—Oscar Peterson, Clark Terry and the Heath Brothers—and staged several fundraising concerts.

And the fest's history is packed with unforgettable moments, like the night in 1996 when saxophonists James Carter and Dave Murray blew toe-to-toe in a cutting contest, the 2012 evening when Sonny Rollins had fans dancing in the aisles or the night Nancy Wilson sang so angelically that listeners wept.

Over the years, many musicians have experienced unforgettable moments as well. Pianist Danilo Pérez recalled being onstage in 2009 with the Wayne Shorter Quartet: "At that moment, the message of connection and people connecting to the music—it became literal, to feel the energy in the air as we took the music into unknown territories."

The festival has overcome plenty of challenges to get where it is today, though. In 1999, the Montreux festival pulled the use of its name, and the event eventually was renamed the Ford Detroit International Jazz Festival. And the fest would go on to experience some shaky ground after Ford Motor Co. discontinued its sponsorship.

Gretchen Valade, owner of Mack Avenue Records, reportedly set up a \$15 million endowment for the festival in 2005–'06, a time when the event was struggling financially. Her philanthropic efforts continue to support the festival, but there also has been corporate support from companies like Quicken Loans, which again is the festival's presenting sponsor.

"I love jazz and I love Detroit," Valade said. "The preservation of the Detroit Jazz Festival and the establishment of an endowment not only preserved Detroit's status as a global jazz epicen-

ter, but also supported a societal and cultural mission to the world's largest free jazz festival as an inspiration for the next generation."

Its programming has remained world-class largely due to the work of its artistic directors over the years: Joyce Cusmano, Jim Dulzo, Frank Malfitano, Terri Pontremoli and Chris Collins. Dulzo (1994–2000), for example, presented swing, bop, blues, the avant-garde and even gospel. Malfitano (2000–'05) expanded the festival to Campus Martius Park, added two stages and instituted the artist-in-residence program, which has included such big names as Metheny, Wayne Shorter, Chick Corea and Terence Blanchard.

"One of the things I like about the program is that the festival has musicians in the community, in the schools," said violinist Regina Carter, the festival's first artist-in-residence. "Not only do the festivalgoers and students get to see the musicians in a different configuration, but these younger musicians interact with them. That's such an important role for the festival."

Under Pontremoli (2005–'11) and Collins (2011–present), the festival became globally renowned as both pushed themselves to think outside the box, commissioning musicians such as Shorter, Christian McBride and John Clayton to write compositions and develop projects specifically for the festival.

"The festival has a strong footing," Collins said. "Along the way, there have been these different caretakers making the best use of the resources to keep the festival going."

—Charles L. Latimer

# MIDWEST

 This trumpet denotes a corresponding ad in this guide.



Kurt Elling at the Chicago Jazz Festival

## Wichita Jazz Festival

Wichita, Kansas  
March 22-31

For nearly 50 years, this festival has been dedicated to fostering great jazz in Wichita and supporting the next generation of Kansas jazz musicians. This event brings some of the greatest names in jazz to Wichita, and its educational programs give young players the opportunity to work with professional musicians.

**LINEUP:** Bill Frisell Trio featuring Thomas Morgan & Rudy Royston, Donna Tucker & Her Kansas City Band, Rudy Love & The Love Family.  
[wichitajazzfestival.com](http://wichitajazzfestival.com)

## 18th & Vine Jazz and Blues Festival

Kansas City, Missouri  
April 17-19

This festival is a partnership between Metropolitan Community College–Penn Valley and the American Jazz Museum. The three-day festival presents jazz stars, as well as hosting a non-competitive event that provides middle school, high school and college students with an outstanding musical experience. The fest is an opportunity to gain deeper appreciation for Kansas City's rich jazz heritage.

**LINEUP:** See website. Past performers include Meshell Ndegeocello, Lucky Peterson.  
[mcckc.edu/programs/music/penn-valley/jazz-festival/](http://mcckc.edu/programs/music/penn-valley/jazz-festival/)

## Eau Claire Jazz Festival

Eau Claire, Wisconsin  
April 26-27

Since 1967, this festival has maintained a standard of excellence in jazz education and performance. This event showcases local,

national and international artists. Additionally, this is the largest student-run festival in the United States. With a board made of community members to oversee activities, University of Wisconsin–Eau Claire students perform all duties needed to present the festival.

**LINEUP:** Grace Kelly, New York Voices.  
[eauclairejazz.com](http://eauclairejazz.com)

## Ravinia Festival

Highland Park, Illinois  
May–September

Ravinia, North America's oldest music festival, offers a remarkable lineup with more than 140 different events throughout the summer. The outdoor music festival is tucked away just north of Chicago in Highland Park. Fans can enjoy music from the lawn or up close in reserved seats.

**LINEUP:** Ramsey Lewis, Philip Bailey, John Pizzarelli Trio, Ann Hampton Callaway, Tony Bennett, Fred Hersch, Michael Feinstein and Christine Ebersole, Buddy Guy, John Prine, Josh Groban, Bobby McFerrin, Billy Childs Jazz-Chamber Ensemble.  
[ravinia.org](http://ravinia.org)

## Chicago House Music Festival

Chicago, Illinois  
May 23-25

The fourth edition of this event will include a conference for DJs and other industry professionals on May 23 in the Chicago Cultural Center and a "Chicago House Symphony" by the Chicago Jazz Philharmonic with Marshall Jefferson on May 24 in the Jay Pritzker Pavilion.

**LINEUP:** Marshall Jefferson, Tony Humphries, Gene Hunt, Mark Grusane, First Lady.  
[chicagohousemusicfestival.us](http://chicagohousemusicfestival.us)

## Chicago Gospel Music Festival

Chicago, Illinois  
May 31–June 1

This year marks the 34th edition of this event, the largest free, outdoor gospel music festival of its kind. Celebrating the great influence of the music genre born in this city more than 80 years ago, the Chicago Gospel Music Festival features local and national artists—from traditional choirs to contemporary urban styles.

**LINEUP:** See website. Last year's performers included the Canton Spirituals, Israel & New Breed, Wendell Parker.

[chicagogospelmusicfestival.us](http://chicagogospelmusicfestival.us)

## Glenn Miller Jazz Festival

Clarinda, Iowa  
(Dates TBA)

Now in its 44th year, this festival celebrates the life and music of Alton Glenn Miller, America's favorite musical patriot. Guests from all over the country and overseas enjoy a weekend of music, programs and scholarship competitions. In 2018, the festival took place in early June.

**LINEUP:** See website. Last year's performers included Glenn Miller Orchestra, Canadian Brass, Bill Baker's Big Band, Tamana Girls High School Band, Nebraska Brass Band, Adam Swanson, Key of Steam and The GMBS Big Band.

[glennmiller.org/festival-2](http://glennmiller.org/festival-2)

## Chicago Blues Festival

Chicago, Illinois  
June 7-9

With a diverse lineup celebrating the genre's past, present and future, the 36th annual Chicago Blues Festival is a free event that will feature performances by more than 100 national, international and local artists. The programming will celebrate the city's rich blues tradition while shining a spotlight on the genre's contributions to soul, r&b, gospel, rock, hip-hop and more.

**LINEUP:** Bobby Rush, Bettye LaVette, Ruthie Foster, Charlie Musselwhite and Billy Boy Arnold, Jimmy Johnson Blues Band with Rico McFarland, Don Bryant, Mike Welch.

[chicagobluesfestival.us](http://chicagobluesfestival.us)

## Twin Cities Jazz Festival

Saint Paul, Minnesota  
June 20-22

This festival is a non-profit organization with a mission to keep the art form of jazz alive and well in the Twin Cities of Minneapolis/Saint Paul. This free festival is a family-friendly event expecting to attract more than 35,000 people. Festival events are held in and around beautiful Mears Park in the heart of downtown Saint Paul's historic Lowertown neighborhood.

**LINEUP:** James Carter Organ Trio, Grace Kelly, José James, Yogev Shetrit, Nnenna Freelon.

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

## Summer Solstice Jazz Festival

East Lansing, Michigan  
June 21-22

The Summer Solstice Jazz Festival is a celebration featuring nationally recognized and regional jazz artists, as well as youth and community education for residents and visitors of East Lansing. This free two-day event takes place in a lively outdoor setting.

**LINEUP:** See website. Last year's performers included Shadakeon, Benny Benack, The Lansing Symphony Big Band, Ritmo and Deon Yates.  
[eljazzfest.com](http://eljazzfest.com)

## Elkhart Jazz Festival

Elkhart, Indiana  
June 21-23

Since 1988, jazz legends and fans have gathered each summer for a memorable weekend at the Elkhart Jazz Festival. Combining warm, intimate, small-town hospitality with the excitement of big-city jazz, this festival has become an internationally acclaimed event with more than 100 performers.

**LINEUP:** See website. Past performers include Terence Blanchard, Preservation Hall Jazz Band, Ramsey Lewis, Ben Folds.  
[elkhartjazzfestival.com](http://elkhartjazzfestival.com)

## Tri-C JazzFest Cleveland

Cleveland, Ohio  
June 27-29

This summer's 40th anniversary of Tri-C JazzFest Cleveland, presented by Key-Bank—taking place at Playhouse Square—will celebrate Cleveland's contributions to jazz over the decades while presenting a mix of iconic and emerging artists.

**LINEUP:** Christian McBride, John Scofield, Tower of Power, Béla Fleck & The Flecktones (Victor Wooten, Roy "Futureman" Wooten, Howard Levy), Dianne Reeves and the Clayton-Hamilton Jazz Orchestra, Regina Carter, Xavier Davis, Helen Sung, Michela Marino Lerman, Ernie Krivda, Matthew Whitaker, Akiko Tsuruga with Jeff Hamilton & Graham Dechter B-3 Trio, Jamey Haddad's Under One Sun, Jazz Funk Soul (featuring Jeff Lorber, Everette Harp, Paul Jackson Jr.), Sax to the Max (featuring Michael Lington, Vincent Ingala, Paul Taylor).

[tri-cjazzfest.com](http://tri-cjazzfest.com)

## Mississippi Valley Blues Festival

Davenport, Iowa  
July 5-6

Hosted by the Mississippi Valley Blues Society, this festival aims to instill an appreciation of the blues tradition in a new generation of music aficionados with programs like BlueSKool. Held at LeClaire Park along the Mississippi River, the festival offers a relaxed atmosphere with acoustic and electric strains of the blues.

**LINEUP:** See website. Last year's performers included Walter Trout, Jonny Lang.  
[mvbs.org](http://mvbs.org)

## Iowa City Jazz Festival

Iowa City, Iowa  
July 5-7

Fans of this jazz fest flock to beautiful downtown Iowa City for live performances on multiple stages. Programming showcases a variety of well-known national and international jazz musicians, up-and-coming talent and local groups over the course of the weekend. The event features food, artist booths and kids' activities. Admission is free.

**LINEUP:** The Bad Plus, Craig Taborn, Danilo Pérez Trio with Chris Potter, Jane Bunnett and Maqueque, Ryan Keberle's Catharsis,

Thumbscrew, Sasha Berliner, The Nayo Jones Experience, United Jazz Ensemble, North Corridor Jazz All-Stars.  
[summerofthearts.org](http://summerofthearts.org)

## Lowertown Blues & Funk Festival

St. Paul, Minnesota  
July 19-20

The largest free blues festival in the Twin Cities started in 2003 as Famous Dave's BBQ and Blues Festival in Peavey Plaza in Minneapolis. After several changes and re-construction of Peavey Plaza, the festival found itself without a home in 2012, and the

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[www.summeroftheARTS.org](http://www.summeroftheARTS.org)

next year was moved to its present location in Lowertown Neighborhood of St. Paul in beautiful Mears Park. The festival organizers take great pride in working year-round to make this a premier event in the Twin Cities.

**LINEUP:** Jon Cleary, Thomas McCleary, Popa Chubby, Boogie Wonderland, Carolyn Wonderland, Sumo Seven, Joyann Parker, Bridget Kelly Band, Craig Clark Band.  
[lowertownbluesfestival.com](http://lowertownbluesfestival.com)

## Sioux Falls Jazz & Blues Festival

*Sioux Falls, South Dakota*  
July 19-20

The 28th edition of this free festival will feature two stages. Also, there will be food and art vendors, beer and wine gardens, arts and crafts, fireworks and more. Events are held at Yankton Trail Park. Some years, the festival has drawn more than 125,000 attendees over the course of the three days.

**LINEUP:** See website. Past performers include Kenny Wayne Shepherd, The Fray.  
[siouxfallsjazzfest.com](http://siouxfallsjazzfest.com)

## Jazz & Rib Fest

*Columbus, Ohio*  
July 19-21

This highly anticipated summertime tradition offers jazz and rib connoisseurs the finest in music and barbeque. The Scioto Mile provides the perfect location for three days of continuous live music. Admission is free.

**LINEUP:** See website. Last year's performers included Arturo Sandoval with special guest Jane Monheit, Ramsey Lewis, Dav Koz & Friends.  
[hotribscooljazz.org](http://hotribscooljazz.org)

## Prairie Dog Blues Festival

*Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin*  
July 26-27

Held each year on St. Feriole Island—a piece of land in the middle of the Mississippi River nestled between cliffs and hills—this festival offers blues and roots supplemented by New Orleans tunes, Texas boogie, zydeco and gospel. Barbecue, cajun cuisine and other types of food are available from multiple vendors.

**LINEUP:** See website. Past performers include Danielle Nicole, Moreland & Arbuckle, Davina & The Vagabonds, Devon Allman, Girls with Guitars.  
[prairiedogblues.com](http://prairiedogblues.com)

## Iowa Soul & Blues Festival

*Iowa City, Iowa*  
August (Dates TBA)

The Soul & Blues Festival is a reworking of the former Iowa Soul Festival. Like its predecessor, the Soul & Blues Festival celebrates the music, dance, food and art of the African and African-American communities that have influenced the culture of the United States as a whole. This event features local, regional and national artists. Attendees can enjoy soul food, visual art and kids' activities.

**LINEUP:** See website. Last year's performers included The Front Page Band, Damani Phillips Band, Jay and Family Fusion.  
[summerofthearts.org/sota-events/soul-and-blues-fest/](http://summerofthearts.org/sota-events/soul-and-blues-fest/)

## Bix Beiderbecke Memorial Jazz Festival

*Davenport, Iowa*  
Aug. 1-3

Focused mostly on the genre's early period, this festival works to honor the legacy of its namesake. At this point, the festival has spanned more years than the cornetist's recording career. The fact that the name Bix Beiderbecke's (1903-'31) can still bring crowds to the Rhythm City Casino Resort is a testament to the important work he crafted in just a few years of recording.

**LINEUP:** Last year's performers included Fats Waller Legacy Band and Benny Goodman Trio (both featuring Jeff Barnhart, Hal Smith, Dave Bennett), The Fat Babies, Josh Duffee's All-Star Graystone Monarchs, Miss Jubilee & The Humdingers, The Wolverines.  
[bixsociety.org](http://bixsociety.org)

## Lansing JazzFest

*Lansing, Michigan*  
Aug. 2-3

Music lovers from throughout the region gather at Lansing JazzFest. This is a free festival that includes stages with state-of-the-art sound, numerous performing artists, education

music workshops, the Turnaround Lounge beverage tent and a street-fair vendor area.

**LINEUP:** See website. Last year's performers included Cindy Scott and Brian Seeger, Elden Kelly Group, John Douglas.  
[jazzlansing.com](http://jazzlansing.com)

## GRandJazzFest

*Grand Rapids, Michigan*  
Aug. 17-18

Presented by DTE Energy Foundation, GRandJazzFest is West Michigan's only free, weekend-long jazz festival. The eighth edition of this festival will be held at Rosa Parks Circle, a central location in the heart of downtown Grand Rapids. The fest will bring to the stage notable jazz performers as well as up-and-coming artists for diverse audiences.

**LINEUP:** See website. Last year's headliner was Euge Groove.  
[grandjazzfest.org](http://grandjazzfest.org)

## Chicago Jazz Festival

*Chicago, Illinois*  
Aug. 23-Sept. 1

This free festival showcases the greatest jazz artists from Chicago and around the world in performances held across the city. This year's edition has extended festival dates, so fans will have plenty of shows from which to choose in the days leading up to Labor Day weekend. The 41st annual Chicago Jazz Festival is produced by the Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events and programmed by the Jazz Institute of Chicago.

**LINEUP:** See website. Last year's performers included Kurt Elling, Dianne Reeves, Kenny Barron Quintet, Louis Hayes Sextet, Maceo Parker, Arturo O'Farrill Sextet, Nicole Mitchell, Geof Bradfield Nonet, Greg Ward, Amina Claudine Myers Trio.  
[chicagojazzfestival.us](http://chicagojazzfestival.us)

## Detroit Jazz Festival

*Detroit, Michigan*  
Aug. 30-Sept. 2

Presented by Quicken Loans, the 40th edition of this festival will feature nearly 100 performances from legendary artists and emerging game-changers. Stanley Clarke, a Grammy winner and one of the world's most celebrated acoustic and electric bass players, will serve as artist-in-residence.

**LINEUP:** Stanley Clarke, Pat Metheny, Kenny Garrett, Ron Carter, Yellowjackets with Luciana Souza, Chucho Valdés, Soul Rebels.  
[detroitjazzfest.org](http://detroitjazzfest.org)

## Indy Jazz Fest

*Indianapolis, Indiana*  
Sept. 12-21

The 21st edition of this festival celebrates the city's jazz legacy with performances in multiple venues throughout the city. Ticketed and free concerts are included. Tributes to Indy jazz greats, such as Wes Montgomery, Freddie Hubbard, J.J. Johnson and others, are part

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**LINEUP:** See website. Last year's performers included Larry Carlton, Mindi Abair, Anat Cohen, Billy Childs, Sean Jones, Harold López-Nussa, Oscar Michelini, Cory Henry, Tim Warfield, Eddie Bayard, Rayford Griffin, Dave Stryker.

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

## Blues at the Crossroads

*Terre Haute, Indiana*

Sept. 13-14

The 20th edition of this outdoor festival will feature two stages, 16 bands, a beer garden and food vendors.

**LINEUP:** See website. Past performers include Lukas Nelson & Promise of the Real, Samantha Fish, Blind Mississippi Morris.

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

## World Music Festival

*Chicago, Illinois*

Sept. 13-29

The 21st edition of this festival will be presented by the City of Chicago and produced by the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events. Over the decades, this citywide, multi-venue festival has presented more than 650 artists and ensembles from more than 80 countries.

**LINEUP:** See website. Past performers include Seun Kuti and Betsayda Machado.

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

## Michigan BluesFest

*Lansing, Michigan*

Sept. 20-21

This festival will present two days of blues on three stages in the Old Town section of Lansing. In addition to all the music, a wealth of beverage and food options will be available.

**LINEUP:** See website. Last year's performers included the Larry McCray Band, Root Doctor, Circuit Blues Band.

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

## Ouibache Music Festival

*West Lafayette, Indiana*

Sept. 27-28

Ouibache Music Festival is a roots-music festival that will feature local, regional, national and international acts. Free jam sessions and workshops will be held on the grounds. Part of the net proceeds go to support local school music programs and local music organizations.

**LINEUP:** Sam Reider & The Human Hands, Jeremy Kittle, Shiny Penny, Bing Futch, The Half Step Sisters, Black Voices of Inspiration, Scott Greeson and Trouble With Monday, The Big Swing Band.

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

## Hyde Park Jazz Festival

*Chicago, Illinois*

Sept. 28-29

This festival is a collaborative platform dedicated to supporting the presentation and ongoing development of jazz, particularly on

the South Side of Chicago. The event provides opportunities for a diverse community of listeners to engage with the music and its creators. The event's organizers work with artists, partners and networks to celebrate the rich tradition of jazz and to support the development of new work and ideas.

**LINEUP:** See website. Last year's performers included Jason Moran, Christian Scott aTunde Adjuah, Ravi Coltrane, Brandee Younger, Kris Davis, Ben LaMar Gay.

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

## Edgefest

*Ann Arbor, Michigan*

Oct. 16-19

Kerrytown Concert House presents Edgefest, its annual experimental, avant-garde jazz and creative music festival. The theme of the 2019 edition is "OUT West." Programming will highlight improvisation and explore the historical contributions of West Coast artists in the development of avant-garde jazz and new music. A roster of distinguished, groundbreaking composer-performers with their ensembles and collaborators will gather in Ann Arbor for this acclaimed event.

**LINEUP:** Rova Saxophone Quartet, Bobby Bradford/Vinny Golia Quartet, Myra Melford, Wayne Horvitz Trio with Sara Schoenbeck, Kyle Bruckmann, Lisa Mezzacappa Sextet, Oluyemi Thomas Positive Knowledge.

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

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[summerfest.sanjosejazz.org](http://summerfest.sanjosejazz.org)





Dianne Reeves, seen here at the 2012 San Jose Jazz Summer Fest, returns to the festival this year.

# SAN JOSE CELEBRATES MILESTONE

**SAN JOSE JAZZ SUMMER FEST, WHICH IS** celebrating its 30th edition Aug. 9–11 with headliners such as Gregory Porter, Ivan Lins and Pink Martini, has become known for its expansive outdoor main stage. Located at Plaza de Cesar Chavez in downtown San Jose, California, it has a long, rectangular VIP section directly in front of its elevated stage and a general admission area surrounding it.

But the annual summer gathering, originally called the San Jose Jazz Festival, nearly began as an indoor affair. “We were told by the city that we could have the convention center for free,” recalled Bruce Labadie, San Jose Jazz’s artistic and festival director (and one of the organization’s co-founders). “But around June, I started getting very nervous.”

Presenting an indoor festival meant having to rent scores of chairs. “And who is going to want to go inside in the summer?” he asked, rhetorically. The nonprofit group decided “to go for broke and make it free, and put it outside and just hope we sell enough alcoholic beverages to make it pay for itself.”

The inaugural SJJF attracted 10,000 patrons with paid VIPs up front and everyone else enjoying four fusion acts on Saturday and four straight-ahead troupes on Sunday. The fest was a success, and the Salsa Stage was added in 1991. Three more bandstands were added the year after that.

“I wanted to book more artists who weren’t really that well-known and might only attract 150 to 200 people, but were great artists who were critically acclaimed,” Labadie explained

when asked about the impetus to eventually add indoor stages. Larger indoor spots, such as The Hammer Theatre (capacity 532), came on board later.

The festival was able to remain free until 2006: “We charged five dollars a day that first year, and people were upset,” Labadie said. “The next year, we had to go up to 10 dollars, and the sentiment at the gate was, ‘How can you do it for so cheap?’”

With weekend general admission passes as low as \$45 last year, Summer Fest tends to attract families and casual fans, as well as those who can be found in jazz clubs throughout the year.

“I really enjoy the festival,” said vocalist Dianne Reeves, one of this year’s headliners, who also performed on the main stage in 1991, 1997 and 2012. “I remember one time, my mother came up with me, and she had an incredible time.”

When DownBeat told Reeves that a local DJ and MC keep the crowd entertained in between sets and that the audience often breaks into the electric slide en masse, the singer chuckled. “And that’s as it should be,” she remarked. “That’s good, when people come together like that and just have a good time in the name of celebration.”

The festival presented many jazz acts during early phases in their career trajectories, such as trumpeter Chris Botti (before he found worldwide success embracing standards) and the Brad Mehldau Trio (more than a year prior to the release of its breakthrough album *Songs: Art Of The Trio, Volume Three*) in 1997. Four

summers ago, it featured saxophonist Kamasi Washington, before local nonjazz festivals like Outside Lands and Noise Pop booked him.

With that kind of booking, the fest has drawn an international fan base. “Some people I’ve talked to at the festival fly in from different parts of the country—and even the world—to come and enjoy it,” trumpeter John Worley said. “It’s a very friendly festival.” A resident of nearby Palo Alto, Worley has performed at Summer Fest over the years with his own groups, as well as with the likes of saxophonists Jimmy Heath and Kristen Strom, percussionist Pete Escovedo and trombonist Wayne Wallace.

At press time, this year’s roster was set to host talent from eight countries in Asia, Europe and South America, but more than half of its acts are locally sourced. “They’ve never shied away from giving some good spots to local musicians like myself,” Worley said. With concerts on 12 stages and numerous venues slated to participate, the programming will present a variety of styles, including Latin alternative, blues, big bands and brass bands. But Afro-Cuban groups have been one of Summer Fest’s strongest draws.

“I remember walking around downtown as this large festival was going on and being exposed to all this music that was different from the more popular music I was listening to at the time,” said Brendan Rawson, SJZ executive director and a Bay Area native, recalling his early experiences at the fest.

“It struck me and stuck with me that this is how a community celebrates itself with music.”

—Yoshi Kato

## WEST

 This trumpet denotes a corresponding ad in this guide.



### UNC/Greeley Jazz Festival

Greeley, Colorado  
April 25-27

The largest event of its kind in the nation, the UNC/Greeley Jazz Festival brings together internationally recognized artists, jazz lovers, award-winning clinicians and more than 250 college, high school and middle school big bands, combos and jazz vocal groups from across the country. Each year, more than 7,500 participants enjoy main stage concerts, after-hours sessions, noncompetitive daytime performances and educational workshops.

**LINEUP:** Benny Golson, Clayton-Hamilton Jazz Orchestra, Take 6.

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

### Reno Jazz Festival

Reno, Nevada  
April 25-27

Since 1962, this festival has drawn jazz students, instructors, fans and professional performers to Reno to play, listen and learn. And what a range of jazz the festival has featured over the years—from solo performers to large ensembles, from the most straightahead to the furthest reaches of the avant-garde. The festival offers public performances by world-renowned musicians from across North America, Australia, Asia and Europe.

**LINEUP:** Melissa Aldana Quartet, Walter Smith III & The Collective.

[unr.edu/rjf](http://unr.edu/rjf)

### Jazz Party Weekend

McCall, Idaho  
April 26-28

This 20-hour event is presented by the Shore Lodge and the Sun Valley Jazz & Music Festival.

**LINEUP:** Charlie Bertini, Brian Casserly, Katie Cavera, Sherri Lynn Colby, Bobby Durham, Tom Hook, Jim Lawlor, Eddie Metz Jr., Joe Midiri, Terry Myers, Russ Phillips, Jason Wanner, Dexter Williams.

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

### Juneau Jazz & Classics Festival

Juneau, Alaska  
May 3-18

Juneau Jazz & Classics presents world-class artists in ticketed and free performances, educational workshops and clinics, and community outreach events. The festival presents concerts in different locations throughout the community.

**LINEUP:** Julie Coucheron, King Louie & LaRhonda Steele, Volante Winds, Gonzala Bergara Trio, Eliot Fisk, Argus Quartet, Jaimee Paul Jazz Band with Leif Shires, Mark O'Connor Band.

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

### Ballard Jazz Festival

Seattle, Washington  
May 29-June 1

Origin Records' 17-year-old festival has grown along with Seattle's historic Ballard neighborhood. Performances will feature 100 musicians from around the Northwest and beyond, playing Saturday's Jazz Walk at 10 venues. Friday's main-stage concert will be presented in the stunning Nordic Museum.

**LINEUP:** See website. Last year's performers included Clarence Penn & Penn Station, Geoffrey Keezer, Brent Jensen, Marina Albero, Johnaye Kendrick, Dawn Clement, Pete Christlieb, Thomas Marriott, Jasnam Daya Singh, Mark Zaleski, John Stowell, Jeff Baker.

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

### Bellevue Jazz & Blues Festival

Bellevue, Washington  
May 29-June 2

Fans can celebrate the creative power of music at the 12th annual Bellevue Jazz & Blues Festival. More than 40 live shows will be hosted at various venues across the city. The community is invited to explore and share its passion for live jazz and blues at the Eastside's premier showcase for top national and regional artists.

**LINEUP:** See website. Last year's performers included Deva Mahal, Dr. Lonnie Smith, Curtis Stigers & The Full Circle Big Band.

[bellevuedowntown.com/events/jazz-and-blues-festival](http://bellevuedowntown.com/events/jazz-and-blues-festival)

### Newport Beach Jazz Festival

Newport Beach, California  
May 31-June 2

Celebrating its 24th anniversary, this festival hosts world-class musicians and vocalists at the scenic Hyatt Regency Newport Beach. The large lawn area provides space to spread out a blanket, and the venue features an international food court, vendor village, stunning views of the Back Bay and two alternating stages of music.

**LINEUP:** George Benson, Morris Day & The Time, Rick Braun, Najee.

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

### Healdsburg Jazz Festival

Healdsburg, California  
May 31-June 9

The 21st edition of this festival brings a wide array of jazz styles to Sonoma County's wine country, located 60 miles north of the Golden Gate Bridge. This intimate 10-day festival



presents concerts in wineries, theaters, outdoor parks and restaurants.

**LINEUP:** Regina Carter Quintet, Joey DeFrancesco Trio, Dhafer Youssef Quartet, Jack DeJohnette/Ravi Coltrane/Matthew Garrison Trio, Carla Bley Trio with Steve Swallow & Andy Sheppard, Ralph Towner with Paul McCandless, Ethan Iverson & Mark Turner Duo, Harold López-Nussa Quartet, Parlour Game with Jenny Scheinman & Allison Miller, Guy Davis with Marcella Simien.

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

## Greeley Blues Jam

*Greeley, Colorado*

June 7-8

Island Grove Arena hosts 12 hours of family-friendly blues along with food and drink temptations during its Greeley Blues Jam. An evening of pre-festival activities in historic downtown Greeley precedes it. Children can learn about the great American art form at the arena's Blues 101 Stage, where they also can acquire a free harmonica (while supplies last).

**LINEUP:** Shemekia Copeland, Larkin Poe, Mr. Sipp, Cha Wa, Roy Rogers, Watermelon Slim, Kara Grainger, Taylor Scott Band, Mojomamma.

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

## Playboy Jazz Festival

*Los Angeles, California*

June 8-9

For the sixth consecutive year, the Los Angeles Philharmonic Association will present the annual Playboy Jazz Festival at the Hollywood Bowl. There will be an extraordinary and eclectic lineup, and George Lopez will return as master of ceremonies, marking his seventh year of involvement with the festival.

**LINEUP:** Terence Blanchard & The E-Collective, Béla Fleck and The Flecktones, Benny Golson, Sheila E., Patrice Rushen, Terri Lyne Carrington, Ernie Watts, Maceo Parker Big Band, The Cookers, Terrace Martin, Dirty Dozen Brass Band, Donny McCaslin, Harold López-Nussa Quartet, Angélique Kidjo, Boz Scaggs, Kool & The Gang, Sona Jobarteh, Michael Mayo.

[hollywoodbowl.com/playboyjazz](http://hollywoodbowl.com/playboyjazz)

## Russian River Blues Festival

*Guerneville, California*

(Date TBA)

This festival takes place along Johnson's Beach in Guerneville, offering a picturesque venue, only a few miles from more than 100 wineries. In 2018, the festival took place in June.

**LINEUP:** See website. Past performers include Tower of Power, Kenny Wayne Shepherd Band, Beth Hart.

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

## San Francisco Jazz Festival

*San Francisco, California*

June 11-23

The 37th edition of this festival will present more than 40 concerts over 12 days in multiple venues around San Francisco's Hayes Valley neighborhood.

**LINEUP:** Chris Potter, José James, Kenny Garrett, Tia Fuller, Rudresh Mahanthappa, Roy Ayers, Jazzmeia Horn, Anoushka Shankar, Fabian Almazan, Linda May Han Oh, Eric Alexander, William Bell, Mark de Clive-Lowe, Sarah MacKenzie, Bobi Céspedes, Claudia Villela, Sasha Berliner, Hristo Vitchev, Felix Peikli.

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

## Jazz Aspen Snowmass June Experience

*Aspen, Colorado*

June 20-23

This annual gathering provides the ultimate musical, cultural and culinary experience by showcasing four nights of headliners at the majestic Benedict Music Tent in Aspen, as well as JAS Cafe shows at the Aspen Art Museum and The Little Nell.

**LINEUP:** Taj Mahal, Patti Austin, Jacob Collier, Richard Bona, José James,

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Sean Jones at Jazz Port Townsend in Washington

Bria Skonberg, Etienne Charles, Cha Wa, others.  
[jazzaspensnowmass.org/  
 june-experience.html](http://jazzaspensnowmass.org/june-experience.html)

## Vail Jazz Festival

Vail, Colorado  
 July 4-Aug. 22

The 25th annual Vail Jazz Festival will feature dozens of concerts spanning the summer, with a diverse array of performance experiences, ranging from an intimate jazz club setting, to a world-class big stage, to a breathtaking open-air venue in the heart of the Rocky Mountains. On July 18, John Pizzarelli will pay tribute to Nat "King" Cole (1919-'65) to celebrate the centennial of his birth.

**LINEUP:** Marcia Ball, Yamandu Costa, John Pizzarelli, Ann Hampton Callaway, Jon Cleary, Veronica Swift & Emmet Cohen Trio, Catherine Russell, Poncho Sanchez.  
[vailjazz.org](http://vailjazz.org)

## Waterfront Blues Festival

Portland, Oregon  
 July 4-7

This festival is the largest celebration of blues, soul, funk and r&b west of the Mississippi. Fans can enjoy a long weekend filled with amazing performances across four stages, plus food vendors and riverboat cruises.

**LINEUP:** Shemekia Copeland, St. Paul & The Broken Bones, Karl Denson's Tiny Universe, Trombone Shorty & Orleans Avenue, Vintage Trouble, California Honeydrops.  
[waterfrontbluesfest.com](http://waterfrontbluesfest.com)

## Vail Jazz Party

Vail, Colorado  
 Aug. 29-Sept. 2

This event features a full lineup of jazz's finest groups and soloists, joining together in main-stage performances, jam sessions and multimedia tributes to jazz legends. Taking place during Labor Day weekend, the Vail Jazz Party brings together classic jazz and contemporary sounds of the genre with majestic mountain views in beautiful Vail, Colorado.

**LINEUP:** John Clayton, Jeff Clayton, Wycliffe Gordon, Terell Stafford, Lewis Nash, Bill Cun-

liffe, Jeff Hamilton, Ken Peplowski, Nicki Parrott, Byron Stripling, Sinne Eeg, Joseph Thomas Brown.  
[vailjazz.org/vail-jazz-party](http://vailjazz.org/vail-jazz-party)

## New Mexico Jazz Festival

Albuquerque and Santa Fe, New Mexico  
 July 10-28

A bi-city, collaborative effort between Outpost Performance Space and The Lensic Performing Arts Center, the 14th edition of this festival will feature concerts and events at indoor and outdoor venues throughout Albuquerque and Santa Fe by major touring artists, as well as respected New Mexico-based artists playing jazz, r&b, Latin music and other genres.

**LINEUP:** Stanley Clarke, Kenny Barron & Dave Holland, Joey Alexander Trio, Dafnis Prieto's Proverb Trio, Doug Lawrence New Organ Quartet, New Mexico Jazz Latino Orchestra, John Lewis Youth Jazz Project, John Lewis Celebration.  
[newmexicojazzfestival.org](http://newmexicojazzfestival.org)

## Sunset Jazz at Newport

Newport Beach, California  
 July 10-Sept. 18

This unique outdoor mainstream jazz event will celebrate its 10th anniversary of featuring national jazz and cabaret artists performing in the Rose Garden of the Newport Beach Marriott Hotel & Spa. Shows take place during 11 consecutive Wednesday nights. Wine and food are offered in this intimate oceanview setting.

**LINEUP:** See website. Past performers include John Pizzarelli, Byron Stripling, Barbara Morrison, The Four Freshmen, Ken Peplowski, Jeff Hamilton, Emmet Cohen & The Tom Kubis Big Band.  
[sunsetjazzatnewport.com](http://sunsetjazzatnewport.com)

## Fairbanks Summer Arts Festival

Fairbanks, Alaska  
 July 14-28

Fairbanks Summer Arts Festival hosts a two-week study/performance jazz program with specializations in vocal jazz, big band and Afro-Cuban music. Spend time learning from guest artists through workshops and lessons, and then perform alongside them

in concerts throughout the two weeks.

**LINEUP:** Keith Karns, Greta Matassa, Zach Compston, Clipper Anderson, Darin Clendenin.  
[fsaf.org](http://fsaf.org)

## Jazz at the Bowl

Los Angeles, California  
 July 10-Sept. 25

The Hollywood Bowl, home of the L.A. Philharmonic, presents jazz, blues, r&b and hip-hop as part of its concert series. Fans can enjoy world-class music in an iconic setting.

**LINEUP:** Herbie Hancock, R+R=Now, Christian McBride Big Band, The Roots, Tony Bennett, Buddy Guy, Jimmie Vaughan, Charlie Musselwhite, Marcus Miller, Hollywood Bowl Orchestra conducted by Vince Mendoza, Chaka Kahn, Michael McDonald, Ivan Lins, Dianne Reeves, New York Voices, Lee Ritenour, Dave Grusin, Luciana Souza, Paulinho da Costa, Chico Pinheiro, Grégoire Maret, Ben Harper, Neneh Cherry.  
[hollywoodbowl.com](http://hollywoodbowl.com)

## Jazz Port Townsend

Port Townsend, Washington  
 July 21-28

Led by Director John Clayton, Jazz Port Townsend is one of the leading summer jazz festivals in the West, and includes a workshop open to instrumentalists and vocalists who are high school age and up. Located in historic Port Townsend, the festival is set on 434 acres of pristine parkland, beaches and trails on the shores of Puget Sound. The event will feature 60 performances.

**LINEUP:** John Clayton, Gerald Clayton, Anat Cohen, Jeff Hamilton, Terell Stafford, Matt Wilson, Clarence Acox, Obed Calvaire, René Marie, Dawn Clement, Marquis Hill, Gary Smulyan, George Cables, Dan Balmer, Jay Thomas, Chuck Deardorf, Chris Symer, Randy Halberstadt, Chuck Easton.  
[centrum.org](http://centrum.org)

## Port Townsend Acoustic Blues Festival

Port Townsend, Washington  
 July 28-Aug. 4

This event features performances and workshops. The downhome, back-porch vibe of this early acoustic blues program makes this week feel like a family gathering. More than 30 of the country's best acoustic blues musicians will participate, and the artistic director is Jerron "Blind Boy" Paxton.

**LINEUP:** Guy Davis, Phil Wiggins, Jim Kweskin, Jerron Paxton, Junious Brickhouse, John Miller, Terry "Harmonica" Bean, Suzy Thompson, Rick Franklin, Rev. Robert Jones, Jonatvius Willis, Shirley Smith.  
[centrum.org/port-townsend-acoustic-blues-festival-workshop](http://centrum.org/port-townsend-acoustic-blues-festival-workshop)

## San Jose Jazz Summer Fest

San Jose, California  
 Aug. 9-11

The 30th edition of Summer Fest heats up the season, featuring more than 100 performances with a lineup of international



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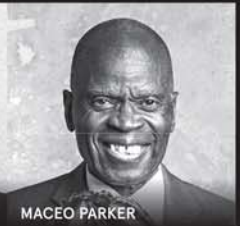
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and TC CARSON

**Terrace Martin**

**Jazz in Pink**

SUN, JUNE 9, 3PM

**Boz Scaggs**

**Maceo Parker: It's All About Love,  
Starring Maceo Parker**  
& featuring THE MACEO PARKER BIG BAND

**The Cookers** featuring BILLY HARPER,  
EDDIE HENDERSON, DONALD HARRISON, DAVID WEISS,  
GEORGE CABLES, CECIL MCBEE, and BILLY HART

**Dirty Dozen Brass Band**

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JERRY MARTINI and featuring PHUNNE STONE

**Donny McCaslin Blow**

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**Harold López-Nussa Quartet** featuring  
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**LINEUP:** Dianne Reeves, Gregory Porter, Pink Martini, Orquesta LA-33, Fred Hersch, Roberta Gambarini, Ivan Lins, Gunhild Carling, Monty Alexander, Charlie Hunter and Lucy Woodward, Veronica Swift with the Emmet Cohen Trio, Elio Villafranca.  
[summerfest.sanjosejazz.org](http://summerfest.sanjosejazz.org)

### Telluride Jazz Festival

*Telluride, Colorado*  
Aug. 9-11

Located in the breathtaking mountain town of Telluride, Colorado, the 42nd Telluride Jazz Festival will celebrate the rich tradition of the jazz art form with a goal of community engagement and student education. A musically charged local culture accompanied by a wide variety of special events round out the weekend celebration.

**LINEUP:** See website. Last year's performers included Bruce Hornsby & The Noisemakers, Irma Thomas, Karl Denson's Tiny Universe, Jaimoe's Jassz Band, BadBadNotGood, Turkuaz.  
[telluridejazz.org](http://telluridejazz.org)

### Montavilla Jazz Festival

*Portland, Oregon*  
Aug. 17-18

This festival is an annual summer event showcasing Portland's thriving jazz scene, highlighting the world-class talents of Portland-based artists actively creating new music and pushing the boundaries of jazz. MJF seeks to enrich the newly revitalized Montavilla neighborhood by showcasing the best of Portland's originally composed, progressive jazz.

**LINEUP:** See website. Last year's performers included Mel Brown with the Gleeful Big Band, Bryn Roberts and Lage Lund, Bobby Torres, Idit Shner, Charlie Porter, Kerry Politzer, Dana Reason, Ian Christensen, Bryan Smith, Sherry Alves with George Colligan.  
[montavillajazzfest.com](http://montavillajazzfest.com)

### Jazz Aspen Snowmass Labor Day Experience

*Snowmass, Colorado*  
Aug. 30-Sept. 1

Held outdoors at Snowmass Town Park during three days, Jazz Aspen Snowmass Labor Day Experience takes place in a mountain resort town where skiers and snowboarders will congregate just a few months later. The main stage is paired with two festival side stages, as well as nightly JAS After Dark music events.

**LINEUP:** Weezer, John Mayer, Sting, Portugal. The Man, Luke Combs, ZZ Ward.  
[jazzaspensnowmass.org/labor-day-experience.html](http://jazzaspensnowmass.org/labor-day-experience.html)

### Russian River Jazz Festival

*Guerneville, California*  
(Dates TBA)

This festival features jazz, funk and r&b on the river at Johnson's Beach in Guerneville. In 2018, the festival took place in early September.

**LINEUP:** See website. Past performers include Stephanie Mills, Richard Elliot, Rick Braun, Norman Brown, Lenny Williams.  
[russianriverfestivals.com](http://russianriverfestivals.com)

### Telluride Blues & Brews Festival

*Telluride, Colorado*  
Sept. 13-15

Renowned as one of the most scenic and intimate music festivals in the country, the 25th Telluride Blues & Brews is located in the world-famous, picturesque mountain town of Telluride. The multi-stage celebration offers an eclectic mix of music paired with some of the best craft breweries in the country.

**LINEUP:** See website. Last year's performers included Robert Plant & The Sensational Space Shifters, Ben Harper and Charlie Musselwhite, Gov't Mule, Booker T, JJ Grey & Mofro, Anders Osborne.  
[tellurideblues.com](http://tellurideblues.com)

### Angel City Jazz Festival

*Los Angeles, California*  
September-October (Dates TBA)

The most adventurous jazz festival in Los Angeles was founded in 2008 by music promoter Rocco Somazzi. In 2009, Cryptogramophone founder Jeff Gauthier became a festival co-producer, and the festival moved to the Ford Amphitheatre in Hollywood. Since then, the festival has grown into a multi-day celebration of cutting-edge jazz at some of the most exciting and prestigious venues in L.A., such as The Ford Theatres, LACMA, REDCAT, Zebulon Café, the Blue Whale, the World Stage, the Bootleg Theatre and the Moss Theatre.

**LINEUP:** See website. Last year's performers included Wadada Leo Smith, Lisa Mezzacappa, Ches Smith/Craig Taborn/Mat Maneri.  
[angelcityjazz.com](http://angelcityjazz.com)

### SLO Jazz Festival

*San Luis Obispo, California*  
Sept. 27-28

This festival presents jazz on multiple stages in Mission Plaza.

**LINEUP:** See website. Past performers include Sergio Mendes, Anton Schwartz.  
[slojazzfest.org](http://slojazzfest.org)

### Monterey Jazz Festival

*Monterey, California*  
Sept. 27-29

The Monterey Jazz Festival is the longest continuously running jazz festival in the world. The 62nd edition will feature about 140 performances, panels, conversations, films, and exhibits take place during two days and three nights on eight stages at the oak-studded Monterey County Fairgrounds. This year's artists-in-residence will be drummer Allison Miller and bassist Derrick Hodge. Bandleader and bassist Christian McBride will be the commission artist and showcase artist.

**LINEUP:** Allison Miller's Boom Tic Boom, Parlour Game with Jenny Scheinman & Allison Miller, Derrick Hodge Band, Christian McBride Big Band,

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**Palm Springs Women's Jazz Festival**  
*Palm Springs, California*  
Oct. 4-5

The festival presents two evenings devoted to a stellar lineup of music and performances by leading female jazz artists, poets, modern dancers and cultural entertainers.

**LINEUP:** See website. Past performers include Claudia Acuña, Kandace Springs, Jazzmeia Horn, Miki Howard. [palmspringswomensjazzfestival.org](http://palmspringswomensjazzfestival.org)

**Oregon Coast Jazz Party**  
*Newport, Oregon*  
Oct. 4-6

Now in its 16th year, the Oregon Coast Jazz Party features multiple sets from renowned jazz stars, nightcap performances and educational events held on the central Oregon

coast. The Newport Performing Arts Center features the state-of-the-art Meyer Constellation acoustic system for spectacular sound.

**LINEUP:** Roxy Coss, Dena DeRose, Holly Hofmann, Larry Koonse, Lewis Nash, Ken Peplowski, Houston Person, Terrell Stafford, Nicki Parrott, Randy Porter, Veronica Swift, Matt Wilson, Martin Wind, Mike Wofford. [oregoncoastjazzparty.org](http://oregoncoastjazzparty.org)

**Silicon Valley Jazz Festival**  
*San Carlos, California*  
Oct. 12-13

The third annual Silicon Valley Jazz Festival will feature nationally known headliners, Silicon Valley-based musicians and local schools in a fun, relaxed setting in the heart of Silicon Valley. This free event also includes master classes and workshops.

**LINEUP:** See website. Past performers include Jon Faddis, Pascal Bokar, Rebecca Dumaine. [svjazzfest.com](http://svjazzfest.com)

**Sun Valley Jazz & Music Festival**  
*Sun Valley, Idaho*  
Oct. 16-20

This festival will present 40 bands at an event nestled in the Sawtooth Mountains. This festival celebrates jazz, swing, big bands, zydeco, blues, boogie-woogie, cabaret, folk, Western swing, doo-wop and other styles. Nine venues will present more than 200

shows, and there will be dance lessons. Fans can enjoy world-class lodging, RV parking, fishing, hiking and mountain biking.

**LINEUP:** Bob Draga & Friends, Black Market Trust, Blue Street Jazz Band, Carolyn Martin Swing Band, Clint Baker's Hot 5, Cocuzzi Trio, Cornet Chop Suey, Gator Nation, Holland-Coots Jazz Quintet, Hot Jazz Collective with Jeff Barnhart & Terry Myers, Sonny Leyland Trio, Midiri Brothers, Pearl Django, Professor Cunningham & His Old School, Side Street Strutters with Meloney Collins, Tom Rigney & Flambeau, U.S. Coast Guard Dixie Band, Yve Evans. [sunvalleyjazz.com](http://sunvalleyjazz.com)

**Earshot Jazz Festival**  
*Seattle, Washington*  
(Dates TBA)

Organizers of this festival believe that jazz is an art form based on invention through creative adaptation. That focus on creative progression always has driven this event's programming philosophy. The mission is to honor refined masters, fiery innovators and bold emerging artists from Seattle and around the world. In 2018, the festival ran from mid-October to early November.

**LINEUP:** See website. Last year's performers included Pat Metheny, Kamasi Washington, David Sanborn, Allison Miller's Boom Tic Boom, Myra Melford. [earshot.org](http://earshot.org)

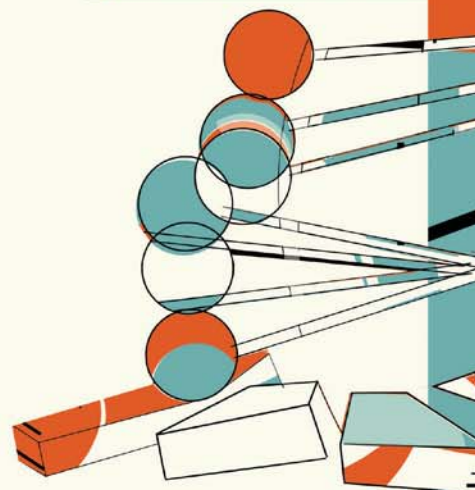


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# CANADA

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TD Kitchener Blues Festival in Ontario

STEFAN JYLES

## Festival International de Musique Actuelle de Victoriaville (FIMAV)

Victoriaville, Quebec  
May 16-19

The 35th edition of FIMAV will include world premieres, world-renowned musicians, visual arts, short films programs and a circuit of sound-art installations in public spaces. FIMAV is a laboratory of contemporary music, jazz, rock, electroacoustic music and free improvisation, a world of audacity and the avant-garde. It is the biggest event of its kind in North America.

**LINEUP:** Vijay Iyer Sextet, Peggy Lee, Barre Phillips, Roscoe Mitchell, Peter Brötzmann, Moor Mother, Joane Héту, Senyawa, Joker.  
[fimav.qc.ca](http://fimav.qc.ca)

## World Guitar Festival (FGMAT)

Rouyn-Noranda, Northern Quebec  
May 25-June 1

The 15th annual Festival des Guitares du Monde en Abitibi-Temiscamingue is dedicated to showcasing top international and local artists playing a wide spectrum of musical styles on stringed instruments. The fest features more than 40 ticketed evening indoor concerts, as well as free outdoor concerts.

**LINEUP:** Past performers include Joe Satriani, John Pizzarelli, Frank Gambale, Jake Shimabukuro, Eric Johnson.  
[fgmat.com](http://fgmat.com)

## Suoni Per Il Popolo

Montreal, Quebec  
June 4-23

This festival takes place in multiple venues: Casa del Popolo, Sala Rossa, La Vitrola and La Sotterenea.

**LINEUP:** Ben LaMar Gay, Charles Gayle, Dave Burrell, Danielle Dahl, Irreversible Entanglements, Saul Williams, King Ayisoba, Hans-Joachim Roedelius, Lea Bertucci, Nadah El Shazly, Lido Pimienta, Spencer Krug, Steve Bates' Black Seas Ensemble.  
[suoniperilpopolo.org](http://suoniperilpopolo.org)

## TD Winnipeg International Jazz Festival

Winnipeg, Manitoba  
June 18-23

Since 1990, this annual festival has been presenting dozens of top-tier touring acts. In addition to ticketed events, there will be more than two dozen free performances on the opening weekend at Old Market Square, as well as free workshops and lunch concerts throughout the fest.

**LINEUP:** Brian Blade & the Fellowship Band, Cécile McLorin Salvant, Joshua Redman Quartet.  
[jazzwinnipeg.com](http://jazzwinnipeg.com)

## SaskTel Saskatchewan Jazz Festival

Saskatoon, Saskatchewan  
June 21-30

For 10 days each summer, the city of Saskatoon bursts into song as the SaskTel Saskatch-

ewan Jazz Festival plays host to hundreds of world-class artists. More than 80,000 music fans devour the sound of jazz, blues, funk, hip-hop, pop and world music each year.

**LINEUP:** Past performers include Ms. Lauryn Hill, The Flaming Lips, The Roots, John Legend.  
[saskjazz.com](http://saskjazz.com)

## TD Toronto Jazz Festival

Toronto, Ontario  
June 21-30

Now in its 33rd year, this is one of the premier jazz festivals in North America, offering 10 jazz-packed days featuring artists from Toronto, across the country and around the world.

**LINEUP:** Cécile McLorin Salvant and Sullivan Fortner, Emilie-Claire Barlow, Tower of Power, Ghost-Note, Rinsethealgorithm, the Buena Vista Social Club's Omara Portuondo—One Last Kiss Tour.  
[torontojazz.com](http://torontojazz.com)

## TD Victoria International JazzFest

Victoria, British Columbia  
June 21-30

The 36th edition of this festival will feature the jazz, blues and world music of more than 350 musicians from around the world in over 80 performances at various venues throughout downtown Victoria.

**LINEUP:** Joey Alexander, Jacob Collier, Raul Midón, Lionel Loueke, Marquis Hill Blackket, Makaya McCraven, Donny McCaslin, Laila Biali, Melissa Aldana, Davina & The Vagabonds, Steve Smith's Groove Blue Organ Trio, Eric Alexander Quartet with Eric Reed, Naughty Professor, Alex Pangman.  
[jazzvictoria.ca](http://jazzvictoria.ca)

## TD Ottawa Jazz Festival

Ottawa, Ontario  
June 21-July 1

The Ottawa International Jazz Festival, the premiere music event to take place in downtown Ottawa, is an essential part of the continuing tradition of bringing jazz to the National Capital Region. Set on a bold path, trailblazing the most dynamic programming and innovations, the festival continues to present the finest musicians from across Canada and around the world in all genres and inspirations of jazz.

**LINEUP:** Norah Jones, The Roots.  
[ottawajazzfestival.com](http://ottawajazzfestival.com)

## TD Vancouver International Jazz Festival

Vancouver, British Columbia  
June 21-July 1

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Salle Wilfrid-Pelletier,  
PdA



**Norah Jones**

June 27

Salle Wilfrid-Pelletier,  
PdA



**Melody Gardot**

June 29

Salle Wilfrid-Pelletier,  
PdA



**Buddy Guy /  
Colin James**

July 6

Salle Wilfrid-Pelletier,  
PdA



**Pink Martini**

July 6 and 7

Maison Symphonique



**George Benson**

Opening act: Kandace Springs

July 1

Salle Wilfrid-Pelletier,  
PdA



**Joshua Redman Quartet  
with Aaron Goldberg,  
Reuben Rogers  
& Gregory Hutchinson**

July 2

Théâtre Maisonneuve,  
PdA



**Rodrigo y Gabriela**

July 3

Maison Symphonique



**Youn Sun Nah**

June 28

Monument-National

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TD Victoria International JazzFest in British Columbia

downtown, and at David Lam Park—this annual festival is not to be missed.

**LINEUP:** The Roots, Makaya McCraven, The Comet is Coming, Melissa Aldana Quartet, Patricia Barber, Beverly Glenn Copeland, Marquis Hill, Donny McCaslin Group, Jonathan Wilson, LSD Trio.  
[coastaljazz.ca](http://coastaljazz.ca)

## Festival International de Jazz de Montreal

*Montreal, Quebec*

June 27–July 6

Ranked as the world's largest jazz festival in the Guinness World Records, the Festival International de Jazz de Montreal has been synonymous with a passion for music for 40 years. Every year for 10 days, the French-speaking metropolis of North America becomes the venue where fans of all types of jazz-related music rub shoulders with aficionados of jazz in its purest form in downtown Montreal, in an area off-limits to car traffic. The 40th edition will include jazz

superstars, as well as icons from other genres.

**LINEUP:** Dianne Reeves, Christian Scott aTunde Adjuah, Norah Jones, Melody Gardot, George Benson, Joshua Redman Quartet, Lou Doillon, Buddy Guy/Colin James, Pink Martini, Peter Frampton, Bobby Bazini, Rodrigo Amarante, Yannick Rieu, Alexandra Stréliniski, Steve Gadd Band, Voivod, First Aid Kit, Omara Portuondo, Youn Sun Nah, Madeleine Peyroux, Rodrigo y Gabriela.  
[montrealjazzfest.com](http://montrealjazzfest.com)

## TD Halifax Jazz Festival

*Halifax, Nova Scotia*

July 9–14

The TD Halifax Jazz Festival, formerly known as the Atlantic Jazz Festival, is the oldest jazz festival and largest summer festival in Atlantic Canada. Designated a Hallmark Event by the Halifax Regional Municipality, the festival attracts up to 55,000 visitors, involves 450 volunteers and employs more than 350 local musicians. The festival also presents master classes and the Creative Music Workshop.

**LINEUP:** See website. Last year's performers included Charlotte Day Wilson, Daniel Caesar, The War On Drugs.  
[halifaxjazzfestival.ca](http://halifaxjazzfestival.ca)

## TD Kitchener Blues Festival

*Kitchener, Ontario*

Aug. 8–11

This event, held in downtown Kitchener, one of the largest blues festivals in Canada. It offers more than 80 international, national and regional acts on six stages with after-shows in clubs and restaurants. There is programming for children and workshops for aspiring musicians.

**LINEUP:** See website. Past performers include Jonny Lang and Rik Emmett.  
[kitchenerbluesfestival.com](http://kitchenerbluesfestival.com)

## Edmonton Blues Festival

*Edmonton, Alberta*

Aug. 23–25

Recipient of a Keeping the Blues Alive Award, this authentic blues festival is held in the sonically superior and party-friendly Heritage Amphitheatre in Edmonton's scenic river valley. This year's fest is the 21st edition.

**LINEUP:** Charlie Musselwhite, Sonny Landreth, Dietra Farr, Lurrie Bell, Lindsay Beaver, Rick Vito, Curtis Salgado, Lil Jimmy Reed.  
[bluesinternationaltd.com](http://bluesinternationaltd.com)

## Pentastic Hot Jazz & Music Festival

*Penticton, British Columbia*

Sept. 6–8

Penticton hosts the 23rd edition of its festival in the beautiful Okanagan Valley, with 11 world-class bands, five venues, free shuttle between venues and a variety of jazz styles including big band, trad, swing, gospel and zydeco.

**LINEUP:** Dave Bennett Quartet, Cornet Chop Suey, Tom Rigney and Flambeau, Bob Draga and Friends, Cocuzzi Coots Courtet, Black Market Trust, Gator Nation, Black Swan Classic Jazz Band with Marilyn Keller, Dave Bennett and the Memphis Speed Kings, Thursday Night Dance Band, Lance Buller (guest artist).  
[pentasticjazz.com](http://pentasticjazz.com)

## Guelph Jazz Festival

*Guelph, Ontario*

Sept. 12–15

This festival is an annual five-day event that features world-class creative improvised music and related arts in a variety of contexts. The festival engages listeners from Guelph and beyond in compelling ways and provides new artistic experiences accessible to all, including a Friday Night Street Music Party in Market Square.

**LINEUP:** See website. Last year's lineup included Darius Jones Quintet, Jean Derome's Somebody Special: Music of Steve Lacy, Steve Swell's Soul Travelers, Augustí Fernández, Satoko Fujii, Amirtha Kidambi & Elder Ones, Nick Fraser Quartet with Tony Malaby.  
[guelphjazzfestival.com](http://guelphjazzfestival.com)

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[www.efglondonjazzfestival.org.uk](http://www.efglondonjazzfestival.org.uk)



**Turkey**  
**Istanbul Jazz Festival**  
 July 2–20  
[www.caz.iksv.org](http://www.caz.iksv.org)



**Belgium**  
**Gent Jazz Festival**  
 June 28–July 9  
[www.gentjazz.com](http://www.gentjazz.com)



**Switzerland**  
**Montreux Jazz Festival**  
 June 28–July 13  
[www.montreuxjazz.com](http://www.montreuxjazz.com)



**France**  
**International Jazz Festival in Juan-les-Pins**  
 July 12–21  
[www.antibesjuanlespins.com](http://www.antibesjuanlespins.com)  
[www.jazzajuan.com](http://www.jazzajuan.com)



**France**  
**Jazz à Vienne**  
 June 28–July 13  
[www.jazzavienne.com](http://www.jazzavienne.com)



**Spain**  
**Festival de Jazz de Vitoria-Gasteiz**  
 July 16–20  
[www.jazzvitoria.com](http://www.jazzvitoria.com)



**Austria**  
**Jazz Fest Wien**  
 June 23–July 10  
[www.viennajazz.org](http://www.viennajazz.org)



**Italy**  
**Umbria Jazz–Perugia**  
 July 12–21  
[www.umbriajazz.com](http://www.umbriajazz.com)



**Norway**  
**Molde International Jazz Festival**  
 July 15–20  
[www.moldejazz.no](http://www.moldejazz.no)



**Finland**  
**Pori Jazz Festival**  
 July 12–20  
[www.porijazz.com](http://www.porijazz.com)



**Holland**  
**North Sea Jazz Festival**  
 July 12–14  
[www.northseajazz.com](http://www.northseajazz.com)



**Canada**  
**Festival International de Jazz de Montréal**  
 June 27–July 6  
[www.montrealjazzfest.com](http://www.montrealjazzfest.com)



**USA**  
**Playboy Jazz Festival**  
 June 8–9  
[www.hollywoodbowl.com/playboyjazz](http://www.hollywoodbowl.com/playboyjazz)



**USA**  
**Monterey Jazz Festival**  
 September 27–29  
[www.montereyjazzfestival.org](http://www.montereyjazzfestival.org)



**USA**  
**Newport Jazz Festival**  
 August 2–4  
[www.newportjazzfest.org](http://www.newportjazzfest.org)



Flutist Nicole Mitchell leads an ensemble at Saalfelden.

MATTHIAS HESCHL



Elliott Sharp (left) and Lukas König

MATTHIAS HESCHL

# SAALFELDEN OFFERS GOOD VIBES

**WHEN IT COMES TO JAZZ FESTIVALS OF AN** adventurous bent, blessed with an idyllic setting, Austria's International Jazzfestival Saalfelden has become something of a standard bearer. Nestled in the Austrian alps, but easily accessible via Salzburg, this adventurous event—celebrating its 40th anniversary Aug. 22–25—long has been considered a thriving component of the European festival scene.

A wondrous convergence of site and sound has been key to the festival's growth. Artistic Director Mario Steidl, in charge for the past 15 years, noted that "most of the stages are inside, but Saalfelden is surrounded by a very beautiful landscape. We are in the middle of the Alps, in the middle of nowhere—but one hour away from the Salzburg airport. But we also have concerts outside and in alpine cabins."

Primarily, concerts take place on a main stage and in the "Shortcuts" series, at the Kunsthaus Nexus venue. For the 40th edition, Steidl said, "We are trying to create new places and spaces to hang out, new stages to explore new music—and also [attract] new audiences."

"We have two Austrian artists-in-residence who will play concerts in an old empty building, which earlier had been a court. We have concerts in bookstores, in a park and up in the mountains. Musicians will hike with the audience. We connect visual art projects in our exhibition hall with improvising musicians. In general, I want to leave more space for spontaneous meetings of musicians to improvise."

This year's program includes Austrian artists-in-residence Lukas König and Maja Osojnik, and performances by Orjazztra Vienna, Norwegian accordionist Frode Haltli and saxophone dynamo Mette Rasmussen, and the triple saxophone-led Swedish-Finnish-German

confab Koma Saxo. The U.S. contingent features a grouping of Sylvie Courvoisier, Ken Vandermark, Nate Wooley and Tom Rainey; the Anna Webber Septet; Joshua Redman's band; and drummer, bandleader and project-maker Jim Black, who is a Saalfelden veteran.

Black first performed there in 2000, with his band AlasNoAxis. He fondly recalled, "It was like no other jazz fest I had ever been to, with a luxury backstage area for musicians and press in a huge tent, a massive stage, and hundreds of concertgoers and campers. I started going there again in 2007 after many years to perform, and have been back every year, whether performing or not, simply because the hang and vibe are so good. I can see my friends and promoters who have watched me grow up on the scene. The music always [includes] something worth discovering."

This year, Black—a U.S. native now based in Berlin—brings "MeoW," a project he described as "an insane collective of free-improv meets messed-up/nice beats."

In broad terms, Saalfelden belongs in a category of jazz festivals willfully embracing avant-garde or genre-pushing sensibilities, such as Jazz em Agosto, Moers, Moldejazz and FIMAV. Black said that each of those festivals "has its own particular quirky lineup and agenda, all of them vital to the scene." But he added that "Saalfelden might be the least commercial—yet it offers the widest possible range of music presented among any of the other festivals."

Musicians from more than 50 countries are part of this year's lineup.

"There are many festivals producing events not only to please their audiences, but especially to showcase young, innovative musicians—and our team thinks along the same lines," said Steidl, an avid collaborator and networker with

other jazz fests in Europe and beyond. "Our future lies in an exchange of ideas with other festival organizers for the benefit of musicians. And that's the reason why we try to be a meeting point for promoters and many people working in the jazz scene."

Steidl's path to his role as director is one that he said might "sound like a kind of an American dream." Drawn to jazz through his uncle's tutelage, he had early exposure to the Saalfelden festival as an avid audience member, and then as a construction worker, helping to build the large tent where the festival was held until 2004. Around that time, Steidl recalled, "The festival took a huge financial nosedive and then they asked me and my wife to run the festival. So, short version: As a music lover, I have made my way from a construction worker of the festival to the artistic director." Besides working for the festival, Steidl runs the Kunsthaus Nexus, a year-round, multidisciplinary venue.

"In general, artists in the Austrian jazz scene are very open-minded," Steidl continued, explaining how the festival is a reliable source for new jazz from Austria, which often is marked by a fresh, inventive spirit. "Rather than looking up to and constantly quoting idols from jazz or classical music, they try to overcome tried-and-true musical styles. But instead of showcasing Austrian musicians, I show them as a part of the program and pay them as I pay all other musicians."

For Steidl, good hospitality is essential: "It is very important to be a great host for all the people visiting our festival, no matter if it's guests or musicians. People should feel that we want to give them a beautiful time with nice people. Through music, we are connecting people, and that's a great and nice task." —Josef Woodard

# EUROPE

 This trumpet denotes a corresponding ad in this guide.



## International Jazz Festival Bern

*Bern, Switzerland*

**March 12–May 18**

International musicians, including world-class performers, appear at more than 200 concerts in the intimate space of Marians Jazzroom for this fest, now in its 44th year.

**LINEUP:** Eddie Palmieri Jazz-Caribbean Sextet, Jane Bunnett and Maquette.

[jazzfestivalbern.ch](http://jazzfestivalbern.ch)

## Menorca International Jazz Festival

*Menorca, Spain*

**March–June**

This festival is held in various towns around the island, including Ciutadella, Mahón, Alaior and Ferreries.

**LINEUP:** Gonzalo Rubalcaba Trio, The Rhythm Treasures, David Pastor Trio, Shai Maestro Trio.

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

## Ulrichsberger Kaleidophon

*Ulrichsberg, Austria*

**April 26–28**

Jazzatelier Ulrichsberg presents the 34th edition of its international festival of jazz, improvised music and contemporary composed music.

**LINEUP:** Manu Mayr, Ava Rade Trio, Dieter Glawischnig & Tanja Feichtmair.

[jazzatelier.at/kal.htm](http://jazzatelier.at/kal.htm)

## Jazz Festival Basel

*Basel, Switzerland*

**April 26–May 20**

International jazz artists will perform in numerous venues around the city, including the Kaserne Basel, Volkshaus Basel and the Bird's Eye Jazz Club.

**LINEUP:** Anat Cohen Tentet, Mark Guiliana Group, The Bad Plus, GoGo Penguin.

[offbeat-concert.ch](http://offbeat-concert.ch)

## Ravenna Jazz

*Ravenna, Italy*

**May 3–12**

The 46th edition of one of Italy's oldest jazz festivals is set to feature an international cast of artists covering several jazz styles.

**LINEUP:** Marc Ribot, Paolo Fresu/Richard Galliano/Jan Lundgren, Mak Lettieri Trio.

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

## MaiJazz

*Stavanger, Norway*

**May 6–11**

Founded in 1989, MaiJazz (aka the Stavanger International Jazz Festival) is the city's oldest festival. It features international stars and local artists.

**LINEUP:** John Scofield, Al Di Meola, Miles Okazaki.

[maijazz.no](http://maijazz.no)

## Trondheim Jazz Festival

*Trondheim, Norway*

**May 8–12**

Launched in 1980 as JazzMazz, this diverse festival focuses on Norwegian and European jazz.

**LINEUP:** Sylvie Courvoisier Trio, Madeleine Peyroux, Tony Allen, Iro Haarla Quintet.

[jazzfest.no](http://jazzfest.no)

## Vicenza Jazz

*Vicenza, Italy*

**May 9–19**

This event will feature about 150 shows, covering many styles, from New Orleans to avant-garde.

**LINEUP:** Chucho Valdés Quartet, Uri Caine Trio, Peter Erskine Quartet, Paolo Fresu, Shai Maestro Trio.

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

## EUROPAfest

*Bucharest, Romania*

**(Dates TBA)**

Jazz, blues and classical music by more than 300 artists from more than 50 countries will take over the Romanian capital.

**LINEUP:** Last year's performers included Mel Hayes, Dan Papirany, Bluesette Duo.

[jmevents.ro](http://jmevents.ro)

## Newbury Spring Festival

*Newbury, England*

**May 11–25**

This event is one of the most popular and successful music festivals in the South of England. During the past 41 years, the festival has grown in size and quality, building up an international reputation.

**LINEUP:** BBC Big Band, Tom Millar Quartet, Misha Mullov-Abbado Group.

[newburyspringfestival.org.uk](http://newburyspringfestival.org.uk)

## Sibiu Jazz Festival

*Sibiu, Transylvania, Romania*

**(Dates TBA)**

The oldest of its kind in the country and one of the oldest jazz festivals worldwide, Sibiu was declared "Romania's Jazz Capital" in the '80s.

In 2018, the festival took place in mid-May.

**LINEUP:** Last year's performers included Accord Vibes Band, Peter Sarosi Azara.

[sibujazz.eu](http://sibujazz.eu)

## INNtöne Jazz Festival

*Diersbach, Austria*

**(Dates TBA)**

This festival fills three stages over three days with groups of various sizes and backgrounds. There's a smattering of blues, but the emphasis is solidly on jazz. In 2018, the festival took place in mid-May.

**LINEUP:** See website. Last year's performers included Sons of Kemet, Kamasi Washington.

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

## Jazzfest Bonn

*Bonn, Germany*

**May 17–31**

Jazzfest Bonn aims to promote young jazz musicians and give them the opportunity to present their music alongside international stars in Beethoven's hometown. Established 2010, this event has grown into a renowned festival and a melting pot for world-class jazz from Germany, Europe and abroad.

**LINEUP:** Jason Moran, Joe Lovano Trio, Yellowjackets, WDR Big Band with Knower, Tower of Power, Julia Hülsmann Oktett, Kyle Eastwood Quintet, Lisa Wulff Quartet, Quasthoff Quartet, Eric Schaefer/Kyoto mon Amour, Riccardo Del Fra, Shake Stew, JO, Jean-Paul Bourelly

Trio, Tobias Hoffmann Trio, Lucia Cadotsch, Of Cabbages And Kings, Miroslav Vitouš & Emil Viklický, Manu Katché, Jazzrausch Bigband, Florian Weber Quartet, Web Web and Joy Denalane, Helge Lien & Knut Hem, Mezzoforte, Monika Roscher Bigband.  
[jazzfest-bonn.de](http://jazzfest-bonn.de)

## Kerava Jazz Festival

*Kerava, Finland*  
May 24-26

This festival has prospered by presenting a lineup of avant-garde, free-jazz and spiritual jazz for the past two decades.

**LINEUP:** Last year's performers included Rob Mazurek, Svenska Kaputt, Régis Huby.  
[keravajazz.fi](http://keravajazz.fi)

## NattJazz

*Bergen, Norway*  
May 24-June 1

NattJazz swings into action in late May every year, and in the course of 10 nights more than 65 concerts are presented.

**LINEUP:** Aaron Parks Little Big, Butcher Brown, Kommode, Neneh Cherry.  
[nattjazz.no](http://nattjazz.no)

## JazzFest Passau

*Passau, Germany*  
June-September (Dates TBA)

Concerts take place "down by the river-side" in Cafe Museum Passau, and outdoor concerts take place in Rathausinnenhof Passau, depending on weather conditions.

**LINEUP:** See website. Last year's performers included Passau Jazz Orchestra, Leo Big Band Passau.  
[cafe-museum.de/jazzfest-passau](http://cafe-museum.de/jazzfest-passau)

## Moers Festival

*Moers, Germany*  
June 7-10

Since 1972, this festival has stood for all forms of nonmainstream music, such as improvisation, contemporary jazz, world, avant-garde, minimal music, sound art, drone and electro.

**LINEUP:** See website. Past performers include Anthony Braxton, Brian Blade.  
[moers-festival.de](http://moers-festival.de)

## Ljubljana Jazz Festival

*Ljubljana, Slovenia*  
June 18-22

Founded in 1960, this festival will feature more than 30 concerts, as well as films, a lecture and two exhibitions.

**LINEUP:** Snarky Puppy, John Zorn, Zorn's Bagatelles Marathon.  
[ljubljanajazz.si](http://ljubljanajazz.si)

## JazzBaltica

*Timmendorfer Strand, Schleswig-Holstein, Germany*  
June 20-23

JazzBaltica takes place right next to the Baltic Sea in northern Germany and even offers concerts at the beach.

**LINEUP:** Nils Landgren, Jakob Bro, Palle Mikkelborg, Julia Hülsmann, Fred Wesley.  
[jazzbaltica.com](http://jazzbaltica.com)

## JazzAscona/The New Orleans Experience

*Ascona, Switzerland*  
June 20-29

Dedicated to jazz and the New Orleans beat, JazzAscona attracts an enthusiastic audience who appreciates the richness of its programming and the backdrop of Lake Maggiore.

**LINEUP:** New Orleans Jazz Orchestra featuring Davell Crawford.  
[jazzascona.ch](http://jazzascona.ch)

## Jazz Fest Wien

*Vienna, Austria*  
June 23-July 10

Shows will take place at 12 landmark venues all over the city of Vienna, including the world-famous Vienna State Opera, area jazz clubs, the Baroque Altes Rathaus and at the plaza in front of the Neo-Gothic City Hall.

**LINEUP:** Jamie Cullum, José James, Bobby McFerrin, Snarky Puppy, Omara Portuondo, Gilberto Gil, Alex Deutsch, Chilly Gonzales, Jamison Ross.  
[viennajazz.org](http://viennajazz.org)

## Gent Jazz Festival

*Ghent, Belgium*  
June 28-July 9

This event is a prestigious jazz festival that was started in 2002 as the Blue Note Festival. Annually, it takes place in the historic courtyard gardens of De Bijloke.

**LINEUP:** Sting, Diana Krall, Gregory Porter, Jamie Cullum, José James, Fred Hersch & WDR Big Band, John Zorn Bagatelles, Masada, Vincent Peirani, Christian Sands Trio, Makaya McCraven, Maisha, Gonzalo Rubalcaba Trio, Melissa Aldana, Craig Taborn, Gyan Riley & Julian Lage, Mary Halverson Quartet, Sylvie Courvoisier & Mark Feldman, John Medeski Trio, Kris Davis, Erik Friedlander & Mike Nicolas.  
[gentjazz.com](http://gentjazz.com)

## Jazz à Vienne

*Vienne, France*  
June 28-July 13

Founded in 1981, this festival has become an institution, attracting novices and enthusiasts alike. With its variety of concerts, stages, exhibitions and art fusion encounters, the festival is eclectic and opulent.

**LINEUP:** See website. Last year's performers included Gregory Porter, Rokia Traoré, Morcheeba.  
[jazzavienne.com](http://jazzavienne.com)

## Montreux Jazz Festival

*Montreux, Switzerland*  
June 28-July 13

This acclaimed festival takes place over two weeks each summer in Switzerland on the shores of Lake Geneva. With ambitious

FREUDE.  
JOY.  
JOIE.  
BONN.

# Jazz fest bonn

May  
17-31  
2019

Lisa Wulff Quartett  
Quasthoff Quartett  
Eric Schaefer –  
Kyoto mon Amour  
Joe Lovano Trio Tapestry  
Riccardo Del Fra –  
Moving People  
Shake Stew  
JO  
Jean-Paul Bourelly Trio  
Tobias Hoffmann Trio  
Lucia Cadotsch – Speak Low  
Of Cabbages And Kings  
Miroslav Vitouš  
& Emil Viklický  
Manu Katché – The Scope  
Jazzrausch Bigband  
Florian Weber Quartett  
WDR Big Band feat. Krower  
Tower of Power  
Julia Hülsmann Oktett  
Yellowjackets  
Kyle Eastwood Quintet  
Web Web  
plus Special Guest  
Joy Denalane  
Helge Lien & Knut Hem  
Jason Moran  
Monika Roscher Bigband  
Mezzoforte

ten years  
jazzfest  
bonn

More Information:  
[www.jazzfest-bonn.de/en](http://www.jazzfest-bonn.de/en)  
Tickets:  
[www.bonnticket.de/jazzfest-bonn](http://www.bonnticket.de/jazzfest-bonn)

programming choices and a warm welcome forged in the hospitality industry, the Montreux Jazz Festival offers a haven of peace to both artists and the public. Time seems to stop as the most improbable encounters become reality.

**LINEUP:** See website. Last year's performers included Chick Corea, Gregory Porter, Jack White, Queens of the Stoneage, Hollywood Vampires, Jamiroquai, Massive Attack, N.E.R.D, Rag'n'Bone Man, Iggy Pop, Jorja Smith, Khalid, Odeza, James Bay. [montreuxjazz.com](http://montreuxjazz.com)

## **Istanbul Jazz Festival**

*Istanbul, Turkey*  
July 2-20

The 26th edition of this festival will present jazz and other genres that have connections to it, including rock and world music. The festival has presented more than 700 concerts since 1994.

**LINEUP:** Last year's performers included Kurt Elling Quintet with Marquis Hill, The Fred Hersch Trio, Nick Cave, Robert Plant, Anat Cohen & Marcello Gonçalves, Avishai Cohen, BADBAD-NOTGOOD, Cross Currents Trio (Dave Holland, Zakir Hussain, Chris Potter), Julian Lage Trio. [caz.iksv.org/en](http://caz.iksv.org/en)

## **Kongsberg Jazz Festival**

*Kongsberg, Norway*  
July 3-6

Designed as an open, inclusive festival, Kongsberg Jazz presents avant-garde and mainstream jazz acts, as well as poetry.

**LINEUP:** Joey DeFrancesco Trio, Jamie Cullum, Cory Henry & The Funk Apostles, Bill Frisell Trio. [kongsbergjazz.no](http://kongsbergjazz.no)

## **Lugano Estival Jazz**

*Mendrisio and Lugano, Switzerland*  
July 4-6

This open-air, free-admission festival presents jazz, world music, rock and other genres.

**LINEUP:** See website. Past performers included Mike Stern, Randy Brecker, Vinicio Capossela. [estivaljazz.ch](http://estivaljazz.ch)

## **Jazz in the Park**

*Cluj-Napoca, Romania*  
July 4-7

Jazz in the Park is a contemporary jazz festival taking place in the Central Park of Cluj-Napoca.

**LINEUP:** See website. Past performers include Richard Bona, Bill Laurance, Dhafer Youssef. [jazzinthepark.ro](http://jazzinthepark.ro)

## **Jazzopen Stuttgart**

*Stuttgart, Germany*  
July 4-14

This festival consistently has presented adventurous music over the decades, as well as mainstream performers.

**LINEUP:** Dee Dee Bridgewater, Bobby McFerrin, Chick Corea, Bob Dylan. [jazzopen.com](http://jazzopen.com)

## **A to Jazz Festival**

*Sofia, Bulgaria*  
July 5-7

This fest takes place in a huge meadow in one of the Sofia's central parks. During three days, 12 acts, children's programming and a jam session are scheduled for a free-admission experience for music fans of all ages.

**LINEUP:** See website. Last year's performers included Cory Henry, Lalah Hathaway. [atojazz.bg](http://atojazz.bg)

## **Love Supreme Jazz Festival**

*East Sussex, England*  
July 5-7

Jazz, funk and soul interweave at this seven-year-old festival, mixing up veterans with up-and-comers in a rich program.

**LINEUP:** Chick Corea, Madeleine Peyroux, Ms. Lauryn Hill, Gladys Knight, Kamaal Williams. [lovesupremefestival.com](http://lovesupremefestival.com)

## **Copenhagen Jazz Festival**

*Copenhagen, Denmark*  
July 5-14

Every summer since 1979, Copenhagen Jazz Festival has taken over the historic city to offer one of Europe's most important international music events, predicated on eminent artistic quality and a sharp focus on new experiments in both Danish and international jazz.

**LINEUP:** See website. Last year's performers included Brad Mehldau, Jeff Beck, Melody Gardot. [jazz.dk](http://jazz.dk)

## **Bohemia JazzFest**

*Prague, Plzen, Liberec, Domazlice, Tabor and Brno, Czech Republic*

July 8-16

Beginning on Prague's historical Old Town Square, this traveling free-admission festival is celebrating its 14th anniversary.

**LINEUP:** João Bosco, Ralph Towner, Jack Broadbent, Wolfgang Muthspiel. [bohemiajazzfest.cz](http://bohemiajazzfest.cz)

## **Roccella Jazz Festival**

*Roccella Jonica, Italy*  
July 11-13; Aug. 16-24

The 39th edition of this festival will feature a new Italian jazz wave edition in July and an August edition that will include performers from Asia.

**LINEUP:** Glenn Ferris Italian Quintet, Mauro Negri Quartet, Dave Liebman & Gaoyang Li. [roccejjazz.org](http://roccejjazz.org)

## **NN North Sea Jazz Festival**

*Rotterdam, The Netherlands*  
July 12-14

Established in 1976, this festival offers three days of jazz, soul, blues, hip-hop and other genres. Programming includes clinics, educational initiatives and the Paul Acket Award for an artist who deserves wider recognition.

**LINEUP:** Joshua Redman, Jamie Cullum, Janelle

Monáe, Chick Corea, Bobby McFerrin, Dafnis Prieto Big Band, Christian Sands Trio, Chucho Valdés, Diana Krall, José James, Burt Bacharach, Chance The Rapper, Makaya McCraven, Stefon Harris & Blackout, Kamasi Washington, Nik Bärtsch's RONIN, Arild Andersen Trio, Chris Potter Quintet, Ambrose Akinmusire, Henry Threadgill's Zooid, Shai Maestro, Joe Jackson, Rag'n'Bone Man, Anita Baker.

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

## **Pori Jazz**

*Pori, Finland*  
July 12-20

The 54th edition of the festival is set to feature a variety of international stars and the best Finnish talent. During the main concerts, music will be played on several different stages, all found in the beautiful and atmospheric Kirjurinluoto Concert Park.

**LINEUP:** Snarky Puppy, Melody Gardot, José James, Louis Cole Big Band, Archie Shepp Quartet, Ron Carter Quartet, Young Gun Silver Fox, Alfa Mist, Nubya Garcia, Angélique Kidjo, Christina Aguilera, Toto, Stray Cats.

[porijazz.fi](http://porijazz.fi)

## **Jazz à Juan**

*Juan-les-Pins, France*  
July 12-21

The 59th edition of this festival once again boasts a spectacular setting. The main open-air arena has tiered seating with the stage backing onto the beautiful bay of Juan-Les-Pins. The concerts start in the cool of the evening, and from the vantage point of the higher seats, the changing light of the setting sun and the boats bobbing in the bay produce an enchanting effect.

**LINEUP:** George Benson, Snarky Puppy, Diana Krall, Steve Gadd Band, Eli Degibri Quartet, Candy Dulfer, Jamiroquai, Electro Deluxe, Omri Mor, Ekram, Ben Harper, King Crimson, Pink Martini featuring Storm Large.

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

## **Umbria Jazz**

*Perugia, Italy*  
July 12-21

First held in 1973 and immediately gratified by its success, Umbria Jazz is a must for all music fans, or anyone ready to spend 10 days in a wonderful town at the core of Italy, enjoying shows, sun, food and warm hospitality. Concerts take place every day from 11 a.m. to 2 a.m. Shows are presented all over the city: in Renaissance theaters, clubs, open-air free shows or at big evening concerts at the 5,000-seat Arena Santa Giuliana.

**LINEUP:** Snarky Puppy, Kamasi Washington, Diana Krall, Michel Camilo, George Benson, Chick Corea, Kenny Barron, Christian McBride, Peter Erskine, Joel Ross, Thom Yorke, Richard Bona, Fred Hersch, Nick Mason, King Crimson, Robben Ford, Lauryn Hill, Fabrizio Bosso, Enrico Rava, Paolo Fresu, Giovanni Guidi, John Patitucci, Danilo Rea, Terence Blanchard, Dianne Reeves, Marquis Hill, Charles Lloyd, Dado Moroni, Uri





# Umbria Jazz 19

Perugia, July 12-21  
[www.umbriajazz.com](http://www.umbriajazz.com)

DIANA KRALL PAOLO CONTE MICHEL CAMILO GEORGE BENSON  
CHICK COREA RICHARD BONA NICK MASON KING CRIMSON SNARKY  
PUPPY KAMASI WASHINGTON THOM YORKE CHRISTIAN McBRIDE LAURYN  
HILL DIANNE REEVES CHARLES LLOYD URI CAINE FRED HERSCH KENNY  
BARRON BENNY GREEN TERENCE BLANCHARD JOHN PATITUCCI MARQUIS  
HILL JOEL ROSS PETER ERSKINE ROBBEN FORD ALEX BRITTI MAX GAZZÉ  
MANU KATCHÉ ENRICO RAVA PAOLO FRESU DADO MORONI  
DANILO REA FABRIZIO BOSSO MAURO OTTOLINI GIOVANNI GUIDI

...plus many more to be announced!





Maria Schneider in a parade at the Molde International Jazz Festival in Norway

Caine with Umbria Jazz Orchestra, Benny Green, Alex Britti, Manu Katché, Allan Harris, Rosario Giuliani, Veronica Swift, Rita Marcotulli, [umbriajazz.com](http://umbriajazz.com)

## Aarhus Jazz Festival

*Aarhus, Denmark*  
July 13-20

This event is a popular annual festival presenting all types of jazz with more than 350 concerts at 40 venues. Most concerts during the day are free of charge.

**LINEUP:** Gregory Porter, Marcus Miller, Michala Petri/Daniel Murray/Marilyn Mazur.  
[jazzfest.dk](http://jazzfest.dk)

## Molde International Jazz Festival

*Molde, Norway*  
July 15-20

Established in 1961, this event, commonly known as Moldejazz, is the second-oldest continuously running jazz festival in the world. Located in Molde, right by the fjord and with a view of 222 mountaintops, the festival offers stunningly beautiful surroundings. For six days, the best of Norwegian and international jazz is presented at about 120 concerts.

**LINEUP:** Joshua Redman, Gregory Porter, Melody Gardot, Marcus Miller, Take 6, Henry Threadgill Zooid, Blood, Sweat & Tears, Bill Frisell & Thomas Morgan Duo with artist-in-residence Gard Nilssen, Rymden, Louis Cole Big Band, Red Baraat, Fred Hersh Trio, Goldings/Bernstein/Stewart, Daniel Herskedal's Voyage, Ambrose Akinmusire's Origami Harvest.  
[moldejazz.no](http://moldejazz.no)

## Festival de Jazz de Vitoria-Gasteiz

*Vitoria-Gasteiz, Spain*  
July 16-20

For more than four decades, this festival has presented world-class jazz. Organizers of this event strive to present unique collaborations.

**LINEUP:** Last year's performers included Cory Henry, Hudson, Mingus Big Band,

Joel Frahm, Avishai Cohen (trumpet), Camila Meza, Seamus Blake, Carla Bruni, Leanne Faine & Favor, Kool & The Gang.  
[jazzvitoria.com](http://jazzvitoria.com)

## Nice Jazz Festival

*Nice, France*  
July 16-20

A mainstay of the French Riviera jazz scene for more than 70 years, this city-centered festival presents performers on two stages at once (there are a total of six). When it was established in 1948, the festival's aim was to shake up tradition. That goal persists.

**LINEUP:** Last year's performers included Gregory Porter, Joshua Redman, Gary Clark Jr.  
[nicejazzfestival.fr](http://nicejazzfestival.fr)

## Hull Jazz Festival

*Hull, England*  
July 19-20

The two-day lineup celebrates the leading ladies of vintage jazz, the Hot Club swing of Reinhardt and Grappelli, the spiritual jazz of Alice Coltrane and the next generation of U.K. talent.

**LINEUP:** John Etheridge's Sweet Chorus, Alina Bzhezhinska Inspiration Quartet.  
[night.org/festival/HullJazzFestivalSummer](http://night.org/festival/HullJazzFestivalSummer)

## Langnau Jazz Nights

*Langnau, Bern, Switzerland*  
July 23-27

During the past 28 years, the festival has featured highly acclaimed lineups. With its incorporated jazz workshop, it is a popular meeting point for musicians from all over Europe and the United States.

**LINEUP:** Charles Lloyd, Theo Croker.  
[jazz-nights.ch](http://jazz-nights.ch)

## Heineken Jazzaldia

*San Sebastian, Spain*  
July 24-28

This is the longest running jazz festival in Spain and also one of the oldest

in Europe. Genres represented include jazz, blues, soul and world music.

**LINEUP:** Diana Krall, John Zorn's Bagatelles Marathon, Joshua Redman, Neneh Cherry.  
[heinekenjazzaldia.eus](http://heinekenjazzaldia.eus)

## Llandudno Jazz Festival

*Conwy, Wales*  
July 26-28

This festival in a seaside resort town in North Wales takes place on Bodafon Fields and highlights key jazz figures on the U.K. scene.

**LINEUP:** Zoe Rahman, Ian Shaw with Dave Newton Trio, Tony Kofi.  
[llandudnojazzfestival.com](http://llandudnojazzfestival.com)

## Ystad Sweden Jazz Festival

*Ystad, Sweden*  
July 31-Aug. 5

This festival is a five-day event that presents 35 concerts, a jazz parade, interviews and jam sessions. Historical venues provide an intimate concert experience for both artists and audience.

**LINEUP:** Benny Golson, Omar Sosa with NDR Big Band, Jakob Bro, Nicole Johantgen.  
[ystadjazz.se](http://ystadjazz.se)

## Jazz em Agosto

*Lisbon, Portugal*  
Aug. 1-11

A festival held by Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation since 1984 and distinguished by its main venue—an amphitheater located in the foundation gardens—is a well-regarded event devoted to experimental jazz and creative music.

**LINEUP:** See website. Last year's performers included John Zorn, Masada, Marc Ribot, Mary Halvorson, Kris Davis, John Medeski.  
[jazzemagosto.pt](http://jazzemagosto.pt)

## Gouvy Jazz & Blues Festival

*Gouvy, Belgium*  
Aug. 2-4

This festival, held near the Belgian border with Luxembourg, is celebrating its 40th anniversary. The tagline is "Gouvy is groovy."

**LINEUP:** See website. Past performers include Chico Freeman, Benny Golson.  
[madelonne.be/festival](http://madelonne.be/festival)

## Jazz Middelheim

*Antwerp, Belgium*  
(Dates TBA)

Contemporary jazz, pop and rock are the mainstays of this festival. There also will be workshops and an artist-in-residence. In 2018, the festival took place in August.

**LINEUP:** See website. Past performers include Avishai Cohen, Ahmad Jamal, Archie Shepp.  
[jazzmiddelheim.be](http://jazzmiddelheim.be)

## Nisville Jazz Festival

*Nis, Serbia*  
Aug. 8-11

A polygonal fortress in Serbia's third-largest city will be taken over by Art To Go Jazz

during the upcoming Nisville Jazz Festival. Jazz, blues and soul will dominate stages.

**LINEUP:** Cuong Vu Trio, Jamal Thomas, Seun Kuti & Egypt 80, Tihomir Pop Asanovic.  
[nisville.com](http://nisville.com)

## Oslo Jazz Festival

*Oslo, Norway*  
Aug. 11-17

International jazz stars, a festival poet, pop-up concerts, film screenings and local performers are on the menu for this jazz festival in Norway's capital city.

**LINEUP:** Kamasi Washington, Ketil Bjørnstad, Hanna Paulsberg & Magnus Broo.  
[oslojazz.com](http://oslojazz.com)

## We Out Here

*Abbots Ripton, Cambridgeshire, England*  
Aug. 15-18

Created in the wake of the 2018 film and compilation *We Out Here*, Gilles Peterson helps curate a festival that ranges from jazz and soul to post-punk and dancehall.

**LINEUP:** The Comet Is Coming, Gary Bartz, Nubya Garcia, A Certain Ratio, Gilles Peterson.  
[weoutherefestival.com](http://weoutherefestival.com)

## International Jazzfestival Saalfelden

*Saalfelden, Salzburg, Austria*  
Aug. 22-25

This festival is celebrating its 40th anniversary and looks back over an impressive history while exploring new avenues for the future. The festival started out in a horse stable before moving some years later to a tented village on the edge of Saalfelden, and finally, following a reorganization, to the center of Saalfelden, where the main stage and heart of the festival have been located ever since. There will be more than 50 concerts this year.

**LINEUP:** Manu Mayr, Jim Black, Joshua Redman, Ron Miles, Dave King, Scott Colley, Mette Rasmussen, Sylvie Courvoisier.  
[jazzsaalfelden.com](http://jazzsaalfelden.com)

## Koktebel Jazz Party

*Koktebel, Russia*  
Aug. 23-25

This annual international jazz festival is set on the shores of the Black Sea.

**LINEUP:** See website. Past performers include Tom Harrell, Jimmy Cobb, Igor Butman.  
[en.koktebel-jazz.ru](http://en.koktebel-jazz.ru)

## Jazz Festival Willisau

*Willisau, Switzerland*  
Aug. 28-Sept. 1

Contemporary European jazz, pop and folk are the key ingredients in this festival, held in a medieval town in the canton of Lucerne.

**LINEUP:** See website. Last year's performers included James Blood Ulmer, Jaimie Branch.  
[jazzfestivalwillisau.ch](http://jazzfestivalwillisau.ch)

## Scarborough Jazz Festival

*Scarborough, England*  
Sept. 20-22

The 17th edition of this festival will take place at Scarborough Spa and offers three days of jazz.

**LINEUP:** Alan Barnes, Jeremy Sassoon's "Ray Charles Project," Jim Mullen's "Volunteers."  
[scarboroughjazzfestival.co.uk](http://scarboroughjazzfestival.co.uk)

## International Festival of Contemporary Music

*Venice, Italy*  
Sept. 27-Oct. 6

This year, the activities of the Biennale College-Musica will be part of the program: An international call for applications was launched in order to support the production of a maximum of four micro-budget chamber theater works.

**LINEUP:** See website. Last year's performers included Keith Jarrett, Mivos Quartet.  
[labiennale.org/en/music/2019](http://labiennale.org/en/music/2019)

## Baloise Session

*Basel, Switzerland*  
Oct. 12-31

For the past 34 years, major stars have come to this popular, boutique Swiss music festival. The diverse lineup offers jazz, soul, funk, blues, world music and many other genres.

**LINEUP:** See website. Past performers include Trombone Shorty, Gregory Porter, Stacey Kent, Marcus Miller, Norah Jones.  
[baloisession.ch](http://baloisession.ch)

## Akbank Jazz Festival

*Istanbul, Turkey*  
Oct. 17-27

This festival was launched in 1991 with concerts organized in Istanbul. Not only

hosting the prominent jazz figures from across the world, but also paving the way for promising next-generation artists, the festival now has made itself into a versatile organization by adding panels, workshops, film screenings, concerts and social responsibility projects.

**LINEUP:** See website. Last year's performers included The Bad Plus, Jamie Cullum, Till Brönner, Avishai Cohen Quartet, The Comet Is Coming, Nubya Garcia.  
[akbankcaz.com](http://akbankcaz.com)

## Jazzfest Berlin

*Berlin, Germany*  
Oct. 31-Nov. 3

Founded in 1964, Jazzfest Berlin increasingly has presented artists from all around the globe, with a growing emphasis on contemporary European and American avant-garde jazz.

**LINEUP:** See website. Last year's performers included Bill Frisell, Mary Halvorson.  
[berlinerfestspiele.de/en/](http://berlinerfestspiele.de/en/)

## EFG London Jazz Festival

*London, England*  
Nov. 15-24

This festival is the U.K.'s largest celebration of the genre, delivering an electric 10-day mix of music. The festival continues to celebrate the diversity of jazz, from the brightest rising stars to world-renowned leaders of the genre.

**LINEUP:** See website. Last year's performers included Bobby McFerrin, Stanley Clarke, Alfredo Rodriguez, Bugge Wesseltoft, Dave Douglas, Jaimie Branch, Abdullah Ibrahim, Ethan Iverson, Makaya McCraven, Nubya Garcia, Archie Shepp, Jeff Goldblum, Punch Brothers, Melody Gardot.  
[efglondonjazzfestival.org.uk](http://efglondonjazzfestival.org.uk)

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# OTHER INTERNATIONAL

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## Saint Lucia Jazz & Arts Festival

*Saint Lucia, Caribbean*  
May 4-12

The event will feature the finest names in modern jazz performing in intimate venues and public settings along the length and breadth of Saint Lucia's breathtaking landscape.

**LINEUP:** Gregory Porter, Dianne Reeves, Christian McBride, Ledisi, Etienne Charles, New Orleans Jazz Orchestra, Adonis Rose, Nubya Garcia.  
[stlucijazz.org](http://stlucijazz.org)

## Melbourne International Jazz Festival

*Melbourne, Australia*  
May 31-June 9

The 22nd edition of this festival will feature more than 100 shows across 30 venues. In addition to ticketed concerts and club performances, MIJF's program includes free events and educational workshops.

**LINEUP:** Herbie Hancock, Laura Mvula & José James, Lisa Fischer, Billy Childs, Ambrose Akinmusire, Linda May Han Oh.  
[melbournejazz.com](http://melbournejazz.com)

## Jamaica Ocho Rios International Jazz Festival

*Ocho Rios, Port Antonio & Kingston, Jamaica*  
(Dates TBA)

This festival will feature the greatest names in Jamaican jazz, as well as the very best of international fare.

**LINEUP:** See website. Last year's performers included The Jamaica Big Band conducted by Marjorie Whyllie, Freddy Loco, June Thompson.  
[ochoriosjazzja.com](http://ochoriosjazzja.com)

## Rio das Ostras Jazz & Blues Festival

*Rio das Ostras, Brazil*  
June 20-23

During the 14th edition of this festival, a selection of the best musicians and performers of our time will play on four outdoor stages around the beach and the beautiful

landscapes of the Rio das Ostras city.

**LINEUP:** Hamilton de Holanda & Armandinho Macedo, Lucky Peterson, The Jig, Bixiga 70.  
[azulproducoes.com.br](http://azulproducoes.com.br)

## Devonport Jazz

*Devonport, Tasmania, Australia*  
July 25-28

Celebrating 18 years, Devonport Jazz comes of age as it features a host of Australian artists, showcasing jazz and blues in a series of special events, dances, dinners and concerts.

**LINEUP:** See website.  
[devonportjazz.com](http://devonportjazz.com)

## Savassi Festival

*Belo Horizonte and Nova Lima, Minas Gerais, Brazil*  
Aug. 1-11

The Savassi Festival has developed into a matrix of musical activities that includes recordings, artistic residencies and collaborations, exhibitions, competitions and a host of live concerts.

**LINEUP:** Antônio Adolfo, Sérgio Santos, Davi Fonseca, Marcus Paiva, Deangelo Silva.  
[savassifestival.com.br](http://savassifestival.com.br)

## Red Sea Jazz Festival

*Eilat, Israel*  
Aug. 25-27

The 33rd edition of this festival will feature multiple concerts every evening, as well as clinics with guest artists and nightly jam sessions.

**LINEUP:** See website. Past performers include Fred Hersch, Nicholas Payton, Gerald Clayton.  
[en.redseajazz.co.il](http://en.redseajazz.co.il)

## Curaçao North Sea Jazz Festival

*Willemstad, Curaçao*  
Aug. 29-31

Since its founding in 2010, this festival has grown to be one of the biggest music events in the Caribbean.

**LINEUP:** See website. Past performers include Bruno Mars, Gregory Porter, Janelle Monáe.  
[curacaonorthseajazz.com](http://curacaonorthseajazz.com)

## KL International Jazz & Arts Festival

*Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia*  
September (Dates TBA)

The biggest jazz festival in Kuala Lumpur presents concerts in clubs, a theater at the University Malaya and other venues.

**LINEUP:** See website. Past performers include Eric Wyatt, Benito Gonzalez, Ahmad Jamal, David Sanborn, Rudresh Mahanthappa.  
[klinternationaljazz.com](http://klinternationaljazz.com)

## Caribbean Sea Jazz Festival

*Aruba*  
Sept. 20-21

Located along the Caribbean Sea in Aruba, the CSJF will welcome music lovers for the 13th time with its scenic sunsets and soothing sea breeze.

**LINEUP:** See website. Past performers include Marcus Miller, Roy Hargrove, Maceo Parker, George Benson, Mike Stern.  
[caribbeanseajazz.com](http://caribbeanseajazz.com)

## Jarasum International Jazz Festival

*Gapyeong, South Korea*  
(Dates TBA)

This festival typically features 15 venues and a special focus on musicians from a designated partner country. In 2018, the festival was held in mid-October.

**LINEUP:** See website. Last year's performers included Carla Bley Trio, Grace Kelly Brooklyn Band, Marc Ribot, The Blind Boys of Alabama.  
[jarasumjazz.com](http://jarasumjazz.com)

## Jazzmandu

*Kathmandu, Nepal*  
Oct. 17-23

Now entering its 17th year, Jazzmandu (aka the Kathmandu Jazz Festival) is renowned as a hidden gem of the international festival scene.

**LINEUP:** See website. Past performers include Ari Hoenig, Trilok Gurtu, Claudia Quintet.  
[jazzmandu.com](http://jazzmandu.com)

## Dominican Republic Jazz Festival

*Punta Canta, Santo Domingo, Santiago, Puerto Plata and Cabarete, Dominican Republic*  
Oct. 31-Nov. 3

The Dominican Republic Jazz festival is one of the biggest cultural events in the Caribbean. All the concerts are free and take place at several locations on the north shore of the island.

**LINEUP:** See website. Past performers include Anat Cohen, Esperanza Spalding, Trio de Paz.  
[drjazzfestival.com](http://drjazzfestival.com)

Thanks to all jazz lovers,  
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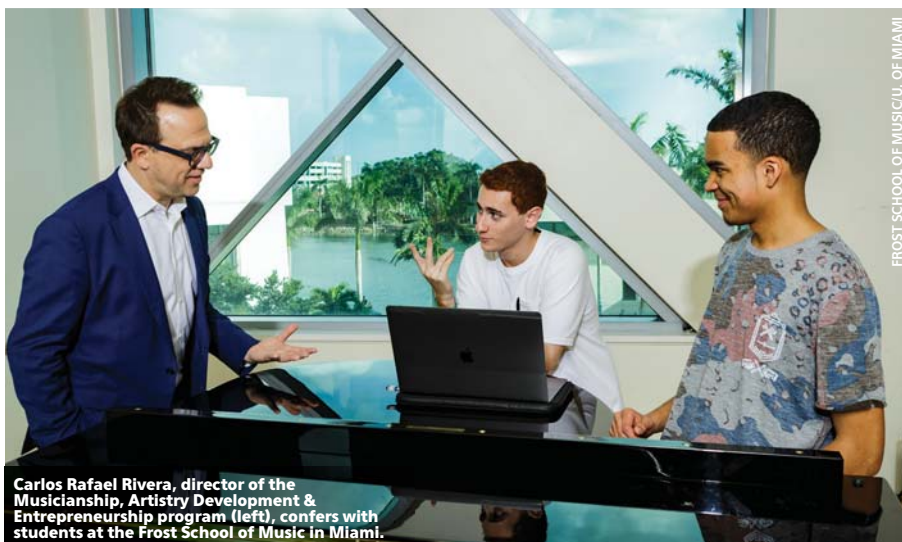
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Carlos Rafael Rivera, director of the Musicianship, Artistry Development & Entrepreneurship program (left), confers with students at the Frost School of Music in Miami.

## At Frost School of Music, Jazz Stars Mentor Students

**THE FROST SCHOOL OF MUSIC AT** University of Miami sports a dazzling array of talent in its faculty ranks. MacArthur Fellow Dafnis Prieto, a drummer and bandleader, is a professor there, as are trumpeter and bandleader John Daversa, and pianist Gonzalo Rubalcaba, a distinguished artist-in-residence.

Prieto and Daversa both recently won Grammy awards: Prieto's big band album, *Back To The Sunset* (Dafnison Music), won in the category Best Latin Jazz Album, and Daversa's 2018 *American Dreamers* (BFM Jazz), which was inspired by debates about U.S. immigration policy toward DACA immigrants, was awarded the Grammy for Best Large Jazz Ensemble Album. Daversa also took home honors in Best Improvised Jazz Solo and Best Arrangement, Instrumental or A Cappella categories. Many of the 53 musicians on the *Dreamers* album are students at UM.

Prieto, who has taught percussion and composition at Frost since 2015, appreciates the flexibility inherent in the Frost "method," explaining that he has "the freedom to teach my students without limiting my own individual perspective," gained from years of experience. "And the students are very humble here, something that can be rare in universities," he added.

Dean Shelly Berg is himself a well-known force in jazz and classical music, and as music director of the annual Jazz Cruise out of Fort Lauderdale, he recently got to see two Frost alumni in the spotlight: vocalist Veronica Swift and pianist Emmet Cohn. "It's great to see that even our recent alums have such great careers," Berg said.

Frost's Henry Mancini Institute is a proving ground for jazz and classical students, individuals previously having worked in TV, recorded with George Benson and shared the stage with Quincy Jones and John Williams. Frost also recently added another luminary to its ranks: Composer and big band leader Maria Schneider now is artistic director of the Henry Mancini Institute Orchestra.

Students in the Frost Concert Jazz Band also had the opportunity to record *Concerto For Guitar And Jazz Orchestra*, a recent album that features guitarist Adam Rogers, playing compositions by Justin Morell. Performed by the student ensemble and directed by Daversa, the pieces blend elements of classical concertos with jazz.

"We learn to play and sing all day long, but there's a whole set of professional skills, like marketing, technology, business, pedagogy," Berg said, referring to other areas in which faculty can mentor students.

Frost's Musicianship, Artistry Development & Entrepreneurship program gives students training in performing, writing, arranging, orchestration, recording, musical direction, marketing and promotion, copyright management and administration, as well as the ability to write basic agreements and licenses.

"We decided to embed [music profession topics] in all the classes," Berg explained. "Each professor takes one of these things to put in the syllabus, so that every class a student takes advances a holistic career. They are already great artists when they get here; we want them to leave with a full palette of professional skills."

—John Radanovich



Greg Ward

**IU Appointment:** Beginning Aug. 1, saxophonist Greg Ward will be assistant professor of music in jazz studies at Indiana University's Jacobs School of Music. Recently, the bandleader, who's worked with Tortoise, William Parker and Linda May Han Oh, among others, issued *Stomping Off From Greenwood*. "I am incredibly excited to join the faculty," Ward said in a press release. "I look forward to being an active member of this music community and to working with all of the extremely talented students this fall."

[music.indiana.edu](http://music.indiana.edu)

**Lead Brass:** Tanya Darby is now chair of the brass department at Berklee College of Music. Previously, she worked as assistant professor of jazz and lead trumpet at the University of North Texas. In addition to her work in education, the trumpeter has performed with the Roy Hargrove Big Band, DIVA Jazz Orchestra and the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra. "Tanya Darby's impressive background in performance and education will contribute tremendously to the goals and initiatives of the Brass Department at Berklee," said Ron Savage, dean of the professional performance division, in a press release.

[berklee.edu](http://berklee.edu)

**Rhythm Research:** Set for April 11–14, the sixth Rhythm Changes Conference, this year dubbed "Jazz Journeys," is planned for the University of Music and Performing Arts Graz in Austria. Keynote speakers are professors Jason Stanyek, of the University of Oxford, and Marie Buscatto, of the University of Paris 1 Panthéon Sorbonne. The conference's closing address will be presented by Prof. Alan Stanbridge, of the University of Toronto.

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

**Warm Welcome:** A free April 1 performance of the USC Thornton Jazz Orchestra and the Yellowjackets will help celebrate drummer Will Kennedy's addition to the school's faculty. Kennedy, who's worked with the Yellowjackets since the 1980s, is the school's adjunct instructor of popular music drumset performance.

[music.usc.edu](http://music.usc.edu)



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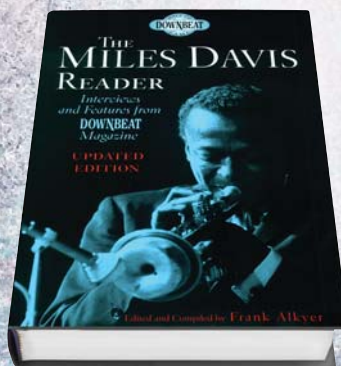
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<b>Akbank Jazz Festival</b> .....133 akbanksanat.com	<b>Healdsburg Jazz Festival</b> ..... 113 healdsburgjazzfestival.org	<b>Pittsburgh Jazz Festival</b> .....94-95 pittsburghjazzfest.org
<b>Amelia Island Jazz Festival</b> ..... 102 ameliaislandjazzfestival.com	<b>I.J.F.O.</b> ..... 124 ijfo.org	<b>Playboy Jazz Festival</b> ..... 115 hollywoodbowl.com
<b>Antigua</b> .....2 antiguawinds.com	<b>Iowa City Jazz Festival</b> ..... 107 summerofhearts.org	<b>Ravinia</b> ..... 79 ravinia.org
<b>Arbors Records</b> ..... 34 arborsjazz.com	<b>Jamey Aebersold</b> .....24 summerjazzworkshops.com	<b>RBH Drums</b> ..... 22 rbhdrumusa.com
<b>ArkivJazz</b> ..... 19 arkivjazz.com	<b>Jazz at Lincoln Center—Blue Engine Records</b> ..... 17 blueenginerecords.org	<b>Realist</b> ..... 8 realistacoustic.com
<b>B.H. Hopper Management Ltd.</b> .....25 sarahmckenzie.info	<b>Jazz in June</b> .....92 jazzinjuncamden.com	<b>Reed Geek</b> ..... 73 reedgeek.com
<b>Bari</b> .....59 bariwoodwind.com	<b>Jazzfest Bonn</b> .....127 jazzfest-bonn.de	<b>Rochester Jazz Festival</b> ..... 82 rochesterjazz.com
<b>Beechler</b> .....78 beechler.com	<b>JEN—Jazz Education Network</b> .... 135 jazzednet.org	<b>Rockport Jazz Festival</b> ..... 92 rockportmusic.org
<b>Blue Note Records</b> ..... 5 bluenote.com	<b>JJ Babbitt</b> .....9 jjbabbitt.com	<b>Rovner</b> ..... 73 rovnerproducts.com
<b>Burlington Discover Jazz Festival</b> ..... 97 discoverjazz.com	<b>JodyJazz</b> ..... 140 jodyjazz.com	<b>Saalfelden Jazz Festival</b> ..... 131 jazzsaalfelden.com
<b>Cannonball Music</b> ..... 7 cannonballmusic.com	<b>Légère</b> ..... 33 legere.com	<b>Sam Ash</b> ..... 16 samash.com
<b>Casio</b> ..... 27 casiomusicgear.com	<b>Linus Entertainment</b> ..... 10 linusentertainment.com	<b>San Francisco Jazz Festival</b> ..... 119 sfjazz.org
<b>Centrum’s Jazz Port Townsend</b> ... 118 centrum.org/jazz	<b>Litchfield Jazz Festival</b> ..... 90 litchfieldjazzfest.org	<b>San Jose Jazz Summer Fest</b> .....110 summerfest.sanjosejazz.org
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<b>DownBeat</b> .....4, 64 downbeat.com	<b>Music Dispatch</b> ..... 12 musicdispatch.com	<b>Umbria Jazz</b> ..... 129 umbriajazz.com
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<b>Eastman Winds</b> ..... 35 eastmanwinds.com	<b>Newport Jazz Festival</b> .....89, 91, 93 newportjazz.org	<b>USA Horn</b> ..... 78 usahorn.net
<b>ECM Records</b> ..... 48 ecmrecords.com	<b>North Coast Brewing</b> .....4 northcoastbrewing.com/jazz	<b>Vail Jazz Festival</b> .....116 vailjazz.org
<b>Edgifest</b> ..... 108 edgifestannarbor.com		<b>Vancouver Jazz Festival</b> ..... 123 coastaljazz.ca
		<b>Vandoren</b> ..... 3 dansr.com
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## Sullivan Fortner

Last year, New Orleans-born pianist Sullivan Fortner, 32, presented his second leader album, *Moments Preserved* (Impulse!); dialogued in duo with vocalist Cécile McLorin Salvant on *The Window* (Mack Avenue); and reimagined two Paul Simon compositions on Simon's *In The Blue Light* (Legacy). This was the first Blindfold Test for Fortner, winner of the 2015 American Pianists Association Cole Porter Fellowship.

### Kris Davis

"Eronel" (*Duopoly*, Pyroclastic, 2016) Davis, piano; Billy Drummond, drums; Sadik Hakim, composer.

I love the sound this pianist is getting from the instrument. This is "Eronel," the tune [associated with Thelonious] Monk. I hear influences of Keith Jarrett, and more modern, free pianists like Cecil Taylor and Muhal Richard Abrams. But if he or she chose a more straightforward approach, it could go there. I love the interplay between the drummer and the pianist. People often take the attitude that when we play Monk, we've got to do some clunks, some Monkisms; it's refreshing to hear someone approach Monk not from a Monk perspective, so to speak. [after] I was getting ready to say Kris Davis! She really understands the instrument, and how to manipulate sound in a beautiful way. She's bad!

### Geoffrey Keezer/Kendra Shank

"Song Of Life [Heartsong]" (*Half Moon: Live In New York*, Ride Symbol, 2016) Shank, vocals; Keezer, piano; Norma Winstone, lyrics; Fred Hersch, composer.

This is Fred's tune, "Heartsong." I think he first played it on *Live At Maybeck*. It's someone who loves Fred, from the generation after him, the age range of Geoff Keezer or younger, who's not uncomfortable playing solo, has a fairly active left hand and is good at accompanying singers. This is in C; the original is in D major—Fred wouldn't do it this low. Probably they played it in C because she felt comfortable in that key. For me, C is a very general key—it brought a whole different character to the tune, from a romantic relationship between two people towards a more sympathetic-empathetic relationship that you can have with anyone. I can't think of the pianist. [after] Keezer is like a magician, always with a rabbit in his hat. Here he seemed a little more tamed.

### David Virelles

"Tierra" (*Gnosis*, ECM, 2017) Virelles, piano, marimbula; Thomas Morgan, bass; Román Diaz, percussion; Allison Loggins-Hull, flute; Rane Moore, clarinet; Adam Cruz, Alex Lipowski, Matthew Gold, Mauricio Herrera, percussion.

This person loves orchestration and writing. Initially, it reminded me of Gonzalo [Rubalcaba], somebody of that ancestral folkloric Cuban lineage—a heavy classical background, too. David Virelles? The dude can play. I appreciate how he develops his statements. The ideas connect, flow really well together. There's a noticeable thread of forward direction. His playing is angular, but not to the point of being random and kind of all over the place. There's nothing stagnant about it.

### Keith Jarrett

"Part III, Paris, Salle Pleyel, July 4, 2014," (*Creation*, ECM, 2015) Jarrett, piano.

[immediately] Keith. You can tell by the sound he gets from the instrument, his vocabulary, his touch, the sense of melody, the multiple melodies at once, stacked on top of each other. Hearing him is like looking at a picture in 3D. He has all kinds of layers of his sound, which all work together to create this one big thing that's Keith. Only Keith does a completely free-improv thing like this, that could be a cadenza for a ballad.



You can hear his influence on pretty much a majority of today's modern piano players.

### Victor Gould

"Lover" (*Earthlings*, Criss Cross Jazz, 2017) Gould, piano; Dezron Douglas, bass; Eric McPherson, drums.

"Lover." A very interesting pianist. I'd guess somebody younger. The bass player's harmonic decisions make me think he's young; the drummer seems older—the cross-sticking in the first chorus reminds me of Eric McPherson. I'm not hearing an Emmett Cohen or Christian Sands thing, and I've never heard Joey Alexander play that fast or be that floaty, especially in the beginning few choruses. I definitely hear some "isms" of older musicians—Larry Willis, Herbie, Brad; it's not as developed, but there's wisdom there.

### John Escreet

"Test Run" (*Learn To Live*, Blue Room, 2018) Escreet, keyboards, piano; Greg Osby, alto saxophone; Matt Brewer, bass; Eric Harland, Justin Brown, drums.

Craig Taborn? Somebody in the age bracket of Sam Harris or Fabian Almazan, though it's not them. It's not Shai Maestro; it doesn't have the folkloric Israeli quality. It's a wild piece. Very angular, like a lot of the modern writing now, à la Ambrose [Akinmusire] or Logan Richardson. Total Brooklyn scene. It almost sounds like somebody transcribed a conversation note for note, and put an ostinato rhythm underneath. The pianist has excellent facility; a strong sound—not brash. [after] When we were at Manhattan School of Music, John actually did a piece where he transcribed a lecture and put an ostinato underneath it! He's an inquisitive mind and a thinker, coming out of the Jason Moran school. And he can read flyshit.

### Kenny Barron

"Charade" (*Gerry Gibbs' Thrasher Dream Trio*, Whaling City Sound, 2013) Barron, piano; Roy Hargrove, trumpet; Ron Carter, bass; Gerry Gibbs, drums.

An older pianist. Larry Willis? That generation. That's Roy Hargrove within the last four or five years, before his health started to decline—he didn't play high at all. But within the limitations of his endurance and stamina, nothing could take away Roy's gift of being musical, whatever he played, to get everything he needed to say in one chorus. Is this the record Gerry Gibbs did with Kenny Barron and Ron Carter? There are very few pianists left that you can depend on to comp well and take good solos every time. Kenny Barron is one of those dependably great piano players.

DB

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