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VOLUME 86 / NUMBER 12

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SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION: Send orders and address changes to: DOWNBEAT, P.O. Box 11688, St. Paul, MN 55111-0688. Inquiries: U.S.A. and Canada (877) 904-5299; Foreign (651) 251-9682. **CHANGE OF ADDRESS:** Please allow six weeks for your change to become effective. When notifying us of your new address, include current DOWNBEAT label showing old address.

DOWNBEAT (issn 0012-5768) Volume 86, Number 12 is published monthly by Maher Publications, 102 N. Haven, Elmhurst, IL 60126-2970. Copyright 2019 Maher Publications. All rights reserved. Trademark registered U.S. Patent Office. Great Britain registered trademark No. 719,407. Periodicals postage paid at Elmhurst, IL, and at additional mailing offices. Subscription rates: \$34.95 for one year, \$59.95 for two years. Foreign subscriptions rates: \$56.95 for one year, \$103.95 for two years.

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POSTMASTER: Send change of address to: DownBeat, P.O. Box 11688, St. Paul, MN 55111-0688. **CABLE ADDRESS:** DownBeat (on sale November 12, 2019) Magazine Publishers Association.



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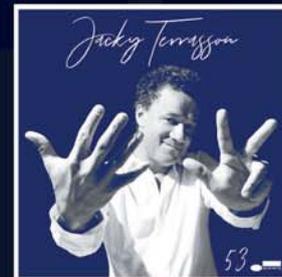
JAMES CARTER
JAMES CARTER ORGAN TRIO:
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Saxophone master **JAMES CARTER** makes his Blue Note debut with this thrilling live set captured at the 2018 Newport Jazz Festival featuring his Organ Trio performing their clever soul jazz reinvention of the music of gypsy jazz legend **DJANGO REINHARDT**.



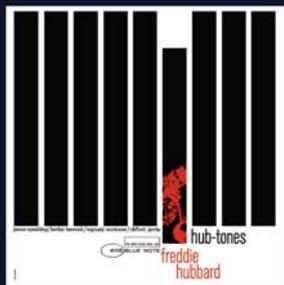
BILL FRISELL
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Acclaimed guitarist **BILL FRISELL** makes his Blue Note debut with **HARMONY**, a gorgeous and evocative journey across the landscape of American music of the last century featuring vocalist **PETRA HADEN**, cellist & vocalist **HANK ROBERTS**, and guitarist, bassist & vocalist **LUKE BERGMAN**.



JACKY TERRASSON
53

With **53**, the 15th album in a recording career that has now spanned 25 years since his stunning self-titled debut on Blue Note in 1994, the remarkable pianist **JACKY TERRASSON** presents a collection of original pieces brought to life by a varied cast of trio mates.



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DECEMBER 2019

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Playing Dangerously

BY PHILLIP LUTZ

Few pianists exploit the potential of the instrument with the range of skills that global superstar Hiromi has at her disposal, as evidenced on her new solo album, *Spectrum*.



Hiromi's masterful use of a piano's pedals is displayed on her new album, *Spectrum*.

Cover photo of Hiromi by Muga Miyahara

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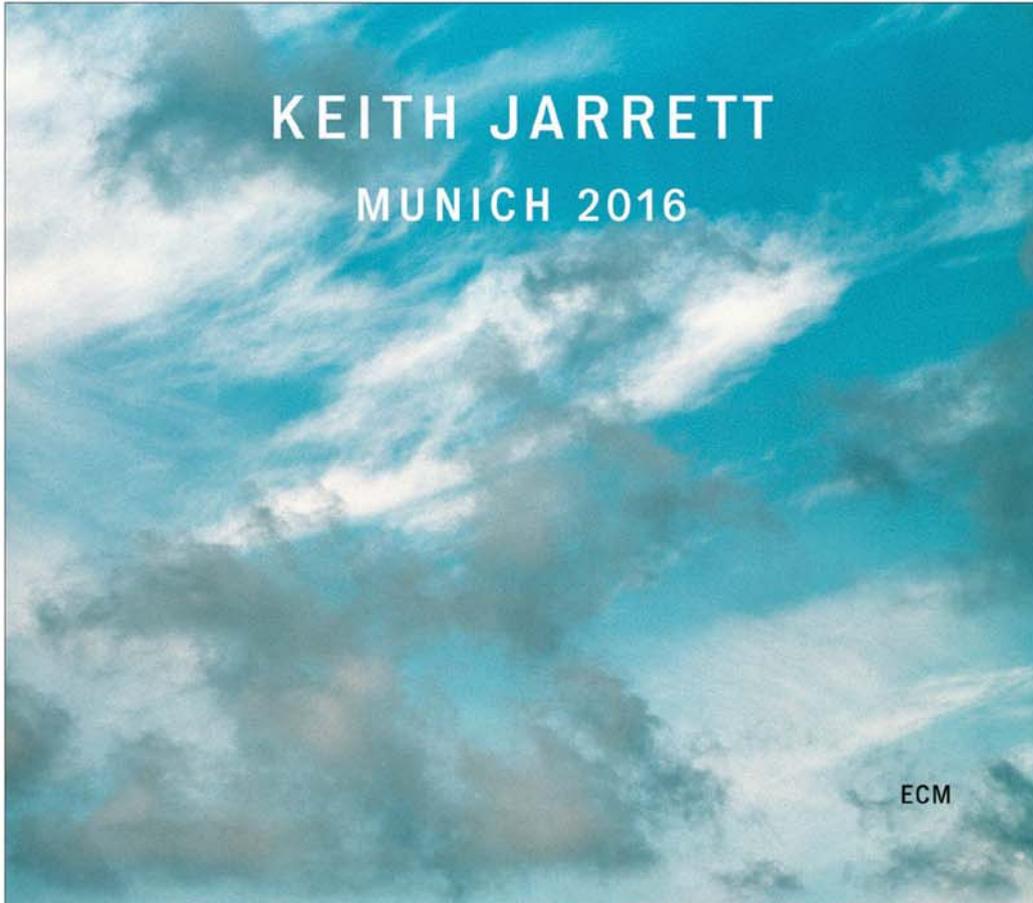
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Antonio Sánchez



ECM



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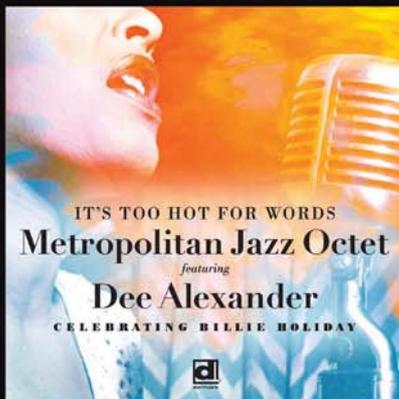
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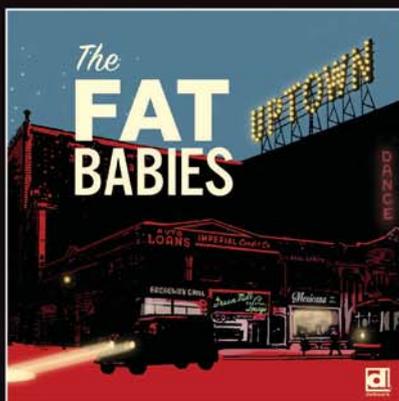


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This image from Sophie Huber's documentary *Blue Note Records: Beyond the Notes* depicts, from right to left, Ambrose Akinmusire (foreground), Wayne Shorter, Marcus Strickland and Herbie Hancock.

Kaleidoscopic Parade

IT'S QUITE A PARADE: HANK MOBLEY, Wayne Shorter, Hiromi, Antonio Sánchez, Allison Miller and Derrick Hodge are all marching by, and we've got a terrific vantage point.

When readers praise or criticize *DownBeat*, their motivation often involves questions regarding which artists get covered in the magazine—and why. With each issue, our editorial team strives to present an intriguing, colorful mixture of timeless icons, living legends, current headliners and rising stars, as well as students and educational institutions, which are highlighted in our *Jazz On Campus* column.

In this issue of *DownBeat*, readers will encounter a kaleidoscopic parade of accomplished musicians. The results of the 84th annual Readers Poll are the centerpiece, with saxophonist Hank Mobley (1930–'86) being voted into the Hall of Fame. We're proud to present a tribute to this gifted, somewhat underappreciated musician, whose induction was a long time coming, but certainly is well deserved.

Additionally, we've got an interview with perhaps the most revered living jazz composer, Wayne Shorter, who topped three categories in the poll: Jazz Artist, Jazz Album (for his ambitious, intricate *Emanon*) and Soprano Saxophone. Congrats to Wayne, who continues to surprise and astound us.

The subject of our cover story is global superstar Hiromi, a pianist who can fill concert halls and clubs in dozens of countries around the world. She describes, among other things, her plan to record a solo piano album every 10 years.

On page 106, our *Blindfold Test* documents a live event at the Monterey Jazz Festival with thoughtful drummer Antonio Sánchez, a four-time Grammy winner. The festival's co-art-

ists-in-residence this year were Miller and Hodge (see page 14 in *The Beat*). Miller, a drummer, and Hodge, a bassist, both enjoy the dual status of being an in-demand headliner and yet still a rising star, as more fans discover their tremendous work each year.

Our Holiday Gift Guide focuses on releases documenting musical titans who are no longer with us, including Miles Davis, Nat "King" Cole, Erroll Garner, Art Pepper and Gregg Allman.

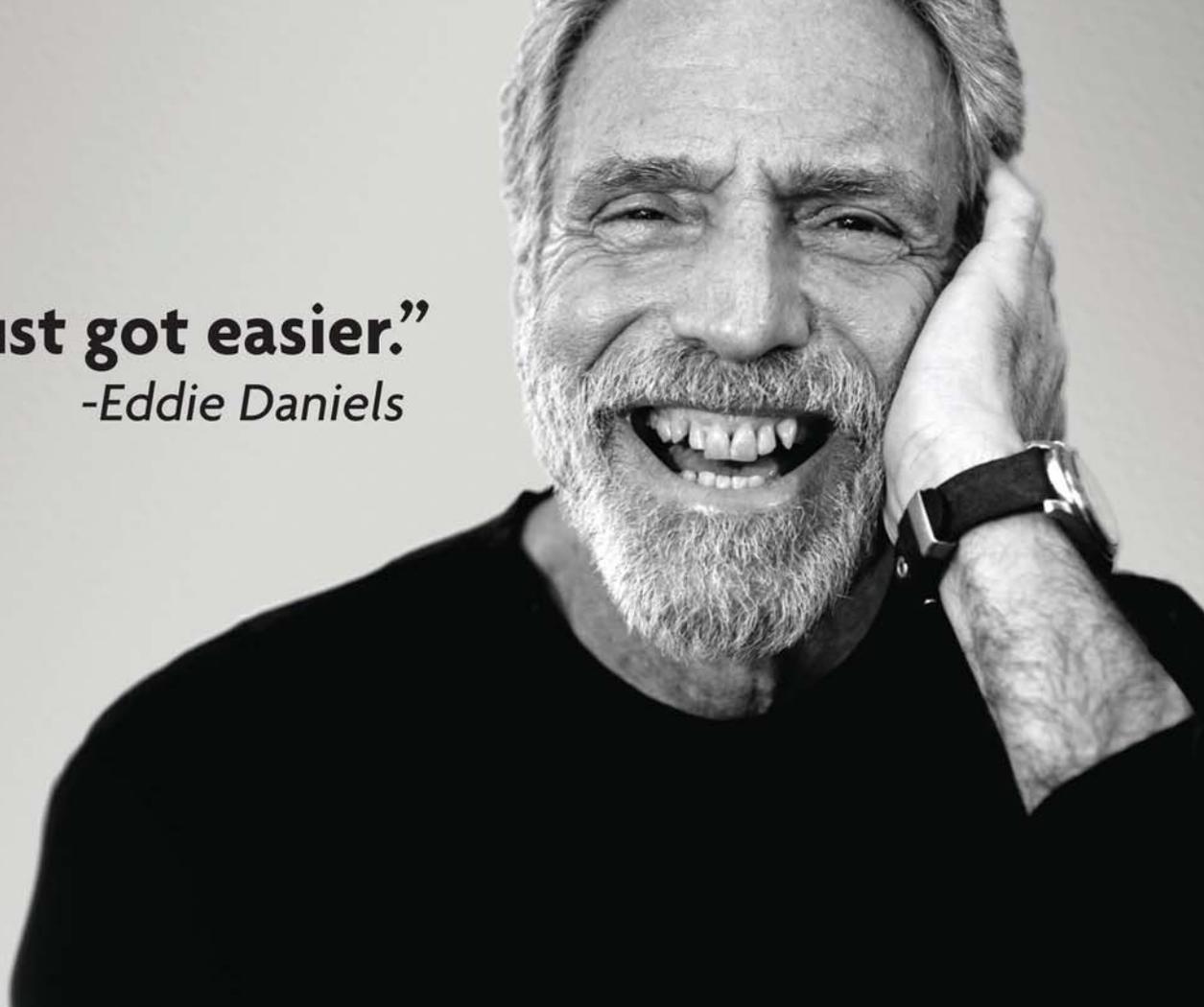
The gift guide also has an article on Sophie Huber's compelling documentary *Blue Note Records: Beyond the Notes*. The photo above, which depicts a scene from the film, includes Shorter and Herbie Hancock—two legends who each have recorded timeless leader dates for Blue Note, and who both were in Miles' "Second Great Quintet" in the mid-to-late 1960s. They are shown in the studio collaborating with trumpeter Ambrose Akinmusire and saxophonist Marcus Strickland, two of the most exciting young jazz musicians working today.

When musicians from different generations meet on the bandstand, sparks often fly. Just ask Jane Bunnett. The Canadian reedist has entered one of the most fruitful chapters of her long career by collaborating with the young, wildly talented Cuban composers who are in her band, Maqueque (see page 30).

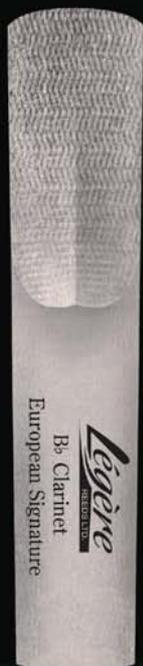
Each issue of *DownBeat* is a smorgasbord, cooked with a variety of ingredients that represent different musical styles, different generations and different countries.

We hope you enjoy this musical feast. If it satisfies you, let us know. If it gives you indigestion, we want to hear about that, too. Send your comments to editor@downbeat.com and be sure to include your city. *Bon appétit.*

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-Eddie Daniels



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Chords & Discords >

Truly Unique Mouthpiece

I'm writing about the October issue's First Take column, which talked about J.J. Babbitt making a reed mouthpiece for a trumpet—at the request of Eddie Harris (1934–'96).

I have had a long career as a working saxophonist, playing blues, r&b and jazz. I've played every imaginable kind of gig, and I am very familiar with the search for the perfect mouthpiece. I was a good friend of Eddie Harris—hanging out and practicing together. I enjoyed the fact that he was always experimenting: drilling holes in his mouthpieces for various electronic pickups, attaching mouthpieces to lengths of garden hose, etc.

At one point he started talking to me about his reed-trumpet mouthpiece. He kept trying to



Saxophonist Edwin Daugherty uses this mouthpiece, which has the previous owner's name inscribed on it: Eddie Harris.

get me to try it, and eventually he just gave it to me. I still have it and play it from time to time.

EDWIN DAUGHERTY
CHICAGO



Tommy Smith, founder of the Scottish National Jazz Orchestra, with Queen Elizabeth on July 2

Royal Treatment

I was one of 17 civilians who were honored with an OBE during an Investiture at the Palace of Holyroodhouse presented by Her Majesty the Queen on July 2.

During my short conversation with the Queen, we talked about the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, its jazz program, and then the Scottish National Jazz Orchestra. Finally, I asked her if she remembered receiving the one and only copy of an LP that Duke Ellington had specially composed and recorded for her in 1959 titled *The Queen's Suite*.

The Queen answered, "Yes!"

TOMMY SMITH
TOMMYSMITH.SCOT

Worthy of the Honor

Regarding the results of the Hall of Fame voting in the DownBeat Critics Poll in your August issue: Come on critics, to have Grant Green and Hank Mobley so far out of Hall of Fame contention is incredibly sad.

Bassist Scott LaFaro—voted in by the Vet-

erans Committee—was a great musician. I love his work with Bill Evans. However, Green and Mobley deserve a better look.

Also, it's obvious that the magazine has a disconnect between swing/melody-driven jazz and the stuff that is "out." Look at the top albums. Look at your Reviews section. There needs to be a balance, especially in the Reviews section.

KEVIN MCINTOSH
STERLING HEIGHTS, MICHIGAN

Editor's Note: Hank Mobley has been voted into the DownBeat Hall of Fame via the Readers Poll. See page 36.

Appropriate Superlatives

In his 4½-star review of pianist Ahmad Jamal's *Ballades* (November), writer Gary Fukushima uses the following adjectives: "impeccable," "astonishing," "hypnotic," "gorgeous," "poignant," "powerful" and "brilliant." Amen!

DENNIS HENDLEY
MILWAUKEE

Corrections

■ Editorial errors resulted in the star ratings being incorrect for two reviews in the November print edition. The correct rating for Ted Nash's *Somewhere Else: West Side Story Songs* (Plastic Sax) is 5 stars. The correct rating for the Steve Lehman Trio + Craig Taborn's *The People I Love* (Pi) is 4 stars. Additionally, in the Lehman review, the surname of Damion Reid was misspelled. These errors have been corrected in the digital edition of the November issue.

DOWNBEAT REGRETS THE ERRORS.

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



KIRK WHALUM

Woven from the words, stories and original melodies of an incredibly diverse cast, saxophonist and composer Kirk Whalum and documentary director Jim Hanon's musical celebration channels the ethos of civil rights in a raw and compassionate bid for global harmony.

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Beat

Miles Davis' 'Rubberband' Finally Arrives

The phenomenon of “lost” recordings finally emerging has caused waves throughout the jazz world. In addition to their entertainment value, these albums—which typically have been in storage for decades—can deepen one’s understanding of a musician’s artistic arc.

A new, reworked version of Miles Davis’ *Rubberband* (Rhino) sheds light on the trumpeter’s mindset and aesthetic in the mid-1980s. The album, which uses one of Davis’ paintings for its cover art, chronicles studio dates that the trumpeter recorded in 1985–’86. The sessions were designed to generate his first album for Warner Bros., following his departure from the Columbia label, his home for 30 years. Davis, now working far outside the pure jazz realm, might have taken an artistic turn that befuddled label executives.

According to a recent press release from Rhino, Davis intended to recruit guest vocalists for the project, including Al Jarreau and Chaka Khan. But those sessions never materialized.

DownBeat recently caught up with Vince Wilburn Jr.—Davis’ nephew, the drummer for the original *Rubberband* sessions and the executive producer of the new release. Wilburn said he believes there was a major disconnect between the bandleader and company brass.

“Uncle Miles wanted to record a pop hit that was radio friendly,” Wilburn said over the phone, while adding that the premise for his uncle’s embrace of commercial sounds was steeped in the vibrancy of ’80s funk and rock music. “He was watching MTV with the sound down and seeing people like Prince, Toto, Scritti Politti and Herbie Hancock’s ‘Rockit.’ He loved melodies and loved funk. He was so excited with the *Rubberband* music when we went on the road. He dug it so much, and the audience was digging it.”

Despite concertgoers’ positive reaction, Warner executives apparently didn’t have faith in the new material. It’s unclear exactly why the album got nixed and the degree to which Davis felt wronged by the decision. “No one will ever know what really happened,” Wilburn said.

When he was approached in 2017 to take another listen to the *Rubberband* recordings, Wilburn discovered that the tapes were deteriorating. He contacted the original producers, Randy Hall and Attala Zane Giles, who were thrilled at the chance to complete a new version of the album, and embarked on the painstaking process of creating digital transfers.

“We listened to what had been recorded and agreed to rewrite some of the tracks, to make them sound modern but respectful of who Uncle Miles was,” Wilburn explained. “We didn’t recreate. We revisited and added a few new sprinkles, like calypso and go-go. In our listening sessions, Randy,



Miles Davis in 1986, around the time he recorded the album *Rubberband*

Zane and I would tweak the originals back and forth until we were satisfied we had the basics of Uncle Miles. It had life, and the more we added, it came to have a new life on its own. It blossomed. Chief was there all the way.”

The revitalized album captures Davis’ muscular, enchanting trumpet work at its best as he led his spirited band—including guitarist Mike Stern and keyboardist Adam Holzman—on a rollicking ride through an unpredictable kaleidoscope of soul, funk, rock and jazz. Kept intact were the bandleader’s exuberant shouts of “rubberband” amid his trumpet solos. To complete the album, producers invited contemporary performers to contribute vocals, including r&b stars Ledisi and Lalah Hathaway.

Ledisi leads off the funky affair with a soul/gospel groove on “Rubberband Of Life.” Hathaway hits the soulful balladic mark on “So Emotional,” which originally was an instrumental track, and Hall and Giles embellished Davis’ supple horn flavors with lyrics.

“Friends of Vince called me to see if I could wrap my voice around the song,” Hathaway said recently. “I felt like I could feel the classic Miles tinges. Even though I was wary about taking this on, I felt comfortable. I never met Miles, but he was a huge influence. I see myself as a vocalist who improvises, which I got from Miles. *Kind Of Blue* is at the top of my [list of] 10 Desert Island albums. Miles plays pure. It was a great experience recording this song with Miles, even though we couldn’t have a real conversation. I conversed with him in another way.”

—Dan Ouellette

Riffs >



Mary Halvorson

JOHND & CATHERINE
MACARTHUR FOUNDATION

MacArthur Fellows: The MacArthur Foundation announced its 2019 fellows Sept. 25, and among them is Mary Halvorson. The New York-based guitarist is set to receive a \$625,000 stipend from the nonprofit organization, which aims to “encourage people of outstanding talent to pursue their own creative, intellectual and professional inclinations” in various artistic disciplines, the sciences and other fields.

macfound.org

Nina’s House: A recent campaign has raised \$60,000 for the preservation of vocalist, pianist and DownBeat Hall of Fame inductee Nina Simone’s childhood home in Tryon, North Carolina. Several organizations, including the nonprofit National Trust for Historic Preservation, are working toward the site’s rehabilitation.

ncdcr.gov

In Newark: The TD James Moody Jazz Festival returns to Newark, New Jersey, starting Nov. 3. Hosted by the nonprofit New Jersey Performing Arts Center, this year’s programming includes sets by Bobby Sanabria, Buddy Guy and Mavis Staples, Steve Turre, The Roots and Christian McBride; salutes to the music of Erroll Garner and Nat “King” Cole; and several film screenings. The festivities culminate Nov. 24 with the Sarah Vaughan International Vocal Competition.

njpac.org

Final Bar: Drummer **Ginger Baker**, best known for his work in Cream, also sported jazz bona fides, performing with guitarists Bill Frisell and Sonny Sharrock, as well as bandleader Fela Kuti. Baker died Sept. 6 at the age of 80 in England. ... Keyboardist **Larry Willis** died Sept. 29 in Baltimore at the age of 76. During a five-decade career, he released more than 20 albums as a leader, including gems like 1973’s *Inner Crisis*. ... Poet **Steve Dalachinsky**, who was as much a documenter of the avant-garde as a well-received performer who collaborated with John Tchicai and Dave Liebman, died in New York on Sept. 16 at the age of 72.



Allison Miller opens the Monterey Jazz Festival with a tribute to pianist Mary Lou Williams.

©TOMAS OVALLE/MONTEREY JAZZ FESTIVAL

Monterey Jazz Festival Celebrates Risk Takers

ON THE JIMMY LYONS STAGE AT THE Monterey Jazz Festival, which ran Sept. 27–29 in Monterey, California, Co-Artists-in-Residence Allison Miller and Derrick Hodge launched the 62nd edition of the grand event with a moving tribute to Mary Lou Williams—paying homage to the indelible music of the iconic pianist and harmonic innovator.

The arena show honored Williams’ integrity by presenting a creative rendering of her works. Holding down the rhythm front, drummer Miller and bassist Hodge—who did not know each other prior to being named co-artists-in-residence—assembled a unique band of two pianists (Carmen Staaf and Shamie Royston) and three vocalists (Jean Baylor, Johnaye Kendrick and Michael Mayo) who served as the “horns” of the ensemble. The show opened with “It Ain’t Necessarily So,” wordlessly sung by the three-piece choir and featuring Miller’s thundering, dramatic drums and Hodge’s blues-steeped tones on acoustic. The show unfolded in sections with different configurations: the dynamic full band, a capella vocals, an ecstatic piano duo, solo tunes.

The Miller-Hodge project represented a philosophy of marrying tradition and new expression, and increasingly MJF is breaking down boundaries by presenting risk-taking artists who are resolute in evolving the music. Miller made two more appearances during the weekend with her adventurous Boom Tic Boom ensemble, as well as the Parlour Game troupe—a captivating project that combines jazz, groove and Americana—that the drummer co-leads with fiddler Jenny Scheinman.

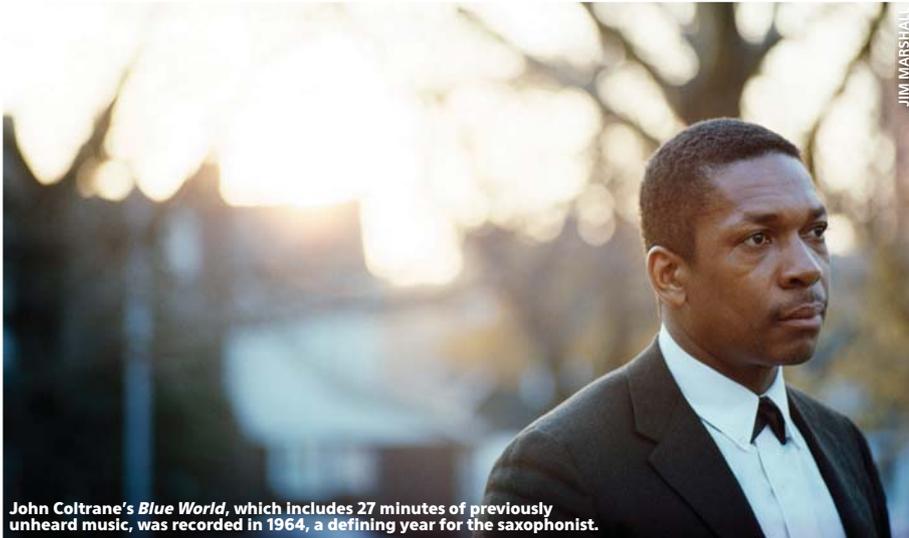
Likewise, Hodge put on a display of ingenuity as a leader with a multipart adventure in

groove at Dizzy’s Den, first with his spirited quintet when he led the charge on five-string electric bass in tandem with blasting-cap drummer Mike Mitchell (aka Blaque Dynamite). After a DJ Stutz McGee interlude, Hodge took the stage with his Color of Noize group, featuring an array of incredibly talented youth performing alongside the quintet.

Christian McBride also played a high-profile role as both Showcase Artist and Commission Artist. He was busy, delivering the world premiere of “Roy Anthony: The Fearless One” (composed for onetime festival favorite Roy Hargrove) with his big band. But where McBride fully took off was at Dizzy’s Den with his band the Situation. He’s a great electric bassist, but the star of the show was keyboardist Patrice Rushen, who proved the consummate foil for the bandleader. She helped dig deep into the rhythm’s bedrock with her funk-ed-up colors and textures, giving the bassist an opportunity to get rooted in his grooves.

As noted by the fest’s opening act, during her lifetime Williams was an early pioneer in the jazz world—a performer who took charge and inspired others. At Monterey this year, a number of younger bandleaders made strong showings, hinting at the music’s future. Trumpeter/vocalist Bria Skonberg took her music to a new level at the Night Club; trombonist/vocalist Natalie Cressman with guitarist Ian Faquini impressed at Dizzy’s Den; and the forward-thinking vibraphonist Sasha Berliner led a rousing electronic journey with her playful and powerful quintet (heightened by Morgan Guerin’s coloristic EWI). While Berliner’s set was truncated because of sound snafus, she overcame the adversity and played with searing energy. —Dan Ouellette

'Blue World' Features New Trane Tracks



John Coltrane's *Blue World*, which includes 27 minutes of previously unheard music, was recorded in 1964, a defining year for the saxophonist.

IN DECEMBER 1964, JOHN COLTRANE AND his classic quartet headed in to Rudy Van Gelder's New Jersey studio to record *A Love Supreme*, an album that documented the band reaching the zenith of its power, while cementing the saxophonist's stature as one of the most visionary musicians of the genre.

But earlier that year at Van Gelder's studio, Coltrane did something he'd never done before: record his own music for a feature film. That summer, the bandleader was approached by French-Canadian filmmaker Gilles Groulx, who'd just shot *Le Chat Dans Le Sac*, a film set against the backdrop of French-Canadians' disenfranchisement in Quebec. *Blue World* (Impulse), an eight-track album released Sept. 27, is the result of that session with pianist McCoy Tyner, bassist Jimmy Garrison and drummer Elvin Jones.

"It's the dissolution, or the breaking apart, of a romance along the lines of different lifestyles," said author and Coltrane historian Ashley Kahn, while recently discussing the film's plot. "[It] represents the breaking apart of the French community in Quebec," marking the start of a separatist movement.

Groulx noticed concurrent rumblings in the American civil rights movement and saw Coltrane's music as a kind of social soundtrack to the conflict. "So, he goes to Coltrane," Kahn continued, "not necessarily because Coltrane is a political firebrand himself, but because in their minds, the struggle of American blacks was a parallel situation with what [the separatists] were going through in '64."

That year was a tumultuous one, marked by the release of *Live At Birdland*, which featured the first recording of Coltrane's "Alabama," a requiem for the four young girls who were murdered in a 1963 white-supremacist bombing of an African American church in Birmingham. But in 1964, Coltrane also moved to the Dix Hills suburb of Long Island with his soon-to-be wife, Alice

McLeod, and her daughter, Michelle. Coltrane envisioned and composed the music to *A Love Supreme* in their home, close to his new family.

"It's very powerful to think of what he did in really a very short span of time," said Michelle Coltrane, during a recent phone conversation. She was just a few years old when the saxophonist was working on the recordings. Listening to the newly released music—only 10 minutes of which made it to the film—served as a reminder of her father's enduring legacy. "It doesn't ever go away, is what I realized," she explained. "I do feel that freshness, that it could have been recorded last year, instead of [being] an old, historic, dated antique."

"If you think about the tunes that Coltrane chose," said Kahn, "these tunes are about the tunes themselves ... [But] these [new] performances are about the quartet, and that, to me, is the biggest difference."

Indeed, the original recordings showcase Coltrane both as an unparalleled improviser and an innovative composer. As he and his signature band moved into a more open, modal form of playing, his writing became more reductive, shifting away from his rapidly modulating "Coltrane changes" to vehicles often with only one or two chords, leaving it to the quartet to supply the larger narrative. To hear them work through this approach on older tunes like "Naima," "Village Blues" and "Traneing In" reveals new insight into just how far they had come in just a few years.

On the one standard here, an arrangement of Harold Arlen's "Out Of This World," the quartet takes it slower and more deliberately than on previous recordings, with a new melody by Coltrane, enabling the song to be retitled as "Blue World."

In an earlier treatment of the tune, Arlen's chordal architecture was demolished, replaced by a drone in E-flat minor, only sliding back into harmonic movement on the bridge. In the film's version, even the bridge is eschewed, leaving only the initial drone. Coltrane's highly chromatic

improvisatory figurations over this static harmony foreshadow the approach he would perfect just a few months later.

An ecstatic Groulx returned to Montreal, master tape in hand. His film became a cult classic within the Canadian film community, but it remained largely unknown to the rest of the world.

"The music has always been on the soundtrack," said Ken Druker, vice president for jazz development at Verve Label Group, which like Impulse is a part of Universal Music Group. "It's stated right at the beginning of the film, and it was always in the discographies, but it was always unclear if they were the Atlantic versions, or what it was. ... If you just [saw the titles] "Naima" and "Traneing In," and you don't have a chance to see the film, you might just assume they had just licensed those."

After *Le Chat Dans Le Sac* was put online for streaming around 2008, Coltrane researchers were, according to Druker, finally able to hear how the performances "were different than the previous recordings."

The search ensued for Van Gelder's tapes, hidden somewhere in the archives of the National Film Board of Canada. But it turned out that the master had been filed under the film's "working title." Once the tape had been secured, a years-long process to present the new material to the public began.

It's been more than a year since the release of the archival *Both Directions At Once: The Lost Album* (Impulse), which topped the Historical Album category in DownBeat's 2019 Critics and Readers polls. Even with two releases coming in such a short amount of time, it's still an understatement to say that Coltrane's "new" music holds up rather well when compared to work by current players. "That's kind of the beautiful mystery of it," Michelle Coltrane said. "It also speaks to the artists, and the timeless nature of [their music]. The kind of people who were ahead of their time."

Given the quartet's ability to extend any piece past the 20-minute mark, *Blue World* can feel like a test-drive. Of course, when the car is a Lamborghini, even a few breathless minutes down the lane can be exhilarating. The sound of the classic quartet is one of full confidence in its sonic identity, as Coltrane was entering an important phase of his improvisatory approach.

Kahn observed that the bandleader was moving toward "the spiritual vocabulary that he's developed coming out of tunes like 'Naima' and 'Alabama,' and now he's applying it to a much more general spiritual vision, to tunes like 'Wise One,' and of course 'A Love Supreme.' In the midst of all that, he takes a moment to look back, affording us a rare chance to do this comparison."

It's also another example of Trane moving in both directions at once. —Gary Fukushima

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Bassist Harish Raghavan steps out with his first leader date, *Calls For Action*.

EMPIRE ISLEK

Raghavan's Steady Patience

It seems obvious to say that a bass player's sound would be a deep one. But there is a real darkness to Harish Raghavan's tone, a rich mahogany that is at turns warm and undulatingly forceful; his precise rhythms and soft melodies emerge from a studied profundity. It's a thoughtful tone, one that reflects the measured patience of its maker, one of New York's most in-demand bassists, who has played with the likes of Ambrose Akinmusire and Vijay Iyer, and who, 12 years into his career, is only now releasing his debut album as a bandleader, *Calls For Action* (Whirlwind).

It wasn't doubt that held Raghavan back but logistics, it turns out. "I had been wanting to record an album for some time and I always had the intention of playing five to 10 gigs with the same band and then documenting it," he said from New York. "It's just keeping the same great musicians on every gig to develop a sound in this busy city proved to be tricky."

It wasn't until Raghavan produced sessions for young vibraphonist Joel Ross' debut *Blue Note* record, *KingMaker*, that he began to find a reliable set of like-minded musicians he could develop a residency—and eventually a sound—with.

With Ross only being 23 and saxophonist Immanuel Wilkins at 24, it was youth that provided an unlikely but welcome foundation from which Raghavan could improvise and take leadership. Playing around eight shows a year, with four new pieces penned by Raghavan to be performed at each, it was a methodology of trial and error to reach the final 15 songs on *Calls For Action*.

"My process for most of the pieces was to record improvisations on the bass daily," he said. "I'd do this for about a week or two and then I'd listen to all the recordings for anything that sparked an idea. Using that method, some of the pieces are just complete improvisations from beginning to end,

like 'Seaminer.'"

A loping, medium-tempo meditation, "Seaminer" progresses like many of the compositions on the record—underpinned by a sturdy rhythmic base, it soon spirals out into a complex, frenetic interplay between drummer Kweku Sumbry's rattling cymbal work and Wilkins' bebop saxophone lines.

The pieces all have personal resonances for Raghavan. Opener "Newe" was written in homage to his band and to Dave Holland's quintet through the 1990s, with masterful melodic playing from Ross mirroring Wilkins throughout. "Los Angeles" is a tribute to the city where Raghavan attended college—the sun-soaked nature of the place seeping in through its down-tempo haziness. And the optimistic "Sangeet" was written for his recent wedding.

The most powerful thematics come on the final number, "AS"—or Aurelia's song—named for Raghavan's newborn niece. A raw, yet tentative, bass solo, it carries a yearning within its three-minute runtime, plucking gently into the slow dissolution of silence at its close. "It's about growing up in the United States as a person who does not look 'American,'" he said—a reality which is becoming increasingly difficult to inhabit in the current political climate.

Yet, it is typical that Raghavan approaches such sensitive subject matter with a gentle pragmatism, an improvised expression that betrays thoughtful emotion.

Ultimately, Raghavan's playing on *Calls For Action* is deep—in all senses of the word. It is a complex record that squeezes every drop of raw talent from his young quintet without flashy showmanship. Whether it connects with new listeners or not, the process has at least inspired Raghavan to continue as a bandleader, and come to a welcome realization: "I'm ready to record the next one now," he said. "I'm inspired to keep writing, so I hope that continues."

DB



Uri Caine's new album celebrates the work of civil-rights advocate Octavius Catto (1839–71).

Caine Pays Tribute to Catto

PIANIST URI CAINE HAD NO IDEA THAT HIS 10-part oratorio, *The Passion Of Octavius Catto*, would somehow gain additional cultural relevance in the five years since he first performed it.

The piece, a celebration of Catto—an African American civil-rights pioneer—had its premiere in Philadelphia during 2014. In some ways, that now feels like a different era. President Barack Obama was halfway through his second term, and Donald Trump had yet to announce his bid for the White House. The Charlottesville, Virginia, riots were three years away.

In 2018, Caine decided to record the oratorio, soliciting funds via Kickstarter. The album, which was released in August on the 816 Music label, arrives at a time when there are heated discussions about the nation's racism—both past and present. The oratorio serves not only as a celebration of one man's life but also as a reminder of our country's long, painful history of brutal oppression.

"The very disturbing aspects of the story, the racism that existed ... all the indignities and the things that were happening inspired a different kind of music," Caine, 63, said in a phone interview. The piece, he explained, was more "dissonant" as a result.

Although he is quite historically significant, Catto is not as well known as such 19th-century African-American figures as Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. Du Bois. Born in Charleston, South Carolina, in 1839, Catto grew up primarily in Philadelphia. An advocate of education and equal rights, he helped push Pennsylvania to ratify the 15th Amendment, which extended voting rights to black men. Catto served as principal at the Institute for Colored Youth (now Cheyney University of Pennsylvania), and he was also an accomplished baseball player.

On an election day, Oct. 10, 1871, Catto was shot and killed by an Irish man named Frank

Kelly while on his way to vote, as racial tensions in Philadelphia were cresting. In 2017, nearly 150 years after his death, a statue of Catto was erected outside Philadelphia's City Hall. It was the city's first public statue honoring an African American.

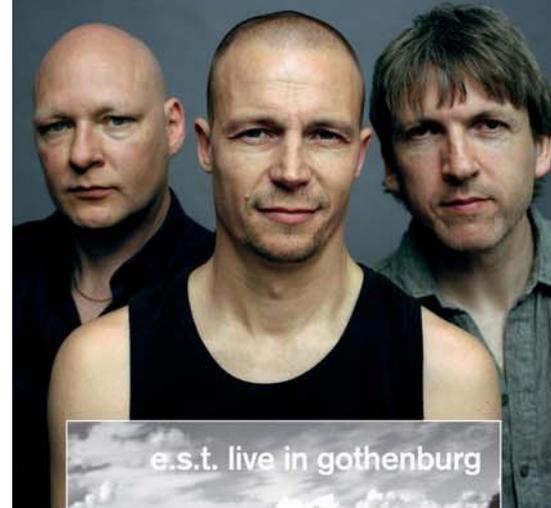
Caine, who is fluent in jazz and classical idioms, and has performed with the likes of Dave Douglas and Christian McBride, sought to channel Catto's eventful but truncated life in his 10-part piece, which was commissioned by Philadelphia's Mann Center. Each musical "chapter," as Caine put it, zeroes in on a different aspect of history. The rousing "No East No West" incorporates lines from Catto's speeches at two different voting-rights conventions. The oratorio, which features singer Barbara Walker and two vocal ensembles, packs a punch, incorporating elements of gospel, jazz and classical music.

Even though the composer is a Philadelphia native—whose father, Burton Caine, served as president of the Greater Philadelphia branch of the American Civil Liberties Union—he was not very familiar with Catto's life prior to this project. His research for the piece centered on the 2010 book *Tasting Freedom: Octavius Catto and the Battle for Equality in Civil War America* by Daniel R. Biddle and Murray Dubin.

André Raphel, who served as the oratorio's conductor, said the piece—along with Catto's message of unity and equality—could not be more urgent today. "All these attempts to divide," he mused, "that's not what this country is about. That's not what it's about. We should be trying to live together as one."

On March 19–21, 2020, the Boston Symphony Orchestra—with Caine, Walker and other guests—will perform the piece at Boston Symphony Hall. Caine said he hopes that Catto's tale will help people see connections between the 19th-century and the current day. "It's part of history," he said. "It still explains what we see today."

—Matthew Kassel



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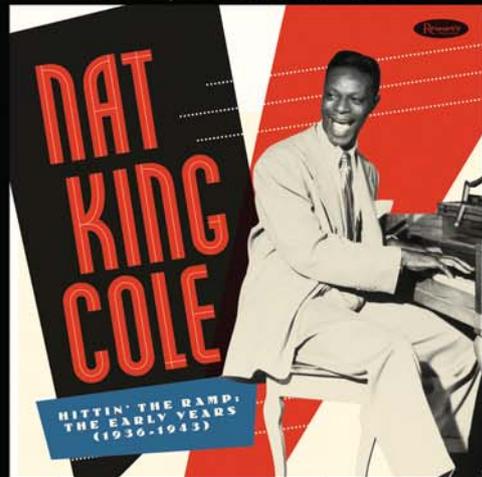
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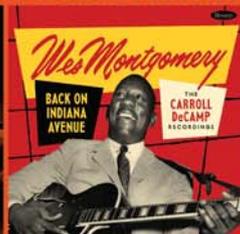
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Even when guitarist and scholar José Dias is on stage, he's doing research.

José Dias' European Ideal

THROUGHOUT MOST OF THE AUGHTS, José Dias worked as the director of a jazz school in Lisbon, Portugal's bustling capital city. As he honed the curriculum, he got to thinking more generally about what exactly constitutes European jazz, not just on a musical or an aesthetic level, but also on a social and economic one. How do jazz musicians in Europe, that vast tapestry of history and culture, connect across borders? How do they create a functioning ecosystem in which jazz thrives?

"Europe has more than 40 countries and more than 55 languages, and somehow we manage to consider ourselves all European," said Dias, a guitarist and author whose new book, *Jazz in Europe*, focuses on the idea of pan-European identity as viewed through a musical prism. "It's interesting to see how it's such a diverse ecology that produces so many different strands of jazz, but at the same time, we feel that we are part of the same thing—the same unity."

With that in mind, it was something of a cruel reminder of Europe's fractured past when Dias, 47, moved to England in 2016 to take a position as a senior lecturer in music at Manchester Metropolitan University. That was the year the majority of British voters decided, in a referendum, to withdraw from the European Union.

The vote was disappointing to the guitarist, to say the least. "Brexit is just a mess, a big mess," Dias said during a Skype interview from Manchester, where he lives with his family. "It makes no sense."

In a way, though, Dias' path operates as a kind of refutation of Brexit, given that he is a native of Portugal now living in a working-class northern city where the Industrial Revolution was born. His music is also an implicit celebration of the idea of European unity. In Manchester, he performs with a trio that improvises to different films, choosing to focus only European directors.

"It's subtle," he said. "But it's a way of resisting." Dias' latest pair of albums—both released in

2019—are a reflection of his expansive and extra-musical approach to jazz. *After Silence, Vol. 1* (Clean Feed), his solo album, is a series of muddy and abstract improvisations recorded while responding to the short films of Man Ray, much in the same way Miles Davis recorded the soundtrack to the 1958 French film *Ascenseur Pour L'échafaud*. (Dias said he was more inspired, however, by the cinematic approach taken by Ben Monder and Bill Frisell.) The other album, *Live At SMUP* (Escanifobético), made in Portugal, is Dias' musical celebration of little-known characters from novels he likes, such as *Lolita* and *Death in Venice*.

In the coming months, Dias also will put out a book about jazz festivals and is planning to release a second volume of *After Silence*, on which his trio improvises to Fritz Lang films.

Dias picked up the guitar at 13 and was drawn to jazz when he listened to the 1985 album *Sun City: Artists Against Apartheid*, with a track featuring Herbie Hancock, Ron Carter, Miles Davis and Stanley Jordan, among others. "I found it really weird," he said. "But I wanted to understand what was going on."

Since then, he has worked to figure out what exactly is going on in the European jazz scene, combining his love of playing with his scholarly inclinations. "When I'm on stage," he said, "I'm also researching."

Dias said that he is particularly interested in jazz from Scandinavia—the "Nordic tone," as he put it—but that the jazz scenes in Milan and Siena, in Italy, also have intrigued him. He described London's celebrated jazz scene as a "bubble," arguing that Manchester has its own unique free-jazz scene that is overshadowed by the capital.

Overall, though, he believes that Europe is too vast and complex to make generalizations about: "It's so diverse that it's impossible to put your finger in one spot and say, 'This is where you should be.'" —Matthew Kassel

Why Wallace Roney's Band Trusts the Music

WITHOUT OVERHAULING HIS SOUND, TRUMPETER WALLACE Roney's music remains fresh, and his latest disc, *Blue Dawn–Blue Nights*, evidences its quintessential vivacity.

Some of the new HighNote disc's capricious energy can be attributed to the intergenerational nature of his ensemble: Roney's 15-year-old nephew, Kojo Odu Roney, played drums on "Bookendz" alongside veteran drummer Lenny White, who has an established history with the trumpeter. "Lenny definitely had the experience of what I wanted to bring to this particular song," Roney explained. "Kojo had the youthful energy going for him."

Apart from their energy, a benefit to Roney working with younger musicians is their eagerness to learn. With almost all his ensembles, the bandleader steadfastly has tried to assimilate the interactive group concepts he learned from playing with Tony Williams, Elvin Jones and, perhaps most significantly, Miles Davis. "It's about having a balance," Roney said. "Younger musicians are sometimes more willing to try stuff than older musicians. ... But it's great when you have older musicians who have mastered certain concepts in your band to play with younger musicians who don't quite understand the concepts yet."

18-year-old saxophonist Emilio Modeste, who contributed to the album, also saw the process as a learning experience: "Wallace taught us how to trust the music. By submitting to the music and trusting it, it allowed everyone in the band to express themselves and contribute in more meaningful ways."

Whether Roney is slyly dropping funk riffs on the makeover of White's "Wolfbane" or finding emotional gravity in pop tunes on Toto's "Don't Stop Me Now," his warm trumpet tone, assured improvisational agility and sim-



GULNARA KHAMATOVA

On *Blue Dawn–Blue Nights*, trumpeter Wallace Roney convenes a new generation of players and grants them room to explore.

mering accord with the rest of the ensemble consistently are marvelous.

Throughout his career, Roney unfairly has taken his share of hits for upholding Davis' legacy. Sure, there's that vibrato-less tone and mysterious allure in his balladry. They even almost share the same birthday. But detractors also need to consider that Roney could be considered Davis' successor; someone who actually studied and shared the stage with Davis toward the end of his life. "Miles told me to stop listening to critics who said that I was a clone of his," Roney said. "He said, 'I know what you're trying to do. You keep doing what you're doing. Because if you don't, and [you] listen to them, they will be playing you, instead of you playing your instrument.'"

Roney's also amassed a pretty significant fanbase, including some well-regarded musicians: "I don't think Wallace gets enough credit for being someone who has kept the legacy and the direction of the straightahead jazz pure and top-shelf," White said. "There are a lot of people who get the glamour. But for someone who's stayed true to their convictions? It's Wallace."

—John Murph



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Harold Mabern (1936–2019)

In Memoriam: Harold Mabern

IN JULY 1975, 39-YEAR-OLD HAROLD Mabern took the stage at Carnegie Hall during a solo piano night at the New York edition of the Newport Jazz Festival. Amid a lineup of eight remarkable pianists—including the reflective Modern Jazz Quartet founder John Lewis and the exuberant ragtime master Eubie Blake—Mabern’s post-bop language, laced with Memphis blues and delivered with a rollicking punch, stood out.

Long before he died of a heart attack on Sept. 17 at 83, that approach, coupled with a personal

openness that drew people to him onstage and off, earned Mabern status as a stalwart of the jazz community. And while in the years following that Carnegie Hall concert he didn’t often enjoy a similarly august forum for his solo work, Mabern carved a niche among jazz pianists—valued as much for his dedication to his work as the work itself.

“He was all in,” said drummer Joe Farnsworth, who knew him for 33 years as a student, sideman and booker. “His life was all about the music and playing.”

Born in Memphis on March 20, 1936, Mabern took up drums early on—an experience reflected in the percussive approach he later developed on the piano. Self-taught, he spent his teen years immersed in the fertile Memphis scene, cultivating relationships with esteemed locals like pianist Phineas Newborn Jr. and saxophonist George Coleman.

In 1954, he moved to Chicago, where Mabern and Frank Strozier, another Memphis saxophonist, worked in drummer Walter Perkins’ band. Five years later, he moved to New York, where he was hired by a who’s who of jazz innovators, among them trumpeters Miles Davis, Freddie Hubbard and Lee Morgan, for whom he wrote “The Beehive,” a highlight of Morgan’s 1970 Blue Note album *Live At The Lighthouse*.

Ironically, said George Wein, founder of the Newport Jazz Festival, Mabern’s sterling reputation as a sideman could overshadow his other work, threatening to consign him to membership in the club of “great, great players who never could break through as leaders.”

But he made albums of distinction. Mabern’s first, 1968’s *A Few Miles From Memphis*, featured Coleman and landed him in the rarified stable of artists signed to the Prestige label. His last, 2018’s *The Iron Man: Live At Smoke* (Smoke Sessions)—a two-disc effort with longtime associates Eric Alexander on saxophone, John Webber on bass and Farnsworth—closed a circle by including the debut album’s title track, a tribute to his hometown. Mabern, in fact, never forgot his roots, said Farnsworth, who got to know him starting in 1986 as a student at New Jersey’s William Paterson University, where the pianist taught for nearly four decades.

In a career spanning 60 years, Farnsworth said, Mabern more than once ran up against club owners who only wanted to book him with a horn player. But in the past decade, Farnsworth and his wife, vocalist Jennifer Farnsworth, helped secure dates for Mabern’s trio in Manhattan rooms like the Village Vanguard, Smalls and Dizzy’s Club Coca-Cola. In June, the trio played the Rochester International Jazz Festival, where Mabern also played solo and with a quartet. In the week before he died, Mabern was gigging with the trio at Fat Cat, and planned to take the group to France and Israel.

Always a soulful artist, Mabern, according to Farnsworth, had of late been focusing even more intensely on “playing from the heart.” And his life mirrored that focus.

Even on off nights, Mabern might be found holding court at the end of the bar at the club Smoke—a big man with a big smile embodying an ethos he articulated in an October 1971 *DownBeat* article: “[F]or me the most important thing is to be able to relate to the public.”

“Everybody loved him,” Wein said.

—Phillip Lutz



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Davina Lozier has traveled the world with her band, The Vagabonds.

Davina Takes Upscale Route

HAVING MADE TOUR STOPS IN TEL AVIV, BUDAPEST AND SÃO Paulo, the Minneapolis-based band Davina & The Vagabonds certainly has lived up to its name. The retro-infused, jazz-meets-blues outfit was founded in 2006 and steadily has won fans around the globe. So, why is it only now releasing *Sugar Drops* (Red House), its first album recorded in a world-class studio?

"I'm very cheap," lead singer Davina Lozier quipped. "But also, we have cut seven albums. I made the Billboard Blues chart with my last one, *Sunshine*. So, I guess we just didn't need it until now."

The band's artistic evolution required a more upscale studio setting. "I started wanting a little more from my music, which can sometimes be picked up better sonically in a bigger studio," she said.

As a child growing up in Altoona, Pennsylvania, her adoptive father had an archive of antique records. Her mother was a folk singer. And so, Lozier was raised on a playlist that featured early jazz, The Ink Spots, Led Zeppelin, Bob Dylan and, especially, '70s icon Melanie.

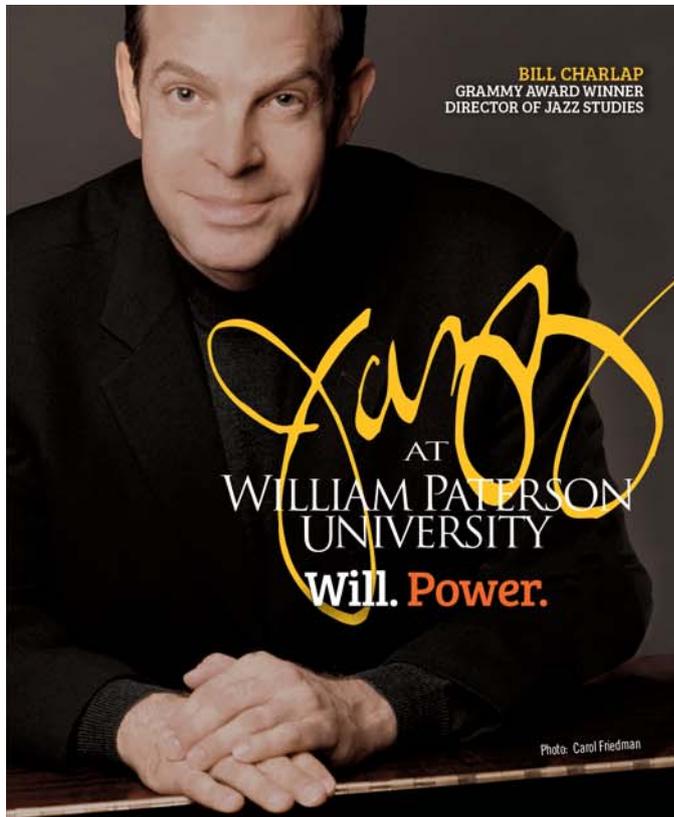
Leaving Altoona, Lozier wound up busking in Key West, Florida. "It was a great place to be homeless," she said. "Well, not great, but it's warm and the people are openly drunk and loose with their money."

It wasn't hard to score drugs there, either. Lozier struggled with heroin addiction and, after getting clean, moved to Minneapolis. "After two years I got sick of working at Applebee's and teaching piano," she recalled. "Then one day, a sound engineer heard me sing and said, 'I have an opening for a gig on Tuesday night. Do you have a band?' Of course I didn't, but I lied, then threw one together and I've been working ever since."

Thus The Vagabonds were born. The group is centered around Lozier and her husband, trumpeter Zack Lozier. They decided together to make the new album at Nashville's Compass Studios. "This was really out-of-the-box for me," the singer admitted. "Doing this would mean less control for me. But I fell in love with the piano. The vibe was nice."

Some of Nashville's best session players were recruited for the project, including trombonist Roland Barber and organist Reese Wynans. "Those guys latched onto every nuance we were trying to get," Zack Lozier said of the top-shelf collaborators. "On 'Magic Kisses,' for example, I'd developed my trumpet parts, but I didn't have anything for the trombone. Roland came up with all the trombone parts. That just made the tune."

Both husband and wife agree that *Sugar Drops* marks a new artistic peak for the singer. "So many people never settle into who they really are," the vocalist noted. "They just do what they do because they want to be Oscar Peterson or Muddy Waters or Britney Spears. But I am what I am: a chubby, 40-year-old woman who's still doing it." —Bob Doerschuk



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Erik Charlston plays vibraphone and marimba on a new album centered on works by Brazilian composers.

Charlston Continues His Brazilian Journey

WHEN DOWNBEAT RECENTLY CAUGHT UP with the multitasking master Erik Charlston at Manhattan's Symphony Space, he was amid a typically chameleonic week: playing vibes on jazz gigs, rehearsing for a production of *Turandot* at the Metropolitan Opera, subbing as percussionist in the pit for *The Lion King* on Broadway and, not least, promoting his 10-year-old band JazzBrasil, which has released its second album, *Hermeto: Voice And Wind* (Sunnyside). About half the album's tracks were written by Brazilian multi-instrumentalist Hermeto Pascoal.

Despite all his musical genre-hopping, it's Charlston's ability to dance a mean mambo that might lead to his most visible role yet: a part in Steven Spielberg's upcoming remake of *West Side*

Story. With his hair slicked back and wearing a pink 1950s-style tuxedo, Charlston plays the maracas-wielding bandleader in the musical's "The Dance at the Gym" scene.

He landed the part because of a chance encounter with Spielberg during recording sessions for the film's score, for which he was hired to play percussion (including the indelible vibraphone part in the song "Cool"). When the scene was filmed, Charlston said, "I had these maracas, and I happened to know how to do the mambo, so I started dancing with them. And Spielberg says, 'Keep doing that,' and moves the camera in closer." That shot may or may not make it to the final cut, but it was an once-in-a-lifetime experience for Charlston.

A native of Chicago, Charlston moved to New York in the 1980s to earn a master's degree at The Juilliard School (studying percussion and voice). His vibraphone and vocal skills, and his interest in Brazilian music, are well deployed on the new album. (He also sings on two tracks.) The all-star band includes Ted Nash on saxophone, clarinet and flute, pianist Mark Soskin, bassist Jay Anderson, drummer/percussionist Rogério Boccato and percussionist Keita Ogawa.

"[Charlston is] classically trained, but he's also a helluva improviser," Soskin said. "He gathered some amazing tunes for us from Pascoal's vast repertoire." Also featured are songs composed by two other Brazilian stars: multi-instrumentalist Egberto Gismonti and singer/songwriter Lenine.

"When I first came to New York," Charlston recalled, "I started hearing a lot of Brazilian music, but Hermeto's music was different from everything else." Pascoal, still touring at 83, writes highly personal music inspired by his upbringing on a farm in a remote section of Brazil's northeast, tapping into the natural sounds and rhythms he heard growing up.

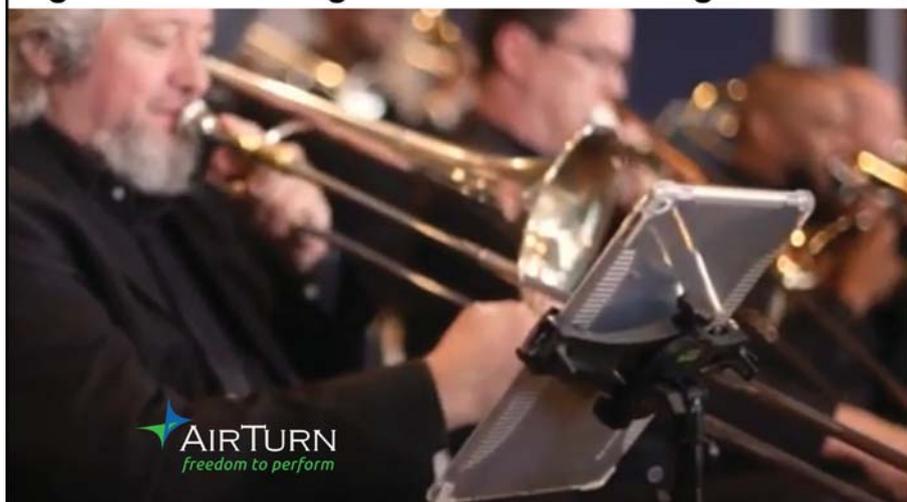
"Birds, cows, pigs, burbling streams—it was all music to him," Charlston said. "He once had [percussionist] Airto [Moreira] squeeze a pig in the studio, because that's the sound he wanted. Hermeto will play a choro, and it might start out sounding like a regular choro, but midway through the tune it takes a left and just explodes. I thought, 'This would sound great on mallet instruments.'"

Pascoal's music is not just grooves and pretty melodies; it can be dissonant and frenetic, with what Charlston calls "a thick jazz vocabulary." He added, "You know about his 'Música Da Lagoa,' where the musicians play in the lagoon? He put his whole heart into that piece; it wasn't a stunt. Like he says, 'Tudo é som.'" (The phrase can be translated as "Everything is sound.")

"Ten years ago, I organized the group in order to play Hermeto's music with my friends, like Ted, Mark and Jay, plus Brazilian drummers to provide the earthy rhythms. I'd be riding that wave [on vibes and marimba] because they're such great players." The first JazzBrasil album, *Essentially Hermeto* (Sunnyside), was released in 2011 to critical raves.

Charlston, who taught percussion at Manhattan School of Music for 20 years, feels that he now is putting into practice the lessons he tried to impart in the classroom: "I always told my students to follow their hearts. Some will want to sing lieder. Some will want to play bebop. My whole thing is, 'Follow your heart.' I did that and it made all things possible for me. I relate to Hermeto in the same way. He heard things as a kid that moved him and followed his heart. I'm so inspired by what he achieved. Like Joseph Campbell said, 'Follow your bliss, and doors will open where there were walls.'" —Allen Morrison

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Polish Musicians Merge Art, Business

THE INAUGURAL EDITION OF JAZZ FORUM SHOWCASE POWERED

by Szczecin Jazz—which ran from Oct. 1–3 in Szczecin, a bustling city in northwest Poland—gestated about three years ago. That’s when Asia Pieczykolan, the managing editor of Poland’s Jazz Forum magazine, began strategizing ways to guide Poland’s fertile pool of musicians through the complexities of the music business.

“I work with them every day, and I know the problems they face,” she said. “I thought it would be great to create an event like jazzahead! in Bremen [Germany], and I started looking for a partner.” So, she contacted Sylwester Ostrowski, a 43-year-old saxophonist who has produced the Szczecin Jazz Festival since 2016. “They are fantastic musicians,” she continued. “But they don’t know the reality of how the music industry works. Sylwester is a great musician and a great businessman in one person.”

On Oct. 3, Ostrowski’s Culture Revolution project, which he co-leads with trumpeter Keyon Harrold, delivered a rousing collaboration with vocalist Lizz Wright. This was preceded by a poetic opening set by Polish pianist Marcin Wasilewski and his trio.

The October event also featured a series of intelligently organized panels on subjects like “Challenges Facing Jazz Musicians in the 21st Century,” “The Audience, Meaning Who?” and “Ready for Export,” as well as presentations with tips on interacting with journalists, bookers and promoters. These transpired after 10 a.m. sessions in which members from each of the eight showcase bands endeavored to encapsulate their essence in five minutes before taking questions. Later, at 6 p.m. sharp, at the headquarters of Radio Szczecin, came the concerts, four bands a night during the first two nights, streamed live on Worldwide FM.

Each displayed high musicianship and played original music. Ostrowski



Vocalist Lizz Wright (foreground) and trumpeter Keyon Harrold perform with Sylwester Ostrowski on Oct. 3 during the Jazz Forum Showcase in Szczecin, Poland.

KASIA STANCZYK

described their common threads: “Our musicians have a Polish feeling, a kind of energizing tension that’s combined with this romantic melancholy that is super-specific for the Polish mood, close to blues in the U.S. We lived through Communism and other difficult things. ... [W]e all have the blues.”

On the second night, bassist Damian Kostka and drummer Adam Zagorski propelled kinetic sets by ZK Collaboration and Weezdob Collective, the latter postulating post-bop vocabulary, rendered idiomatically, without cliches, by pianist Mateusz Gawęda and alto saxophonist Maciej Kadziela. “I think our scene needs this showcase,” said Kadziela, 29. “ZK Collaboration has played more or less everywhere in Poland the last few years, and we’re running out of places. The idea is to show the world, ‘Yeah, we’re here; come on, check us out.’”

— Ted Panken



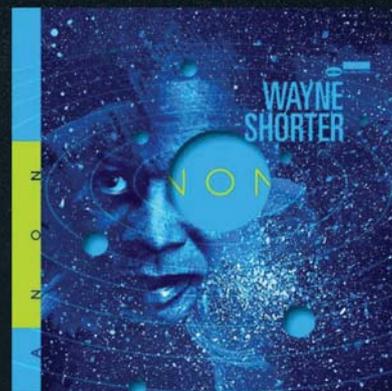
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PLAYING DANGEROUSLY

By Phillip Lutz | Photo by Muga Miyahara

“Kaleidoscope,” the opening track on **Hiromi Uehara’s** new solo album, **Spectrum**, features the dazzling displays of pianism that have become her trademark: cascading waves of right-hand notes; countervailing left-hand runs that pull, like rip currents, against the sonic flow; melodic figures that appear, disappear and reappear in mutated form amid the roiling sea of sound. The spectacle astounds.

But beyond the spectacle—and beneath the keyboard—lies the source of a telling twist: the piano’s sostenuto pedal. An oft-ignored appendage that sustains selected tones, the pedal, under Hiromi’s foot, transforms the most unassuming phrases in “Kaleidoscope” into pulsating facsimiles of digital delay. The strategy—and it is decidedly that—is both aesthetically striking and designed to heighten the piano’s appeal to 21st-century ears.

“I love the instrument and I want people to know its potential,” she said.

Few pianists exploit the potential of their instruments with the range of skill and emotion that Hiromi has at her disposal. Even at her most effulgent, she is the most intimate of pianists—an effortlessly charismatic communicator who, through her music, evangelizes for the instrument. And, in making that case, few documents testify more powerfully than *Spectrum* (Telarc).

Recorded in February 2018 when she was 39 years old, the new nine-track collection is the second in a series of solo albums she’s set to release marking 10-year increments in her life. At 29, she recorded *Place To Be* (Telarc), her first solo album. She plans to record the third album in the solo series when she is 49.

That Hiromi observes these milestones with solo albums is no coincidence. While her involvement with

other formats is no less formidable—her duo and trio work in particular have electrified audiences—solo performance, by her own account, holds both a fascination for her intellect and a mirror to her musical soul.

“The more I play solo, the more challenging it gets,” she said. “It’s like a never-ending adventure for me. I just want to be alone with the piano, looking at myself as a pianist.”

The solo work has won the admiration of impresarios like George Wein, founder of the Newport Jazz Festival. “When she’s playing solo, nothing gets in her way,” said Wein, who has since 2006 booked her at the festival five times, in both solo and trio formats, and, along with fellow pianists Jacky Terrasson and the late Cedar Walton, in a series of solo “summit” concerts in 2011. “Playing solo, you get the most out of Hiromi.”

The summit concerts were scheduled at a time when Hiromi was emerging as a notable solo voice. *Place To Be*, a two-disc set released in 2009, had been garnering raves for the scope and execution of its offerings, from the relentlessly lyrical title track







Hiromi's new release is the solo-piano album *Spectrum*.

“I COMPOSED SONGS IMAGINING THEM PLAYING. I HAD THEM IN MY MIND.”

(a duo version of which had appeared in 2008 on a Concord release with Chick Corea, *Duet: Chick & Hiromi*) to the three-part “Viva! Vegas” (a mini-suite that is, well, kaleidoscopic in its evocation of Sin City).

Despite the praise, the success of *Place To Be* was by no means preordained. Hiromi's five previous albums, all combo works, had not necessarily prepared her for the solo effort. “There was a lot of work with other people, and she wasn't completely exposed,” said Michael Bishop, who has produced or engineered nearly all of her albums for the past decade through his Five/Four Productions. “She was more apprehensive about how a solo piano recording was going to be accepted in the world.”

The recording session, in fact, took some time to find its footing. “For me as the engineer,”

Bishop said, “it seemed like the project overall was more work because it wasn't her familiar element.” But, he said, things began to fall into place during an evening session when, as the night grew late and the studio lights were dimmed, she dug into the title tune. “She created such an incredible moment.”

Recalling the moment, Hiromi grew animated as she discussed how, when the atmosphere in the studio changed, so too did her relationship to her instrument: “It made me feel more focused. It made me feel as though it's me and the piano. I could really feel every sound of the piano, the overtones, all these [sonic] details.”

A decade later, that feeling returned with added potency at the recording session for *Spectrum*. “There was a lot more confidence,” Bishop recalled. “It was just off and running.

It didn't ramp up like *Place To Be* did. She just ripped right into it. Within 10 minutes of doing our sound check, she was doing the first takes of ‘Rhapsody In Blue.’ We were recording ‘keeper’ takes within the first half hour.”

The intention on the first day was simply to run a sound check. But the plush surroundings in Skywalker Sound, the studio at filmmaker George Lucas' Marin County ranch, induced in Hiromi a kind of adrenaline rush and, in two extended takes, she produced the material that became “Rhapsody In Various Shades Of Blue.”

“I was just happy to play,” she said. “It was such a beautiful studio. It made me feel 10 times better a pianist than I am. I could hear all the details. It felt like shooting stars were coming at me. ‘Wow. This makes me listen to the music.’”

The track, which at more than 22 minutes is by far the album's longest, is essentially a medley with extended improvisations on George Gershwin's “Rhapsody In Blue,” John Coltrane's “Blue Train” and The Who's “Behind Blue Eyes.” Synthesizing the tunes—disparate favorites from her childhood—she creates a de facto disquisition on 20th-century piano technique, sustaining a throughline as she evokes the melodic effusions of Art Tatum, the rhythmic agitations of Erroll Garner and the harmonic declamations of post-Romantic players from Sergei Rachmaninoff on.

Referring to notes he kept as the session unfolded, Bishop said that, after completing the

takes, the group called it a night. Come morning, small inserts were made to “Rhapsody” before Hiromi and the crew moved on to recording the title track—a voluble set of variations in its own right.

Hiromi then took it down several notches with “Whiteout,” a meditation on snowstorms realized without a blizzard of notes. Inspired by a walk in the snow, the melody had come to her quickly—and just as quickly she sang it into her phone’s recorder before it atomized like so many snowflakes. “It was a gift,” she said, demurring when asked for details about the productive stroll, a self-imposed gag order she hoped would help preserve the song’s universality. “I try not to specify the place.”

In contrast, she was quite willing to discuss matters of time and place when it came to the writing of “Mr. C.C.” The tune, which began the third day of recording at Skywalker, grew out of an assignment at Boston’s Berklee College of Music, from which she graduated in 2003. Enlisted to provide improvised accompaniment to a silent film, she was taken by the experience and began immersing herself in the work of the form’s master, Charlie Chaplin.

“I felt something really personal,” she said, “I felt some similarity between how I play the piano and how he acts. Then I started to write [music] for his films, not specific films but clips from this and that film.” She began to draw parallels between, on one hand, the ability of the piano’s black and white keys to make her hear colors and, on the other, the impact of Chaplin’s movies on her visual sense. “His films are black-and-white, but his expressions made me see so many colors.”

The resulting track is at once a hyper-articulated exercise in two-fisted virtuosity and a mad-cap analog to the kind of controlled anarchy embodied by Chaplin. In the studio, the match between Chaplin’s films and Hiromi’s music became clear when Bishop, Hiromi and her manager, Laura Hess-Hay, gathered in the control room and listened to a playback of “Mr. C.C.” as Skywalker engineer Dann Thompson screened a random Chaplin film.

“Hiromi didn’t have that film in mind when she composed the tune, but it worked perfectly,” Bishop said.

The antic mood then shifted as Hiromi tackled “Once In A Blue Moon.” The tune is a study in contrasting dynamics, a light bounce set off by a section Bishop labeled “heavy metal.” The section, he said, proved a bit knotty, with Hiromi opting for several takes to strike the right tone. “Some of them were really aggressive,” he said. “She didn’t want to have an over-the-top aggressive [tone]; she wanted to have just the right amount of aggression on that.”

Though Hiromi didn’t recall applying the expression “heavy metal” per se, she did take note of the sudden shift in dynamics from a soft start to a “really loud” section in which she attacks the

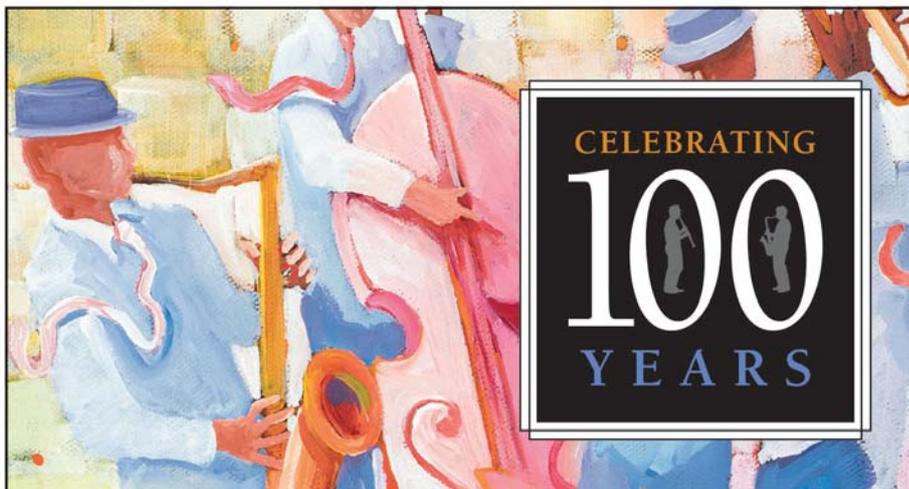
keyboard at its bottom end. The moment exemplifies her predilection for making full use of the instrument, including its percussive side.

The session then took yet another turn with “Sepia Effect,” a gauzy reminiscence built on melodic fragments inspired by her paging through photo books from her school years. “Whenever I write these kinds of fragments,” she said, “I write down certain words. ‘What was the image? What struck me?’ I wrote something like, ‘some old photo,’ ‘nostalgic.’” Finished last year, “Sepia Effect” closed both the third day’s record-

ing and the album itself.

The fourth and final day of recording opened with a bang: the recording of the aforementioned “Kaleidoscope,” one of several *Spectrum* tracks with titles that refer to colors. The tune proved to be one of the most complex and risky to negotiate. Beyond the tricky maneuvers with the sostenuto pedal, the challenge, she said, lay in the open framework for improvisation: “The only rule was playing something. That freedom made it difficult.”

But the risk paid off, according to Bishop:



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Hiromi's diverse discography includes collaborations with pianist Chick Corea and harpist Edmar Castaneda.

"She had to put herself in a zone of no-thinking—just playing. That's ultimately what it took. We had one take where the whole solo went absolutely perfectly, and she landed on one perfectly, and we knew when it happened."

From there, the session wound down. "Yellow Wurlitzer Blues," a deceptively relaxed number inspired by the titular vintage keyboard—one acquired by the owner of a favorite hangout for her to play—draws liberally on a stretch of free-swinging piano-blues history, from James P. Johnson to Oscar Peterson, even as it momentarily skirts the edge of atonality.

That tune slipped naturally into her session-ending version of Paul McCartney's "Blackbird." A longtime favorite of hers often played for the crew during sound checks, she said, it generated queries from them: "They asked, 'Why didn't you play it in the show?' But I hadn't come up with an arrangement. It really touched the deep side of my heart. I was looking for the right place to land the song. I finally found it. I have reason to play it now."

The arrangement opens with a straightforward rendering of McCartney's melody and chords, followed by an improvisation that hews closely to their outline. But as the tune nears its end, Hiromi begins to refract the harmonies, bending more toward abstraction with each melodic repetition. "I felt the melody pushing me to play different chords," she recalled. "It really worked out well."

For Hiromi, the urge to put her stamp on notated works was noticed early on, as was her affinity for solo performance. The latter revealed itself at age 6, when, as a recitalist in the Japanese coastal city of Hamamatsu, she won praise from

her teacher for her poise at the keyboard. "I remember her saying, 'You play better onstage than in the practice room,'" Hiromi recalled.

Her irrepressible inventiveness, meanwhile, became obvious in the practice room. Taking to the woodshed the way other children took to video games, she said, she had, by age 8, been exposed to Peterson and Garner, and, in the years that followed, begun turning Hanon exercises—the mechanistic sine qua non of piano pedagogy—into swinging vehicles for improvisation.

Her penchant for syncopating the classical literature spread to pieces like Beethoven's Sonata No. 8, the "Pathétique." "I was reading the piece as most of the students do," she said. "But then, because I would listen to so much jazz, I was introduced to a different flavor of chords. I wanted to add some tensions—so I added sus chords."

Hiromi never stopped experimenting with the sonata. She uses its adagio—one of Beethoven's purest melodies—as a delicately rendered jumping-off point for a slightly kicky jazz ballad that closes 2011's *Voice* (Telarc), the first of four trio albums she recorded with bassist Anthony Jackson and drummer Simon Phillips.

Phillips recalled that he used brushes on the tune, an experience he did not often have in decades of playing with rockers like Jack Bruce, Jeff Beck and The Who. Not that brushes were his go-to choice with Hiromi, whose appreciation for said musicians was amply reflected in her trio concept.

"She's a huge fan of all those people," he said. "She has a huge listening curve."

Unaware of her fondness for high-voltage music, he was surprised when in 2010 Hess-Hay called to recruit him for Hiromi's trio. "I said,

'Really?' She said, 'Yes, and it would be you and Anthony Jackson.' I said, 'That would be interesting. But are you aware of what I play, my drum kit? It's like a rock 'n' roll drum kit.' She said, 'Hiromi wants that.' And that's how the whole thing started."

The experience, he said, was liberating, especially compared with some small-group situations he's encountered outside the rock world. "I've always been fairly bombastic, energetic, looking for a different way around playing things. A lot of people tend to be a little more reserved. So, in a lot of lineups, I've had to curb my enthusiasm, as it were. With her, it was like all the gates were open. Off you go. What I loved was the challenge."

The challenge, Bishop said, actually worked both ways. Hiromi's original trios had mostly been composed of personal friends from Berklee. "Then she made the leap to recording exclusively with Anthony and Simon. That took everything to a much higher level of discipline as far as the attitude toward the work. She was learning a lot from Anthony and Simon, who had much broader experience. But their challenge was that they had never played with anybody like her. So, they had to up their game to keep up."

Before hiring them, Hiromi was well aware of both Phillips and Jackson, who had performed with everyone from Chick Corea to singer Chaka Khan, and played on two of Phillips' albums—*Force Majeure* (1992) and *Another Lifetime* (1999). "Simon and Anthony were complete musicians—very strong musicians with strong characteristics," she said. "So, I composed songs imagining them playing. I had them in my mind. This made the trio really powerful."

Part of the power came from the sense of possibility Hiromi engendered. For touring, she said, she viewed her arrangements “like a blueprint; the structure can change freely.” Phillips fancied that attitude: “She was like, ‘I want to play all these songs for the new album, but we’re going to play one new song every set.’ We’d barely rehearsed. Talk about brave. Anthony and I would look at each other and go, ‘Which one is this?’ I would go, ‘Is this the one in 17 or the one in 5?’ I loved it—I love playing dangerously.”

Before recording, Phillips was a bit more circumspect. He spent time studying Hiromi’s piano demo and PDF files of the music: “I would listen to them and look at the chart and go, ‘Part of it is playable, part of it is totally unplayable.’” At that point, he would fall into default mode. “Let’s say the chart’s in 7. I would just play the easiest pattern I could play. But then I’d listen to where the key points of the phrase are, in terms of that 7. Then when I’d listen to all the tunes coming in, I’d go, ‘Hmm. We’ve got three tunes in 7.’ This is where my production approach comes in. I’d look at one song and go, ‘I could play this normal or I could look for something totally different on this.’”

One tune in 7/4 on which he did the unexpected was “Take Me Away,” off the trio’s last album, 2016’s *Spark* (Telarc): “It’s almost a composed part, almost like a pop song. It’s almost like a sequence drum pattern. What I did to come up

with that, I needed to just play around that particular groove. I took Pro Tools and I looped the first melody and I just started very sparsely. Maybe one kick beat. ‘Let’s see how the backbeat is going to hit; how does this feel?’ And in 20 minutes I had a part.”

The processing obviously worked, contributing as it did to four acclaimed albums. In addition, Phillips said, he played 346 live dates with Hiromi’s trio, from June 2011 to April 2017. The run, which included three tours of Japan, dispelled any early reservations. And, he admitted, there were some. At the first show, in San Francisco, he said, “I really still had my doubt as to how this was going to work in a live context.” But long before the final gig, at Parque Trasloma in Guadalajara, Mexico, he had become a true believer.

Bishop witnessed the way the trio jelled: “They really started working more as a flock of birds, turning instantly and going in opposite directions. They could just do anything; if she took it in another direction, they were with her and vice versa.”

That kind of *simpatico* has, to one degree or another, also characterized her duo collaborations, whether with keyboard monsters like Corea and Michel Camilo or, more recently, with harpist Edmar Castaneda.

The pairing of piano and harp, she said, constituted something of a delicate dance. “Each sec-

ond, I’d try to avoid the range he’d play. Even in the improvisation, I was trying to understand where he plays chords, accompaniments.”

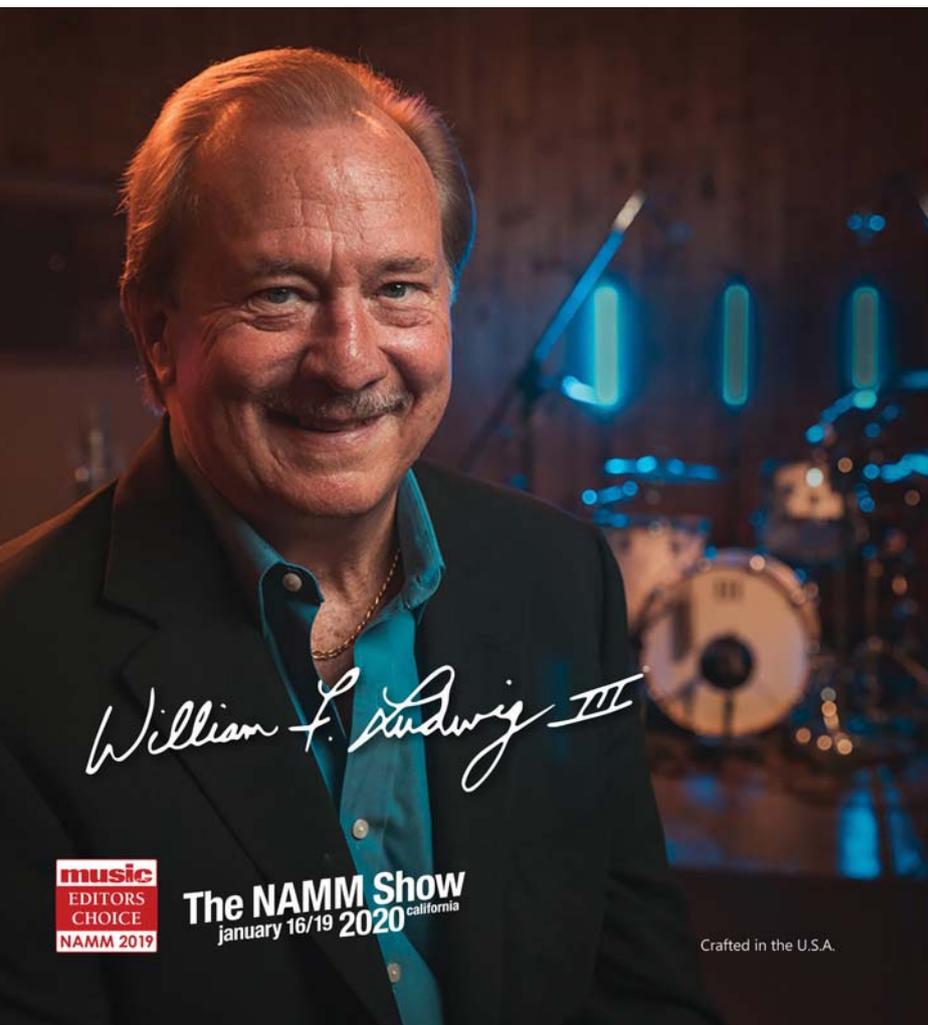
Castaneda, who also had collaborated with pianists like Gonzalo Rubalcaba, did not play down the challenges: “To mix harp with piano is very difficult. We have almost the same rules. If you open a piano, inside it’s a harp. You have so many notes and all the harmonics. You have to divide your roles. It’s very difficult to make space for everything.”

But from their first gig, at New York’s Blue Note in 2017, clashes were virtually nonexistent. Thrust onstage with no time to bond musically beyond a sound check, he said, “It sounded like we knew each other for years.” Hiromi was satisfied enough to book a tour with Castaneda that culminated in the 2017 duo album *Live In Montreal* (Telarc).

Despite—or, perhaps, because of—all the small-unit work she has been doing, Hiromi is, for the future, thinking big. Among her aspirations: “I want to push my big band writing.”

For the moment, however, she is embarking on a 50-city solo tour of Europe and the United States. And next August, according to Wein, Hiromi might be playing solo again at Newport. That is a prospect that, for Hiromi—a giant of pianism in a compact frame—hardly qualifies as thinking small: “There are many different projects I want to achieve.”

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Jane Bunnett & Maqueque

SIMPATICO



SYNCOINATION

By J.D. Considine | Photo by Rick McGinnis



Reedist Jane Bunnett's first-hand observations of the Havana jazz scene spurred the foundation of Maqueque, a collaborative six-piece ensemble.

It's the first day of September, and a chill off Lake Ontario has reduced the crowds around Toronto's Harbourfront Centre to a trickle. But it's plenty hot inside the Bill Boyle Artport's Brigantine Room, where Jane Bunnett & Maqueque are in the second of three kinetic sets.

At the moment, they're working their way through the title track from their third album, *On Firm Ground/Tierra Firme* (Linus), a funky, minor-key tune that, in its recorded version, nicely balances the melodic discipline of Cuban son with the rhythmic and harmonic elaboration of jazz.

Onstage, however, the tune has been hijacked by the rhythm section, which turns the syncopated refrain into a monster clavé, not only fueling lengthy solos from soprano saxophonist Bunnett, pianist Dánae Olano and vocalist Joanna Majoko, but also igniting several layers of rhythmic interplay among drummer Yissy García, *conguera* Mary Paz and bassist Tailin Marrero. At a certain point, it's as if the riff departs the song and becomes the basis for lengthy and spirited improvisation that lifts both band and audience to a higher plane.

The next day, Bunnett reflected on the show. "I think that's the added ingredient of having Joanna in the group," she said, regarding the band's invigorated dynamism. Bunnett and the other five musicians were sitting in the living room of the comfortable Victorian she and her spouse—trumpeter and producer Larry Cramer—own in the Parkdale section of Toronto. "Even though we're rooted in Cuban music, my foundation is jazz. The same with Joanna," she said, referring to the band's newest member, who was discovered through a recording of her singing along to Charlie Parker solos.

"Even though we're Afro-Cuban, we are a

jazz group, and I want to always keep that in mind, because I think that's the way the group will develop and become more unique, and be able to make even a stronger statement with what we're doing."

Making a statement was, to some extent, Bunnett's original intention with the band, as she assembled Maqueque partially to demonstrate that women in the Cuban jazz scene weren't getting the attention they deserved.

"For about 35 years, Larry and I had been working with Cuban musicians that were guys," she explains. "Pedrito Martinez and Dafnis Prieto, Francisco Mela, David Virelles ... there's a long list.

"And then, later, I was going into the conservatories with Larry, and we were taking instruments." Those efforts were done through a charity called Spirit of Music, which distributed and repaired instruments for students in Cuba's music conservatories. With each visit, Bunnett noticed the same thing: "Most of the programs had more women than guys. But I was never seeing women out on the scene. I kept talking about it, and Larry finally said, 'Why don't you do a project?'"

With the help of singer Daymé Arocena, who became a founding member of Maqueque, Bunnett looked at numerous candidates before narrowing her list down to players "who I thought had jazz skills coming along. And then we went down to Cuba to meet the [musicians] I felt were going to [possibly start] this group."

Despite frustrating rehearsals in a rented

hall that kept losing its electricity, eventually the band came together in the studio, and everything clicked. Its self-titled debut on Justin Time topped the category Jazz Album of the Year—Group at the 2015 Juno Awards.

"It was like, 'Hey, maybe there is something here,'" Bunnett recalled. "And then we embarked on our first Canadian tour, with the original group."

After the ensemble recorded its acclaimed 2016 sophomore album, *Oddara* (Linus), and hit the road yet again, Arocena left the ranks to pursue a solo career. She returned as a guest contributor to *On Firm Ground/Tierra Firme* and composed the track "Mystery Of Jane's House." The album's other guests are singer Melvis Santa and vocalist/steel guitar player Nikki D Brown.

Touring has turned out to be an essential element in Maqueque's development. "A lot of bands, they go out just a couple times a year, and then they all go off and do their own things," Bunnett said. "We've really put a lot of roadwork in now, but we have also, as a group, spent a lot of time in the house here because we have to wait for the visas."

Ah, yes, the visas. Whereas Canada has maintained diplomatic relations with Cuba for decades, relations between the United States and Cuba have been difficult, if not hostile, in the decades since Fidel Castro's forces overthrew Fulgencio Batista in 1959. There was a brief thaw under President Barack Obama's administration, resulting in easier passage of people and goods between the two countries, but the Trump administration undid that—and then some.

"If you want to bring people from Cuba to the U.S., it's difficult ... So, we have to bring them from Cuba to Toronto," Bunnett said.

"But even before that, we've got to petition the State Department, line up all our dates—

which is very, very complicated—send that to the State Department. When we get the approval, which can take some time, then we make the appointments at the embassy here for them to go in and get their visas. And then they get their visas; hopefully it's before our tour starts."

As a result, band members can spend weeks waiting in Bunnett's house. It's almost like the old days of bus tours, where band members lived in close contact for months. "Yeah, it is, except that we can cook," Bunnett, quipped, generating a wave of laughter among her bandmates. "And everybody here is a pretty good cook."

But the sense of togetherness goes well beyond room and board. Marrero, García and Paz, in particular, operate almost as a single organism within the band, reacting to the others, while at the same time prompting them, offering a pulse that is complex, melodic and uniquely compelling—especially since instead of having one master drummer, Maqueque has two.

When DownBeat mentioned the interplay between the three musicians—particularly the agility with which Marrero's bass plays off the piano while somehow interweaving with the drums and percussion—it sparked considerable chatter. Because these Cuban artists understand a fair amount of English but speak

very little, their comments were translated by Olano.

"They're connected," Olano said. "They were preconnected, because back in Cuba, they play together. And because of that, it's like we look at each other, and we know what we want from each other. What happens with the energy, it's something, um, we'll say like magic. And we go following each other, especially the three of them, because that's how it goes with a Cuban group. In the son, it is all about syncopation. So, that's what they do, and that's the polyrhythm we have."

What's truly astonishing is how intricate, yet natural feeling, that polyrhythm is. Paz—who studied with Irakere co-founder Oscar Valdés and even played in his group Diákara—is exceptionally gifted at articulating a phrase that will alter the rhythmic current of the band. But García, who might be one of the finest Cuban drummers of her generation, is even slyer, regularly shifting within the pocket to expand and contract the space between beats.

Bunnett joked about the complexities of García's rhythmic patterns: "I don't want to think about that, because then I'll get messed up." But the beauty of García's playing is that you don't have to think about it, because the feel is so natural.

"I think the connection within the culture,

with Cuban music, as well as jazz, is that understanding of trust," Majoko noted. "We can go off, but everyone's really hypersensitive in their listening. It's like you can be free, and know that it's all going to come together."

There's also a sense of equality within the group that keeps that communal vibe ringing true. The group is billed as Jane Bunnett & Maqueque, but the Canadian reedist—who is a generation older than her bandmates—objects to the notion of a star system in jazz. "The problem with some groups is it's too much about the 'star' in the group," she opined. "It may sound bullshit-y humble saying it, but I really do believe that in all the great groups, you kind of give yourself up to something bigger than what your part is. What we're doing is just channeling, to try and make a beautiful statement that hopefully transforms people, makes them feel better."

For her, Maqueque's greatest strength is that the individuality of the musicians' voices is enhanced by the collectivity of their effort. "For the new album, everybody wrote for the record," Bunnett explained. "But then we workshop it together. We collaborate and throw around ideas."

"That's the special thing about this group," Olano added. "Because I'm not a drummer, and I respect a drummer, I will ask her, 'Hey, do you

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think this will work? How do you think we can improve this, make it better? The same thing with Mary Paz. Same thing with Tailin, same with Joanna. I respect everyone, and everyone's opinion, because that's what musicianship is. To make a group as close as we are to each other, and make the music out of it, I think that's something in general that helps. So, I just throw out the parts, and Tailin starts telling me: 'Hey, how come I'm gonna play this?' 'No, there is a note that isn't clear in there.' 'OK, let's fix it.' That's just the way it goes."

Olano, who composed the new album's title track, cited it as an example. She started working on the tune during a band break, while she was staying at Bunnett's house, working on her classical repertoire in hopes of being accepted as one of the six students admitted annually into the Glenn Gould program at the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto.

It was a difficult period for the pianist because she was constantly practicing—12 hours a day—to master the repertoire. "Dánae's at the piano, driving everybody cuckoo because she wanted to get into school," recalled Bunnett, who, at the time, was wrestling with mixed feelings. "I didn't say anything to her, because it seemed like she really wanted to do it," she explained. "But in the meantime, I felt like I'm just supporting her to leave the band."

In the end, Olano was not accepted into the program, and she suspects it was because of an interview question: "One of the questions was, 'Will you keep playing with Jane while you are here studying?' And I said I could. I handled that in the past, at the University of Arts in Havana, which is a high-level institution in our country. I told them I managed to do what I had to. Why can't I do both?"

Apparently, that was not the right answer. Olano's subsequent anger and frustration about not being admitted into the program were poured into a new song—"On Firm Ground."

"I started writing in a moment that was difficult to understand," Olano said. "And the title for that song, at first, was 'Evicted.' That was the title."

"No, even before 'Evicted,' it was something else," Bunnett remembered. "It was like, 'I Don't Care What You Think.'" She laughed. "And I said, you can't call a song 'I Don't Care What You Think.'"

"Yeah," Olano agreed. "At the end, that was a wakeup call. Because at the end of the day, this is what I enjoy. I enjoy being on the road. I enjoy the scenario. I enjoy that I don't have to stay at the piano for 12 hours. I'll keep doing well, and even though I don't go through your beautiful conservatory, I will keep fighting for who I am, and who I want to become in the future."

In Cuba, the relationship between classical and popular music is fraught for some players. Cuba's classical roots run deep—the first operatic concert in Havana took place in 1776, a full 20 years before an opera would be performed in the United States—whereas jazz was once deemed culturally corrupt by Castro's government. Although most of the Cuban members of Maqueque went through years of conservatory training, Paz did not, because the institutions didn't teach conga or *bata* drumming there. From her perspective, that was an advantage. "She says what's good about studying privately is that she got to start playing pretty early," Olano said, translating her colleague's statement.

"I was like the worst classical student," García said.

"Whenever you want someone to teach you popular music, you've got to go out and play," Olano said. "You've got to ask for a lesson, because at our school, they would kick your ass out of school for playing that." As she mimed a teacher whacking her fingers, Bunnett asked, "What if they heard you playing a *tumbao*?"

"If they heard me playing a *tumbao*?" Olano said, then momentarily paused. "It'd be like, 'You're breaking the piano!' And I'm like, 'Hello? This is my music. This is my identity.'"

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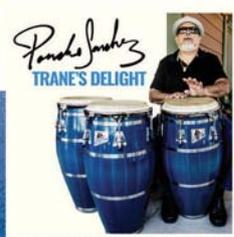
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Hank Mobley

MASTER OF CONTRASTS

One night in November 1955, a cooperative then known as The Jazz Messengers took the stage of New York's Cafe Bohemia. Their performance would yield two albums (*At The Cafe Bohemia, Volume 1* and *Volume 2* on Blue Note) and help spark the rise of hard-bop.

By Aaron Cohen

At 25 years old, tenor saxophonist Hank Mobley should already have been widely acclaimed for what he brought to the ensemble: making tricky tempo changes sound easy, playing with a big, full sound on ballads and penning strong compositions. But when his name was introduced on the first night at Cafe Bohemia, he received just a brief smattering of applause. That contrast between his incredible artistry and an audience's understated reaction encapsulates his career.

Critic Leonard Feather described Mobley as "the middleweight champion of the tenor saxophone." Likely not intended to be disrespectful, the phrase implied that his sound was somewhere between a heavy, aggressive style (like Sonny Rollins), and gently swinging one (like Lester Young). But the "middleweight" designation left him underappreciated in the annals of jazz history.

Additionally, Mobley retreated from the public eye for a number of years, which earned him a reputation for reclusiveness. Still, just as middleweight champion boxer Sugar Ray Robinson inspired the legendary Muhammad Ali, Mobley set the pace for many celebrated tenor saxophonists who followed his path, including his friend John Coltrane.

Now, with his induction into the DownBeat Hall of Fame more than 33 years after his death at age 55, Mobley's name has joined the ranks of the esteemed artists he influenced. Much of his best work has been assembled for the newly released eight-disc box set *The Complete Hank Mobley Blue Note Sessions 1963-70* (Mosaic). The collection illustrates the evolution of Mobley's instantly identifiable sound and his unique compositional approach. His muted harmonic twists and flowing rhythmic exchanges—while often hewing close to the blues—

offer a crucial statement on how jazz was transformed during that decade. Dissonance, electronic experimentation and more open-ended collective improvisation were not the only stylistic advances that marked what became known as "The '60s." Mobley's warm tone didn't necessarily coincide with clichés of the tumultuous era, as the saxophonist purposefully placed himself beyond perceived trends.

That individualism came across in one of his rare interviews, which he gave to writer John Litweiler for "Hank Mobley: The Integrity of the Artist—The Soul of the Man," which ran in the March 29, 1973, issue of DownBeat.

Mobley said to Litweiler: "When I was about 18, [my uncle] told me, 'If you're with somebody who plays loud, you play soft. If somebody plays fast, you play slow. If you try to play the same thing they're playing, you're in trouble.' Contrast."

That uncle, multi-instrumentalist Dave Mobley, encouraged the musical inclinations of his nephew, who picked up the tenor saxophone at around age 16. During the late 1940s and early 1950s, Mobley's experiences ranged from playing in r&b bands to a brief stint in the Duke Ellington Orchestra. But the bop revolution captured Mobley's passion as he started recording his own compositions in 1953, two years after drummer Max Roach brought him to New York.

In the early Jazz Messengers (before Art Blakey took the helm), Mobley's writing and improvisations incorporated advanced harmonic ideas while maintaining strong ties to the blues. On his mid-'50s Savoy records, Mobley's challenging compositions emboldened teenage trumpeter Lee Morgan, who would become one of the saxophonist's ongoing musical foils.

Blue Note signed Mobley as a bandleader in 1955, and for



Hank Mobley (1930–1986)



FRANCIS WOLFF © MOSAIC IMAGES LLC/MOSAICRECORDS/IMAGES.COM

Mobley with pianist McCoy Tyner at the recording sessions for *A Slice Of The Top* on March 18, 1966

the next 15 years he would record extensively for the label. The fervor in his playing and writing while he was in his mid to late twenties remains astonishing. Mobley recorded one of his landmark albums, *Soul Station*, in 1960, highlighting how, as the sole horn player, he engaged with a formidable rhythm section of Blakey, bassist Paul Chambers and pianist Wynton Kelly. The results are a triumph, especially the group's modern-leaning take on Irving Berlin's "Remember" and Mobley's assertiveness on his own "This I Dig Of You."

Mobley gained much wider attention when he joined Miles Davis' group in 1961. He plays on the trumpeter's album *Someday My Prince Will Come*, as well as two live LPs recorded at The Blackhawk in San Francisco. Mobley's earlier experience with Chambers and Kelly, Davis' rhythm section stalwarts, proved valuable. The saxophonist's tone highlighted what he described as "not a big sound, not a small sound, but a round sound," most vividly on ballads. This approach blended impeccably with the bandleader's muted tone.

In the Davis biography *So What*, writer John Szwed noted that with Mobley's blues inflections, "There was a hipness to his playing that reinforced Davis' popularity in black communities across America." But Davis did not speak so favorably about the saxophonist, and Coltrane and Wayne Shorter's roles with the trumpeter historically have overshadowed Mobley's short tenure in the band.

Just after leaving Davis, Mobley said that he delved into a recurring drug addiction that frequently kept him away from performing and recording. While incarcerated for drug possession, he used prison time to compose, and his sound continued to evolve after each setback

throughout the 1960s. Fortunately, as *Blue Note Sessions* shows, Mobley's record company stood by him, despite such episodes.

On 1964's *No Room For Squares*, Mobley conveyed quiet authority while allowing ample room for an especially spirited quintet. The group's unison lines on his "Three Way Split" give way to shifting rhythms in a fierce exchange among Mobley, bassist John Ore and drummer Philly Joe Jones.

Mobley extended his musical palette for the sextet LP *A Caddy For Daddy* (recorded in 1965). His waltz "The Morning After" sounds like it was written specifically for pianist McCoy Tyner.

Dippin' (also recorded in 1965) featured pianist Harold Mabern, whose robust blues feeling was a quality he shared with the leader. Mabern, who spoke to *DownBeat* about two weeks prior to his Sept. 17 death, somewhat agreed with a consensus that Mobley could be personally withdrawn. But he described the saxophonist as far from distant.

"Hank was a joy to be around, he never created problems, never got loud and boisterous," Mabern said of the sessions that produced *Dippin'*, the only album the two musicians made together. "He was pure in heart. Those are the things that made the date easy for us, but he was no pushover: He knew what he wanted; you couldn't jive him."

Mobley did not always adhere to a standard format, as illustrated by his 1966 octet recording, *A Slice Of The Top*. His sharp timing and command of all registers remained steadfast while he created long choruses for a distinctive brass section that included euphonium and tuba. While Duke Pearson was nominally in charge of the arrangements, they flowed from Mobley's instructions. The tracks range from a waltz in 6/8

time ("Cute 'N Pretty") to the title track's multidirectional groove.

The groundbreaking LP sat unreleased until 1979, about six years after Mobley expressed frustration at the amount of his material sitting in the Blue Note vault. His exasperation seems understandable, and the new Mosaic collection includes tracks from five compelling albums that were recorded in the 1960s but not released until the late '70s and mid-'80s. Still, as Mosaic producer Michael Cuscuna pointed out, Mobley and his contemporaries—including Morgan, Jimmy Smith and Grant Green—created more tracks than any label could have been expected to issue around the time they were recorded.

During Mobley's last years in the studio, his work also included covers of r&b hits, like the Four Tops' "Reach Out I'll Be There," as well as original compositions that emphasized immediately attractive melodies with repeating motifs, such as "The Flip." In some ways, these tracks show that after 20 years of invention, he never lost his feel for r&b.

Bassist Mickey Bass, who played on the saxophonist's 1970 Blue Note album, *Thinking Of Home*, said Mobley's compositional skills remained honed, regardless of the distractions or hardships he faced. "With both Hank and Lee Morgan, their genius was so great that in spite of their addictions, they would write out most of the tunes for the record date in the cab on the way to rehearsal," Bass recalled. "That genius was unheard of at that particular time."

In 1972, Mobley recorded his last album, *Breakthrough!*, a collaboration with pianist Cedar Walton. (It was released on the Cobblestone label and later reissued by Muse.)

Mobley continued his peripatetic lifestyle in the years that followed, but with the possibility of new music always out there. At the time of his 1973 *DownBeat* interview, Chicago was his home and he had started working with pianist Muhal Richard Abrams. No recording of the two is known to exist, which is a shame. Mobley's final years remain mysterious, but he was known to have suffered from lung cancer and bouts of homelessness. It's conceivable that he saw how his advanced ideas for composing and arranging on *A Slice Of The Top* became part of the lexicon for some of the groups coming out of Abrams' Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians.

As Bob Blumenthal writes in the liner notes to *Blue Note Sessions*, Mobley did achieve a moment of acclaim shortly before his death. When Blue Note experienced its rebirth in 1985, the label invited him to participate in a relaunch concert at New York's Town Hall. Mobley appeared at the event, but he chose to speak to the audience, rather than perform. In some regard, he didn't have to, as everyone present seemed to acknowledge that the label, and jazz itself, had thrived because of Mobley's contributions.

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Wayne Shorter won three categories in the 2019 DownBeat Readers Poll, including Jazz Artist.

Wayne Shorter

‘PROBING INTO THE UNLIMITED’

Members of Wayne Shorter’s quartet have heard some intriguing anecdotes over the years. “Miles believed in so much of Wayne’s orchestral writing, his large-form writing,” said bassist John Patitucci, referring to Shorter’s stint in Miles Davis’ band. “Not long before Miles passed, he kept saying to Wayne, ‘You gotta expose yourself.’ Because he wanted him to expose all his orchestrational power, and all the large-form things that he’d been working on all his life, sketches and things.



“Miles was the one who gave Wayne the idea to [record Shorter’s arrangement of] ‘Vendiendo Alegría,’ which was on the *Alegría* record,” Patitucci added. “We played it live a lot too, with orchestras.”

It’s clear that the orchestral portion of Shorter’s *Emanon* (Blue Note)—which won Jazz Album of the Year in both the 2019 DownBeat Readers Poll and Critics Poll—has been a long time coming. (Shorter also topped the Jazz Artist and Soprano Saxophone categories in the Readers Poll.)

The iconic saxophonist has been performing with symphony orchestras for years with his quartet, which, in addition to Patitucci, includes pianist Danilo Pérez and drummer Brian Blade. “We did stuff with the St. Louis Symphony, the Concertgebouw Orchestra, a lot of European [orchestras],” Patitucci said. “There are a lot of recordings that exist, I’m sure, but they have not come out. We were thrilled that *Emanon* could happen, frankly.”

The hurdles for having a project like *Emanon* come to fruition involve not only the cost of recording a large ensemble, but the fact that jazz and classical are seen by many as separate poles in music culture. Shorter, however, frequently has understood and explored many connections between the two genres.

“It’s all wrapped up in forging ahead,” Shorter said. “Like, do you know Mozart’s G minor Symphony No. 40? That can be the cymbal beat in jazz, straight jazz.” He then demon-

strated by singing the opening theme. Then he translated the phrase into a rhythmic pattern: “*Danga-dang, danga-dang, danga-dang-dang*,” making it sound like a skip-ride beat. “I’ll just throw it out there: Mozart was probing into the unlimited.

“In classical, there is an extreme, a desire to increase what you’d call musical vocabulary,” Shorter continued. “And then in jazz, you have a kind of vocabulary which, when increased, or expounded, or blown up, you have the birth of avant-garde, a birth of this, a birth of fusion, a birth of that. But the actual musical vocabulary, and what jazz was driving at, was the democratic gateway to increasing the expressive vocabulary of what you’re doing. Not just doing jazz.”

“He has his style,” Patitucci said of Shorter’s orchestral compositions. “We have the benefit of poring over the scores, and being inside that music for many years—whether it’s directly related to that piece or many others that he’s written and performed with orchestras all around the world.”

Many aspects of Shorter’s orchestral writing seem vertical in structure; for instance, “the way he stacks harmonies up,” according to Patitucci. But what the bassist most admires are the horizontal elements. “There are a lot of lines—the woodwind line, the string line—that shoot across horizontally, commenting on those blocks of harmony that he lays out.”

Patitucci emphasized that he, Pérez and Blade, who are all composers, are “huge stu-

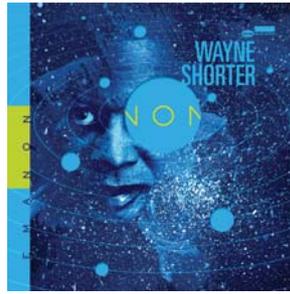
dents of orchestration.” They typically study Shorter’s scores and then collaborate on the final piece: “Wayne trusts us to come up with our own stuff. So, Danilo will get the score, a piano reduction. Sometimes I’ll look at that, but I’ll also have the orchestral bass part, and will improvise around that, writing in aspects of the piano part, if needed. Brian will look at the bass part or the score ... and Danilo will write in parts of the orchestration coming from the woodwinds or whatever, lines that he might want to double. What we do in those situations is carve out our own parts, to complement what Wayne has written.”

Screenwriter Monica Sly worked on a different aspect of Shorter’s writing: the graphic novel that provides the visual element of the *Emanon* package. Sly framed the narrative arc around the four orchestral compositions on the recording. (The graphic novel’s illustrations are by Randy DuBurke.)

“You have four different songs, with four different meanings,” she explained. “Each song is going to be a different journey to overcome fear. Wayne’s biggest thing in life, what he’s always trying to get people to do, is to face their fears and embrace the unknown—which is a very scary thing for most people.”

Although she’d never written text for a graphic novel before, she found working on *Emanon* to be a deeply satisfying experience. “Nothing I’ve done has ever been like writing with Wayne,” she said. “But that’s because there’s no one like Wayne.” —J.D. Considine

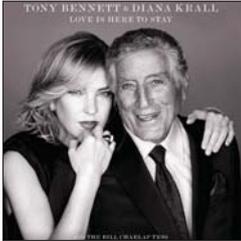
84th
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 2019
JAZZ ALBUM OF THE YEAR



1. WAYNE SHORTER

Emanon (Blue Note)

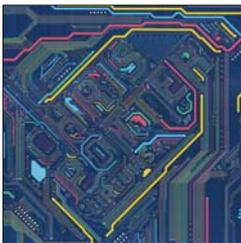
Shorter's quixotic and nonlinear approach to music (and language) has made him an unlikely candidate for a high-profile spotlight. Yet he's been in lofty situations for decades as a critical player and composer in Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers dating back to the 1950s, in the Miles Davis Quintet of the '60s and as cofounder of Weather Report in 1970. This ambitious, three-disc set, recorded with both the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra and his long-standing quartet, reinforces Shorter's status as one of jazz's paradoxical superheroes.



2. TONY BENNETT & DIANA KRALL

Love Is Here To Stay (Verve)

Bennett and Krall collaborate with pianist Bill Charlap on a collection of 12 Gershwin tunes that conjure both animated and intimate moods. The material is suffused with vernacular—from the opening "S Wonderful" (which employs the kind of street-corner slang of which the Gershwins were fond) to the closing "Who Cares?" (which supplies plenty of attitude).



3. CHRIS POTTER

Circuits (Edition)

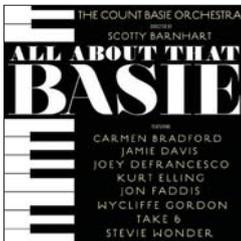
Potter's latest showcases some of the groove and r&b feel that marked his Underground group. But this new trio originally was assembled for a tour. Potter wanted to pursue an electric project, so he brought in drummer Eric Harland, who in turn recommended pianist James Francies. The live shows went so well, it seemed as if studio time was in order. It was.



4. KAMASI WASHINGTON

Heaven And Earth (Young Turks)

Musical representations of struggle, love and redemption, expressed through lush orchestration and a malleable mix of styles, ranging from futuristic post-bop to fusion and folk, constitute Washington's most recent longform recording. But *Heaven And Earth* traces a personal evolution that speaks to larger issues around justice and unity.



5. COUNT BASIE ORCHESTRA

All About That Basie (Concord)

The Count Basie Orchestra was founded in 1936 in Kansas City, Missouri, and continues to this day, decades after its namesake bandleader died in 1984 at the age of 79. Just don't call it a repertory, or worse, "ghost" band. And while the troupe plays true to its roots, it handles everything from Adele's "Hello" to Leonard Cohen's "Hallelujah" with aplomb.



6. CÉCILE MCLORIN SALVANT

The Window (Mack Avenue)

In many ways vocalist Salvant is, first, an actor. She knows that actors are dependent upon their roles and that, for her, the song is the role. She chooses carefully from high-end theater and cabaret songs, sometimes unexpectedly if not always successfully. But her repertoire mixes the safety of the familiar with the risks of the obscure.



7. SNARKY PUPPY

Immigrance (GroundUP)

There's usually a thematic conceit to Snarky Puppy records, and when writing the tunes for *Immigrance*, Michael League was thinking about migration and movement. Snarky has 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.



8. WYNTON MARSALIS

"Bolden" Original Soundtrack (Blue Engine)

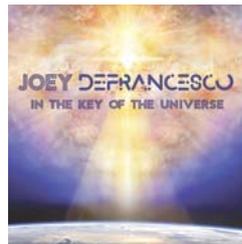
If the notion of Marsalis' tentet cutting loose on "Tiger Rag" or an original piece designed to evoke what Bolden's band might have sounded like is intriguing, then this wildly entertaining excursion into early styles of the genre, expertly delivered by members of the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra, should be in your collection.



9. BRANFORD MARSALIS QUARTET

The Secret Between The Shadow And The Soul (OKeh/Sony)

Whether leading his own groups; playing alongside artists as diverse as Public Enemy, Tina Turner and the Grateful Dead; appearing on Broadway, in films and on TV; and pursuing classical music, Marsalis' ability to shape-shift remains central not only to who he is, but who he's becoming. The bandleader's journey continues here, with his inimitable quartet.



10. JOEY DEFRANCESCO

In The Key Of The Universe (Mack Avenue)

Organ virtuoso DeFrancesco takes on a contemplative aura for his collaboration with saxophonist Pharoah Sanders, a celebration of "The Creator Has A Master Plan," the half-century-old song of praise that was the revelatory centerpiece of Sanders' earthshaking album, *Karma*. Everyone benefits from this kind of musical exchange.

11.	CHRISTIAN SCOTT ATUNDE ADJUAH <i>Ancestral Recall</i> (Ropeadope)
12.	TOM HARRELL <i>Infinity</i> (HighNote)
13.	BRAD MEHLDAU <i>Finding Gabriel</i> (Nonesuch)
14.	ESPERANZA SPALDING <i>12 Little Spells</i> (Concord)
15.	FRED HERSCH TRIO <i>Live In Europe</i> (Palmetto)
16.	JOHN SCOFIELD <i>Combo 66</i> (Verve)
17.	AMBROSE AKINMUSIRE <i>Origami Harvest</i> (Blue Note)
18.	CHARLES LLOYD & THE MARVELS + LUCINDA WILLIAMS <i>Vanished Gardens</i> (Blue Note)
19.	JOSHUA REDMAN <i>Come What May</i> (Nonesuch)
20.	MELISSA ALDANA <i>Visions</i> (Motéma)

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HISTORICAL ALBUM OF THE YEAR



1. JOHN COLTRANE

Both Directions At Once: The Lost Album (Impulse!)

Above all, *Both Directions At Once* works as a snapshot of a wondrous band on the cusp of revolution. The 14 studio performances, all recorded March 6, 1963, by engineer Rudy Van Gelder at his New Jersey studio, fill out the history of Trane's classic quartet, the song selection offering fresh insight into the way the group developed and grew. There are four takes of "Impressions" (each strikingly unique in terms of tempo and approach), three untitled originals and two versions of "One Up One Down." Basically, this is a Coltrane fan's fantasy come true.

2. THE BEATLES

The White Album (Anniversary Edition) (Apple Corps Ltd./Capitol/UMe)

Sgt. Pepper's might be The Beatles' most feted recording, but an argument for *The White Album* being the group's most feral is easy to make. Adding to the darkness, joviality and rough-hewn blues are new stereo mixes, the 27-track Esher Demos, overseen by Paul, Ringo and George Martin's son, Giles.

3. JOHN COLTRANE

Coltrane '58: The Prestige Recordings (Craft)

The eight-LP set *Coltrane '58: The Prestige Recordings* captures the saxophonist at a pivotal point in becoming one of jazz's most influential leaders and soloists. The seven sessions he cut as a leader for Prestige were but a fraction of the 20 studio dates on his calendar in 1958, just a year before recording both *Kind Of Blue* with Miles Davis and *Giant Steps*.

4. BILL EVANS

Evans In England (Resonance)

Having just formed a trio with bassist Eddie Gomez and drummer Marty Morell the year before, as well as temporarily kicking his heroin habit, '69 marked Evans entering a new era of stability and exploratory creativity. And it's this nascent self-discovery that's documented on this double album of Evans' trio playing at London's Ronnie Scott's club that year.

5. THE ART ENSEMBLE OF CHICAGO

The Art Ensemble Of Chicago And Associated Ensembles (ECM)

Prepared in acknowledgment of ECM's 50th anniversary in 2019, this sizable 21-disc collection counts albums under the Art Ensemble banner, some helmed by Lester Bowie, Wadada Leo Smith, Roscoe Mitchell and Jack DeJohnette. There's even a recording headed up by U.K. improviser Evan Parker.

6. LOUIS ARMSTRONG

Sparks, Nevada 1964! (Dot Time)

A stop at the Circus Room of the Nugget Casino in Sparks, Nevada, is typical of what Armstrong's All Stars brought to audiences in 1964. The program touches on his New Orleans roots, showcases the musicians' chops and peaks with a couple of energetic vocal turns by Jewel Brown. And, of course, the show gives ample room for Pops to just be Pops.

7. ARETHA FRANKLIN

The Atlantic Singles Collection 1967-1970 (Rhino)

Spanning one of Franklin's most fruitful periods, this collection finds The First Lady of Soul getting comfortable on her new label after leaving Columbia. Compiling 34 cuts issued from the beginning of her relationship with the imprint, hits that would elevate Franklin beyond "crossover star" status are plentiful, as are covers of Sam Cooke, The Band and others.

8. BETTY CARTER

The Music Never Stops (Blue Engine)

Blue Engine Records, the recording arm of Jazz at Lincoln Center, launched singer Betty Carter's first posthumous album, a live 1992 recording. She's backed alternately by a jazz orchestra, a string section, and three different piano trios, and her distinctive melodic alterations engage both musically and emotionally. It's hard to remain detached while listening.

9. ERIC DOLPHY

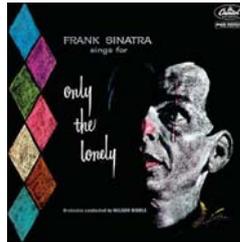
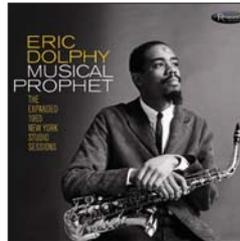
Musical Prophet: The Expanded 1963 New York Studio Sessions (Resonance)

Whether wielding alto sax, flute or bass clarinet, Dolphy was a godsend to those who were on a mission to expand the language of jazz. He might never attain the stature and notoriety that Trane has, but the previously unreleased music from 1963 on this three-disc set goes a long way toward bolstering Dolphy's legacy.

10. FRANK SINATRA

Frank Sinatra Sings For Only The Lonely (60th Anniversary Edition) (Capitol)

If the title and cover weren't enough to convey the album's theme, its somber torch songs did the trick, propelling the disc to chart-topping success in 1968. Included on Capitol's anniversary edition are the original 12-song program in both a mono and a new stereo mix, as well as four bonus tracks.



11.	WES MONTGOMERY <i>Back On Indiana Avenue: The Carroll DeCamp Recordings</i> (Resonance)
12.	DEXTER GORDON QUARTET <i>Tokyo 1975</i> (Elemental)
13.	WOODY SHAW <i>Tokyo 1981</i> (Elemental)
14.	THELONIOUS MONK <i>Monk</i> (Gearbox)
15.	PAUL BLEY/GARY PEACOCK/PAUL MOTIAN <i>When Will The Blues Leave</i> (ECM)
16.	GARY BURTON <i>Take Another Look: A Career Retrospective</i> (Mack Avenue)
17.	CHARLIE HADEN & BRAD MEHLDAU <i>Long Ago And Far Away</i> (Impulse!)
18.	DUKE ELLINGTON <i>In Coventry, 1966</i> (Storyville)
19.	CHARLES MINGUS <i>Jazz In Detroit/Strata Concert Gallery/46 Selden</i> (BBE)
20.	KEITH JARRETT <i>La Fenice</i> (ECM)
21.	ART PEPPER <i>Unreleased Art Pepper, Vol. 10: Bourbon Street-Toronto, June 16, 1977</i> (Widow's Taste)



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Roy Hargrove (1969–2018)



84th
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TRUMPET

FAREWELL TO A BELOVED MENTOR

As the jazz world continues to mourn the death of Roy Hargrove, the bandleader has been given a posthumous honor, winning the Trumpet category in the DownBeat Readers Poll.

Roy Hargrove died suddenly on Nov. 2, 2018, at the age of 49, from cardiac arrest caused by kidney disease, an affliction with which he had long struggled.

Hargrove was, among many other things, a kind of binding agent in jazz, as trumpeters are wont to be; artistically generous and open-minded, he helped connect all sorts of musicians in a genre that has had its share of aesthetic schisms.

It was entirely uncontroversial—and also extremely cool—to dig Roy Hargrove. He stood apart from the neo-bop musicians who had preceded him by a decade or so—particularly Wynton Marsalis, who helped launch Hargrove’s career—in that he was part of the jazz tradition but not stuffy about it. Hargrove wasn’t supercilious about crossing genres or blending styles or even moving away from jazz.

His nonchalant, unaffected air lent him a

magnetic quality. “When he played, everybody just sat up a little bit straighter and there was this excitement in the room,” said Rio Sakairi, who since 2000 has served as the artistic director of the Jazz Gallery, the Manhattan club Hargrove founded with Lezlie Harrison and Dale Fitzgerald in 1995. “He left a gaping hole.”

That was apparent last January during a tribute concert held at Jazz at Lincoln Center’s Rose Theater and hosted by bassist Christian McBride. Around 200 performers lamented the loss of a musician who meant so much to so many people.

There was Marsalis leading a traditional second line, summoning the feel of a New Orleans funeral. And here was Hargrove’s big band, along with different iterations of his celebrated quintet. There was the Dizzy Gillespie All-Star band, in which Hargrove had played. And there was Dee Dee Bridgewater, Jon

Batiste and Norah Jones, who delivered a moving solo-piano rendition of “The Nearness Of You,” which Jones told the crowd she had learned by listening to Hargrove.

The trumpeter was raised in Dallas and relocated to New York in 1990, and was a prodigy from the start, moving easily among different sounds, styles and generations. His band, the RH Factor, was a loud, funky vehicle, while his quintet was a smooth-running, straightahead machine.

He won two Grammys, one for his 1997 Latin jazz album, *Habana*, and another for *Directions In Music: Live At Massey Hall*, his famed collaboration with Michael Brecker and Herbie Hancock, released in 2002. In the late 1990s, he became involved with the Soulquarian movement, working with stars from hip-hop and r&b, such as D’Angelo and Erykah Badu.

Hargrove released more than 20 albums as a leader, and his 2008 release—*Earfood*, the second-to-last recording he led—is one of his most highly regarded. He performed on many other artists’ recordings, but his greatest impact as a musician was perhaps at the interpersonal level. He was an avid club-goer, and often sat in at jam sessions throughout New York, particularly at Smalls, the basement jazz hangout in the West Village that operates as a proving ground for young musicians.

Such mingling kept Hargrove fresh, according to Marc Cary, a pianist/keyboardist who performed frequently with the trumpeter. “Because he was driven by a need to keep his chops together, and his love for the music, he was out most nights in pursuit of that,” Cary said. “Because he communed so frequently with the young musicians, he could pass on his wisdom of the music, the etiquette and the correct changes to a composition.”

Hargrove was a ubiquitous and outsized presence on the scene, with his stylish suits, sunglasses and fedoras. In the months leading up to his premature death, he could be found blowing away at clubs and embodying the tradition, helping to pass it along to younger players.

Sakairi said that no one’s yet risen to take Hargrove’s place as a kind of community organizer capable of bringing everyone together while also standing apart as one of the most talented musicians in the field.

Although Hargrove leaves behind an acclaimed discography, Sakairi said it is unfortunate that fans who are just discovering him—or are yet to discover him—won’t be able to experience the trumpeter in person. “It’s disheartening to think that new audiences are going to come to Roy only through his recordings,” said Sakairi, “and never understand what he was capable of in a live situation.”

—Matthew Kassel



84th
READERS POLL
 2019

BEYOND ARTIST

Dr. John (1941–2019)

SPIRITUAL CONNECTIONS

DownBeat devised the term “Beyond” to apply to music that defies easy categorization—and no one is a better example of that than Dr. John.

“Yeah, Mac was ‘beyond’ even when he was still with us,” observed producer Shane Theriot, who produced Dr. John’s final gift to the world: the last album he recorded and signed off on before his June 6 death at 77.

That as-yet unreleased album, which at press time wasn’t attached to a label, caps a genre-busting career. Steeped in the funky second-line rhythms of his hometown of New Orleans—where he joined a pantheon of piano greats from Professor Longhair to Fats Domino—Dr. John ranged far beyond his roots, without ever losing that deep connection, collecting six Grammys along the way and earning his rightful place in the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame.

Born Malcolm John Rebennack Jr., he was still a kid when he started channeling Pinetop Perkins on the keys and Lightnin’ Hopkins on guitar. As a teen in the mid-’50s, he dove head-first into the steamy cauldron of r&b boiling over in New Orleans, wrote a couple of regional hits himself, and was touring the South as a guitarist when he sacrificed the tip of one finger to the gods in a Florida motel altercation.

That fortuitous mishap reignited Mac’s uncanny ability to “radiate the 88s,” as he put it,

first as a Bourbon Street strip-joint organist and later as Dr. John The Night Tripper, the bone-and-bead bedecked stage persona he unveiled on his 1968 debut, *Gris-Gris*. Inspired by a Senegalese healer and conjurer who arrived in 19th century New Orleans via Haiti, Dr. John soon became inseparable from Mac himself.

“Mac did incantations and chants before the gigs,” recalled jazz keyboardist and bandleader David Torkanowsky, who played Hammond B-3 with Dr. John on and off for several decades and accompanied Mac every year to get a New Year’s blessing and gris-gris bag from their spiritual mentor, Frank Lastie. “It was sort of a spiritual reset.”

“It wasn’t a jive thing,” noted Theriot, a Neville Brothers veteran who played guitar with Dr. John on before signing on as Mac’s producer. “Everyone would hold hands in a circle, and I always felt different when we got done with that.”

Those spiritual resets carried even more weight when Theriot and Torkanowsky were both working on what they sensed would be Mac’s swan song. And while some fans might be surprised that the as-yet untitled album invokes the spirit of Hank Williams and other country pioneers, taken in context of Mac’s career, it

makes perfect sense.

Ske-Dat-De-Dat: The Spirit Of Satch (2014), the last studio album Mac released before his death, salutes Louis Armstrong and follows tributes to Duke Ellington and songwriter Johnny Mercer. Now, Williams joins that illustrious list.

“[T]hose songs were dear to his heart,” said Theriot, who helped Mac fulfill a dream of following Ray Charles’ lead by making his own country album. “This record wasn’t intended to be posthumous; that’s just the way things happened. It was a cohesive artistic statement Mac put together while he was here.”

Like Dr. John’s concerts, the forthcoming album has some surprises. Willie Nelson joined in for a joyous rendition of “(Give Me That) Old-Time Religion” and Rickie Lee Jones circled back to put a spell on “I Walk On Gilded Splinters.” But even the country standards were “completely Rebennack-ed out,” as Torkanowsky put it.

“Mac basically channeled ancestry, which is what great jazz players do,” Torkanowsky said. “Every time you played music with him, you were speaking to several of his ancestral griots at the same time. That’s why his music was so deep. It was informed by history and a deep reverence for those who came before him.” —Cree McCre

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2019

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Maria Schneider, winner of the Composer, Arranger and Big Band categories

TAKEHIKO TOKIWA

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Chris Potter, winner of the Tenor Saxophone category

LULL GRUBER



Gary Smulyan, winner of the Baritone Saxophone category

COURTESY OF ARTIST



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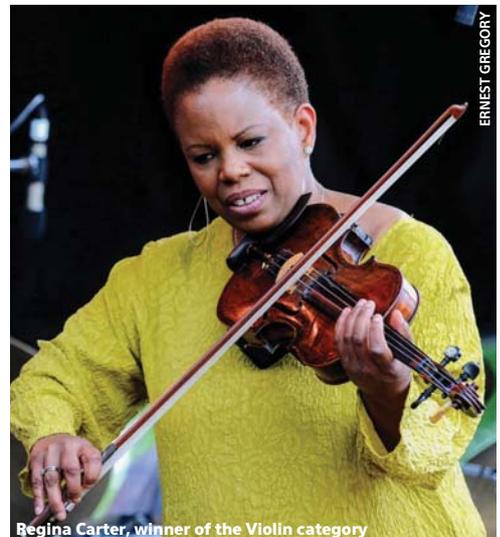
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Pat Metheny, winner of the Guitar category



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Christian McBride, winner of the Bass category

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Mat Maneri	207
Nils Økland.....	195
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Michal Urbaniak	141
Karen Briggs	138



Brian Blade, co-winner of the Drums category

LURAH BLADE



Poncho Sanchez, winner of the Percussion category

ESTEVAN ORIOLO



Banjo player Béla Fleck, winner of the Miscellaneous Instrument category

ANNA WEBBER



Kurt Elling, winner of the Male Vocalist category

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Scott Tixier	135	Jerry Gonzalez.....	516
Tomoko Omura	120	Pedrito Martinez.....	462
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Gregory Porter	1,440
Bobby McFerrin	873



BUDDY GUY
the
BLUES
is
ALIVE
and
WELL



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Michael Bublé	519
Theo Bleckmann	477
John Pizzarelli	333
Andy Bey	321
José James	288
Leslie Odom Jr.	264
Freddy Cole	255
Kenny Washington	234
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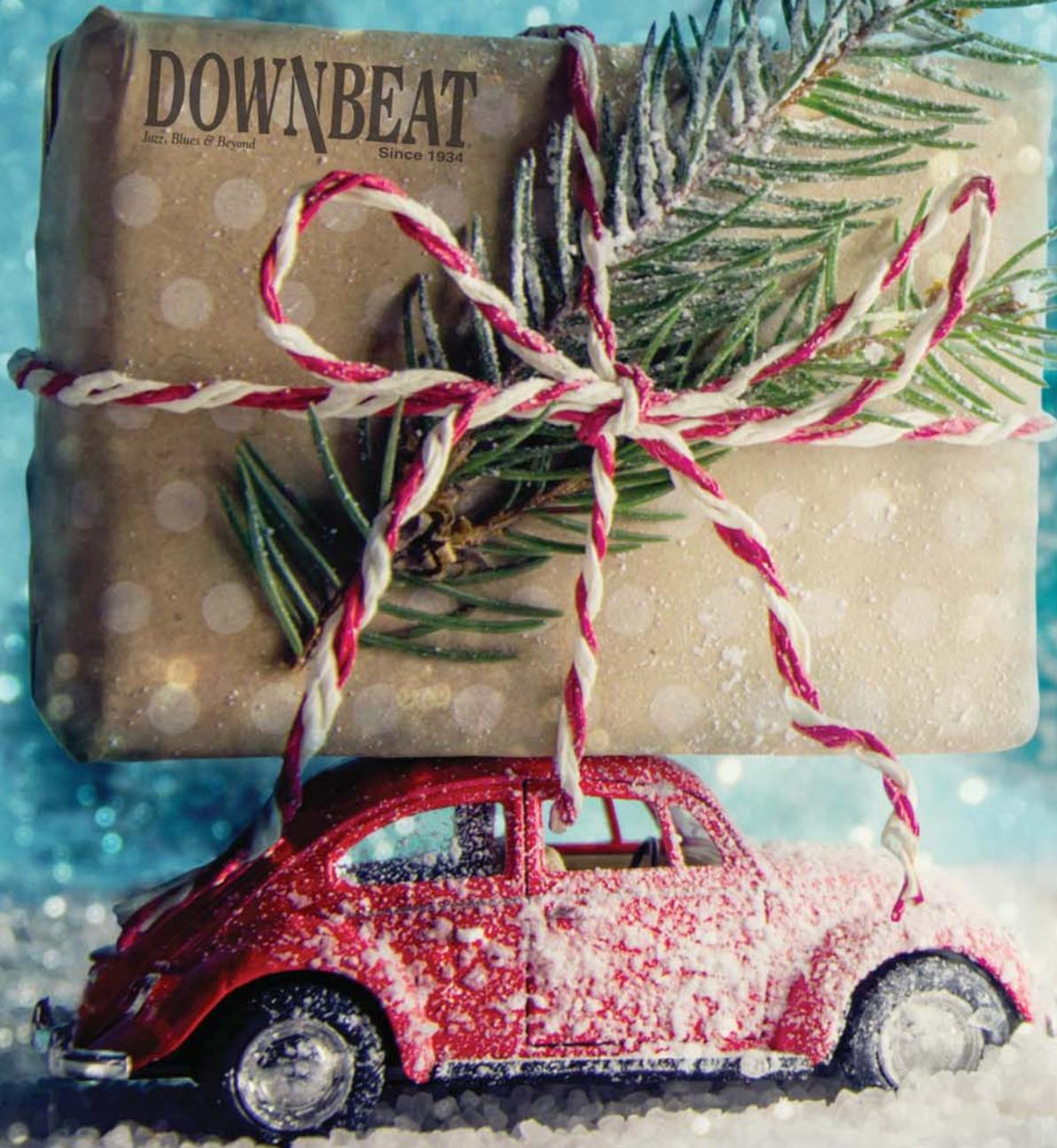
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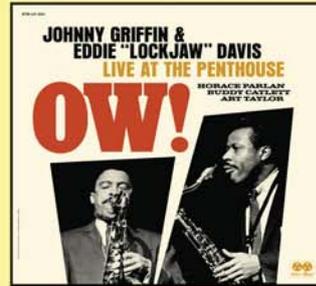


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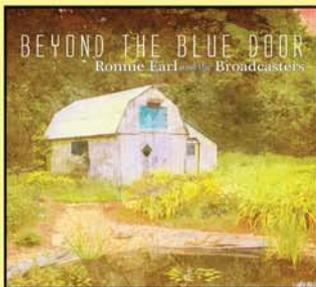


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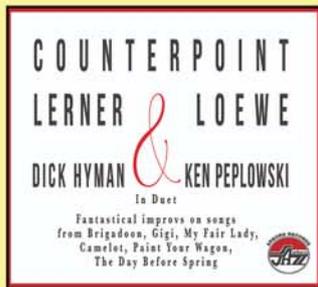


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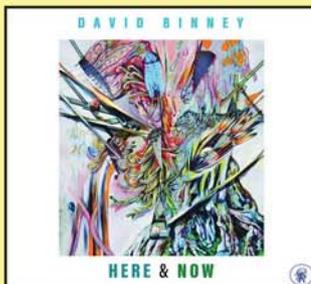


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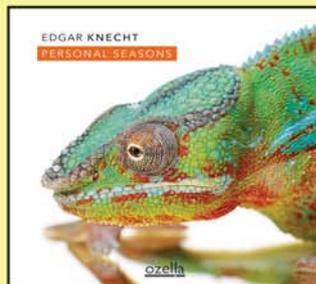
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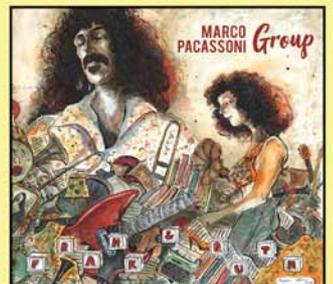


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DELPHINE DIALLO

Terri Lyne Carrington harnesses the intellect of her Social Science ensemble to update message music for the 21st century.

Terri Lyne Carrington and Social Science *Waiting Game*

MOTÉMA 0345

★★★★★

Terri Lyne Carrington never has shied away from discussions of social justice. And in addition to featuring voices like civil rights activist and author Angela Davis on several projects, Carrington initiated Berklee College of Music’s Institute of Jazz and Gender Justice in 2018. But hardly anything she’s done previously can prepare listeners for *Waiting Game*, a two-disc masterpiece on par with Kendrick Lamar’s 2015 hip-hop classic, *To Pimp A Butterfly*, or better yet, Carrie Mae Weems’ 2016 multimedia production, *Grace Notes: Reflections for Now*.

Waiting Game absorbs a lot of the Black Lives Matter movement’s simmering fury—as well as the #MeToo movement—and converts it into artistic fuel, as she also addresses homophobia and the genocide of Native Americans. Similar to Weems, Carrington excels at articulating piled-up, conflicting emotions and the mental fatigue

induced by the insistent bombardment of social ills. Her keen focus on song-based compositions during the album’s first half helps shape thematic clarity, as does the scintillating rapport she’s struck with her band, Social Science.

A foreboding heaviness permeates the album’s first disc, as if to convey an unending series of social injustices and the stress of being caught in that cycle. The somber “Trapped In The American Dream” sets the tone as Carrington’s martial beats, pianist Aaron Parks’ repetitive riff, and guitarist Matthew Stevens and vocalist Debo Ray’s howling chorus provide a dirge over which Kassa Overall raps about a canopy of horrors. Inside the interrelated obstacles discussed here is police brutality, particularly against people of color. Carrington, though, puts that into sharper focus during “Bells (Ring Loudly)” on which Ray sings from the perspective of a grieving mother after her child’s been killed by the police. The tempo quickens to a Crescent City bounce on the biting “Pray The Gay Away,” a mocking rebuke of gospel singer Kim Burrell’s 2016 homophobic rant. Underneath the Middle Eastern-flavored melody and Nicholas Payton’s lacerating trum-

pet solo, one hears the antidote—“pray the hate away.”

Carrington dedicates *Waiting Game*’s second disc to “Dreams And Desperate Measures,” a wondrous four-part orchestral suite that begins with a gossamer arrangement of haunting woodwinds, melancholy strings, a pensive guitar, piano and bass, all in dialogue. The extended improvisation gradually evolves into an undulating groove, propelled by Esperanza Spalding’s elastic bass ostinato.

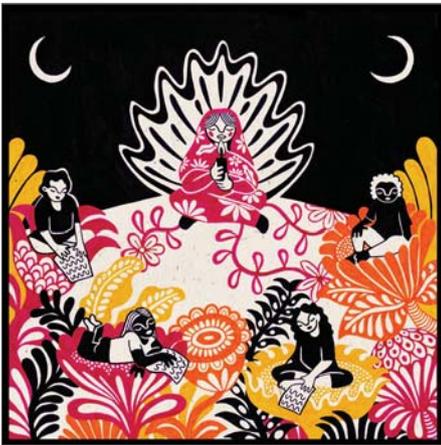
After receiving a Doris Duke Artist Award, Carrington concludes another triumphant year by releasing an utterly ambitious project, a recording that could be the best jazz album of the year.

—John Murphy

Waiting Game: Disc One: Trapped In The American Dream; Bells (Ring Loudly); Pray The Gay Away; Purple Mountains; Waiting Game (A capella); Anthem; Love; No Justice (For Political Prisoners); Over And Sons; If Not Now; Waiting Game. Disc Two: Dreams And Desperate Measures, Parts 1–4. (67:14/42:19)

Personnel: Terri Lyne Carrington, drums, vocals; Aaron Parks, piano; Matthew Stevens, guitar; Kassa Overall, turntables, vocals; Esperanza Spalding, bass, vocals; Morgan Guerin, saxophone, EWI, bass, drums; Nicholas Payton, trumpet (3); Malcolm-Jamal Warner (1), Meshell Ndegeocello (7), Mark Kibble (5), Debo Ray (1, 2, 7, 11), Rapsody (6), Kokayi (4), Maimouna Youssef (9), vocals; Raydar Ellis (3), turntables.

Ordering info: motema.com



Yazz Ahmed
Polyhymnia
 ROPEADOPE 506
 ★★★★★

British trumpet and flugelhorn player Yazz Ahmed, who made a ton of “best of” lists with her 2017 album *La Saboteuse*, further establishes herself as one of the more creative new voices in jazz with *Polyhymnia*. She applies her buttery sound and firm command—think Kenny Wheeler—to a swirling mix of jazz, electronic music and Arabic scales. But this time she’s got a big band with a compositional palette and warm textures that recall Maria Schneider, and a powerful mes-

sage, with each track dedicated to a female activist or collective. The halting melody of “One Girl Among Many” was inspired by the cadence of the Nobel Peace Prize acceptance speech given by Pakistani activist Malala Yousafzai, chanted here by 17 women. Ahmed takes a mathematical approach to “2857” (the number of the bus Rosa Parks rode), returning again and again to a crazy-fast piano arpeggio based on those numbers. “Deeds Not Words”—the slogan of the Suffragettes—is based on the sing-songy anthem “Shoulder To Shoulder” and features Ahmed riding high and lonesome over throbbing bass, like Miles Davis on *Sketches Of Spain*. Occasionally, the bandleader lapses into atmospheric clichés. And though the opener, “Lahan Al-Mansour,” inspired by the Saudi Arabian filmmaker Haifaa Al-Mansour, sets an in-the-bazaar mood, it feels a bit like movie music. But that’s a quibble. This is a first-rate, original album.

—Paul de Barros

Polyhymnia: Lahan Al-Mansour; Ruby Bridges; One Girl Among Many; 2857; Deeds Not Words; Barbara. (56:59)

Personnel: Yazz Ahmed, trumpet, flugelhorn, Kaoss pad; Alex Ridout, Becca Toft, Chloé Abbott, trumpet; Noel Langley, trumpet, flugelhorn; Helena Kay, Camilla George, alto saxophone; Nubya Garcia, tenor saxophone; Gemma Moore, Josie Simmons, baritone saxophone; Tori Freestone, tenor saxophone, soprano saxophone, alto flute; George Crowley, bass clarinet; Rosie Turton, trombone; Carol Jarvis, trombone, bass trombone; Alcyona Mick, Sarah Tandy, Naadia Sheriff, keyboards; Samuel Hällkvist, Shirley Tetteh, guitar; Ralph Wyld, glockenspiel, vibraphone; Johanna Burnheart, violin; Charlie Pyne, bass; Corrina Silvester, percussion; Sophie Alloway, drums; Sheila Maurice-Grey, vocals.

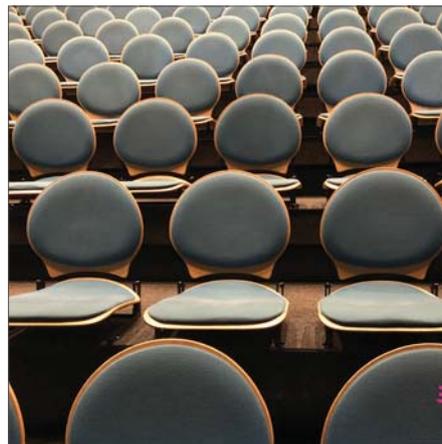
Ordering info: ropeadope.com

The Bad Plus
Activate Infinity
 EDITION 1143
 ★★★★★

My interest in covers by The Bad Plus waned with “Mandy.” As the trio’s version of Barry Manilow’s first No. 1 hit spilled forth on 2016’s *It’s Hard*, histrionics outweighed humor, and I started jonesing for the cagey originals they’d delivered from Day One. Last year’s self-penned *Never Stop II* deeply sated that need (while inviting Orrin Evans to the piano chair); this new follow-up of their own stuff is just as pithy and powerful.

Activate Infinity reminds how clever the band’s writing can be. Instead of recalibrating pop and rock titles, the trio composes a fast-moving program that leans on mainstream music’s most salient elements: catchy melodies and assertive hooks. Each theme penned by bassist Reid Anderson, drummer Dave King and Evans is instantly infectious. To a one, these tracks have a sing-along vibe.

The band seldom has been long-winded, but here a coordinated dedication to pith seems to reduce the unholy blend of fanfare and melodrama the trio previously enjoyed milking. In general, there aren’t a lot of “solos” in the air, and when they do occur, they take place in compact arenas



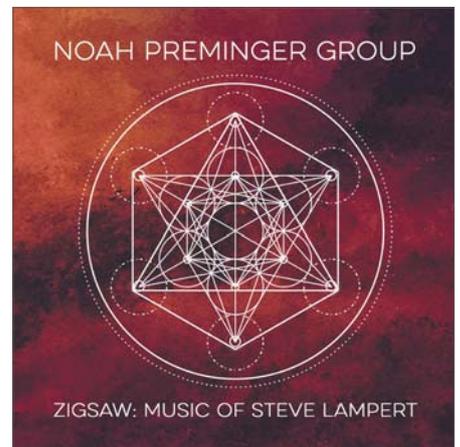
that keep the action corralled. From the opening “Avail” to the closing “Love Is The Answer,” the band’s exchanges are enhanced by abbreviated episodes, and grandiosity is shown the door.

One Bad Plus tenet remains intact: Their chemistry still can thrill. How the band moves from carefree jaunt to floating extroversion is jazz magic. Filled with intra-group wiles, *Activate Infinity* reminds listeners that these guys need only to rely on themselves. —Jim Macnie

Activate Infinity: Avail; Slow Reactors; Thrift Store Jewelry; The Red Door; Looking In Your Eyes; Dove-tail Nicely; Undersea Reflection; Love Is The Answer. (37:38)

Personnel: Orrin Evans, piano; Reid Anderson, bass; David King, drums.

Ordering info: editionrecords.com



Noah Preminger Group
Zigsaw: Music Of Steve Lampert
 DRY BRIDGE 006
 ★★★★★½

Tenor saxophonist Noah Preminger met trumpeter Steve Lampert during 2010 on a gig in New York’s West Village and, as their musical friendship deepened, so did Preminger’s admiration of the elder statesman’s compositional chops. A few years on, he asked Lampert to write a piece featuring himself with an ensemble; Preminger now has issued the recording of that composition—*Zigsaw: Music Of Steve Lampert*—on his own label.

The mostly improvised piece lasts almost 50 minutes and is offered as a single track—a straightforward enough undertaking, it would seem. But beyond the cut’s opening salvo—a downward-arpeggiated chord—there is nothing straightforward about this composition. In the liner notes, Lampert wrote that he envisioned the piece as a zigzagging dream that circles back upon itself 12 times. Each cycle comprises a 24-bar vamping melody section underneath a soloist; an open improvised section; a progressive reiteration of two of the 24 bars; and a “fantasy” section, replete with guttural electronics and filled, at times, with sheer musical abandon. Like a dream, though, it makes sense on an intuitive level.

Preminger’s septet, which counts Rob Schwimmer on clavinet and the continuum fingerboard (the source of the eerie electronica), executes Lampert’s challenging compositional constructs. In the hands of a less exacting group, the work easily could have devolved into a surreal pit of noise, minus any intentionality. But the players’ commitment to finessing the many winding turns of this piece is what makes it exciting—and surprisingly fun—to follow. —Suzanne Lorge

Zigsaw: Music Of Steve Lampert: Zigsaw. (48:49)

Personnel: Noah Preminger, tenor saxophone; Jason Palmer, trumpet; John O’Gallagher, alto saxophone; Kris Davis, piano; Rob Schwimmer, haken continuum, clavinet; Kim Cass, bass; Rudy Royston, drums.

Ordering info: noahpreminger.com

The Hot Box

	Critics	Paul de Barros	Suzanne Lorge	Jim Macnie	John Murph
Terri Lyne Carrington <i>Waiting Game</i>		★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★
Yazz Ahmed <i>Polyhymnia</i>		★★★★	★★★½	★★★★	★★★½
The Bad Plus <i>Activate Infinity</i>		★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★
Noah Preminger Group <i>Zigsaw: Music Of Steve Lampert</i>		★★★	★★★½	★★★★	★★★

Critics' Comments

Terri Lyne Carrington, *Waiting Game*

The challenge for jazz in the '60s was embracing rock. Today, it's hip-hop, and Overall, featured on the first track here, is ahead of the pack. Jamal-Warner's in the game, as are Rapsody, Youssef and Debo Ray. Bravo to Carrington for letting them show their stuff. —Paul de Barros

Waiting Game marks a decided shift in the tone of socially responsible music. Drawing on the full power of her stature as an elite musician, Carrington does more than raise awareness with this album—she helps us envision a world of greater understanding. —Suzanne Lorge

The poetic protests of the first disc are the fruits of a #resist culture connecting with a broad set of improvisers and jazz players. Provocative and welcome. The second disc is even more fetching; its own poetry grows with each turn. —Jim Macnie

Yazz Ahmed, *Polyhymnia*

Ahmed's primary language here is jazz, even as she uses electronic elements and Bahraini musical references in her forward-looking, hybridized compositions. But her knowing way around a horn solo and the harmonic sophistication of her writing trump all else. —Suzanne Lorge

The first thing that struck me was the full use of the ensemble—all instruments are invited to the party. The second thing was the emotional depth of the action once Ahmed lowered her figurative baton. Sharp. —Jim Macnie

This ornamental music glides with such remarkable grace and grit that it would elevate any momentous documentary. —John Murph

The Bad Plus, *Activate Infinity*

Evans can slide from Monkish disjunction to fleet-flying Bud Powell and adds a welcome playfulness while avoiding the faux-grandeur that sometimes seeped into this band's previous work. —Paul de Barros

These discerning players continue to strike the right balance between innovation and accessibility, whether luxuriating on a reflective ballad like "Looking In Your Eyes" or charging through an atonal line as on "The Red Door." A triumph for pianist Evans. —Suzanne Lorge

The chemistry might have changed slightly because of the new lineup, but the trio still concocts an intoxicating blend of bright melodicism and jostling bustle. —John Murph

Noah Preminger Group, *Zigsaw: Music Of Steve Lampert*

Alternately dreamy and zigzaggy, this intricate, 49-minute puzzle of composed and improvised elements showcases Preminger's impressive chops. But Palmer's free-bop trumpet is the real highlight. Some of the electronic moves, though, are rank clichés. —Paul de Barros

Lampert's sagely designed spider-web theme provides the improvisers with plenty of food for thought. Each player's own interpretations give wings to the piece's gnarled logic. And O'Gallagher tears it up. —Jim Macnie

It takes a minute to find your bearings inside this swirling, kaleidoscopic extended work. But once you're ensconced, it becomes a protean journey through the sonic looking glass. —John Murph



GEORGE COLEMAN
HAROLD MABERN JOHN WEBBER JOE FARNSWORTH
The Quartet

GEORGE COLEMAN tenor saxophone
HAROLD MABERN piano
JOHN WEBBER bass
JOE FARNSWORTH drums



NICHOLAS PAYTON
PETER WASHINGTON KENNY WASHINGTON
Relaxin' with Nick

NICHOLAS PAYTON trumpet, piano, Fender Rhodes, vocals, effects & samples
PETER WASHINGTON bass
KENNY WASHINGTON drums



BOBBY WATSON **VINCENT HERRING** **GARY BARTZ**
DAVID KIKOSKI YASUSHI NAKAMURA CARL ALLEN
Bird at 100

VINCENT HERRING alto saxophone
BOBBY WATSON alto saxophone
GARY BARTZ alto saxophone
DAVID KIKOSKI piano
YASUSHI NAKAMURA bass
CARL ALLEN drums



Yes! Trio
Groove Du Jour
 JAZZ&PEOPLE 819008

★★★★

The piano trio is elemental to jazz; it's the foundational rhythm section upon which so many great ensembles have been built. But on their own—just piano, bass and drums—those core instruments are given the room to explore, swing and show off an often-remarkable chemistry. At least, that's the feeling that comes across most strongly on the second release by Yes! Trio.

This sensational meeting of players—pianist Aaron Goldberg, drummer Ali Jackson and

bassist Omer Avital—is a near-perfect mixture of ingredients, bristling with braggadocious energy. While they lock together frequently, the album takes on the mode of a dance showdown or a rap battle—each musician showing off for the others and daring them to try and do better.

The resulting recording is close to overkill, though. The Latin groove of “Flow” is dominated, at first, by Jackson with each loud report of an agogô bell or brutal thud of his trap kit. But Avital takes the thread with a solo that emphasizes pinched tones and harshly plucked notes. Goldberg somehow finds space in their thick interplay, offering up supporting chords and a quivering, rollicking solo. Even the few ballads that sneak into the album's tracklist are played as if under some kind of duress, with the three musicians straining against the milder tempos and romantic spirit of songs like “I'll Be Seeing You” or Avital's “C'est Clair.”

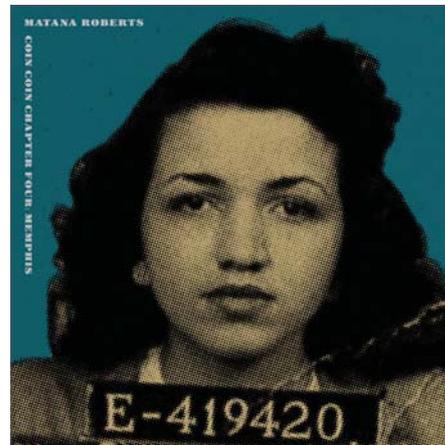
This is a trio that wants to soar. If those quiet moments give them time to regain their strength before bounding off down the hillside together, then they're entirely worth it.

—Robert Ham

Groove Du Jour: Escalier; C'est Clair; Dr. Jackle; I'll Be Seeing You; Muhammad's Market; Claque; Tokyo Dream; Groove Du Jour; Flow; Bed-Stuy. (59:41)

Personnel: Aaron Goldberg, piano; Ali Jackson, drums; Omer Avital, bass.

Ordering info: jazzandpeople.com



Matana Roberts
Coin Coin Chapter Four: Memphis
 CONSTELLATION 145

★★★★

“Memory is the most unusual thing,” Matana Roberts says repeatedly throughout *Coin Coin Chapter Four: Memphis*, the latest installment in a 12-part project that explores the reedist's personal history and cultural lineage through an ethnographic lens. She methodically weaves childhood memories with reimagined jazz standards, African-American spirituals, avant-garde composition and instrumentation that evokes the American South.

Sam Shalabi contributes oud to the recording, its crisp, resonant tone capturing the stillness of a Southern summer, while Hannah Marcus' fiddle conjures the folk tradition. Hymnal vocals and anguished reeds on “Jewels Of The Sky: Inscription” give way to a modern arrangement of “St. Louis Blues” on “Fit To Be Tied,” unrelenting horns and free improvisation on “Trail Of The Smiling Sphinx” and the Afro-futurist dimensions of “Shoes Of Gold.” Inspired by her maternal grandmother's “Memphis-raised defiance,” the record centers nonmale voices and honors black resilience while examining the Roberts family's dispersal and the historical context through which they moved. “Her Mighty Waters Run” is a round robin of femme voices that celebrate generational grit as they sing a newly arranged “Roll The Old Chariot Along.”

Roberts later triumphantly proclaims, “Live life out loud. Live life, stay proud,” concluding a deeply personal exploration of identity and lineage.

—Ivana Ng

Coin Coin Chapter Four: Memphis: Jewels Of The Sky; Inscription; As Far As Eyes Can See; Trail Of The Smiling Sphinx; Piddling; Shoes Of Gold; Wild Fire Bare; Fit To Be Tied; Her Mighty Waters Run; All Things Beautiful; In The Fold; Raise Yourself Up; Backbone Once More; How Bright They Shine. (46:47)

Personnel: Matana Roberts, alto saxophone, clarinet, vocals; Hannah Marcus, guitar, acoustic guitar, fiddle, accordion, vocals; Sam Shalabi, guitar, oud, vocals; Nicolas Caloia, bass, vocals; Ryan Sawyer, drums, vibraphone, jaw harp, bells, vocals; Steve Swell, trombone, vocals; Ryan White, vibraphone; Thierry Amar, Nadia Moss, Jessica Moss, Ian Ilavsky, vocals.

Ordering info: cstrecords.com

Jacky Terrasson
 53

BLUE NOTE 00602508081989

★★★★½

Parisian pianist Jacky Terrasson juggles three different rhythm tandems on this collection of originals while tipping his hat to some significant pianistic influences along the way.

Named for his age at the time of this release, 53 opens with the gently grooving “The Call,” an obvious nod to Ahmad Jamal's 1958 hit version of “Poinciana,” while also referencing a riff from John Lewis' “The Golden Striker.” The tender, soulful “Kiss Jannett For Me” acknowledges the influence of Keith Jarrett, while Terrasson's interpretation of “Lacrimosa” from Mozart's Requiem in D Minor, full of jazzy filigrees and syncopation, displays a profound classical influence. “What Happens Au 6ème” is a freewheeling romp over an ostinato that exploits Gregory Hutchinson's brilliance on the kit, while “My Lys” is an appealing dip into samba jazz that has Terrasson tickling the ivories in giddy fashion. The cleverly constructed “Palindrome” features a rare vocal contribution from the leader, doubling the challenging line with gentle wordless singing. And his “Blues En Femmes Majeures” is a loping blues in F with allusions to Miles Davis' “Freddie Freeloader.”



Elsewhere on 53, the pianist delivers the gently affecting “Alma” with playful delicacy, supported by nice chordal work from electric bassist Géraud Portal, and he flaunts imposing chops on the revved-up interlude “Mirror” and the boppish “Jump!” (a swinging showcase for Hutchinson). This is a diverse package with many moods to choose from.

—Bill Milkowski

53: The Call; Alma; Mirror; Jump!; Kiss Jannett For Me; Palindrome; La Part Des Anges; Babyplum; What Happens Au 6ème; My Lys; Sequentia; Lacrimosa; Nausica; This Is Mine; La Part Des Anges (Reprise); Blues En Femmes Majeures; Resilience. (56:16)

Personnel: Jacky Terrasson, piano, synthesizer (11), vocals (6); Ali Jackson, Gregory Hutchinson, Lukmil Perez, drums; Thomas Bramerie, Sylvain Romano, bass; Géraud Portal, electric bass; Stéphane Menuit (14), Philippe Gailloft (6), vocals.

Ordering info: bluenote.com



e.s.t.
Live In Gothenburg

ACT 9046

★★★★★

Consider the “new” album from the Esbjörn Svensson Trio, or e.s.t., as another potent reminder of what the jazz piano world has been missing since the poetic master Svensson died in a scuba diving accident at the age of 44 back in 2008.

Similar to the posthumously released live album from London, issued in 2018, but with greater and more persuasive force, *Live In*

Gothenburg offers an enthralling and pristine recording, captured by engineer Åke Linton, of a 2001 concert at the Gothenburg Concert Hall in Sweden.

With its full, varied musical menu and an ample display of the pianist’s gifts, as well as the trio’s intricate ensemble empathy, *Live In Gothenburg* serves both as a confirmation of reputation and a fine introduction to e.s.t.’s distinctive place in the annals of the piano trio.

During the late ’90s and early 2000s, Svensson, in tight alliance with partners Dan Berglund on bass and Magnus Öström on drums, created one of the crucial models in the wave of new piano trios, in sync with The Bad Plus and perhaps inspired by Brad Mehldau’s group. Clearly, Svensson leads the pack here, but the pack decidedly speaks collectively and interactively.

Ensemble thinking prevails on the opening tune, “Dating,” with its Keith Jarrett-like chordal melody and sculpted dynamics. And on “The Wraith,” tensile telepathy and dramatic structure seem to echo old Pat Metheny Group aesthetics. While rooted in jazz tradition and its attendant offshoots, the trio also easily could lean into prog-rock sensibilities with cheeky titles like “Dodge The Dodo,” an epic, suite-like piece.

Veering away from an all-acoustic texture,

Berglund occasionally flirts with rock effects (distortion, flanger and wah-wah) on “Good Morning Susie Soho”—the title track of the trio’s 2000 album—and the Monk-ishly elastic “Bowling.”

That last track features splashy bravura from Öström, while his solo drum turns also can move into subtle, painterly territory as on “The Rube Thing.”

Individually, Svensson manages to display his broad range of musical instincts on this two-disc, 11-track document, from the restless lyricism of “Somewhere Else Before” to the contrapuntal circles he spins around the prelude to “Providence.” But his sensitive balladeering, from the brooding “From Gagarin’s Point Of View” to the elegiac “The Chapel” and the sweet-spirited “The Second Page,” invokes a poignancy from an important musical voice that was stilled too early.

As heard here, 18 years after the performed fact, this trio has achieved an undeniable and lasting relevancy.

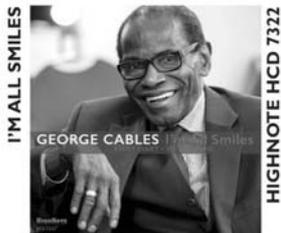
—Josef Woodard

Live In Gothenburg: Disc One: Dating; Somewhere Else Before; The Rube Thing; From Gagarin’s Point Of View; The Wraith. Disc Two: Providence; Good Morning Susie Soho; The Chapel; Bowling; The Second Page; Dodge The Dodo. (46:50/60:02)

Personnel: Esbjörn Svensson, piano; Dan Berglund, bass; Magnus Öström, drums.

Ordering info: actmusic.com

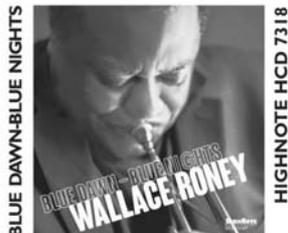
HighNote Records & Savant Records - Memorable Recordings from the World’s Finest Jazz Artists



GEORGE CABLES’ eagerly-anticipated return to the studio finds him achieving the pianistic splendor that he’s come to be relied on over the past five decades. The characteristic drive, elegance, wit and ingenuity is all there in abundance. The album also features Cables’ longtime compatriots, the bassist Essiet Essiet and the drummer Victor Lewis.



ERIC ALEXANDER follows in the footsteps of great saxophonists recording with a compliment of strings in a lush, redolent album featuring an ensemble of his regular colleagues and a 13-piece string orchestra under the direction of arranger Dave Rivello. Eric’s sound and style perfectly compliments the velvety background of the string orchestra.



WALLACE RONEY’S unmistakable trumpet tones are as virtuosic and thrilling as ever, razor-sharp at breakneck speeds and luxuriously relaxed in a ballad. Here the jazz icon is buoyed by a quicksilver group of the Next Generation 21st Century Artists featuring the signature sound from Rudy Van Gelder’s legendary New Jersey studio.



MIKE LEDONNE, known for his B-3 work, leads a piano trio session with his accomplished friends, bassist Christian McBride and drummer Lewis Nash. The album unfolds in an especially swinging, soulful and intuitive fashion, benefitting no doubt from the lighthearted camaraderie and the seemingly telepathic interplay of the three musicians.



HOUSTON PERSON offers a celebration of classic compositions — a blueprint that brought out the best in his colleagues, all of whom share a profound respect for the architecture of a well-constructed melody and who obviously took his studio-made admonition of “Right note or wrong note it’s got to swing!” to heart.



TOM HARRELL Harrell & company combine complex compositions, seductive rhythms, advanced harmonic concepts, vibrant solos and sheer inspiration in an album which transcends the jazz idiom. This is perhaps Harrell’s most imaginative recording to-date, with the scoring for the piano-less, tenor sax and guitar front line ensemble sui generis among his work.



DAVID KIKOSKI has seemingly done it all during his three-plus decades on the scene, appearing with everybody from Randy Brecker to Roy Haynes, and serving as the harmonic host for the Mingus Big Band. As a leader, Kikoski hits this one out of the park, with his rhythmic verve, imaginative arrangements and impressive chops.



JD ALLEN has been the winner of Downbeat, JazzTimes & NPR polls in categories including NPR’s Best Jazz of the Year, Tenor Saxophonist of the Year, Composer of the Year and Rising Star of the Year. Here Allen plays with his usual sizzling intensity and unveils new works which challenge preconceptions with terse, contemporary melodies and harmonic freedom.



Four Visions Saxophone Quartet: Samuel Blais (left), Donny McCaslin, Dave Binney and Dave Liebman

COURTESY OF SAMUEL BLAIS

No Surfeit of Saxophone

As musical instruments go, the saxophone came into being relatively late—in the mid-19th century, about a hundred years or so after the oboe and clarinet, and eons after the flute. Unlike these other wind instruments, and somewhat unfortunately, the world of classical music has relegated the saxophone to a small corner of the orchestral canon. But this loss is the jazz world's gain.

Few instruments share the saxophone's expressiveness—its ability to inspire humor, romance, outrage or calm. And the players who have proved able to harness this expressiveness have emerged as the greatest jazz innovators; their influence has come to dominate the art form. Funny how that worked out.

Four new sax-centric releases demonstrate just how richly variegated the jazz saxophone tradition has become—and how inventively it continues to evolve.

As a student at the Manhattan School of Music, **Samuel Blais** shared his love of playing in saxophone quartets with his professor, **Dave Liebman**. Fast-forward a few years, and Blais and Liebman have formed the **Four Visions Saxophone Quartet**, an all-saxophone ensemble that also includes **Dave Binney** and **Donny McCaslin**. The group's first album, **Four Visions (Sunnyside 1568; 70:35 ★★★½)**, features 10 originals that use reed instruments to create the beats and harmonies the rhythm section usually provides. You can hear how they do it in the short, clearly enunciated phrases on "Road Kill" that foster a neo-bop vibe or in the four-part harmonies on "In Bach's Studio" that add lushness to the chord changes. Masterful.

Ordering info: sunnysiderecords.com

When he plays with his eponymous ensemble, somehow reedist Chris Speed manages to avoid slipping into the vortex. **The Chris Speed Trio** now is releasing **Respect For Your Toughness (Intakt 336; 41:19 ★★★)**, a tantalizing exploration of odd meters, lean melodicism and the occasional out-ré chord. Much of the musical tension on the album derives from Speed's restrained soloing against the rhythmic assertions of bass-

ist Chris Tordini and drummer Dave King; the nine originals on the album often make use of this dynamic. One notable exception: "Can This Be Love?," a sweet warble of a standard as the opening track.

Ordering info: intaktrec.ch

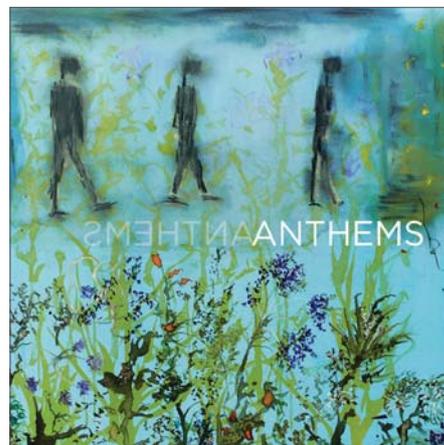
In September 2018, **the New York All-Stars**—tenorists Eric Alexander and Seamus Blake, pianist/organist Mike LeDonne, guitarist Erik Södelind, bassist Aldo Zunino and drummer Bernd Reiter—performed at Pizza Express in London. It was their first time playing together. Ever. The previous incarnation of the New York All-Stars recorded only once, and included the late pianist Harold Mabern (1936–2019) instead of LeDonne—a different sound altogether. The troupe's second effort, **Live Encounter (Ubuntu 0030; 66:20 ★★★)**, from that London date, details the explosive energy of this first-time meeting. It was a straightahead gig of the highest order—hard-swinging grooves, shuffle-driven blues, impassioned horn solos and an exhilarating Hammond.

Ordering info: weareubuntumusic.com

Tenor saxophonist **Ellery Eskelin**, bassist **Christian Weber** and drummer **Michael Griener** recorded **The Pearls (Intakt 331; 47:40 ★★★½)** in Switzerland at the end of a European tour, about a year after the release of their successful first album for Intakt Records, **Sensations Of Tone**. On this latest set, the trio interpreted several classic ragtime melodies in a traditionally upbeat manner—Scott Joplin's "Magnetic Rag," Russell Robinson's "Eccentric Rag," Count Basie/Harry Edison's "Jive At Five" and the title cut, by Jelly Roll Morton. But they also recorded several improvisatory, exploratory originals that reveal the substantial depth of their artistry. With their insight into these musical forms, originated almost a century apart, these three longtime co-creators manage to link one era to the next. "In making this recording, I was stuck by the ways in which time can simultaneously be so exacting, so malleable, and so multi-dimensional," Eskelin wrote in the liner notes.

DB

Ordering info: intaktrec.ch



Caroline Davis & Rob Clearfield's PERSONA Anthems

SUNNYSIDE 1538

★★★★

Saxophonist Caroline Davis and pianist Rob Clearfield's quartet, **PERSONA**, takes its name from a 1966 Ingmar Bergman film. In the existentialist thriller, two characters muddle the boundaries that separate their individual psyches, and as the story progresses, their hold on reality begins to dissolve in the blur of beautiful black-and-white images. Davis and Clearfield use a similar dissolving technique on **Anthems**, as they move between classical and jazz idioms, sentimentality and rigor, structure and freedom.

The dialectics they're exploring are most pronounced on the two renditions of the title track, one acoustic and one electric. On the first, the composition's staccato, disjointed melody supports the dominance of the rhythmic figure. On the reprisal, played at a slower pace, however, the tune's bright harmonies and nuanced bass line move more clearly into focus, this time defying the song's assertive pulse. Together, these two renditions provide a cipher for understanding the album: Each musical impulse eventually will yield to a contrasting concept. The album's auteurs manage to squeeze all of this musical information into a small space—the acoustic title track clocks in at less than one-and-a-half minutes.

At times, though, as on "A Soothing, Melancholy Breeze," the co-leaders fall into a closely synchronized pattern where it's hard to tell who's leading and who's following. These are some of the finest moments on the album, when the two artists meet in a blur, somewhere in between their respective polarities.

—Suzanne Lorge

Anthems: People Look Like Tanks; Bots; Anthem; Miss Ann; A Soothing, Melancholy Breeze; Anthem (Reprise); Secrets; Lithe. (43:59)

Personnel: Caroline Davis, alto saxophone; Rob Clearfield, keyboards; Sam Weber, acoustic bass, electric bass; Jay Sawyer, drums.

Ordering info: sunnysiderecords.com

Ingrid Laubrock/ Aki Takase

Kasumi

INTAKT 337

★★★★★

Saxophonist Ingrid Laubrock and pianist Aki Takase initially performed together at Jazzfest Berlin in 2016, and they turned that encounter into ongoing spirited dialogues three years later for their first duo disc. As with Takase's recent solo album, *Hokusai*, and Laubrock's small group albums, they unravel a series of sudden twists throughout a set of brief compositions. Serious technique supports that surface playfulness here, as does a warm mutual empathy.

With writing credits evenly divided, both Laubrock and Takase make the most of contrasting their runs with perfectly timed hesitations. Along with the mutual and quick-thinking blur of improvisation and composition, Laubrock's higher-register flights set up a contrast with Takase's darker rumblings. That combination becomes especially clear on "Chimera," with Laubrock's held notes descending to a great use of breath at the coda.

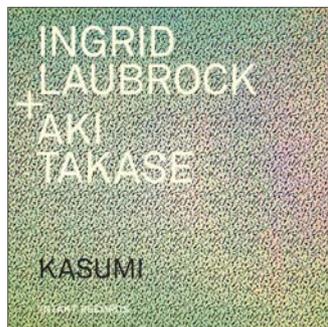
Some could connect Takase's oblique forays to particular contemporary European free improvisers, and similarly, Laubrock's oblique angularity sometimes recalls her mentor Anthony Braxton. But a big part of the joy in this disc—the title roughly translates as "haze"—are its playful and unknowable mysteries.

—Aaron Cohen

Kasumi: Kasumi; Andalusia; Brookish; Chimera; Harlekin; Dark Clouds; Scurry; Sunken Forest; Density; Win Some, Lose Track; Poe; Carving Water; One Trick Paper Tiger; Luftspiegelung. (50:07)

Personnel: Ingrid Laubrock, tenor saxophone; Aki Takase, piano.

Ordering info: intaktrec.ch



Dana Saul *Ceiling*

ENDECTOMORPH 004

★★★★½

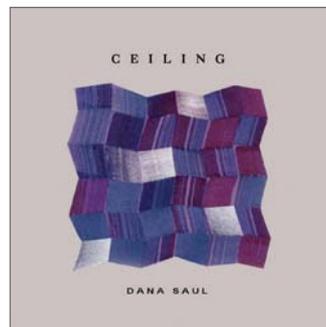
Pianist Dana Saul's debut frequently has little in common with jazz, other than its instrumentation.

Saul rejects dynamics and extroverted solo gestures in favor of a collective sound that has the respiratory quality of '70s minimalism; the music slowly expands and contracts like six pairs of lungs operating in unison. The compositions blend together like movements in a single 41-minute work, sustaining a mood and a philosophy. The solos seem to arrive not as the result of one player stepping forward, but because of a momentary withdrawal by others.

Adam O'Farrill's trumpet solo on "Ceiling" is a disruptive element, his smeared notes sounding like someone rubbing patterns on the surface of a balloon with their thumb. Vibraphonist Patricia Brennan and drummer Matt Honor attempt to intervene, the latter tattooing a sharp, militaristic pattern, as if to say, "Hey, cut that out and get back in line!" At times, the two sides interact, as when O'Farrill and Brennan trade phrases on "A Living Dream," her vibes ringing out like a metallic cloud.

Taken as a hybrid work, half jazz and half modern composition, it's both meditative and compelling, almost seeming to slow the passage of time.

—Philip Freeman



Ceiling: Reflection In A Moving Surface; Ceiling; A Living Dream; Frieze; Luminescent Shadows. (40:43)

Personnel: Adam O'Farrill, trumpet; Kevin Sun, tenor saxophone; Patricia Brennan, vibraphone; Dana Saul, piano; Walter Stinson, bass; Matt Honor, drums.

Ordering info: endectomorph.com

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- Tim Jackson, Monterey Jazz Festival

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**Gianluigi Trovesi/
Gianni Coscia**
*La Misteriosa Musica
Della Regina Loana*

ECM 2652

★★★★★

Umberto Eco once said of Gianluigi Trovesi and Gianni Coscia, “On a street corner or in a concert hall, they would feel at home just the same.”

For their fourth ECM installment, the clarinetist and accordionist prove that statement in a tribute to their departed friend, taking listeners on a sonic journey through Eco’s semi-autobiographical novel *La Misteriosa Musica Della Regina Loana*. Most of the songs are mentioned in the novel itself, the centerpiece being the five-part “EIAR”; titled in homage to Italy’s first radio station, the suite drips with nostalgia. Despite being of literary genesis, the album carries a tender cinematic charge, evident already in Coscia’s opening accordion solo on “Interludio.” More overt connections to the silver screen abound on “As Time Goes By,” from *Casablanca*, which spreads across the ear like butter over warm bread, and the mysterious yet emotionally transparent “Bel Ami,” from the 1939 film of the same name. But their masterstroke comes on “Gagnola.” Moving from tragedy to triumph, it’s a film in and of itself, casting in its leading role the unabashed love that defines a grander story.

—Tyran Grillo

La Misteriosa Musica Della Regina Loana: Interludio; Nebjana I; Basin Street Blues; Nebjana II; As Time Goes By; Pippo Non Lo Sa; Fischia Il Vento; Moonlight Serenade; In Cerca Di Te; Bel Ami; Eco; EIAR; Gagnola; Nebjana III; Inno Dei Sommergibili; Umberto; Volando; La Piccinina; Moonlight Serenade (Var.). (50:46)

Personnel: Gianluigi Trovesi: piccolo and alto clarinets; Gianni Coscia: accordion.

Ordering info: ecmrecords.com



**Susan Alcorn/Chris
Corsano/Bill Nace**
Live At Rotunda

OPEN MOUTH 59

★★★★★

Guitarist Bill Nace has gotten attention as ex-Sonic Youth member Kim Gordon’s partner in Body/Head, but he’s no newcomer. A youthful infatuation with hardcore evolved into a committed exploration of free improvisation’s collision with noise, and the two lines of inquiry intersect on *Live At Rotunda*. Chris Corsano, who drums on the album and plays with Nace in Vampire Belt, is one of his most enduring partners. The third party here is Susan Alcorn, a Baltimore-based pedal steel guitarist who has transcended her instrument’s conventions, and her presence certainly alters the duo’s chemistry. In Vampire Belt, the duo can sound like they’re jousting with the intent to draw blood. But on *Live*, they sometimes work more like twin burners on a stove, their flames rising and falling in near unison as unseen hands adjust the gas. For every moment of sonic assault, there’s another when Nace’s feedback billows in the breeze whipped up by Corsano’s quick, quiet circuits around the toms and cymbals. Each leaves gaps in his flowing attack, which has the effect of keeping Alcorn’s playing in the center of the frame. The passages where she plays explosive clusters seem closer to Cecil Taylor than anything on a country record, building to an unbearable tension, then bursting into continuous rivers of sound.

—Bill Meyer

Live At Rotunda: Untitled Track No. 1; Untitled Track No. 2; Untitled Track No. 3. (38:49)

Personnel: Susan Alcorn, pedal steel; Chris Corsano, drums; Bill Nace, guitar.

Ordering info: openmouthrecords.blogspot.com



Espen Berg Trio
Free To Play

ODIN 5969

★★★★★

Free To Play, a perfect title for the Espen Berg Trio’s new recording, doesn’t mean that the group plays nice. It suggests that the band takes pleasure in its inspiring interplay.

The piano trio’s third album attests to a unique conception of ego.

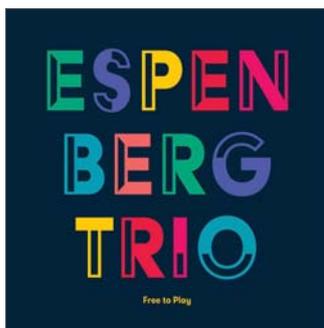
No matter how full the track, the musicians don’t put each other on a pedestal by dropping into the background during solos. The sound is thick and thorough, the sequencing designed to tell a story that begins in turbulence and ends in peace. All nine tunes are distinctive, but three are especially beautiful: “Camillas Sang,” the first to pack as much romance as rigor; “Oumuamua,” on which Berg unearths lines both confrontational and aspirational; and “Furuberget,” a ruminative conversation between Berg and bassist Bárður Reinert Poulsen. Berg is the group’s driver, commanding the track even when he doesn’t launch it. “Skrivarneset” illustrates the group’s flexible M.O.: Berg hews close to the middle register, building inexorably as Reinert Poulsen rises to prominence, his taut bass lines grounding the piece. The recording doesn’t leave a lot of air, and the solos are brief and purposeful. Trio members goad and coax each other, tracks vary in texture and tempo, and melody is largely implied. But no matter how abstract, *Free To Play* never reduces to the merely intellectual.

—Carlo Wolff

Free To Play: Monolit; Skrivarneset; Kestrel; Camillas Sang; Gossipel; Episk-Aggressiv-Syndrom; Oumuamua; Meanwhile In Armenia; Furuberget. (50:35)

Personnel: Espen Berg, piano; Bárður Reinert Poulsen, bass; Simon Olderskog Albertsen, drums.

Ordering info: odinrecords.com



MAE.SUN
Vol. 2: Into The Flow

SELF RELEASE

★★★

Hailey Niswanger’s project MAE.SUN feels of a piece with many modern jazz ensembles, folding r&b, EDM, psychedelia and the avant-garde into wafting, airy post-bop. The compositions represent a logical step sideways for an artist who has spent years backing up everyone from pop star Demi Lovato to Ethiopian highlife groups. Niswanger brings all that experience—and a bit of the smoothed-out tone of her own albums like *Confeddie*—to bear on this second MAE.SUN collection. But for all her efforts to look the part of a colorful, spiritual seeker, the music on *Vol. 2: Into The Flow* feels safe and tenuous. Niswanger and her band certainly do their best to evoke the essence of an Arkestra or an Art Ensemble. Songs like “Awaken” and “Free” delight in flickering synth, samples and sending the saxophone or flute through an array of effects. But their adherence to commercial concerns takes precedence, as they work to make the messages of “Bond” and “Ascension,” both anchored by aphoristic lyrics of self-assurance and freedom, easily digestible. The effort is appreciated; the execution feels like a pulled punch. What’s never in doubt is the ensemble’s musical prowess. MAE.SUN clearly has the skills; it just needs compositions that will meet and challenge those abilities.

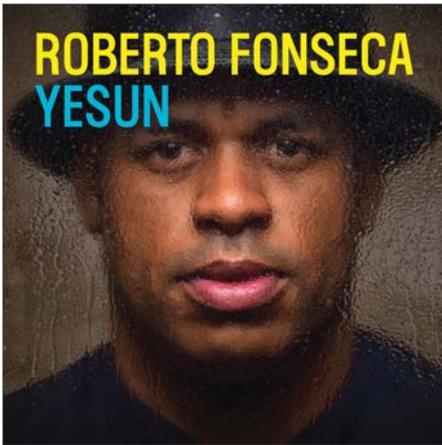
—Robert Ham

Vol. 2: Into The Flow: Awaken; Change; Bond; Cycle; Ritual; Ascension; Acceptance; Free. (36:38)

Personnel: Hailey Niswanger, soprano saxophone, flute, vocals; Nikara Warren, vibraphone; Andrew Renfroe, guitar; Axel Laugart, Jake Sherman, keyboards; Aaron Liao, bass; David Frazier, drums; Amber Navran (3), Kate K-S (6), vocals.

Ordering info: maesunmusic.com





Roberto Fonseca

Yesun

MACK AVENUE 1173

★★★★½

When it comes to 21st-century Afro-Cuban jazz, Roberto Fonseca is one of the music's brightest lights. For nearly two decades, the pianist and composer has anchored his music with deep roots in various Afro-Cuban idioms without being confined to them. His most recent albums have illustrated Cuba's cultural exchanges with other cosmopolitan music: Nigeria's Afrobeat, Puerto Rico's reggaeton, Brazil's bossa nova and the States' contemporary jazz and hip-hop.

That confluence of torch-bearing veracity and diplomatic curiosity energizes Fonseca's newest effort as it unfurls like an ultra-hip multimedia playlist. Modern Afro-Cuban joints like the carnivalesque *danzón* "Kachucha" pulsate next to the intriguing hybrid "Motown," a soulful ditty that subtly tips its hat to both the label and Detroit's noteworthy electronica scene.

There's a sonic fullness to *Yesun*, despite it being mostly a trio date. But that's a testament to the ensemble's dynamic range, as well as the leader's command on acoustic piano, as well as various keyboards. Virtuosity long has been a hallmark of Afro-Cuban jazz; sometimes a tendency to blaze across intricate polyrhythms can obscure music's identity. Fonseca certainly shows off his percussive touch and boundless improvisational prowess intermittently. But more importantly, he shows a flair for succinct melodicism as on the laid-back "OO" on which his crisp, repetitive riffs sound like a love letter to Robert Glasper.

The album's eclecticism might jar those seeking standard-issue Afro-Cuban jazz. But for those looking for a contemporary mosaic of Cuban's jazz scene, *Yesun* mesmerizes.

—John Murph

Yesun: La Llamada; Kachucha; Cadenas; Por Ti; Aggua; Motown; Stone Of Hope; Vivo; OO; Mambo Pa La Niña; Ocha; No Soy De Esos; Clave. (54:58)

Personnel: Roberto Fonseca, keyboards; Raúl Herrera, drums; Yandy Martínez Rodríguez, bass; Ibrahim Maalouf (2), trumpet; Joe Lovano (8), tenor saxophone; Gema 4 (1, 10), Danay Suárez (3), vocals.

Ordering info: mackavenue.com

New from Chicago

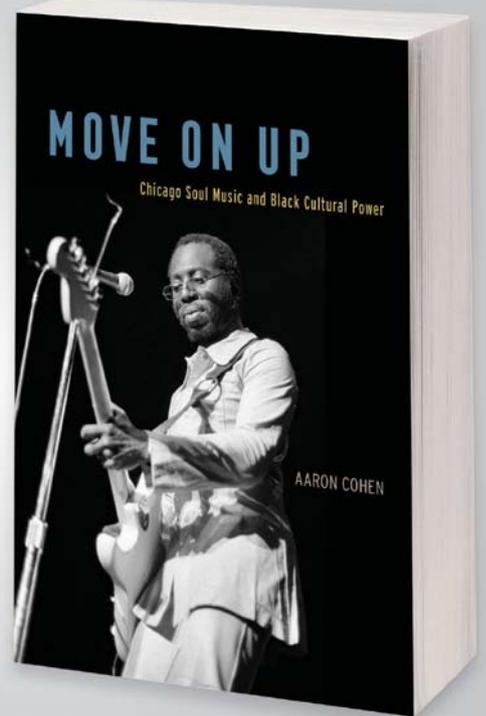
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The Stamp of Inspiration

Vaneese Thomas, *Down Yonder* (Segue; 56:01 ★★★★★) Thomas, who first recorded in the 1980s, is a force to be reckoned with, and her militantly robust soul-blues style powers this stellar album made in New York and Memphis. A lapsed sentimentalist, the youngest daughter of soul great Rufus Thomas addresses melodically appealing original songs on romantic chicanery and spiritual awareness that have an emotional backbone as hard and tough as hickory. Classical and gospel schooling account for her masterly control of vocal sounds. The bounty of vocals by Thomas—her backup singers including her famous sister, Carla, and actor Kevin Bacon (featured on “Legacy Of Pain”)—compensates for several routine blues guitar solos.

Ordering info: vaneesethomas.com

Rob Ickes & Trey Hensley, *World Full Of Blues* (Compass 747362; 43:40 ★★★★★) The second acoustic roots album by Ickes on dobro and Hensley on guitar, both A-list country musicians privy to legitimate blues feeling, has loads of supremely assured playing that modulates from gentle lyricism to driving exhilaration. The Nashvillians, writing more than before, have Taj Mahal sing a verse of their ambitious title track; horns help ratchet up the drama. “Born With The Blues” is just as much a gem with consistently fine singer Hensley and eight musicians laying a stamp of inspiration with their contributions; “Suzanne” catches the blues spirit of the 1950s Sun label; and “Nobody Can Tell Me I Can’t” winds up on Bourbon Street with a clarinetist and brass players. Ickes and Hensley travel Robben Ford’s “Rugged Road” like kin of the Allman Brothers. Also mighty pleasing are the more country-oriented tracks.

Ordering info: compassrecords.com

Samantha Fish, *Kill Or Be Kind* (Rounder 1166100584; 45:40 ★★★) Intending her sixth album to be an artistic and commercial breakout, Fish toggles between standard blues-rock bite and contained pop understatement on material that intelligently looks at the troubling side of love. Her pale and flushed voice, at times emotionally gauche, takes getting used to. Genuine heart pervades “Dream Girl,” and the livelier “Love Your Lies” has a pounding power.

Ordering info: rounder.com

John Lee Hooker, *The Country Blues Of John Lee Hooker* (Craft/Riverside 00183; 20:00/21:52 ★★★★★) In 1959, the folk-blues label Riverside lured Hooker away from the r&b hub at Vee-Jay, the first big-league record company owned by African Americans, and had the Detroitier interpret traditional tunes that would appeal to white record buyers. From the Fred McDowell-identified lament “Pea Vine Special” to the prison



work song “Water Boy” and the flood blues “I Rowed A Little Boat,” solo performer Hooker measuredly steers his carnally wrought singing voice through the program as his acoustic guitar playing preserves his characteristic sense of dark mystery. Though criticized by many Hooker devotees as being dull, this now-reissued LP is of considerable interest with Hooker burrowing deep inside to find his true grit.

Ordering info: craftrecordings.com

Rick Estrin & The Nightcats, *Contemporary* (Alligator 4996; 50:57 ★★★★★) Four albums since splitting with guitarist Charlie Baty in the early 2000s, Estrin still showcases a saucy, put-upon attitude that defines its own brand of hip. His affected singing, which reveals skewed thoughts on gender clashes, mortality and the passage of time, lope through original blues and vintage rock-style tunes that also harbor his superb harmonica work. “Contemporary” incorporates modern pop for fun. The one cover, Detroit bluesman Bobo Jenkins’ “Nothing But Love,” finds Estrin emoting with just the right mix of kitsch and sincerity to vanquish nostalgia. The instrumental “Cupcakin’,” in particular, lends credence to claims that the current litter of ‘Cats, including guitarist Kid Andersen, reigns as the best band anywhere.

Ordering info: alligator.com

Jimmy “Duck” Holmes, *Cypress Grove* (Easy Eye Sound; 38:49 ★★★½) The Skip James-spawned Bentonia branch of Mississippi blues, with its distinctive minor key guitar tunings and chords, is exemplified today by Holmes. With Black Key Dan Auerbach producing and contributing guitar to a handful of tracks, the 72-year-old paces a dozen numbers with sharp musical instincts that lie within the strictures of the music that’s in his blood. Perhaps wary of Holmes going adrift or sounding old-fashioned, Auerbach also has young guitarist Marcus King step in here and there to modernize the proceedings. Auerbach himself shines as the fuzz-toned guitarist featured on “Catfish Blues.”

Ordering info: easyeyesound.com



Mary Halvorson/ John Dieterich *A Tangle Of Stars*

NEW AMSTERDAM 125

★★★★½

The quality of play, or creativity explored for its own sake, turns out to be rarer in music than one might assume.

A Tangle Of Stars, though, rightly describes guitarist Mary Halvorson and multi-instrumentalist John Dieterich’s interplay on their first recording together. Halvorson, a prolific bandleader and solo artist who recently was named a 2019 MacArthur Foundation Fellow, and Dieterich, best known for his work in experimental rock act Deerhoof, spent a year exchanging and building upon each other’s sketches.

The result is a tangle of sound and ideas, elegant in its conception and execution.

Opening with a brief interpretation of 20th-century composer J.D. Robb’s “Excerpt From Spatial Serenade,” Halvorson and Dieterich attack the composition’s angular peaks percussively. Meanwhile, a razor-like drone hovers menacingly overhead. The second track, “Drum The Rubber Hate,” opens with an airy, folkish melodic contraption. A baritone guitar’s droning bass line bounces alongside it, containing form within its boundaries, while the melody evolves into a distorted, modal electric guitar solo before returning again to its starting point.

The shimmering guitars on “Lace Cap” float around each other, playing alternatively separately and together, meeting unpredictably at moments of dissonance and harmony. While some improvisations stick around in the memory less than others, enough achieve these serendipitous moments to reward multiple listens.

—Andrew Jones

A Tangle Of Stars: Excerpt From Spatial Serenade; Drum The Rubber Hate; Balloon Chord; Short Knives; Lace Cap; Undercover Meltdowns; Ghost Poem; Vega’s Array; The Handsome; My Mother’s Lover; Better Than The Most Amazing Game; Continuous Whatever. (38:30)

Personnel: Mary Halvorson, guitar; John Dieterich, guitar, drums, synthesizer.

Ordering info: newamrecords.com



Petros Klampanis *Irrationalities*

ENJA YELLOWBIRD 7797

★★★½

The head-to-toe, blues-less lyricism that Greek bassist Petros Klampanis and his trio evince on *Irrationalities* places them in the company of a lot of 21st-century piano trios, especially those based in Europe. The distinguishing factor in Klampanis' work is that his bass is as upfront and lyrical as the piano—unfortunately.

Let there be no doubt that Kristjan Randalu is a highly adroit and sensitive pianist who handles intricate, highly linear melodies, as on

“Easy Come Easy Go” and the title track, with ease. But he rarely handles them alone. On both, Klampanis doubles him on the melody (and frequently on the pianist's bass lines), takes a prominent and fruitful solo, and makes himself an unmistakable presence in comping Randalu. These are, if anything, the median of Klampanis' insistence on his own importance. “Thalassa Platia” finds him stating the melody himself, then making ostentatious display of his own (yes, admittedly gorgeous) tone and articulation when he should be supporting the pianist.

Drummer Bodek Janke isn't alone in the role of rhythmic support; Klampanis does that, too. But it does leave him in a surprisingly (for a drummer) subtle position. It is Janke who is more felt than heard; even with the pianist laying out on “Temporary Secret II,” Janke functions nearly subliminally and his occasional bursts of technique—a shuffle on the piano solos of “Easy Come Easy Go,” some sly statements around the edges of “No Becomes Yes”—are the happy surprises. *Irrationalities* is certainly an effective showpiece for Klampanis' ability as a bassist, but he could stand to learn from his drummer's example of taste.

—Michael J. West

Irrationalities: Easy Come Easy Go; Seeing You Behind My Eyes; Temporary Secret III; Irrationality; Thalassa Platia; Temporary Secret II; No Becomes Yes; Blame It On My Youth. (40:09)

Personnel: Petros Klampanis, bass, vocals, glockenspiel; Kristjan Randalu, piano; Bodek Janke, drums, percussion.

Ordering info: yellowbird-records.com

Michael Musillami/ Rich Syracuse

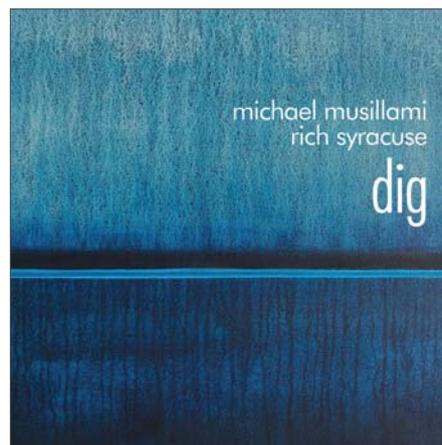
Dig

PLAYSCAPE 030519

★★★★

In spite of writing classics like “Waltz For Debby,” Bill Evans' work as a composer tends to get overshadowed by his brilliance as a post-bop pianist and piano-trio innovator—and in the case of “Nardis,” the tune credited to Miles Davis, but believed by some to be written by Evans, by legend. In mixing tunes by and associated with Evans, guitarist Michael Musillami and bassist Rich Syracuse offer a richly balanced view of his genius.

Dig features three Evans compositions, including “C Minor Blues Chase” (a contrapuntist's delight) and “Twelve Tone Tune” (the freest performance here). But the album largely concentrates on the pianist's work with modal Miles, including the co-write “Blue In Green” and “All Blues,” which the duo rather miraculously awakens from the deep sleep of endless cover versions. Throughout, the pair achieve the kind of invigorating tonal balance you don't often hear in a guitar-bass setting. Musillami's lightness of touch and percussive sparkle play beautifully off Syracuse's dark lyrical rumble and singing tones. As demonstrated on their swinging rendering of



Earl Zindars' “How My Heart Sings,” these guys can cut loose. But they find greater rewards in an investigatory mode. Their take on “Nardis” dreamily taps into the blues and emulates Evans' thrilling tension and release on its own terms. It's the best kind of reconstruction.

Ultimately, in the quiet dazzle of this performance, who wrote what doesn't really matter. One tune leads seamlessly to the next, adding up to a celebration of Evans' artistic vision that's as uplifting as it is accomplished.

—Lloyd Sachs

Dig: C Minor Blues Chase; Twelve Tone Tune; Blue In Green; Nardis; All Blues; How My Heart Sings; Bill's Hit Tune. (44:02)

Personnel: Michael Musillami, guitar; Rich Syracuse, bass.

Ordering info: playscape-recordings.com



Mette Juul *Change*

UNIVERSAL 7796107

★★★★

As subjective as attraction to any particular voice can be, there are some singers whose instrument is so pure, unaffected and tuneful that it's hard to imagine anyone not being drawn to them. Call it vocal charisma.

Danish singer Mette Juul has an exceptional-ly intimate and unadorned voice, spotlighted on *Change* by her decision to position herself in the company of four string players. Few vocalists can sing so softly and conversationally while staying in tune and projecting so consistently. And when she soars into full voice, as on Gene Lees's lyrics to Jobim's “Double Rainbow,” it sounds effortless.

Solidly in the school of folk-influenced art song, Juul doesn't make anything sound less than well rehearsed, but her evenly paced delivery compensates for the lack of spontaneity; charisma trumping improvisation. While much of her material—particularly her own compositions like “At Home (There Is A Song)” and “It Might Be Time To Say Goodbye”—is soft and understated, her voice can plunge to darker realms as well. On “The Peacocks (A Timeless Place),” with its superb pairing of Jimmy Rowles' music and Norma Winstone's lyrics, she mixes a wistful breathiness with full-throated phrasing that matches well with a spare bass line and subtle acoustic guitar. When she moves in front of the full band, as she does on a stormy version of “Get Out Of Town,” she loses none of the immediacy achieved with just a single guitar.

Recorded by Juul herself in her home and at studios in New York and Sweden, *Change* shows depth and heart, and makes for an outstanding headphone listening experience.

—James Hale

Change: Beautiful Love; At Home (There Is A Song); Get Out Of Town; It Might Be Time To Say Goodbye; Double Rainbow; Just Friends; I'm Moving On; Dindi; Young Song; Without A Song; Northern Woods; The Peacocks (A Timeless Place); Evening Song. (46:49)

Personnel: Mette Juul, vocals, guitar; Ulf Wakenius, Gilad Hekselman (8, 11), Per Møllehøj (12), guitar; Lars Danielsson, bass, cello, cymbals; Heine Hansen, piano, Rhodes, celeste, harmonica.

Ordering info: universalmusic.com

Songs For Horace Silver

Horace Silver's music long has occupied a special space in singer, songwriter, pianist and guitarist **Carmen Souza's** repertoire. She produced an inventive remake of the pianist and composer's signature piece, "Song For My Father" on her impressive 2010 debut, *Protegid*. That song has become a crowd favorite in her live sets—and so have other Silver classics, such as "Peace" and "Cape Verdean Blues."

That last song pinpoints a connection between Souza and Silver beyond her admiration for the hard-bop pioneer's work. Although she was born in Lisbon, Portugal, Souza's parents are from Cape Verde, the 10-island African nation from where Silver's father hailed. Those geographical and hereditary connections—and contrasts—energize Souza's fascinating new disc, ***The Silver Messengers (Galileo Music Communications 087; 46:27 ★★★★★)***, her first full-length dedication to Silver.

With her longtime musical partner and bassist Theo Pas'cal coproducing *The Silver Messengers*, Souza infuses Silver's repertoire with a few Cape Verdean creole musical idioms, such as funaná (an accordion-powered dance music) and the rhythmically rubato and social-conscious coladeira, as well as Northern Brazil's pulsating duple-metered dance music, baião. She glides through these styles and in between sings in Portuguese, English and creole with supple ease and superb invention.

It also helps that she possesses a remarkably distinctive alto singing voice. Souza has both the commanding range and lissome agility that mark most jazz singers. But she also accentuates it with intriguing sighs, wails, growls and other unique vocalizations.

Still her musical characteristics don't overshadow the melodic integrity of Silver's work. And the with help of other accomplished and longstanding band mates, such as pianist Benjamin Burrell and drummer Elias Kacomanolis, Souza and Pas'cal's cosmopolitan arrangements retain a strong connection to the composers' hard-bop roots.

The disc ignites with an entrancing makeover of "Soul Searchin'," a piece from Silver's early-1970s *United States Of Mind* trilogy. Souza replaces the spacey electric piano and wah-wah guitar flourishes of the original with an accented, stripped-down arrangement that places the spotlight more on Burrell's ebullient piano accompaniment and Souza's purring vocals. She gives Silver's mid-1960s "Jody Grind" a more drastic retooling with a haunting wordless background, quicksilver percussion and an infectious funaná groove while also waxing capricious verses concerning sexual conquest and intrigue.

Black American blues sensibilities come



Carmen Souza

PATRICIA PASCAL

to the fore most acutely during a dusky take of "Señor Blues" on which Souza sings the tale of a wandering Lothario.

A highlight of *The Silver Messengers* is Souza's brilliant take of "Nutville," where she toys with rhythmic pulse by inserting a 6/8 baião rhythm as she dispenses thoughtful lyrics about some people's obsession with social media and the negative effects it can have.

Other major wins are the three non-Silver compositions. Souza includes Moacir Santos' "Kathy," which Silver recorded on his 1973 LP, *In Pursuit Of The 27th Man*. She slows the tempo considerably from the original version, then serenades listeners with a story about a beautiful black Brazilian girl living in the Amazon.

Then there's Souza's own compositions: "Lady Musika," an undulating guitar-laden ditty that finds the vocalist alluding to Silver's famous reference to the art form as his "Lady Music," and the haunting "Silver Blues" (co-written by Pas'cal), on which Souza accompanies herself with guitar twang worthy of Marc Ribot amid an almost indie-rock ballad.

Of course, *The Silver Messengers* wouldn't be complete without a rousing rendition of "Song For My Father," and Souza delivers the goods splendidly. It showcases the bandleader on Rhodes alongside guest pianist Jonathan Idiagbonya, while Pas'cal and percussionist Sebastian Sheriff underscore them with a staccato, Afro-Cuban danzón groove. The result is satisfyingly provocative, personal and persuasive.

The Silver Messengers marks Souza's ninth disc as a leader, despite her prowess as a performer not being widely recognized in the United States. But this is the recording that has the greatest potential to spread the word—and possibly propel her to greater worldwide acclaim. **DB**

Ordering info: galileomusic.de



Here & Now 2

Maria Baptist Orchestra *Here & Now 2*

BAPTIST 3034

★★★★

German pianist Maria Baptist isn't so well-known in the States, which seems like something of an injustice. During the past few years, she has put out a variety of distinct and subtly appealing albums—one with a big band (*Here & Now*), one with a trio (*Poems Without Words*) and a solo record (*Resonance*), on which her rhapsodic, free-flowing piano style evokes Bill Evans and Keith Jarrett. Now, the 48-year-old bandleader has released a follow-up to *Here & Now* that should cause listeners' ears to perk up in the U.S.

The spine of the record, which includes a 16-musician ensemble, is the four-part "Midnight Suite," a moody, episodic series that sounds as if it could soundtrack a noir film. Baptist is a creative arranger and makes good use of a wide array of instruments. In the suite's first portion, brassy voicings, along with a breathy baritone saxophone solo by Nik Leistle, recall Gil Evans' work on the *Birth Of The Cool* sessions. And a bass clarinet in the second part brings to mind Gunther Schuller's classically inflected third-stream work. Other modernist flourishes, particularly on the last track, "Sign Of The Zodiac," including flashy and dramatic horn blasts, recall Stan Kenton.

But the main influence here is the great bandleader Maria Schneider, with whom Baptist studied composition at The New School in Manhattan. Schneider's music is characterized by its expansiveness, and that quality also can be applied to Baptist's orchestral work. Fortunately, though, Baptist's music stands on its own as her rhythm section keeps things loose and lets the music breathe.

—Matthew Kassel

Here & Now 2: Nature Of Reality; Midnight Suite #1–4; As Long As We Are Searching For; Sign Of The Zodiac. (53:38)

Personnel: Maria Baptist, piano; Fabian Timm, bass; Heinz Lichius, drums; David Beecroft, soprano saxophone, alto saxophone; Jan Von Klewitz, alto saxophone; Niko Zeidler, tenor saxophone, clarinet; Richard Maegraith, tenor saxophone, clarinet, flute; Nik Leistle, baritone saxophone, bass clarinet; Julius Hopf, Jan Landowski, Rasmus Holm, Christopher Sauloff, trombone; Greg Bowen, Fabian Engwicht, Ruben Giannotti, Eddie Hayes, brass.

Ordering info: mariabaptistmusic.com

Peterson-Kohler Collective

Winter Colors

ORIGIN 82787

★★★★★

Some families gush with affection. Others show love in cooler, quieter tones. This is a thoroughly grown-up family band that relies on deep thought, mutual respect and understatement, rather than competitive rough-housing. David Peterson's themes are gently swinging, with the kind of attractively lopsided lyricism one hears in his guitar solos. His cousins, Lee and Rob Kohler, grew up in a music-loving family, and it shows in the companionable ease of these performances. "Grey Mist" is one of a few freely improvised pieces, and while these are not necessarily representative of the group's signature impressionism, they're indicative of how intuitively bandmembers work together, and how generously they offer creative space to saxophonist Brent Jensen and drummer John Bishop. "Graceful" comes on like a cousin of "Lush Life," but finds a more optimistic narrative as it develops. "Winter Colors" itself is quite appropriately the signature cut, establishing a congenial dynamic and a sophistication that sustains to the very end. It's an immaculately executed, but above all mature, recording. One knows from the beginning that this isn't a bunch of colts feeling their oats, but seasoned players with nothing left to prove, but much to say.

—Brian Morton

Winter Colors: Winter Colors; I Need You Too; Rise Up; Graceful; Grey Mist; The Wind Has Gone Down; Danza; White Flurries; M&M Blues; Solstice Song. (53:08)

Personnel: Brent Jensen, saxophone; Lee Kohler, piano; David Peterson, guitar; Rob Kohler, bass; John Bishop, drums.

Ordering info: originarts.com



Ola Onabulé

Point Less

RUGGED RAM 15

★★★★★

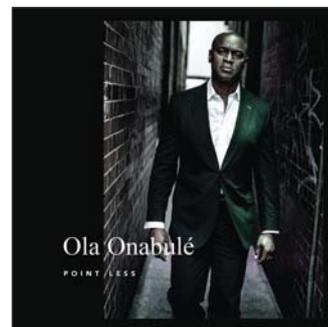
Resisting hatred and injustice, U.K. vocalist Ola Onabulé's *Point Less* spurs contemplation through involute lyrics grieving violence, xenophobia and corruption. Cynical undertones surface from storyteller Onabulé's 15 intricate jazz arrangements, displaying fusions of pop, r&b and Latin jazz, enhanced by musical influences from Nigeria, where Onabulé spent his youth. The bandleader points out the pervasiveness of victim blaming within a violent culture on the 3/4 jazz cut "Point Less," where John Parricelli's guitar wraps around sonorous piano and drummer Jack Pollitt's fine brush work. Toying with the pairing of opposites, "And Yet" is an r&b/jazz track demonstrating Onabulé's commanding three-and-a-half-octave range, where lyrics replay centuries of bigotry. Contrasting the ironic elated vibe of "What The Heck," Onabulé again fuses jazz and pop, driving verses and happy-go-lucky piano with vocals hinting at the sociopathy of hegemony. Wistful harmonica introduces the closer, "You Can't Depend On Love," where the vocalist's uplifting work is a prized gift—an antidote to hope's defeat.

—Kerlie McDowall

Point Less: Throwaway Notion; The Old Story; Point Less; And Yet; Exit Wound; What The Heck; Ballad Of The Star Crossed; I Knew Your Father; Suru Lere; Tender Heart; Conceive It; So They Say; Pas Famille; You Can't Depend On Love. (82:33)

Personnel: Ola Onabulé, vocals; Duncan Eagles, saxophone; Berthold Matschat, harmonica; John Parricelli, Al Cherry, Femi Temowo, Guillermo Hill, guitar; Pete Adams, John Crawford, piano; Ross Stanley, piano; Rhodes; George Hazelrigg, Hammond organ; Phil Mulford, bass; Will Fry, percussion. Jack Pollitt, Chris Nickolls, drums.

Ordering info: olasmusic.com



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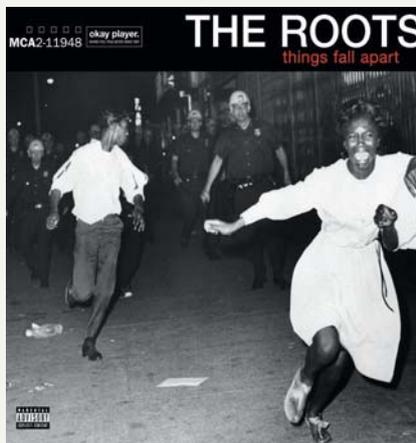
Up From the Underground

The Roots have become a household name, recognizable as the house band and occasional comedic foils for Jimmy Fallon on *The Tonight Show*. But when they emerged from the underground—simmering quietly at jam sessions in their native Philadelphia before decamping to London where their legendary live shows helped them reach a boiling point—they were an anomaly: an ensemble that blended hyper-intelligent rap lyrics with elements of jazz music, building their music from live instrumentation rather than samples. In a world of hip-hop groups, The Roots were a band.

The core members—drummer/producer Ahmir “Questlove” Thompson and rapper Tariq “Black Thought” Trotter—leaned into this band concept with the work they did in the studio as well, crafting albums that felt like cohesive statements instead of a collection of singles and filler. From the moment they signed to DGC Records during the ‘90s, each release was meticulously plotted. Early on, that meant blending together recordings of their regular jam sessions with live material and tracks captured in the studio. As their collective star grew, they delighted in being able to collaborate with new friends (Q-Tip, Raphael Saadiq) and old cohorts (saxophonists David Murray and Steve Coleman). And as they had solidified as a unit toward the end of that decade and helped form a rough collective of artists known as the Soulquarians, they shifted into an entirely new creative gear, walking toward the new millennium with a bona fide masterpiece, *Things Fall Apart* (Geffen/Urban Legends B0030407; 20:06/34:15/37:45 ★★☆☆½).

During the next few years, The Roots are going to be paying tribute to this part of their career with vinyl reissues of three of their earliest albums. While next year brings the 25th anniversary release of their second full-length album, *Do You Want More?!?!?!?*, with their 1994 album *Illadelph Halflife* getting a similar treatment in 2021, the campaign is kicked off on a high note with a new pressing of the group’s 1999 release *Things Fall Apart*. It’s an amazing package, too, complete with a booklet that features essays from Thompson and Trotter, and song-by-song commentary alongside rare photos from the era. And the music never has sounded better, thanks to some crisp, thoughtful remastering work.

Not that it needed that much help. With production assists from then-keyboardist Scott Storch and beat maestro J Dilla, *Things* already was captured in rich, sharp detail. The music on each track is dense, yet everything from the duelling record

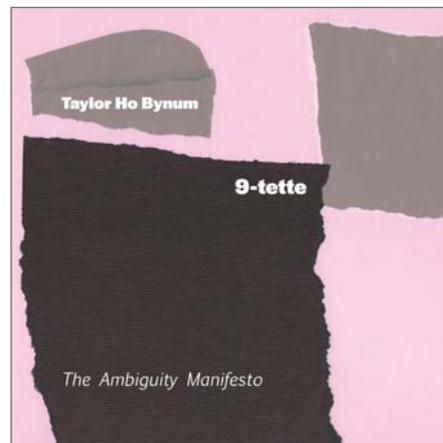


scratchers on “The Next Movement” and the swimming keyboards and background vocals on “Ain’t Sayin’ Nothin’ New” is clear and immediate. It’s a sound that was a culmination of spending “all of 1997 and all of 1998 building ... a movement,” as Thompson told SPIN in 2008. A creative wellspring captured at New York’s Electric Lady Studios funneled not only into *Things*, but also breakthrough albums by Common, Erykah Badu and D’Angelo. *Things* beat all of those other albums to market by a year, helping prepare listeners for a new direction in conscious hip-hop and r&b. But The Roots took the greater risks with what they released. The group already had made some bold moves on previous records through appearances of spoken word artist Ursula Rucker or the scatting/drumming battle “Essaywhuman?!?!?!?” from *Do You Want More?!?!?!?*

They pushed out even further on *Things*. The stark photo of two terrified teens running from the police during a Civil Rights protest. The opening suite that uses a sample from Spike Lee’s *Mo’ Better Blues* to comment on their lack of support from black hip-hop fans. The touches of drum ‘n’ bass that enter into their Grammy-winning single, “You Got Me.” And the push-pull that runs through so many songs as Trotter and a gaggle of guests pay tribute to their chosen genre while offering up criticism of hip-hop’s history of violence and intolerance.

This new edition of *Things Fall Apart* fleshes out the story of its creation both through substantive liner notes and the addition of bonus tracks that further showcases The Roots’ instrumental prowess and production skills. Even without those extras, this album stands alone as a testament to this group’s power and artistic daring. Ever since, both The Roots and hip-hop have been straining to reach these heights again. **DB**

Ordering info: urbanlegends.com



Taylor Ho Bynum 9-tette *The Ambiguity Manifesto*

FIREHOUSE 12 032

★★★★★

As a bandleader and composer, cornetist Taylor Ho Bynum strives to create elastic, variable vehicles for improvisational interplay. The influence of mentors like Anthony Braxton and Bill Dixon always has been apparent in those endeavors. *The Ambiguity Manifesto* not only finds Bynum forcefully emerging from their shadows, but it stands as the most striking accomplishment of his career.

The front half of this long-form suite includes three compositions constructed as modular platforms, bracing in their clarity and directness, and generous in the adaptability yielded to the players. Bynum underlines that versatility during the album’s second half, deconstructing those same pieces into new shapes, where even familiar motifs sound new in a shifting context.

The riveting opener, “Neither When Nor Where,” begins with a sly funk backbeat and a needling guitar riff from Mary Halvorson that summons the feel of the indelible Julius Hemphill tune “Dogon A.D.,” with cellist Tomeka Reid comping splintery arco accents à la Abdul Wadud. Alto saxophonist Jim Hobbs and bass trombonist Bill Lowe layer lilting and earthy solos over the groove, with constant commentary from the rest of the band.

Much of the album refracts different bits of pieces early in the program, emphasizing various subgroups within the band. And it’s here that the excellent ensemble gets to really dig in, revealing a remarkable level of interaction and intuition. The oxymoronic album title embraces uncertainty as an operating principle, but there’s nothing indecisive about what the band brings to the material. —Peter Margasak

The Ambiguity Manifesto: Neither When Nor Where; Enter Ally; Real/Unreal (For Ursula K. Leguin); (G)host(aa/ab); Enter (g) Neither; Ally Enter; Unreal/Real (For Old Music). (70:56)

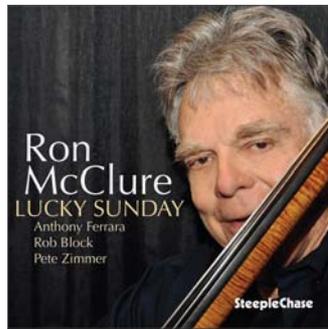
Personnel: Taylor Ho Bynum, cornet, flugelhorn; Bill Lowe, bass trombone, tuba; Ingrid Laubrock, soprano saxophone, tenor saxophone; Jim Hobbs, alto saxophone; Ken Filiano, bass; Mary Halvorson, guitar; Stormu Takeishi, electric bass; Tomeka Reid, cello; Tomas Fujiwara, drums.

Ordering info: firehouse12records.com

Ron McClure
Lucky Sunday
 STEEPLCHASE 31877
 ★★★★★

Ron McClure has had a major career in jazz going on 60 years, though like many excellent bassists his tireless support has gained him fame mostly among other musicians. Best known for membership in Charles Lloyd's late-1960s quartet, McClure also has lent his soft but steady pulse to Buddy Rich's sextet, Carla Bley's *Escalator Over The Hill*, and Blood Sweat and Tears. He's also led his own sessions since 1990, 13 of them on SteepleChase.

Characteristically, McClure presents conventional mainstream acoustic jazz on *Lucky Sunday*, pleasingly intelligent, subtly swinging, polished and intimate, designed for anytime-listening. All 10 tracks are dynamic, if only moderately so—they neither bog down nor race for excitement. The bassist-leader penned six tunes, his title track offering the strongest melody. Although four song titles reference water, no programmatic theme is evident beyond the possible suggestion that listeners kick back and float throughout this album's hour-long runtime. "Stay Where You Are" is a Blue Note-like boogaloo, but doesn't push its funk, and the concluding sequence of the waltz "Quiet Life," the ballad "Mending Ties" and the spacious "To Begin" reinforces the dreamy mood conjured from the jump. —Howard Mandel



Lucky Sunday: What's Due; The Shining Sea; Lucky Sunday; Deep Sea Urban Planning; Stay Where You Are; The Waves; You And The Salt; Quiet Life; Mending Ties; To Begin. (65:54)

Personnel: Ron McClure, bass; Anthony Ferrara, tenor saxophone; Rob Block, piano, guitar; Pete Zimmer, drums.

Ordering info: steeplechase.dk

Leslie Pintchik Trio
Same Day Delivery:
Leslie Pintchik
Trio Live
 PINTCH HARD 05
 ★★★★★

It takes a lot of gumption to start a record with "Smoke Gets In Your Eyes." But pianist/vocalist Leslie Pintchik and her trio gracefully reimagine the tune and two other standards before tearing into a stunning assortment of the bandleader's originals.

Recorded live at New York's Jazz at Kitano, Pintchik specializes in taut phrasing, enticing melodicism and wry commentary. On the medium-tempo take of "I've Grown Accustomed To Her Face," the band quickly abandons the head and gently swings, while Pintchik holds down the bottom with her left hand, freeing up bassist Scott Hardy to explore variations on the theme. The result is a lingering glance at an old friend that reveals something new and in-the-moment. The original "Your Call Will Be Answered By Our Next Available Representative..." is filled with jagged elision, and fitful stops and starts tinged with slight blues underpinnings that call to mind the compositions of Oliver Nelson. Two of the other Pintchik-penned tunes, "Let's Get Lucky" and "I'd Turn Back If I Were You," have New Orleans in their DNA, but still are consistent with the bandleader's wise and witty perspective. —Hobart Taylor



Same Day Delivery: Leslie Pintchik Trio Live: Smoke Gets In Your Eyes; I've Grown Accustomed To Her Face; There You Go; Falling In Love Again; Terse Tune; Your Call Will Be Answered By Our Next Available Representative. In The Order In Which It Was Received. Please Stay On The Line; Your Call Is Important To Us; Tumbleweed; Let's Get Lucky; I'd Turn Back If I Were You. (62:21)

Personnel: Leslie Pintchik, piano; Scott Hardy, bass; Michael Sarin, drums.

Ordering info: lesliepintchik.com

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Roberto Magris Sextet

Sun Stone

JMOOD 017

★★½

Pianist Roberto Magris opens his new sextet recording, *Sun Stone*, with a blast of kinetic energy. The eponymous first track is anchored by a side-winding rhythm, Magris' splashy, spaced-out chords bobbing in and out of lively percussion. The tune's hot-house atmosphere, propped up by burning solos from trumpeter Shareef Clayton and tenor saxophonist Mark Colby that are full of grit, grime and determination, seems to beg that listeners summarily strip the pejorative connotations from party jazz.

The pact this opening composition makes with the listener is somewhat diminished by the rest of the disc, though. Throughout the recording, tunes like the introspective "Planet Of Love," which is a feature for Ira Sullivan's breathy flute, and the medium-tempo "Beauty Is Forever" are suitable, but innocuous, bits of modern jazz; they're filled with superb playing and interesting melodies, but lack the urgency of the first track.

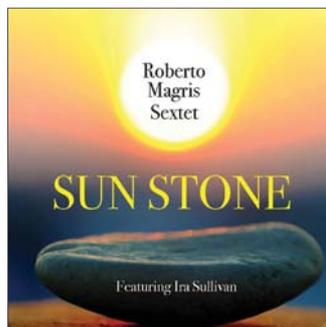
Fittingly, the album closes with "Sun Stone II," a return to the opening groove, slightly modified. The familiar elements are back, just in a new package. But between these bookends, Magris' latest record sags a little under the weight of loping swing rhythms.

—Jon Ross

Sun Stone: Sun Stone; Innamorati A Milano; Planet Of Love; Malibues; Beauty Is Forever; Look At The Stars; Sun Stone II. (66:33)

Personnel: Roberto Magris, piano; Ira Sullivan, flue, alto saxophone, soprano saxophone; Shareef Clayton, trumpet; Mark Colby, tenor saxophone; Jamie Ousley, bass; Rodolfo Zuniga, drums.

Ordering info: jmoodrecords.com



Quentin Collins Sextet

Road Warrior

UBUNTU 0027

★★★★

Plenty of rising bands plant their flags firmly in the foundations of hard-bop. Some slavishly mimic classic sounds, while others make the alternate mistake of going out of their way to interject jarring modern elements in order to prove forward thinking. Trumpeter Quentin Collins and company happily have found a sagacious balance on a disc that's intended to depict the *Road Warrior* life of itinerant jazz musicians. That spirit is undeniable in the ensemble's rousing, optimistic energy.

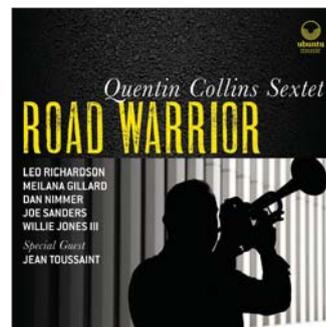
A significant presence on the U.K. scene, Collins also has worked with artists like Gregory Porter and Alicia Keys, and maintains a lasting membership in Kyle Eastwood's band. It's clear why he's in demand: Collins hits his marks with flair while avoiding overstatement. Commanding the urgency of Lee Morgan-like muscle and concise chops, Collins' fully realized solo concepts are fueled by a full tone from top to bottom. Favoring upbeat melodicism with a strong rhythmic bent—as exemplified on the title track—Collins' catchy compositions are glorified by the powerful, yet never blaring, frontline. Many miles have taught these warriors well.

—Jeff Potter

Road Warrior: Road Warrior; Float, Flitter; Flutter; Do You Know The Way?; Look Ahead (What Do You See?); Jasmine Breeze; The Hill; El Farolito; Wider Horizons; Oh! Look At Me Now. (55:01)

Personnel: Quentin Collins, trumpet, flugelhorn; Meilana Gillard, alto saxophone; Leo Richardson, Jean Toussaint (5, 7), tenor saxophone; Dan Nimmer, piano, Rhodes; Joe Sanders, bass; Willie Jones III, drums.

Ordering info: weareubuntumusic.com



Gordon Grdina Quartet

Cooper's Park

SONGLINES 1630

★★★★½

Prolific guitar and oud player Gordon Grdina hails from Vancouver, Canada, but his band on *Cooper's Park* mostly is New York-derived.

The title track acts like a would-be suite, loaded with swerves, pouncing straight into a dense, winding theme with guitar, alto saxophone and piano inseparably entwined. After this opening rush, everything disintegrates into a spacious probing. Halfway through the track's 18-plus minutes, a heavy riff grows, with saxophonist Oscar Noriega passionately soloing. A move from rigorous angularity to sombre reflection—and then right into headbanging—illustrates how Grdina infuses his work with weight, thrust and dynamism.

The bandleader doesn't attempt to play oud in the traditional fashion, at least not on this album. Here, it's gnarled by distortion, chuggingly riffed, although his sound is "natural" on "Wayward," the song making no dramatic shifts. It's the calm before "Night Sweats," which close out the album as powerful riffs pile up via harsh clavinet and guitar edges, Noriega bidding his time before a flaming entrance.

Most of Grdina's pieces on *Cooper's Park* are extended, and he always ensures that no single moment is expendable.

—Martin Longley

Cooper's Park: Cooper's Park; Benbow; Seeds II; Wayward; Night Sweats. (68:04)

Personnel: Gordon Grdina, guitar, oud; Oscar Noriega, alto saxophone, bass clarinet; Russ Lossing, Rhodes, clavinet, piano; Satoshi Takeishi, drums.

Ordering info: songlines.com



Daniela Soledade

A Moment Of You

BLUE LINE 0120

★★★★½

Singing in both Portuguese and English, Daniela Soledade's debut album displays her mastery of classic samba and bossa nova standards with some pleasing surprises, including "Ninho." The entire album builds toward that original composition by demonstrating Soledade's mastery of the form and highlighting the pristine clarity of her vocals.

That sort of skill makes sense, though, given her familial past. Soledade's roots as a third-generation musician are explored through the inclusion of her father, guitarist Paulinho Soledade, on a single track. And the band-leader revisits a composition by her grandfather, Paulo Soledade, and Antônio Carlos Jobim, "Sonho Desfeito." From the opening cut, "Eu Sambo Mesmo," a samba standard featuring Duduka Da Fonseca on drums, to the closer, "I Wish You Love," *A Moment Of You* represents a careful curation of compositions and an expansive cast of players, each of them contributing the perfect nuanced sound, intimacy, harmonious melodies and poetic rhythms while injecting the music with much-needed freshness.

—Michele L. Simms-Burton

A Moment Of You: Eu Sambo Mesmo; The Man I Love; Song For Baden; Dunas; Safely In Your Arms; Veja Bem Meu Bem; Sonho Desfeito; Ninho; Someone To Light Up My Life; I Wish You Love. (41:52)

Personnel: Daniela Soledade, vocals; Nate Najjar, guitar, cavaquinho, bass, vibraphone, drums, percussion; Martin Wind (1, 3), Tommy Cecil, bass; Maucha Adnet, percussion; Jeff Rupert, saxophone; Eddie Metz, drums; Duduka Da Fonseca, drums (1, 3), percussion (4, 7); Paulinho Soledade, guitar (3); Yves Dharamraj, cello (6); Patrick Bettison, harmonica (8).

Ordering info: danielasoledade.com



Petter Eldh *Koma Saxo*

WE JAZZ 15

★★★★★

During the past five years, bassist Petter Eldh has revealed his versatility while anchoring a wide variety of ensembles, Django Bates Belovèd and singer Lucia Cadotsch's Speak Low among them. Simultaneously, he's emerged both as a producer and bandleader. And with the stunning *Koma Saxo*, Eldh showcases the full diapason of his abilities, particularly his dynamic work as a producer. While jazz artists have been tangling with hip-hop for decades, Eldh ingeniously borrows production techniques, rather than breakbeats, from the Bronx-bred genre, maintaining a loose post-bop sensibility, but reframing it with an askew rhythmic thrust. Three of Scandinavia's best saxophonists—Jonas Kullhammar, Otis Sandsjö and Mikko Innanen—submit to Eldh's vision, frequently playing tidy unison lines in a deliciously smeared blend, that in post-production are treated like oil paint on canvas. Most pieces here use the rhythm section as a variable armature over which those horn-blends are stretched and pulled, and on "Ostron Koma," the saxophonists serve up an almost martial riff before fracturing into a three-way honkfest. It all ranks as one of the most distinctive records of the year and presents potent new possibilities for the collision of uncut post-bop and electronics. —Peter Margasak

Koma Saxo: Kali Koma; Ostron Koma; Cyclops Dance; Byågg; Koma Tema; Blumer; Fanfarum For Komarum II; Slakten Makten Takten; LH 440; Sport Koma; Pari Koma; Så Rinner Tiden Bort. (36:12)
Personnel: Petter Eldh, bass; Christian Lillinger, drums; Otis Sandsjö, Jonas Kullhammar, tenor saxophone; Mikko Innanen, alto saxophone, baritone saxophone.

Ordering info: wejazz.fi



Adam Deitch Quartet *Egyptian Secrets*

GOLDEN WOLF

★★★★★

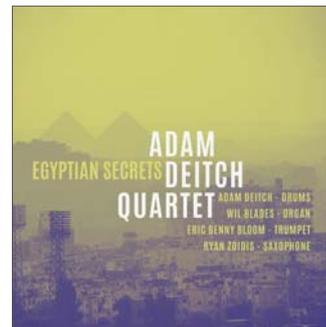
Drummer Adam Deitch (Lettuce, Break Science) insists that his quartet "isn't exactly jazz," though he allows that it "might be soul-jazz." That seems disingenuous as its debut album, *Egyptian Secrets*, clearly is dyed-in-the-wool soul-jazz. Organ, two horns and guitarist John Scofield? C'mon. It's the real deal, and a damn fine specimen, too.

One might even call it psychedelic soul-jazz, soaked as it is in reverb, effects and drone. That last signifier refers to Wil Blades' pedal point on tunes like the title track, a menacing smoker with trumpeter Eric Benny Bloom and saxophonist Ryan Zoidis wah-wahing fervently over the organist's pulsating sustain. It's not all about pedal point, however. The Hammond choogles through the quartet's churchy version of Michael Jackson's "The Way You Make Me Feel," playing bluesy fills during Sco's improvisation, and takes magnificent features on "Dot Org" and "Summer Is Here." If Deitch's case is that his band is too funky to be strictly jazz or soul-jazz, he might have an argument: The drummer plays unabashed grooves. Nevertheless, it doesn't preclude *Egyptian Secrets'* jazziness. —Michael J. West

Egyptian Secrets: Dot Org; Rocky Mountain Boogaloo; Egyptian Secrets; Fear Of The Blades; Language Interlude 1; Progressions; Art Bar; Do Better; The Way You Make Me Feel; Summer Is Here; Language Interlude 2; Dot Org Take Two; Mr. Clark's Message. (73:18)

Personnel: Adam Deitch, drums; Wil Blades, Hammond B-3; Ryan Zoidis, saxophone; Eric Benny Bloom, trumpet; John Scofield, guitar (2, 7, 8), bass (3, 10); Mike Clark, vocals (13).

Ordering info: deitchbeats-store.com



JO Party

BERTHOLD 319157

★★

On eight of *Party's* 10 tunes, German drummer Jo Beyer opens with a beautiful, consonant melody, steeped in pathos. Then, in almost every case, that introductory idea is vamped to death. Beyer and his quartet then introduce some form of abrasive improvisation that, for all its harshness, one might think at least provides some contrast and, thereby, relief. Alas.

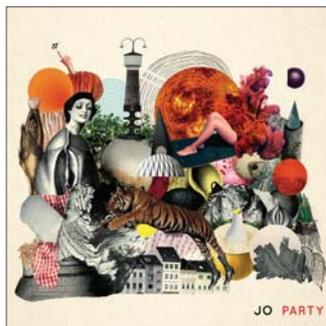
On "Bei Rosa," for example, Beyer's own solo quickly succumbs to the same kind of wheel-spinning it might otherwise subvert. A second solo, by pianist Roman Babik, starts out promisingly, but soon does the same. Andreas Wahl's electric guitar workout in the second half of "Instastory Hashtag Tourlife" blesses us with lack of repetition; unfortunately, alongside it comes aimless wandering through un- and under-developed ideas.

The closing "Kalk Post Romantik" takes the somewhat novel path of having Beyer noodle around on the drums while saxophonist Sven Decker, Babik and Wahl develop a cohesive, pretty—but repetitive—melody. Eventually, Beyer catches up and undergirds them for a spell, only to lose direction again for a frustratingly fitting finish. —Michael J. West

Party: Cascada Geht Immer; Bei Rosa; Instastory Hashtag Tourlife; Auf Jeder Jamsession Gibt Es Diesen Einen Tiger Bongo Latin Crasher; Zwischen Bier Und Poll Und 37 Grad Im Schatten; Hallo Mein Name Ist Umberto; 15 Step; Halloween Ist Doof; Wart Ihr Schonmal Auf Einer Bobbahn?; Kalk Post Romantik. (69:47)

Personnel: Jo Beyer, drums; Sven Decker, tenor saxophone; Roman Babik, piano; Andreas Wahl, guitar, acoustic guitars.

Ordering info: berthold-records.de



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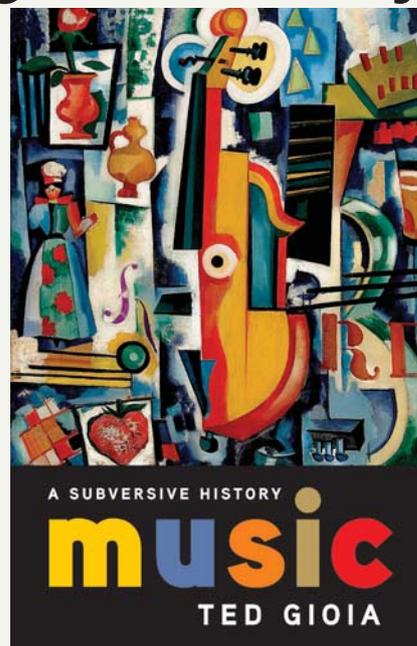
In his 10 previous books, **Ted Gioia** has written about a myriad of musical genres—from jazz to love songs—with compelling and comprehensive prose. His latest, ***Music: A Subversive History (Basic Books)***, is Gioia's magnum opus, an inventive and original work that spans 4,000 years.

"The history books downplay or hide essential elements of music that are considered disreputable or irrational ... sexuality, magic, trance and alternative mind states, healing, social control, generational conflict, political unrest, even violence and murder," Gioia writes. "A key theme of this book is that the shameful elements of songs ... are actually sources of power, serving as the engines of innovation in human music-making." Examples of those shameful elements include the hip-swerving sexuality of Elvis Presley that was censored in the '50s, the hippie counter-culture of Woodstock and the racially tinged messages in rap, which eventually made fortunes for multinational corporations and have become part of our worldwide linguistic and cultural fabric.

Drawing from a number of disciplines, including anthropology, archaeology, neuroscience and social history, Gioia creates a narrative that's a well-constructed literary labyrinth leading readers away from the solitude of a safe, nonlinear history toward a more nuanced narrative that paints a complex portrait of iconic musicians.

Gioia's well-tempered treatment of J.S. Bach counters the conventional histories that portray the keyboardist/composer as the ultimate "sanctioned and orthodox insider" encased in a rigid amber of respectability. Building on the work of musicologists Laurence Dreyfus and John Eliot Gardiner, Gioia uncovers a heavy-drinking Bach who pulled a knife "on a fellow musician during a fist fight" and "was imprisoned for a month." The author convincingly makes the case that Bach was a "subversive" who "disturbed many austere Lutherans and even fellow musicians" with his "ostentatious display of technique and bold architectural structures," and long improvisations when he was a church organist. It wasn't until the 1820s that his gifts began to be appreciated.

Gioia deftly deals with the import of classical music without positioning it as a global Eurocentric monolith—as so many other writers have—to which other cultures must kowtow. The author even traces some of that cultural arrogance to Greek philosopher Pythagoras' music theories from 500 B.C. that defined music in mathematical terms, but weren't fit to sufficiently notate African-born music genres "that defied conventional metric thinking."



That didn't curtail the influence of black music, though. Gioia writes that "[e]ven when white musicians stepped forward with their own distinctive popular musical styles—whether it was 'British Invasion' rock, disco, bluegrass, or whatever else climbed the charts for longer or shorter durations—they always did so with heavy borrowings from black sources of inspiration."

In the chapter titled "Funky Butt," Gioia builds upon his previous books—*How to Listen to Jazz* and *The History of Jazz*—and describes the idiom as an art form "which thrives in melting pot situations, because it is outwardly focused and hungry for new sources From its earliest days, jazz demonstrated a remarkable ability to devour and digest other performance styles, a trait that would distinguish it from all other folk arts."

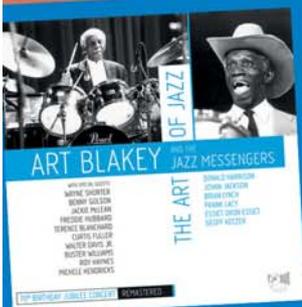
Buddy Bolden, Louis Armstrong, Charlie Parker, Miles Davis, Thelonious Monk and Duke Ellington (who the author maintains was a kind of rival to George Gershwin) are noted as the music's many innovators. Jazz, as well as the blues, gospel, r&b, soul and rap, have "given voice to individuals and groups denied access to other platforms of expression, so much so, that, in times and places, freedom of song has been as important as freedom of speech, and far more controversial."

Throughout this vital book, Gioia shows that music *still* is a disruptive force. "Even as we have arrived at a blissful age of music as pure entertainment, a new era of disruption is usually waiting just around the corner." **DB**

Ordering info: basicbooks.com



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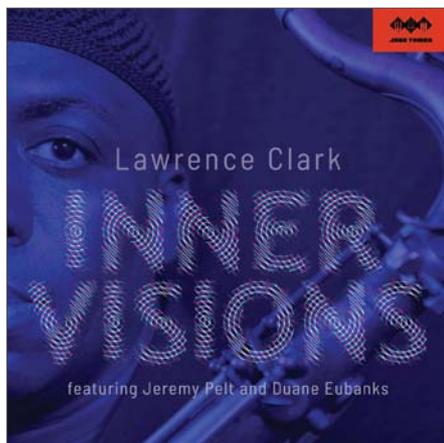
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Lawrence Clark *Inner Visions*

JAZZ TRIBES 1906001

★★★

Tenor saxophonist Lawrence Clark begins *Inner Visions* with a tribute to Rashied Ali, one of John Coltrane's last drummers. Clark played with Ali, who died in 2009, for more than a decade, and the first track, "Mr. Ali-1," is an appropriate encapsulation of both elder musicians—it's slow and meditative, in free time, and sounds as if it could have emerged from Coltrane's late period. Clark's tone is dry and grainy, and occasionally keening; he plays a lot of long tones. There's a tense bowed bass from Joris Teepee, and floating cymbal and snare work from Darrell Green on the opener, the song feeling like an incantation (as does the final track, "Mr. Ali-2").

The dedications stand out on an album that largely comes off as a straightahead hard-bop affair. The seven tracks between the Ali tributes are dark, swinging and mysterious, harkening back, say, to Coltrane in his earlier period—*Blue Train*, for instance—or Wayne Shorter in the mid-1960s. Or perhaps Art Blakey and his Jazz Messengers during the same time. Jeremy Pelt and Duane Eubanks, who split trumpet duties throughout, add to this impression. (There are few things that signify hard-bop more than a tenor/trumpet lineup.) Clark's second album—his first, 2017's independently released *Forward Motion*—for the most part, has a wide-open, modal, blues-inflected vibe, particularly "Blew," "Judgment Day," "Freedom" and the title track, a waltz. David Bryant's piano, dark and vampy, plays a large part in helping to set the mood.

Though the record on the whole seems as if it's reaching back to another period, it doesn't sound dated or nostalgic. Clark's a self-assured saxophonist with a vision that's in touch with the tradition, but not mired in it. —*Matthew Kassel*

Inner Visions: Mr. Ali-1; Blew; Judgment Day; Freedom; Time Traveler; Anit; Inner Visions; Nibiru; Mr. Ali-2. (56:17)

Personnel: Lawrence Clark, tenor saxophone; Duane Eubanks, Jeremy Pelt (4, 7), trumpet; David Bryant, piano; Rhodes; Joris Teepee, bass; Darrell Green, drums.

Ordering info: jazztribes.net

Rempis/Abrams/ Ra + Baker

Apsis

AEROPHONIC 022

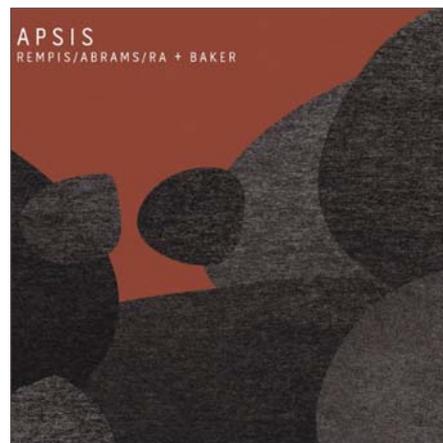
★★★★

As heard on the 2016 recording *Perihelion*, the hard-charging Chicago improvising trio of saxophonist Dave Rempis, bassist Joshua Abrams and drummer Avreeayl Ra deftly incorporated the piano abstractions of Jim Baker in stride, which complemented the core unit's increasingly cohesive onslaught with a carpet of fractured sound.

That extended three-track recording was captured live during the first meeting of the trio and the keyboardist. Despite the band name, which suggests Baker is just a guest, during the past several years he's actually become a fixed member of the ensemble, and his steady involvement reaps serious dividends on the quartet's latest recording, *Apsis*.

Each party sounds significantly more comfortable and locked-in now on both the most visceral, fiery exchanges, and, more significantly, during less frenzied and more ruminative stretches.

But there's plenty of heat on "Exedra," with Rempis blowing characteristically cranky, striated baritone lines, flush with gnarly split tones. Baker's moody blanket of two-fisted runs functions as a counterbalance, not so much tamping down chaos but enhancing it with an insistent presence that points toward other paths. His patterns and Ra's explosive flurries take pressure off Abrams, who uses the release to toggle between tangles of plucky pizz and solemn low-end grounding to pro-



vide something far beyond the instrument's anchoring role.

Both of the album's tracks are extended journeys that ebb and flow organically, but "Mithrab" is particularly gripping, delving into a reflective, levitating vibe, even as the saxophonist rips into the tenor's scalding upper register and Ra spreads punishing snare explosions. Baker switches to ARP synthesizer here and lays down long tones that morph and shimmer psychedelically.

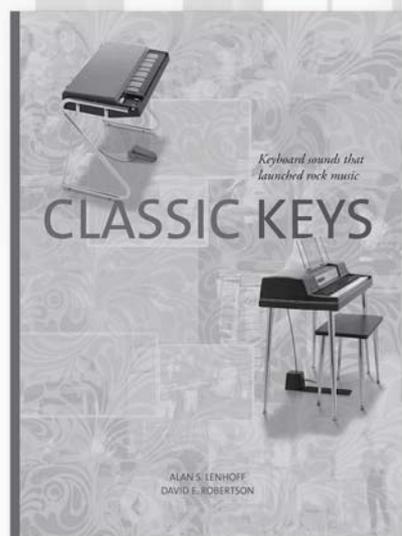
But the 36-minute epic's general low simmer belies an intensity and interactive brilliance that's never been more effective. The most restrained, hushed performance in the group's history is also its most powerful and promising.

—*Peter Margasak*

Apsis: Exedra; Mithrab. (61:20)

Personnel: Dave Rempis, alto saxophone, tenor saxophone, baritone saxophone; Jim Baker, piano, electronics; Joshua Abrams, bass; Avreeayl Ra, drums.

Ordering info: aerophonicrocords.com



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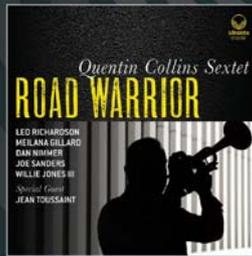




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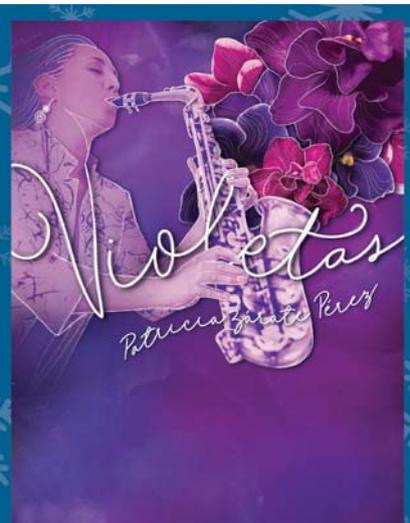


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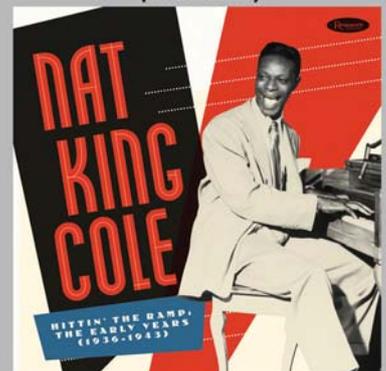
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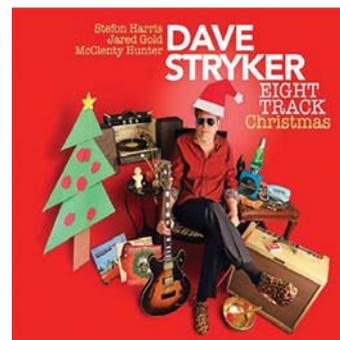
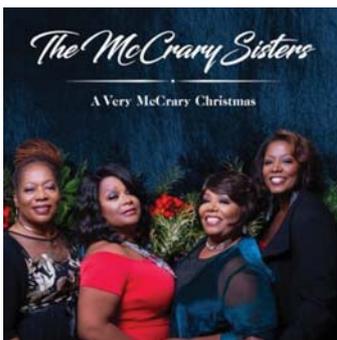
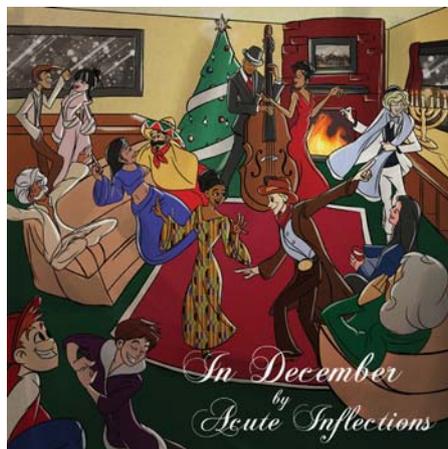
GIFT GUIDE»»



Timeless Classics

Miles Davis' *The Complete Birth Of The Cool* & other gifts for music fanatics

Miles Davis (Photo: ©Herman Leonard Photography, LLC)



BOUNTY OF YULETIDE TUNES

Each autumn, a windfall of new albums arrives to help celebrate the Christmas and Hanukkah season. And every year, thankfully, there are a dozen or so releases that stand apart from the pack.

Dave Stryker has lent his considerable musical intelligence, imagination and prowess the past few years to a series of three *Eight Track*-titled albums recorded with organist Jared Gold, drummer McClenty Hunter and either Stefon Harris or Steve Nelson on vibes. Crafting soul-jazz grooves, the quartet reanimates tunes Stryker enjoyed listening to as a teenager in the 1960s and '70s. *Eight Track Christmas* (Strikezone 8819; 51:02 ★★★★★) continues the series with the guitarist's fresh-as-newly-fallen-snow ballad and uptempo arrangements of his favorite Yuletide tunes, mostly familiar carols. The shiny star atop Stryker's Christmas tree is "Soulful Frosty," a mash-up that pairs "Frosty The Snowman" with a version of Young-Holt Unlimited's hit from 1968, "Soulful Strut."

Ordering info: davestryker.com

Talented singer Brynn Stanley projects unstudied rapport with the melodies and messages of the 10 songs comprising her *Classic Christmas* (SonoPath 2019001; 35:55 ★★★★★). The pure tones and shadings of her appealing voice invite return listens to Brook Benton's "This Time Of The Year" and the Tony Bennett-identified "I Love The Winter Weather." Supported by a big band led by arranger/

co-producer Tony Guerrero or a combo, sometimes strings and a vocal group, Stanley makes sure her singing elevates the human spirit.

Ordering info: brynnstanley.com

Denmark-based Kristin Korb's *That Time Of Year* (Storyville 1014323; 65:06 ★★★★★) pulls off the trick of sounding simultaneously new and traditional. A skilled bassist and a more than capable singer, she imparts warmth to her interpretations of 13 holiday songs. Highlights include her renditions of the Lou Rawls-identified "Christmas Will Really Be Christmas" and Dave Frishberg's "Snowbound."

Ordering info: storyvillerecords.com

The Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra with Wynton Marsalis follows up its 2015 seasonal concert album with *Big Band Holidays II* (Blue Engine 0020; 50:32 ★★★★★), which compiles highlights from the past four Jazz at Lincoln Center holiday shows. Key to the band's appeal is how assuredly it embraces famous carols ("Silver Bells," "We Three Kings") and less-common chestnuts ("Cool Yule," popularized by Louis Armstrong, and Percy Faith's "Brazilian Sleigh Bells," incorporating cross-currents of serious jazz business and seasonal gaiety). The Claude Thornton classic "Snowfall," arranged by Sherman Irby, defines elegance. Featured vocalists include venerated jazz veteran Catherine Russell, rising star Veronica Swift, Canadian treasure Denzal Sinclair and

the late, great Aretha Franklin, alone, singing and playing piano on "O Tannenbaum."

Ordering info: store.jazz.org

The 12-piece, Wisconsin-based Isthmus Brass delivers its second holiday album with *We Need A Little Christmas* (Summit 737; 65:07 ★★★★★). Tuba player Mike Forbes and all the other horn players, along with drummer Keith Lienert, are Christmas music connoisseurs with jazz and classical backgrounds. Serious beauty informs "Ave Maria," "Wexford Carol" and "Russian Christmas Music," while sheer fun propels the sled occupied by "Frosty The Snowman," with its thundering Gene Krupa-like drums.

Ordering info: summitrecords.com

The German, Belgian and Dutch members of the New Orleans Jazz Band of Cologne find their passion in New Orleans traditional jazz. *Santa Claus Is Coming To Town* (K&K Verlagsanstalt 134; 66:52 ★★★½) maintains the level of energy necessary to keep nostalgia away on this live album. A round-robin of decent solos is the order of the day.

Ordering info: kuk-art.com

The vocal group Accent reacts to the specialness of the holiday season with *Christmas All The Way* (self-released; 39:10 ★★★½). These six singers exult something outstanding in their a cappella rendering of the Swedish classic "Jul, Jul Stralande Jul." They hit it off in tandem with Gordon Goodwin's Big Phat Band

on “It’s The Most Wonderful Time Of The Year” and “Let It Snow! Let It Snow! Let It Snow!”

Ordering info: accentvocal.com

Often heard at posh hotels in Manhattan, the **Acute Inflections** duo of singer Elasea Douglas and upright bassist Sadiki Pierre share a heartbeat for the popular carols they play on *In December* (self-released; 46:23 ★★★½). Douglas’ lovely voice meshes with Pierre’s rich, thumping tones throughout the program, whether they’re reworking “Sleigh Ride,” “White Christmas” and “Winter Wonderland” or offering their compelling original composition “In December.”

Ordering info: acuteinflections.com

It’s only fitting that gospel group **The McCrary Sisters** would record an album in celebration of the season. On the satisfying *A Very McCrary Christmas* (Rounder 1166100649; 55:29 ★★★★★), these four daughters of a preacher stick to carols, singing with a religious exhilaration that elevates the tunes far beyond staleness. Gospel legend Shirley Caesar helps the siblings lift up “Joyful Joyful,” and blues star Keb’ Mo’ graces “Away In A Manger.”

Ordering info: rounder.com

Utilizing warm, accessible vocal tones, **Keb’ Mo’** gracefully navigates the lyrics of old standbys like “Please Come Home For Christmas” in his comforting pop style on *Moonlight, Mistletoe & You* (Concord 01077; 35:25 ★★★½). Shifting the mood, he and guitarist Akil Thompson light real blues fires on “Santa Claus, Santa Claus” and Koko Taylor’s “Merry, Merry Christmas.” Keb’ Mo’ deserves an extra slice of gingerbread cake for daring to poke Mr. Claus in the belly with the witty, anti-consumerism anthem “Christmas Is Annoying.”

Ordering info: kebmo.com

East L.A. rockers **Los Lobos** also had never released a holiday album until this year. On *Llego Navidad* (Rhino 604538; 40:48 ★★★★★), the band delivers messages of peace, hope and compassion as they marvelously update gems like “La Rama” and Mexican singer Javier Solís’ classic “Regalo De Reyes.” The studio tamale-making party heats up with “It’s Christmas Time In Texas,” a merry Tex-Mex tune.

Ordering info: store.rhino.com

Assessing Hanukkah as a celebration of the freedom of faith and thought, **Yale Strom’s Broken Consort** creatively mixes elements of folk, classical, jazz, blues, rock and traditional Jewish music styles on *Shimmering Lights* (ARC Music 2809; 77:18 ★★★★★). First-rate violinist-composer-arranger Strom and his colleagues tap into the humanity of Sephardic and Yiddish folk songs. Gifted collaborators include vocalist Elizabeth Schwartz, who skillfully sings in Yiddish, Hebrew, Ladino and English while eschewing egotism.

Ordering info: arcmusic.co.uk

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All of Miles Davis' recordings with his namesake nonet are compiled on *The Complete Birth Of The Cool*.

MILES' 'COOL' SESSIONS

This year marks the 70th anniversary of the short-lived, but now legendary, Miles Davis Nonet. Its recordings, first issued in 1949, attracted only modest attention and praise from jazz fans and critics until 1957, when they were compiled for the newly popular LP format as *Birth Of The Cool*. This was a marketing masterstroke that capitalized on the rising popularity of “cool” jazz and elevated the nonet recordings from a faintly remembered curio into the realm of overlooked masterpiece.

To mark the anniversary, Blue Note/UME has issued a set titled *The Complete Birth Of The Cool*, including the 12 studio sides, plus all known recordings of the nonet’s live shows. Those took place in September 1948 at New York’s Royal Roost, a long-defunct Broadway chicken restaurant that served bebop on the side, and whose shows were broadcast on WMCA by famed radio DJ “Symphony Sid” Torin.

Although the set is available in vinyl, CD and digital formats, the two-LP version is especially notable: It marks the first time since 1957 that the recordings have been remastered for vinyl, and the first time that all the *Birth Of The Cool* performances—studio and live—are available together on LP. The accompanying book includes informative essays by Ashley Kahn, Gerry Mulligan and Phil Schaap, along with gorgeous photos.

The nonet grew out of impassioned intellectual discussions held in arranger Gil Evans’ basement room behind a laundry on 55th Street, a “salon” frequented by many of the music’s rising stars. Two factors especially distinguished the nonet’s sound from previous iterations of bebop: the orchestration—a six-member horn choir, featuring French horn and tuba, backed by a rhythm section—and the arranging concepts of Evans, which he had developed while working for the

Claude Thornhill Orchestra.

As Davis recalled in his 1989 autobiography (written with Quincy Troupe), “*The Birth Of The Cool* album came from some of the sessions we did trying to sound like Claude Thornhill’s band. We wanted that sound, but the difference was that we wanted it as small as possible.”

For fans just discovering this music, it might not sound as “cool” as the title suggests: Some of the playing is actually pretty hot, especially the live material, propelled by Max Roach’s drums. Balancing the heat, however, is a heady mix of 20th-century classicism mixed with bebop, the approach Evans honed with Thornhill. Not all the arrangements are by Evans, but his overwhelming influence is made clear in the dense, choir-like, parallel voicings of the six horns—as opposed to the usual colloquy among brass, woodwinds and rhythm sections of traditional big bands.

“It’s something I listened to a lot back in 10th grade, when I was first getting into Miles,” trumpeter Jeremy Pelt said recently. “These recordings are iconic. They should be studied from a lot of different angles. It’s like watching *The Godfather*: You watch it one way the first time, then ... you watch it again and start to think about some things; it grows on you. I listen back to solos I’ve been able to sing for 25 years, and they have new meaning to me ... [Those musicians] were dissecting chords in a very hip way. It was bebop in sheep’s clothing.”

The Complete Birth Of The Cool provides invaluable snapshots of several young, future jazz masters who were just beginning to crystallize their sound, especially the 22-year-old Davis. On his first recordings as a leader, he delivers sumptuous trumpet lines with hints of the lyricism and mystery to come.

—Allen Morrison

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CAMP & CLASS CONVERGE ON COLE'S 'RAMP'

Big CD box sets are like fancy cars or eye-catching jewelry—fun to own but expensive to buy. Then comes the holidays, a time when wish-lists come out of the shadows and permit us to ask others for all the things we dare not ask of ourselves. That's why record companies reserve their most tempting treasures for December, when even adults are entitled to dream like children on Christmas Eve.

In that spirit, the front runner for the most wish-lists in 2019 could be *Nat King Cole, Hittin' The Ramp: The Early Years (1936–1943)* (Resonance Records), which scoops into one seven-CD (or 10-LP) package a nearly complete library of Cole's early pre-Capitol period, which formally ended Nov. 30, 1943. I say "nearly" because it misses the nine 1940 sides he did for Victor with Lionel Hampton and a 1943-ish Norman Granz session with Illinois Jacquet and Shad Collins whose precise date remains mysteriously vague and might fall within the Capitol period. But their absence won't stop *Hittin' The Ramp* from becoming the essential companion to Mosaic's famous *Complete Capitol Recordings Of The Nat King Cole Trio*, issued nearly 30 years ago.

The principal platform of Cole's early career was not the commercial record, but the radio transcription. The '30s and '40s were a pre-payola period when big record companies fought to keep their music off the radio, not give it away free on the radio. To fill that gap, annotator Will Friedwald explains, local stations subscribed to various transcription services that supplied them with whole libraries of recorded music.

Starting in September 1938, Cole and his new trio began picking up quick cash by dashing off a dozen or more tracks in an hour or two for these libraries. The performances were relaxed and not particular about details or repertoire. Of the nearly 200 selections on *Hittin' The Ramp*, almost 150 are transcription pieces. (Cole did another 100 or so transcriptions after joining Capitol, but they are for another day.) Only about 40 tracks here are commercial record dates, and only 16 of those were for a major label, Decca. The remaining dozen or so are taken from Armed Forces radio broadcasts in which the hipster lingo seems quaintly, if not severely, dated.

It reminds us that Cole was still very much a "race" or "sepia" artist whose scat and "jive" appeal was assumed to be limited strictly to African American audiences. Hipness distanced the young Cole from the embarrassments of miscarried emotions, otherwise known as corn. It kept things light, even when



Nat "King" Cole

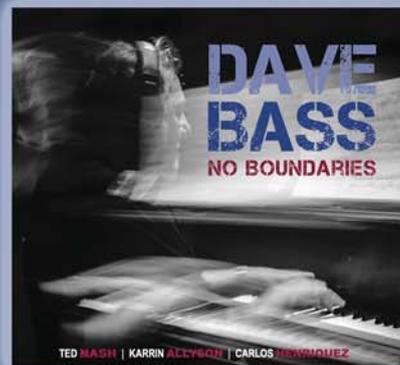
racism was systemic. The featherweight innocence of a tune like "I'm An Errand Boy For Rhythm" would be too politically incorrect for public display today.

Yet, the music—and particularly Cole's magnificently streamlined piano flights—sounds totally at ease in the 21st century, much more so than, say, the pre-Decca Bing Crosby sides made only a few years before. In the interim, between 1933 and 1938, the modern swing bands had, shall we say, hip-notized American music, i.e., awakened young audiences to the often-subtle distinctions between the quick emotional hit of campy excess and the enduring elegance of authentic style. Hipness became its own kind of camp, of course. ("Tickle my belly, and I'll send you the jelly," says Cole. Translation: "Send your requests and I'll sing them on the air.") But Cole on piano was like Fred Astaire in shoes.

Camp and class converge like two clashing sensibilities in this wonderfully conflicted collection. The faddish slang of a revolt against schmaltz blinks like a neon sign, but Cole's pianism illustrates the sublime intellect of a master virtuoso at the height of his powers. It was the place where Earl Hines met Teddy Wilson and Art Tatum. But don't take Cole's singing too seriously here. He was still learning.

In addition to Friedwald's fine notes, the 80-page book that accompanies *Hittin' The Ramp* offers reflections on Cole from Dick Hyman, Tony Bennett, Quincy Jones, John Pizzarelli, Michael Feinstein, Johnny Mathis, Harry Belafonte, Oscar Moore and his brother, Freddy Cole; many photographs; and a complete discography with dates, locations and personnel.

—John McDonough



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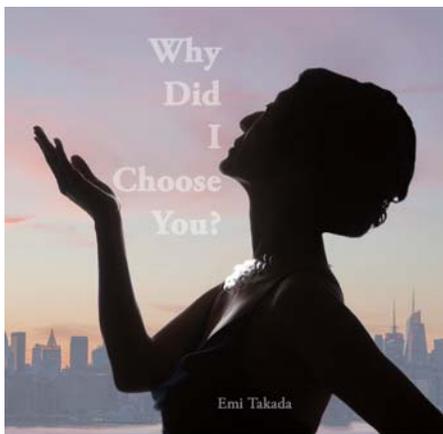
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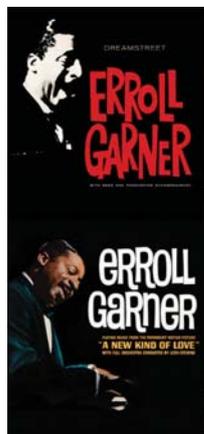
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12 GARNER ALBUMS REISSUED IN OCTAVE REMASTERED SERIES

Fans of pianist Erroll Garner (1923–77) have rejoiced in recent years, as reissues and new titles have shone a spotlight on the work of the legendary Pittsburgh native. The resurgence continues with the 12-album Octave Remastered Series, a joint effort between Mack Avenue and the Garner estate. The dozen albums—each of which has a previously unreleased bonus track—are newly restored from analog masters of releases from the 1960s and 1970s. The series represents a treasure trove for Garner fans and completists.

The first four titles in the series—*Dreamstreet*, *Closeup In Swing*, *One World Concert* and *A New Kind Of Love*—were released Sept. 27. The series will continue, with one album released per month—*A Night At The Movies*, *Campus Concert*, *That's My Kick*, *Up In Erroll's Room*, *Feeling Is Believing*, *Gemini*, *Magician* and *Gershwin & Kern*—leading up to the kick-off of Garner's centennial celebration in June 2020, concluding on his 100th birthday in June 2021.

The master tapes for all 12 albums were transferred and restored using Jamie Howarth's Plangent Process playback system, which removes machine noise and unwanted fluctuations from the original analog recordings. "The experience of it is more like you're listening to Garner through the monitors in a professional studio, rather than listening to him off the tape copy," said Peter Lockhart, senior producer of the project and vice president of Octave Music.

Lockhart originally began working on the Garner archives in 2015 with pianist Geri Allen, then director of jazz studies at the University of Pittsburgh. "Geri was our creative center and our 'North Star' in terms of the Garner project," he said. "After she passed [on June 27, 2017], we were trying to figure out where to go from there. Geri had introduced us to Christian Sands after a three-piano Garner tribute they did with Jason Moran at the Monterey Jazz Festival in 2015, so we started talking to Christian. Then early last year, he became our creative ambassa-

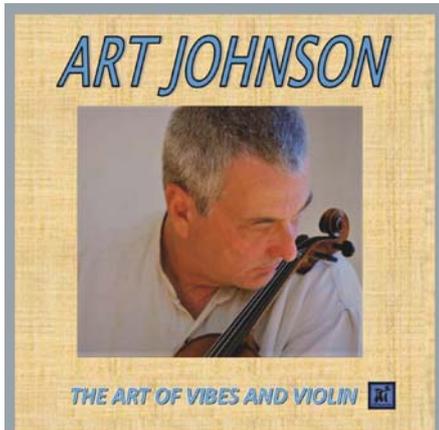
dor. Christian is very passionate about performing Garner's music in concert with his High Wire Trio, and he's been a great ambassador for the Garner project."

In 1959, Garner successfully sued Columbia Records to remove an album the company had released without his permission. Garner and his manager, Martha Glaser, subsequently founded and launched Octave Records, whose 12 releases make up the Octave Remastered Series.

The reissue of *Dreamstreet* contains the bonus track "By Chance," an engaging, medium-tempo Garner original, while *Closeup In Swing* includes "Octave 103," another original that showcases the pianist's impeccable sense of time. *One World Concert*, recorded in Seattle at the 1962 World's Fair, includes the hauntingly beautiful Garner ballad "Other Voices," and *A New Kind Of Love*, featuring the pianist with a 35-piece orchestra, includes a new trio version of "Paris Mist."

Lockhart explained that many of Garner's spontaneous intros to tunes on the live recordings were cut to fit the time limitation of the LP format. Those same off-the-cuff intros have been restored for the new releases. "For instance, there's an extra minute of an introduction for 'The Way You Look Tonight,' an extended introduction for 'Sweet And Lovely' and a really amazing one for 'Mack The Knife,' where he goes through these progressions and modulations that are really hip and that no one's ever heard before.

"It's such a unique catalog," Lockhart continued. "There are so few artist-owned catalogs that are this important and this large and have so much unexplored material to work with. And it's not just the music but a million pieces of paper—all of his telegrams and correspondence, contracts, pictures, and then there's his clothing, jewelry, artwork. There's so many things to explore, and we're trying to encourage more people to go to the [Erroll Garner Archive at the University of Pittsburgh] and engage in scholarship about his life and his work."
 —Bill Milkowski



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Robert Glasper (foreground) and Herbie Hancock in a scene from the documentary *Blue Note Records: Beyond the Notes*.

JAZZ FILM WITH HIP-HOP HEART

Swiss-born director Sophie Huber's *Blue Note Records: Beyond the Notes* (Eagle Vision), which coincides with the label's 80th anniversary, supports the canard that good things come in threes. However, the film stands in contrast to both *It Must Swing: The Blue Note Story*, by Eric Friedler, a German—which portrays label co-founders Alfred Lion and Francis Wolff from the perspectives of the musicians they documented—and *I Called Him Morgan*, in which Kasper Collin, a Swede, traces the relationship between iconic Blue Note trumpeter Lee Morgan and the woman who shot him in 1972. Huber examines the ways in which the members of Blue Note's hip-hop-informed 21st-century roster connect, aesthetically and emotionally, to the classic albums that established Blue Note's indelible brand.

She frames the narrative around a beautifully shot 2017 recording session at which the "Blue Note All Stars" (Ambrose Akinmusire, Robert Glasper, Derrick Hodge, Lionel Loueke, Kendrick Scott and Marcus Strickland) join old masters Wayne Shorter and Herbie Hancock for two intuitive explorations of Shorter's "Masqualero." Huber interviews all of them, as well as Blue Note President Don Was, producer-alto saxophonist Terrace Martin, vocalist/pianist Norah Jones, recording engineer Rudy Van Gelder (1924–2016) and alto saxophonist Lou Donaldson, whose 23 years with Blue Note included the 1967 LP *Alligator Bogaloo*, which featured contributions from "hip-hop architects" (in the words of Ali Shaheed Muhammad from A Tribe Called Quest), such as guitarist George Benson, organist Dr. Lonnie Smith and drummer/groove-master Idris Muhammad.

"I knew from the beginning that I wanted to talk to the younger artists not only about what's happening now, but to directly understand how alive the influence of the artists of the past still is," Huber said. As examples, she mentions

Scott's account of his "conversion experience" after hearing Art Blakey on *A Night At Birdland* (1954), and Strickland's paean to John Coltrane's *Blue Train* (1958).

The project began in 2015, after an inquiry from Was, who'd played bass on the soundtrack to Huber's first documentary, *Harry Dean Stanton: Partly Fiction*. "My dad had a lot of jazz records, and the music always intrigued and invigorated me," she said. "But what made Blue Note different was the aesthetics." Huber was referring to the "timeless, perfect combination" of Wolff's distinctive photographs and Reid Miles' album cover design, which she deploys prominently in propelling the film's narrative flow.

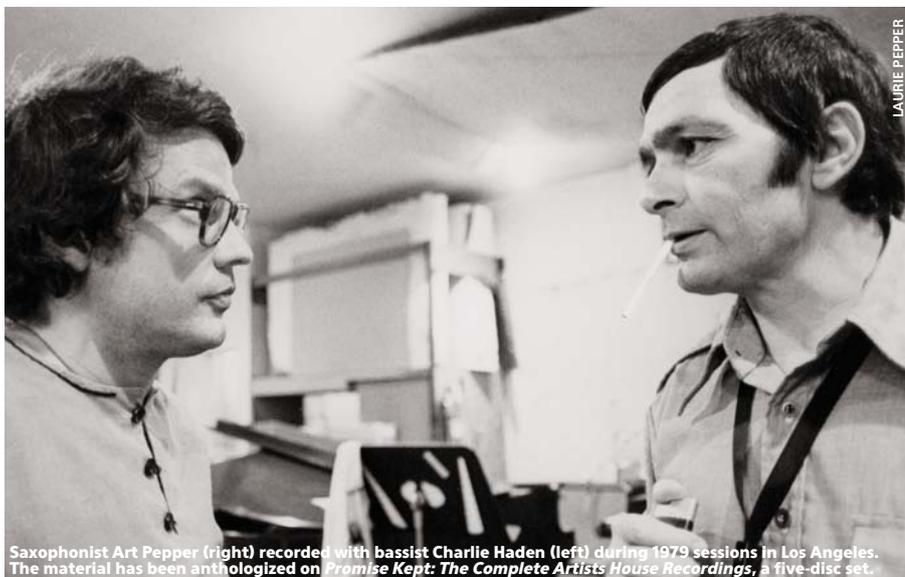
"Then I discovered that Blue Note was founded by two German-Jewish refugees," she added. "In a time when xenophobia and racism are moving to the forefront, it was important to tell a story about immigrants and African Americans who created a legacy as powerful and vital today as it was then."

The process of winnowing down hours of footage to an 85-minute film "that would hopefully appeal to younger people, and people who don't necessarily know much about jazz, or like it, or even know that they like it" necessitated difficult editorial decisions.

Some aficionados will question Huber's choice to generally ignore the 1984–2010 tenure of label head Bruce Lundvall, who oversaw consequential albums by Cassandra Wilson, Dianne Reeves, Kurt Elling, Joe Lovano, Greg Osby, John Scofield, Benny Green and Jason Moran, as well as Jones, Glasper and Loueke.

"I tried to at least show an album cover, so that [many artists'] names come up," she explained. "But I chose to be present and look into the future, rather than go into detail about the past. I hope people will be interested enough to dig deeper and find out more, as the wealth is vast."

—Ted Panken



Saxophonist Art Pepper (right) recorded with bassist Charlie Haden (left) during 1979 sessions in Los Angeles. The material has been anthologized on *Promise Kept: The Complete Artists House Recordings*, a five-disc set.

PEPPER'S COMEBACK

In 1977 alto saxophonist Art Pepper told New York Times critic John S. Wilson, “In a very short time I’ll be like Trane. There was Pres, then Bird and then Trane. And then there’s going to be Pepper. I’ve felt that way all my life.”

Lawyer, record producer and ardent Pepper fan John Snyder—then the head of the A&M jazz imprint Horizon Records—did his best to help the saxophonist achieve that goal, booking the weekend stint at the Village Vanguard that preceded the Times article. The gigs were part of an impressive comeback, following years of inactivity caused by drug abuse and incarceration.

“Our gratitude to John was enormous, because it was John who put Art on the road and hired PR people,” said the saxophonist’s widow, Laurie Pepper.

The Vanguard engagement was the saxophonist’s first-ever performance in New York, nearly three decades after he first appeared on the Los Angeles scene. Snyder suggested recording the Vanguard shows, releasing them to great acclaim on Contemporary Records, the saxophonist’s longtime label run by Les Koenig.

Pepper and Snyder agreed that they would make a studio recording, eventually. A few months after the Vanguard dates that summer, Koenig died and Pepper signed a new deal with Fantasy, with the caveat that he was to make a record for Artists House, a new imprint Snyder launched after leaving Horizon.

Pepper never attained the influence he prophesied, but he did make good on his word to Snyder. In 1979, the producer put together all-star bands in New York and Los Angeles for sessions that would yield four albums worth of material. The first, *So In Love*, was issued on Artists House in 1980, while the Fantasy-owned *Galaxy* and the Japanese imprint Victor released the other three after Pepper’s death in 1982. Apart from appear-

ing in the out-of-print 1989 box set *The Complete Galaxy Recordings*, the Snyder sessions long have been unavailable, but thanks to the efforts of Laurie Pepper—who made most of them available digitally through the Bandcamp page of her Widow’s Taste label in 2016—they were recently collected in a five-CD set, *Promise Kept: The Complete Artists House Recordings* (Omnivore), which features 15 previously unissued takes.

While the music throughout the set generally is superb, both Laurie and Snyder have reservations. In her liner notes, she accuses some musicians of disrespecting the saxophonist and phoning in some of the performances. She relates an anecdote about bassist Ron Carter reading a newspaper during a session after Pepper had requested him to lie out during an a cappella introduction for one tune. Still, the rest of the group—pianist Hank Jones and drummer Al Foster—play with exquisite grace and depth.

“The record we made for Artists House isn’t that good in my opinion,” said Snyder, now a professor at Loyola University–New Orleans. “I picked the wrong repertoire. The world did not need another ‘Straight No Chaser.’” Indeed, with the exception of a few Pepper originals, including his timeless ballad “Diane,” everything cut was a standard. On the other hand, Snyder had the nifty idea of recording six remarkable solo performances by Pepper, which prove revelatory.

“I thought Art’s sense of melody and storytelling through sound matched up perfectly with the idea of the solo voice. It was my way of framing an exquisite human ability at which Art Pepper had a particular genius,” Snyder said. “He was like a Delta blues dobro player—he could create melody, harmony and motion at the same time, which, coincidentally, just so happens to be the DNA of Ornette [Coleman]’s ‘Harmolodics.’”

—Peter Margasak



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Narvel "Cadillac Baby" Eatmon was the founder of the label *Bea & Baby Records*.

ENCHANTING DISCOVERIES

Michael Robert Frank, founder and CEO of the label Earwig Music, has completed his greatest rescue mission. "I've believed that the *Bea & Baby* record label had too much great country and urban blues, doo-wop and gospel to let it go into the dustbin of history," he said. "So, I've produced a deluxe, complete testament to all the musicians and to Cadillac Baby. I took the project on as a fan, to create something to be dug into deeply, a source of enchanting discovery to be cherished."

The box set *Cadillac Baby's Bea & Baby Records: The Definitive Collection* (Earwig Music) brings to light the long-neglected recording legacy of Narvel "Cadillac Baby" Eatmon (1914–'91). Based on Chicago's South Side, Eatmon was a club and label owner who scouted out artists, especially blues musicians, for gigs and sessions. In addition to 101 tracks spread across four CDs, the set has a 128-page book with rare photos and essays by blues authorities Jim O'Neal and Bill Dahl, as well as gospel historian Robert M. Marovich.

The set (spanning 1959–'89) showcases more than 30 recording artists. Blues fans, in particular, have lots to explore. Wild slide guitarist Hound Dog Taylor's first recordings are here, and a young James Cotton gruffly sings "One More Mile," using resolve to mute a penetrating sadness. Among the others plunging into the blues with personality are Eddie Boyd, Earl Hooker, Homesick James, Sunnysland Slim, Detroit Junior and Lee Jackson. R&B acts no longer lost in the mists of time include Kirk Taylor & The Velvets and Faith Taylor, who cut two tracks at age 11. African American gospel singers turn

up on Disc 4, notably the transcendently impassioned Eddie Dean. On six tracks, Cadillac Baby himself is heard discussing his fascinating life and career.

Stories about the man are legion. Perhaps none more outlandish than the account of him driving one of the convertible Cadillacs he owned through his club's entrance door, up a ramp and onto the stage. He then cruised over to the bar.

In 2006, Earwig Music bought *Bea & Baby* and its associated labels from Cadillac's widow, Bertha (aka *Bea*). The transaction got Frank thinking about a compilation. With stacks of 45s and a bushel of paperwork in his possession, he began doing research. He spent years organizing a discography and tracking down missing records owned by collectors. He then created new digital masters.

In addition to issuing 76 albums on Earwig, Frank has ranged freely throughout the blues world as an artist manager, booking agent, and producer of albums and the occasional event. He's also a harmonica player, long serving as an accompanist to bluesman David "Honeyboy" Edwards (1915–2011), whom he managed.

All the while, Frank has been motivated by altruistic instincts. "As I learned more about the histories and obstacles faced and overcome by musicians, especially blues musicians, I began to appreciate their lifetime commitment to creating and performing. [These artists are] revolutionary and inspiring. I wanted to help them to have better economic opportunities by playing to larger, more diverse audiences and to make more recordings.

"On an experiential level," he continued, "I felt the transformational power, emotion and cultural magnificence of the music. I wanted to share all that—so the public could experience the music and the artists as deeply as I did."

Another labor of love by a committed blues fan was Jim Fishel's restoration and compiling of tapes he made a half century ago as a teenager at a three-day event near the campus of the University of Michigan. Now issued as *Ann Arbor Blues Festival 1969—Vols. 1 & 2* (Third Man Records), the set offers one or two performances each by a parade of blues VIPs, including B.B. King, Howlin' Wolf, T-Bone Walker, Muddy Waters, Junior Wells, Son House, Mississippi Fred McDowell, Lightnin' Hopkins, Roosevelt Sykes, Big Mama Thornton, Big Joe Williams and Clifton Chenier.

Up-and-comers of the time were out in force, too. Guitar firebrands Magic Sam, Otis Rush and Jimmy "Fast Fingers" Dawkins agitated a barbed-wire tension that surely affected thousands of concertgoers. Harmonica players James Cotton ("Off The Wall"), Junior Wells ("Help Me—A Tribute to Sonny Boy Williamson") and Charlie Musselwhite ("Movin' And Groovin'") dazzled the college crowd as well. A 26-page booklet provides details on the event, one of the first U.S. festivals devoted solely to the blues. A deluxe edition includes reproductions of tickets, news articles, production notes and more.

Like the *Bea & Baby* box set, overall the sound quality here is acceptable, with historical importance trumping sonic purity.

—Frank-John Hadley

WRITERS ILLUMINATE VAUGHAN'S ARTISTRY

What made Stevie Ray Vaughan great? Nearly 30 years after the Texas guitar slinger's tragic death, music journalists Alan Paul and Andy Aledort provide hundreds of testimonials to his exalted status with *Texas Flood: The Inside Story of Stevie Ray Vaughan* (St. Martin's Press). Paul recently described the 366-page book as "a biography in the form of an oral history." The biographers, who are both musicians, brought rare insight to the project.

Scores of Vaughan's bandmates and fellow Lone Star artists shared their stories for *Texas Flood*, most notably older brother Jimmie Vaughan, who served as Stevie's guide into the music world. Jimmie—founder of the blues-rock band The Fabulous Thunderbirds and now a solo artist—previously had been reluctant to discuss his brother. But here, he details Stevie's early guitar prowess and later triumphs.

Bassist Tommy Shannon and drummer Chris Layton, both longtime members of Vaughan's trio, Double Trouble, offer valuable perspectives. But amid the many revealing quotes, one source seems a little scarce: Stevie himself. Aledort said he interviewed Vaughan on four occasions and knew him well, while Paul lamented that he never got a chance to interview him.

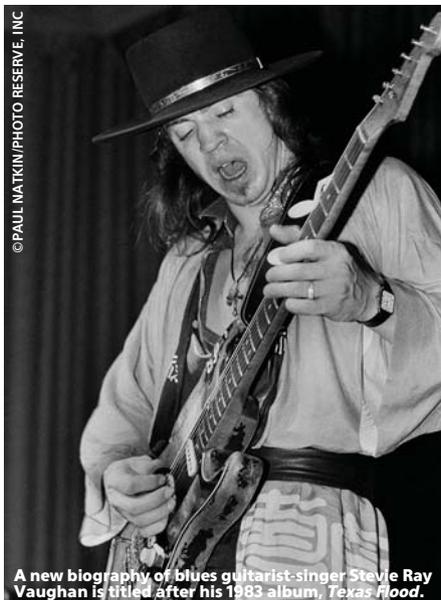
"Every quote in the book came from interviews that one of us conducted," Paul explained. "It was tempting at times [to incorporate Vaughan quotes from secondary sources], but we thought it was important to stick with quotes from us."

One nonparticipant was Johnny Winter (1944–2014), the prototypical white Texas blues-rock guitar hero, whose legacy slowly has faded as Vaughan's reputation has continued to grow. "Johnny didn't have a lot to say about Stevie," Aledort said. Shannon, who played bass for Winter early in his career, provides needed context here.

The book is illustrated with two glossy sections of rare photos, as well as grainy black-and-white shots that break up the text. The authors present a balanced, warts-and-all account of Vaughan's life without devolving into hagiography. Readers won't like the substance-abusing SRV whose life spirals out of control prior to entering rehab in late 1986.

"Stevie's life was so much about overcoming adversity, so the last several years of his life were dedicated to helping other people overcome their own adversity," Paul said.

Aledort stressed that Vaughan's intensity made him an enduring artist. "All things that



A new biography of blues guitarist-singer Stevie Ray Vaughan is titled after his 1983 album, *Texas Flood*.

are great just get better over time," he said. "With Stevie, he combined two things that the greatest of the great usually do: He had tremendous facility and technique, but also played with a depth of emotion. Tommy Shannon said he poured his life into every note, and that sounds like a cliché, but it's true."

Bonnie Raitt, one of many rock stars who sing Vaughan's praises in *Texas Flood*, said, "[T]he fire and passion with which he invested everything he touched was just astounding, as was the way he synthesized his influences and turned them into something so fiercely personal."

As perhaps Vaughan's foremost influence, blues legend Albert King said succinctly, "No doubt about it, Stevie had what it takes."

In show business, a sudden death can enhance a legend. When Vaughan's helicopter went down in the fog after a memorable show with Eric Clapton, Buddy Guy and Robert Cray at Alpine Valley in East Troy, Wisconsin, on Aug. 26, 1990, he was only 35 years old. He was at his creative peak, committed to sobriety, in a loving relationship and had recorded *Family Style*, a collaborative album with Jimmie.

Those who knew him best still marvel at his upbeat attitude and soaring musicianship. "Stevie's tragic death only punctuates his greatness and puts a mark on his legacy, akin to Buddy Holly, Otis Redding, Jimi Hendrix, Janis Joplin and Duane Allman," Layton said. "It's like something has been stolen and you can only wonder what might have come next."

Texas Flood will leave readers longing for that next chapter. —Jeff Johnson

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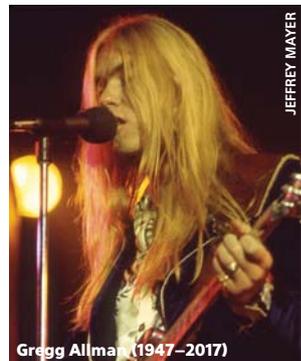
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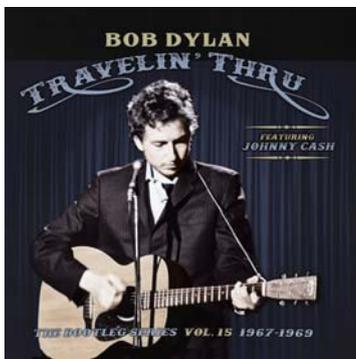
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Gregg Allman (1947–2017)

JEFFREY MAYER



BRILLIANT ABUNDANCE

With the gift-giving season upon us, music lovers have a multitude of options when it comes to reissues, deluxe editions and box sets. As record labels eagerly raid their vaults, a couple of industry trends continue to blossom. First, a “more is more” aesthetic often is at work, with voluminous amounts of music being presented. Secondly, in 2019, elegant design remains essential. If you’re going to go to the trouble of buying music in a physical format, the packaging should be stunning, right?

In keeping with the DownBeat motto of covering “Jazz, Blues & Beyond,” below are descriptions of some intriguing titles from the worlds of country, rock, r&b and hip-hop.

A generation ago, every jazz fan had a strong opinion about director Ken Burns’ 10-episode film *Jazz*, which aired on PBS television in 2001. Many viewers scratched their heads because the first nine episodes covered the period from the late 19th century up until 1960. Then the concluding episode had the audacious title “A Masterpiece by Midnight: 1960 to the Present.” (Forty years of multiple sonic revolutions surveyed in 109 minutes?) This approach was a way for Burns to remind viewers, quite clearly, that his film was about history, not the current scene.

Burns’ recent eight-episode film *Country Music* has thrust roots-music critics into similar debates about the time period that the documentary covers. No matter whether one was

genuinely moved by the film or deeply disappointed by it, one topic where viewers might find common ground is the soundtrack. The five-CD set *Country Music—A Film By Ken Burns (The Soundtrack)* (Legacy), which includes 105 tracks, would not be a bad place to start for novices seeking a broad overview of the art form.

Disc 1 includes tracks that helped give birth to the genre, such as The Carter Family’s “Wildwood Flower” (1929) and Jimmie Rodgers’ “In The Jailhouse Now” (1928). Disc 5 features high-quality tearjerkers, such as Kathy Mattea’s “Where’ve You Been” (1989) and Vince Gill’s “Go Rest High On That Mountain” (1994), the most recent studio cut in the collection.

Burns used more than 3,200 photographs in his film, so there was plenty of visual material from which to choose for the colorful, 69-page book housed with the soundtrack. Essays by country music historians Bill C. Malone, Colin Escott and Tamara Saviano provide context for the music.

Among the artists who are represented with multiple tracks are Bill Monroe, Hank Williams, Patsy Cline, George Jones, Loretta Lynn, Dolly Parton, Kris Kristofferson, Ray Price, Willie Nelson, Merle Haggard, Ricky Skaggs and Dwight Yoakam.

Johnny Cash and Bob Dylan’s duet version of “Girl From The North Country” (from the latter’s 1969 album, *Nashville Skyline*) pops up on Disc 3 of *Country Music*. Fans who revere

that track certainly will want to check out the next installment of Columbia/Legacy’s ongoing Bob Dylan Bootleg series.

The 50-track set *Travelin’ Thru, 1967–1969: The Bootleg Series Vol. 15* focuses on Dylan’s recording sessions in Nashville for the albums *John Wesley Harding*, *Nashville Skyline* and *Self Portrait*. Among the 47 previously unreleased tracks are numerous collaborations with Cash. Rockabilly pioneer Carl Perkins stops by to add his twangy guitar to a handful of tracks, too.

Travelin’ Thru is a three-CD set, which is but a tasty snack for the obsessive Dylan fan, whose appetite seems insatiable. (These are the Dylan die-hards who bought the epic 36-CD set that Legacy released in 2016: *The 1966 Live Recordings*.)

Last year, Legacy delivered a six-CD deluxe edition of Vol. 14 of the Bootleg series: *More Blood, More Tracks*, which documents all the sessions that yielded Dylan’s 1975 classic *Blood On The Tracks*. The first two tracks on that LP—“Tangled Up In Blue” and “Simple Twist Of Fate”—made it onto the set list for Dylan’s Rolling Thunder Revue Tour of 1975.

During the first leg of that tour, which stretched from October to December, The Bard performed several songs that he had not yet released, such as “Hurricane,” “Isis,” “One More Cup Of Coffee,” “Romance In Durango” and “Sara.” Those songs are on his album *Desire*, which would be released in early 1976.

The hefty 14-CD set *The Rolling Thunder*

Revue: The 1975 Live Recordings documents five complete concerts, as Dylan surrounded himself with an amazing cast of players that included folk icon Joan Baez, Byrds frontman Roger McGuinn, violinist Scarlet Rivera and bassist Rob Stoner. How did the sprawling ensemble work out the set list? Well, hardcore fans seeking a fly-on-the-wall viewpoint can check out the rehearsal sessions documented on Discs 1–3.

Far more modest in scope, but free of extraneous material, is the three-CD deluxe edition of Van Morrison's 1997 gem, *The Healing Game* (Exile/Legacy). This is an exemplary reissue. Disc 1 has the original album's 10 tracks, plus five bonus cuts. Disc 2 has alternate takes and collaborations with some of the singer's heroes, such as Carl Perkins, skiffle master Lonnie Donegan and blues titan John Lee Hooker.

Disc 3, chronicling a transcendent concert, is the most potent catnip here. Morrison was infused with explosive charisma during his show in Montreux, Switzerland, on July 17, 1997, as he explored tracks from *The Healing Game* ("Rough God Goes Riding," "Fire In The Belly," "Sometimes We Cry"), as well as covers and classics from his catalog. All 14 concert tracks are previously unreleased.

After commercial and critical successes with the Allman Brothers Band, in 1973, lead singer Gregg Allman released his solo

debut, *Laid Back*, which yielded the hit single "Midnight Rider." He also teamed with a 24-piece orchestra (featuring members of the New York Philharmonic) for a road jaunt, which was documented on the 1974 live album *The Gregg Allman Tour*. Fans now can revisit both chapters of Allman's career, thanks to reissues from Mercury/UMe.

The two-CD deluxe edition of *Laid Back* includes demos, rehearsal tracks, alternate mixes and a solo acoustic live version of "Melissa." *The Gregg Allman Tour*—which is being reissued on vinyl for the first time since 1987—was recorded at Carnegie Hall and the Capitol Theatre in Passaic, New Jersey. The set list for the double album has some interesting twists, as Allman tackles Elvis Presley's 1961 hit "I Feel So Bad" and the traditional tune "Will The Circle Be Unbroken."

The mid-'70s was a time of tremendous popularity for the Steve Miller Band, which shot up the charts with the hits "The Joker," "Rock'n Me," "Fly Like An Eagle" and "Jet Airliner." All those tracks are included on the three-CD/single-DVD set *Welcome To The Vault* (Sailor/Capitol/UMe). Of the 52 audio tracks, 38 are previously unreleased, including demos, rehearsal sessions, live takes and some blues tunes. The DVD compiles 21 live performances, ranging from 1967 to 2011. The accompany-

ing 100-page hardbound book features a 9,000-word essay by rock journalist David Fricke.

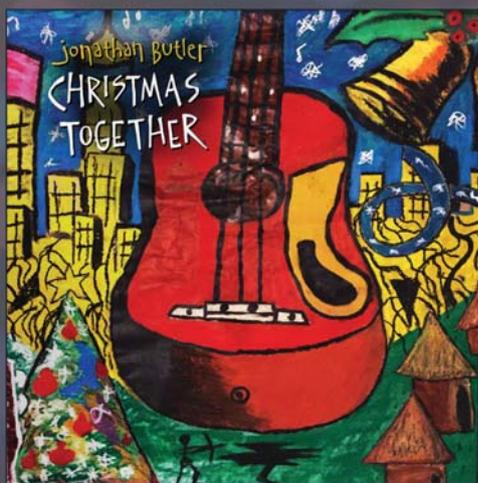
Fans of Motown have had plenty to celebrate in 2019, the 60th-anniversary year for the label. An expanded version of *Motown: The Complete No. 1's* (Motown/UMe) has a whopping 208 tracks on 11 CDs, packaged in a replica of Motown's original Hitsville U.S.A. headquarters in Detroit (now home to the Motown Museum). The box set also includes a 100-page book with rare and classic photos.

Tracks include Marvin Gaye's "What's Going On," The Jackson 5's "ABC," The Supremes' "Where Did Our Love Go," Smokey Robinson & The Miracles' "Tears Of A Clown," Stevie Wonder's "Superstition," Diana Ross' "I'm Coming Out," Rick James' "Super Freak," Boyz II Men's "End Of The Road" and Erykah Badu's "Bag Lady."

Early hits by the "Queen of Hip-Hop Soul" are the focus of Mary J. Blige's *HERstory, Vol. 1* (UMe), a compilation available Dec. 6. In addition to the CD, two-LP and digital versions, it is packaged as a set of eight 7-inch vinyl singles housed in a sleek carrying case with a handle.

Fans can spin the 1992 track "Real Love" and then flip the vinyl over to hear the remix featuring The Notorious B.I.G. Other artists appearing on the remixes include Keith Murray, K-Ci and Method Man. —*Bobby Reed*

Jonathan Butler CHRISTMAS TOGETHER

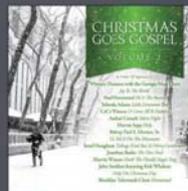


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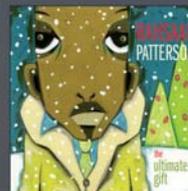
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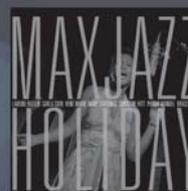
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Low-Profile Speaker Setup

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Real Reharmonizations

Hal Leonard has introduced *The Reharmonized Real Book*. By retooling songs featured in the original *Real Book*, *The Reharmonized Real Book* shows new options for harmonizing melodies. Editor Jack Grassel reharmonized 393 songs, resulting in some songs with fewer chord changes, some with more changes, some with different types of alterations and some with a more modern sound. halleonard.com



Travel Case for Guitar/Bass

The Kapsule travel guitar case from Gruv Gear combines a polycarbonate shell with rugged fabrics, a headstock "Iso Chamber" to prevent impact damage, a TSA security lock, padded shoulder straps for backpack-style carrying, humidity control and snap-on wheels. Additional pouches on the front provide storage for mini-amps, cables, pedals, strings and other essential gear. The Kapsule's Global Recovery Tag is integrated with HomingPin and recognized at more than 2,800 airports worldwide. It comes in single- and double-case options for most guitars and basses. gruvgear.com



Elegant Reed Case

The Selecta Wooden Reed case from Chedeville is made from an elegant cherry-stained birchwood. The case features a super-flat acrylic plate that will keep reeds from warping while in storage. It can hold four reeds, from B-flat clarinet to soprano, alto and tenor saxophone, in any combination. The case provides ample protection and will store reeds in true style while keeping them flat and ready to perform. chedeville.com



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The Elite is a responsive and resonating synthetic new reed from Bari Woodwinds that provides players with great projection and focus and even tone through all registers. Currently available for tenor and alto saxophone, the line soon will be available for clarinet, bass clarinet and the rest of the saxophone family. Elite reeds come in multiple strengths: Soft (2-2.5), Medium Soft (2.5-3), Medium and Hard (3.5-4.0) and Hard (4-4.5). They feature a distinctive, genuine Swarovski crystal inlay. bariwoodwind.com



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Antonio J. García



COURTESY TRINITY EPISCOPAL SCHOOL

Rules for Reharmonizing Melodies 'On the Bus'

There are infinite ways to reharmonize a melody when arranging a tune for an ensemble or your own solo performance. But what method can work for you, guaranteed, even if you're on a bus to your next gig, without a keyboard or other chordal instrument, and facing a deadline to hand out your new chart on arrival?

Here is a process that has never failed me, so I share it with my freshmen jazz theory stu-

dents each year. It's heavily rooted in lessons I learned from Ray Wright at Eastman School of Music, both when I attended as a member of the Arranger's Holiday summer program and then as a graduate student.

Most listeners are unaware that in a given sax soli, ensemble "shout" section or in many solo performances on chordal instruments, there are times when every single note of a melodic line is harmonized by a differ-

ent chord. This allows great harmonic color; and, if played by an ensemble, each musician receives a line to play that is much more interesting than repeating one chord-tone for an entire measure.

"ON THE BUS" RULES

To begin, have your chosen melody at hand, plus a chord in mind for at least the final note of the phrase (if not also all the chords

typically associated with the tune). For our example, we'll be reharmonizing the first two bars of the melody to the Duke Ellington standard "In A Sentimental Mood." Know that I'll be providing you online audio-links to demonstrate all the music notated here and more, making the results as real to your ears as to your eyes. See the top line of Example 1 for our initial knowledge of the "original" melody harmony. Each of the five reharmonizations below it follows the process outlined below:

1. Start at the end of a given phrase. If you start at the beginning, you never know where you'll end up; but if you start at the end, you'll have a targeted arrival that satisfies you.

2. Choose the chord for that final note. Whether major, minor or other, that chord must be compatible with the melodic tone, as a primary tone or acceptable extension. The more similar to the original chord your choice is, the more traditional your harmonies will sound; the more radical your choice, the more radical your resulting progressions will sound. Circle that chord as your final target.

3. Look backwards over the melodic line and decide if there are other prominent notes that would be a worthy target as well. Perhaps they are notes emphasized by being high or accented and/or long. Circle those possible target-notes—unless you prefer none other than the final chord of the phrase.

4. Now your job is to approach your final chord with strong harmonic movement. Consider it your temporary "tonic" chord. If viewed as your instant "I" chord, approach it by means as strong as Bach: by its (a) V7, (b) bII7 ("tritone substitution") or (c) dim7 chord. The chord you choose must always be compatible with the melodic tone.

Approach	Target	Example
V ⁷	I	G ⁷ → C
bII ⁷	I	D ^{b7} → C
vii ^{o7}	I	B ^{o7} → C
bVII ⁷	I	B ^{b7} → C

5. When seeking an approach chord, note that suspended chords and major seventh chords make poor approaches. In a typical environment, a suspended chord wants to resolve its suspended-fourth to a third before moving on; and a major-seventh

Example 1: Reharmonization Analysis

Example 2: Reharmonization Roots

Example 3: Reharmonization Roots/Sevenths

"ORIGINAL" HARMONY
 Dmi7 or A7(#5) Dmi9

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REHARMONIZATIONS (CHORD EXTENSIONS ARBITRARY UNLESS MANDATED BY MELODY NOTE.)

1 Dmi11

2 Dmi11

3 Dmi11

4 Dmi11

5 Dmi11

ANALYSIS © 2019 ANTONIO J. GARZIA

chord just wants to sit still. We want strong movement. And so, if an approach by V7 or bII7 yields a suspended or major-seventh chord, invoke the “bVII bailout”: Approach your target-chord instead by a dominant-seventh chord a full step below the target. I call this the “bailout” because in the freshman class I allow students to employ the bVII approach only when a V7 or bII7 yields a suspended or major-seventh chord.

6. An exception to the above major-seventh approach-chord issue is “planing.” I allow a limited amount of chromatic planing of any chord quality. Examples might include Gbmaj7 → Fmaj7 (as in the eighth and ninth bars of “The Girl From Ipanema”) or Bb7 → B7 → C7 (or Cm7). I also accept a limited amount of diatonic planing, such as Ebmaj7 → Fm7 → Gm7 (as in the opening of “They Can’t Take That Away From Me”). But if the goal is a sound more contemporary than the 1940s, the bulk of reharmonizations should be approaches by V7, bII7 or dim7.

7. If you find that your chosen chord’s root is actually in the melody and want more color than that, consider moving your root a tritone away.

8. You do have the option of editing a dominant chord to become a minor seventh (optional flat-five) chord as a pre-dominant passing chord within what becomes a ii–V or ii–bII progression.

9. Once you’ve chosen your approach chord to the final target, you’ve now reharmonized using our “on the bus” rules. Now it’s time to approach that approach. You can view your new approach (penultimate) chord as your instant “I” (tonic) chord, and approach it by its V7, bII7 or dim7 chord. The chord you choose must always be compatible with the melodic tone. Be wary of suspended fourth or major seventh chords.

10. Continue this backwards-moving process until you arrive at a preceding target-note that you’ve circled. At this locale you can either choose to (a) harmonize it as an approach chord as well to what follows; (b) use the chord originally appearing with the melody at that point so as to reinforce the traditional harmony of the melody; or (c) harmonize this note with any chord you enjoy—so long as the chord is compatible with the melodic note at that point. Note that if (b) or (c), your chord here may have nothing directionally to do with what follows—and that’s fine. Once Bach arrived at a targeted chord, his next harmony could go anywhere.

11. Approach this targeted chord using the “on the bus” rules cited above. (If your new chord was stunningly different than the original harmony, fine, so long as you approach

Example 4: Reharmonization Seventh Chords

"ORIGINAL" HARMONY
 Dmi7 or A7(#5) Dmi9

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REHARMONIZATIONS (CHORD EXTENSIONS ARBITRARY UNLESS MANDATED BY MELODY NOTE.)

1 Dmi11

2 Dmi11

CONTINUES ON NEXT PAGE

it “legally.” The approach chords will emphasize your new harmonic direction.)

12. Continue this “tonicization” process backwards through the melodic line until reaching the beginning of your melodic phrase (for which you could again use the original harmony or continue the approach-chord process).

REVIEWING YOUR REHARMS

Looking over Example 1, you’ll find that every chord in the five reharm is tagged with one or more triangled numbers that reference the steps above. Start at the end of a given chordal line, try to discover what process led to that chord choice and then cross-reference its number(s) to the list above for my rationale.

What if you’re not a strong pianist? You’ll find that aside from computerized playback, you can hear a lot about the quality of your reharmonization just by sitting at a keyboard, playing out of tempo the melody in your right hand and roots in your left (see Example 2). Or, you can play root-and-seventh voicings in your left hand while playing the melody in the right or singing it (see Example 3). If you can play tones 1, 3, 5 and 7 in root position in the left and sing the melody or play it in the right, then you’ll receive the aural information of Example 4.

You’ll notice in the five sample reharmonizations I’ve provided that I tend to favor seventh chords rather than sixth chords, dominant chords instead of diminished chords, and avoid roots above the bass. I generally prefer more “bite” in my harmonies. If you wish to avoid repeated pitches, a slight change in color-tone or chord will provide options.

Of course, you can take any reharmonization and personalize it further with ingredients that don’t follow these concepts: linear writing, chromatic inflections, random notes and more. It’s simply about how much red you want in your painting—or spice in your cooking. You can’t establish rules for musical taste. But you likely also won’t be as confident that the writing you did on the bus will work when you walk off of it. If you follow and develop your skill within the “bus rules,” you’ll find that you have myriad options available to you while still ensuring the sonic quality of your work.

APPLYING YOUR REHARMS

If you later want to voice out your new harmonies for an ensemble, consider including a third, seventh and then color tones within each voicing, as evidenced in the combo voicings of Examples 5–9. If you voice a “shout”-style section for big band, include those very tones within the trum-

Example 4: Reharmonization Seventh Chords

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

Example 5: Combo 1

Example 6: Combo 2

Example 7: Combo 3

Example 8: Combo 4

Example 9: Combo 5

pet section, perhaps doubled an octave down within the trombones and saxophones (range-permitting) to attain just one style of scoring. I've created five additional notated examples, in which I've scored these reharmonizations for big band in a traditional manner. For online scores and audio of the complete collection of the above examples, visit garciamusic.com/educator/articles/articles.html.

Over the past few decades of writing, I've enjoyed reharmonizing and scoring using a number of non-traditional and even random techniques. I'm not interested in stifling my options or those of my students. We should all explore our individuality. But when I look for a solid solution yielding strong harmonic movement, I still often turn to "the bus": It's a most useful tool to have in my box.

Regarding arranging, Ray Wright once told me in a lesson: "There's always a solution." I highly recommend his book *Inside the Score* (Kendor), in which he explores eight band charts by Sammy Nestico, Thad Jones and Bob Brookmeyer and illuminates how well the above reharmonization techniques and others have served those legendary composers/arrangers.

For a contrasting, linear and equally valid approach to ensemble-writing, check out the superb *Jazz Arranging and Composing: A Linear Approach* (Advance Music) by my Eastman writing mentor, Bill Dobbins. Both he and Wright taught my undergraduate arranging teacher at Loyola University in New Orleans, John Mahoney; I was most fortunate to have studied writing under all three. Some of Wright's and Dobbins' students have now in turn written superb books analyzing the scores of contemporary arranging masters. **DB**

Trombonist, vocalist, composer and educator Antonio J. García (ajgarcia@vcu.edu) is director of jazz studies at Virginia Commonwealth University. He is Secretary of The Midwest Clinic, advisory board member of The Brubeck Institute, associate jazz editor of the International Trombone Association Journal, past editor of the IAJE Jazz Education Journal and network expert (improvisation materials) for the Jazz Education Network. His newest book, *Jazz Improvisation: Practical Approaches to Grading* (Meredith Music), explores improvisation course objectives and grading. García's book with play-along CD, *Cutting the Changes: Jazz Improvisation via Key Centers* (Kjos Music), offers musicians of all ages standard-tune improv opportunities using only their major scales.

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Marcos Silva

Upbeat & Downbeat Patterns in Samba Music

A lot of misconceptions exist among jazz musicians about the proper way to approach a samba. A Brazilian export, the samba is distinctly different than Afro-Cuban styles like mambo, bomba, salsa and rumba that frequently fall under the umbrella of “Latin jazz.”

In order to play a samba properly, it’s important to understand how the melody of the song dictates the rhythmic patterns that should be played by the piano, guitar, drums and percussion. There are two equally important patterns that are utilized in this music: the “downbeat” pattern and the “upbeat” pattern. Once you learn how these two essential samba patterns apply to different types of melodic lines, you’ll see how they are written into the DNA of the song itself. There can be many variations on the “basic” patterns outlined here; nothing is set in stone.

Example 1 shows a basic two-bar downbeat pattern. The pattern begins on the downbeat of the first bar, and a syncopation exists between the two bars. When played on a comping instrument like piano, this pattern would look like Example 2. The piano’s left hand doubles the bass line, a steady dotted-eighth groove that emphasizes every downbeat consistently and alternates between the root and

the fifth. Different notes can be played in the bass on the last beat of each measure.

Example 3 shows what the basic downbeat pattern would look like when another chord is introduced to create a one-chord-per-bar type of scenario. Note that the second chord—in this case, Fmaj9—is played on the final 16th note before the downbeat of the second bar.

Example 4 represents a basic upbeat pattern, which serves as a kind of polar opposite to the basic downbeat pattern. The pattern starts on an upbeat, and the downbeat falls at the beginning of the second bar of the motif.

Example 5 shows what the basic upbeat pattern looks like when played on the piano over two bars, one chord per bar. Note how the first chord, Cmaj7, is played on an upbeat, and the second chord, Fmaj9, lands firmly on a downbeat.

Remember, the song’s melody always dictates which pattern to use. Let’s start by taking a look at some Brazilian standards that primarily utilize downbeat patterns. One such tune is “The Dreamer,” by Antônio Carlos Jobim (see Example 6). For most of the tune, the melody is syncopated between the first and second bars of any given phrase. That indicates that it calls for a downbeat pattern. Another well-known Brazilian tune that calls

for a downbeat pattern is “Summer Samba,” by Marcos Valle and Paulo Sérgio Valle. Although it doesn’t feature across-the-bar syncopation, the song’s melody lines up nicely with a basic downbeat pattern (see Example 7).

“Triste” is another popular Jobim tune. Its melody, most of the time, begins on an upbeat and stresses the downbeat of the second bar of the motif (excluding pickups). Example 8 shows how the melody fits with the right-hand piano part of a basic upbeat pattern.

“Samba de Orpheus” by Luiz Bonfá calls for an upbeat pattern as well. Example 9 shows how the bars of Fmaj9, in particular, lock in with the rhythms of a basic upbeat pattern. Example 10 shows a variation of the upbeat pattern where the first chord, Cmaj7, anticipates the downbeat instead of coming right after the downbeat. It is equally appropriate for the melody of this tune.

Most of the uptempo tunes in Brazilian music have melodies that begin on the downbeat, requiring an upbeat pattern from the piano/guitar/drums/percussion. At slower tempos, both downbeat and upbeat patterns can be applied to different parts of a tune, depending on what the melody dictates at any given moment. Sometimes in the middle of a song that starts in a downbeat pattern, you might have to switch to an upbeat pattern. In such instances, play whichever pattern feels most natural—but be sure that the rest of the rhythm section is with you.

Examples 11 and 12 show the proper way to play a downbeat-pattern samba and an upbeat-pattern samba on the drum set. Example 13 shows how *not* to play a samba on the drum set—this is a common mistake.

There aren’t any “downbeat” or “upbeat” patterns for the bass to groove on. Regardless of the melody and the patterns being played by the piano/guitar/drums/percussion, the bass part sticks to a steady dotted-eighth pulse that mainly utilizes the root and the fifth, with some note-choice variations. Example 14 provides two basic options for bassists. Don’t play the type of bass line shown in Example 15, an ostinato figure that’s reminiscent of Steely Dan’s “Rikki Don’t Lose That Number.” This is a march pattern that would be a poor choice for a samba groove.

Brazilian singers Leny Andrade, Pery Ribeiro (1937–2012), Emílio Santiago (1946–2013) and Gonzaguinha (1945–’91) are among the icons of samba music. Check out their recordings and listen to the ways they utilize upbeat and downbeat patterns to fit the melodies of the songs in their vast repertoires. **DB**

Grammy-nominated multi-instrumentalist, composer, arranger, producer and educator Marcos Silva performs worldwide. He has toured with Paquito D'Rivera, Bud Shank, Claudio Roditi, Raul de Souza, Toninho Horta, Leny Andrade, Edu Lobo, Emilio Santiago, Dori Caymmi and numerous others. Silva served as musical director for vocalist Flora Purim and percussionist Airto Moreira for more than 20 years, and he worked as a co-composer and arranger on *Misa Espiritual: Airto's Brazilian Mass* (Deutsch Harmonia Mundi). His most recent CD, *Brasil: From Head To Toe* (CD Baby), features 10 original compositions that vary from Brazilian funk to jazz samba to baião. Silva, who was born in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, currently heads the Brazilian Music Department at the California Jazz Conservatory in Berkeley. Visit him online at marcosilva.com.

Example 1: Basic Downbeat Pattern

Example 2: Basic Downbeat Pattern—Piano

Example 3: One Chord Per Bar—Piano

Example 4: Basic Upbeat Pattern

Example 5: Basic Upbeat Pattern—Piano

Example 6: "The Dreamer"

Example 7: "Summer Samba"

Example 8: "Triste"

Example 9: "Samba de Orpheus" #1

Example 10: "Samba de Orpheus" #2

Example 11: Drum Set Downbeat Pattern

Example 12: Drum Set Upbeat Pattern

Example 13: Improper Drum Set Pattern

Example 14: Bass Line Options

Example 15: Improper Bass Line



Victor Wooten

Victor Wooten's Bass Solo on 'The 13th Floor'

I remember Victor Wooten once saying that bassists were the only ones in the ensemble who don't get to solo over a bass line.

This is both an advantage and disadvantage. On one hand, there isn't someone providing root notes and a bass groove underneath. But it also gives a bassist the option of incorporating a groove into their solo. Doing this in such a way as to make a bass solo provide the musical interest of an improvisation—and not just be a bass line that sounds like there should be a soloist *on top* of it—is a bit of a challenge. Wooten rises to that challenge on “The 13th Floor,” a track from his 2017 album *Trypnotyx* (Vix) composed by saxophonist Bob Franceschini.

Though the first part of the song is a blues in B \flat , Wooten solos on the “B” section of the song, which moves into A minor. One way Wooten immediately establishes both groove and melody is by starting his solo with the opening bass lick from this part of the composition, and for the second bar doubling the bass-drum rhythm while leading up to the root note. But at the end of this bar, he goes into some 16th notes, which lead to some syncopation (the bass drum

rhythm from the beginning of bar 2 reappears in measure 3, but starting on the “and” of 2, demonstrating another means of providing the groove while still being melodic). Also, we don't hear another root note until bar 5, making it sound less like a regular bass line. It's also worth pointing out that this opening motif reappears at bar 17, which is when the form repeats. Within his improvisation, Wooten is making a point of delineating the form.

Wooten does something else ingenious, but subtle, with this opening riff. Both the melody and bass line of the “B” section start on an offbeat, the “and” of 1. Many of Wooten's measures display this exact idea (bars 4, 7, 8, 9, 28, 35, 39, 40, 44, 46 and 47). Wooten also implies this idea by leaving the downbeat silent in other bars, but without starting in the same exact spot—sometimes hitting earlier (bars 5, 19, 23, 26, 34 and 36) and sometimes later (bars 6, 13 and 42). That's almost half his solo. This creates a continuity, as well as producing a sort of groove. Normally, bassists emphasize the downbeat, but by leaving it open, Wooten creates a sense of groove (using negative space to serve as positive space, to use a painting

analogy), but produces something that's not the typical groove—quite atypical, actually.

Another issue that can arise from not having the support of an underlying bass line is lack of clarity in the harmony. For this solo, there are only two chords, and Wooten makes some great choices to make this clear in a musical way. For the Am sections, he plays a lot of A minor pentatonic. This elucidates the harmony, but by not overemphasizing the tonic (e.g., not always putting it on the downbeat, or not playing very much of it), it comes across as more melodic, more soloistic and not a bass line. Toward the ends of these sections, he tends to move away from the pentatonic, adding in more tones not found in this scale. This makes the harmony sound more vague, which alerts our ears that a chord change is coming.

On the F7s, Wooten favors the F mixolydian scale, again providing a strong sense of the harmony, but as with the Am we don't hear the root note overemphasized (or even regularly emphasized). There certainly are places in both chords where Wooten plays the root like a root, and these are often at the beginning of a chord change (measures 17 and 25). But he doesn't overdo it. He's helping the listener hear the chord change, but not restricting himself to spoon-feeding it to us.

One curious choice is Wooten's use of F#s in the A minor sections. On its own, this isn't unusual; it gives the A minor a dorian flavor. But since the next (and only other) chord is F, it makes the harmonies sound more disparate, less connected. This might be Wooten's intentions; after all, with only two changes it might be most interesting to make them sound as different as possible. But there's also the fact that F# shows up in the “B” section (the A minor part) of the head. Wooten is also using material from the melody to make his solo fit the song.

To end his solo, Wooten makes a point of being clear about the conclusion by bringing back the bass line from the original composition. This makes it obvious that we're getting to the end of his solo, but so as not to be the actual end of his solo, Wooten throws in licks between the melodic fragments (including a run of 32nds in bar 46, the densest rhythms he's played in this improvisation). This keeps it from becoming a reiteration of the “B” section, but also shows everyone, listeners and band alike, that his improvisation is drawing to a close.

DB

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

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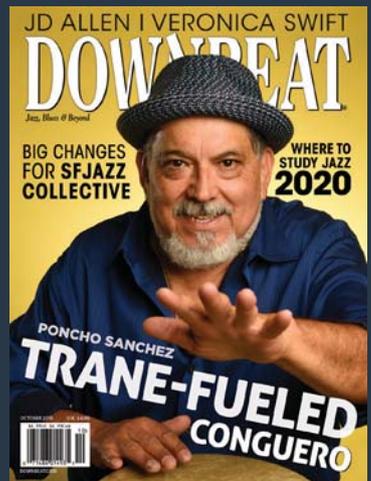
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Kurzweil PC4 Performance Controller/ Production Station

Killer Sounds, Immense Control

Self-contained, reliable, all-in-one keyboards always will have a following, but the bar is very high for success. Kurzweil has released a new entry into the workstation market, the PC4, which is positioned at a lower price than the company's excellent Forte series, but offers a huge amount of the same functionality. This is not a stage piano, not a controller and not a synth—it's a bit of all of them, and it does them all well.

The PC4's molded plastic casing makes it nice and lightweight. The keybed is weighted and velocity-sensitive, and it has aftertouch, making for an appropriate and very playable action. The control panel is laid out well, and includes a beautiful color display, a bank of nine programmable knobs, faders and buttons on one end, and a pad-style button grid designed for easy navigation, transport controls, pitch and mod wheels—and quite a bit more. Overall, it's an extremely well-designed face that's inviting and easy to jump into, but features a lot of depth. The back panel offers all the audio and MIDI capabilities you would expect, as well as four switch inputs and two CC pedal inputs, and a ribbon connector. This keyboard is designed to be a monster controller. There are also a 1/8-inch stereo input and two 1/4-inch inputs to bring your sound into the effects processors, or to just play along.

The PC4 offers 256-note polyphony, and many of Kurzweil's sound engines. There's 4GB of sample data here—2GB factory and 2GB user flash memory. The KB3 organ modeler is included, and the faders automatically map to drawbars when using it, which is key. There is a full V.A.S.T. synthesis engine, and a new six-operator FM synth, too. Kurzweil's V.A.S.T. engine has been around a long time, but its modular nature has enabled it to remain a very powerful and relevant synthesis platform. You can make killer sounds on this thing, from basic to crazy-complex. The FM engine will accept sysex data from '80s and '90s FM synths, which is a nice touch. Of course, there are tons of effects included, and on the whole, they sound very good. Add to all of this the deep editing capabilities of the interface, and you've got a really powerful tool here. The onboard 16-track sequencer is well-implemented. You can couple this with the power of 16 riff generators, and all of it can work through MIDI as



well as on-board. The arpeggiator is very flexible and can add 16 multiple instances in a sequence, or a multi.

All of this ties in with the PC4's excellent controller features. This is a great controller to drive your VSTs, Mainstage or Ableton Rig, modular synths, or any other outboard gear you might rely on. This, I believe, is key to the success of any modern workstation. Using the 16 Zones in multi mode combined with the wide array of controller options on board, the PC4 shines as the heart of a large rig.

The PC4's pianos are very nice, with a lot of detail and versatility in the 9-foot and 7-foot grands included. There is a vast array of very useable electric pianos, clavs and the aforementioned KB3 organ engine. Kurzweil has built its reputation on lush strings and orchestral sounds, and the PC4 does not disappoint here, either. The pads are huge, and the orchestras are inspiring. The included synth patches range from pedestrian to amazing. I did find that a little tweaking went a long way toward making some of the more ordinary factory patches sound great.

The PC4 comes in below the prices of the Phantom and Montage ranges, instead competing with other company's lower-priced options, and in that arena, it compares very well. I would even go so far as to say that it competes directly with some of the flagships in a favorable way. Kurzweil has become a staple of theater pit orchestras, and it's easy to see why. The wide array of very pleasing sounds combined with the immense controller possibilities make the PC4 a perfect fit for those types of situations. Not everything here will necessarily grab and inspire you right out of the box, but if you dig a little deeper, there's a lot of substance. —Chris Neville

kurzweil.com

Fishman TriplePlay Connect

Improved Performance, Slimmer Price Tag

When Fishman introduced its original TriplePlay Wireless Guitar Controller in 2013, it set a new standard in the world of MIDI guitar. Offering extremely accurate tracking and unparalleled ease of use, TriplePlay gave guitarists access to an entirely new universe of creative possibilities. Recently, Fishman expanded its MIDI pickup line with the new TriplePlay Connect, which once again establishes a new benchmark, providing improved performance, an extremely powerful iPad application and a slimmer price tag.

The TriplePlay Connect builds on the technology developed for the original controller and uses the same pickup and mounting hardware. However, the controller box is much smaller and lighter than the original, featuring only two buttons. The Connect is not wireless (as was its predecessor) and connects to an iPad with a Lightning USB cable.

The Connect is available for \$229.95, significantly less than the \$399.95 wireless version. According to Jason Jordan, product manager for TriplePlay Connect, customers had been asking for iPad functionality, so that the pickup could be used without the need for a laptop. The Connect comes bundled with all necessary hardware and cables for connection to your iPad or any USB host.

Installation of the pickup is extremely easy, and Fishman provides several mounting options that allow it to attach to a wide variety of guitars. The controller box can be attached to the guitar's top with a sticky pad or magnetically. The entire unit can be attached and removed in seconds with no permanent alteration to your instrument. The pickup mounts close to the bridge using a self-adhesive pad that allows you to easily snap it on or off. Fishman provides a very clear installation guide

with instructions for various guitar models. I found the installation very straightforward, but it's essential that you take time to fine-tune the pick-up height in order to achieve the best tracking.

Once installed, download the free Connect App from the Apple App store, connect to your iPad and you are basically good to go. There are some important settings that need to be adjusted the first time you run Connect. The app allows you to adjust the sensitivity of each individual string and even compensate for whether you are using a pick or bare fingers. There is also an onboard tuner included. The entire setup process is definitely quick and painless, but don't overlook the fine details in adjusting the hardware and software to function best with your playing style.

Although the Connect allows your guitar to function as a standard MIDI device and can interface with any MIDI-aware application, the true heart of this product lies in the Fishman Connect App. Connect provides a deep set of creative possibilities to the user that go far beyond just playing basic MIDI patches and triggering instrument sounds. The extensive array of features are far too large to cover in detail here, but Connect offers the ability to map a variety of sounds to specific regions of your fretboard, including instruments, loops, audio clips and even backing tracks from iTunes. Fishman provides libraries that you can use, but you can also record your own loops and audio clips. Instruments can be layered to play two at once—or split, which assigns each sound to a specific group of guitar strings. Audio clips and loops can be mapped to a specific fret for triggering playback. You can create and save your own projects and also record your entire performance.

There is so much going on here, and the more you get into it, the more there is to discover in terms of the endless possibilities for composing and performing. Connect offers a nice info button that pops up a description of each feature, and great online video tutorials to help ease the learning curve. TriplePlay Connect tracks incredibly well for single notes and even chords, with almost no latency. MIDI tracking with guitars has always been problematic, and Fishman again has raised the bar here.

TriplePlay Connect is an impressive product that combines state-of-the-art hardware with powerful software to provide guitarists with a limitless set of creative possibilities. Considering the cost, there is certainly no other solution out there that offers so much for so little. —Keith Baumann
fishman.com



Casio Privia PX-S3000

Distinctive Design, Superb Tones

The Privia PX-S3000 from Casio takes the company's growing line of digital pianos to a higher realm of realism, expressiveness and affordability. With a suggested retail price of \$1,199.99, the new model offers a distinctive, sleek design and superb sounds on top of a comprehensive and enhanced feature set.

Sporting a smooth, glossy top panel that evokes a luxurious acoustic grand and a slim unibody chassis that's unlike anything previously released in the Privia line, the PX-S3000 is the coolest-looking digital piano on the market today. It's also among the leanest instruments in its product category, offering extreme portability and super-efficient operation.

It comes equipped with AiR Sound Source, Casio's proprietary technology that reproduces the complex tone, mechanical sounds and string/damper resonance of high-end grand pianos. It is also outfitted with an improved scaled hammer-action keyboard that enables even more delicate and nuanced expression than earlier generations of Privia.

The PX-S3000 has 700 preset tones, including numerous synth patches, woodwinds/brasswinds, strings, various traditional keyboard instruments, period-perfect electric pianos, powerful organs, electric and acoustic guitars, upright and electric basses, ethnic instruments and a huge selection of drum/percussion sounds. It features a two-track MIDI recorder, 200 built-in backing rhythms with tempo control and intros/endings, an expression wheel and two assignable knobs that can be used to modulate sounds on the fly.

Using the unit's touch-sensitive control surface, the first thing I did was scroll through the full menu of amazing-sounding grand and upright pianos. The instrument's ebony- and ivory-textured keys felt quite real, the action was solid and the five levels of touch response made for an immersive experience. I noticed that when I reached deeply into the keys, I got the same kind of response as I would on a traditional grand.

The PX-S3000 sounded great through its built-in speakers, which can be set on two different types of surround sound. Playing through headphones brought out the sonic detail in full stereo. Amplified through a portable P.A. system, the PX-S3000 sounded like a high-end acoustic piano filling a huge concert hall.

I recommend the PX-S3000 to anybody seeking a pro-quality digital piano. Make sure to get Casio's lightweight gig bag with backpack straps. You'll also want the SP-34 three-pedal unit with sustain, sostenuto and una chorda, which makes a world of difference. A free Chordana Play for Piano app for iOS or Android mobile devices provides even deeper levels of control.

—Ed Enright

casio.com



An undergraduate ensemble performs the music of Mats Gustafsson at NTNU in Trondheim, Norway.



One O'Clock Lab Band at the University of North Texas

NTNU Embraces Tristano's Pedagogy

IT'S NO SECRET THAT NORWAY HAS BEEN a font of creativity for jazz during the past few decades, producing a diverse range of music that would be notable even if the country weren't as small as it is. While the nation has produced its fair share of straightahead masters, one factor that has distinguished much Norwegian music is how it either breaks from orthodoxy or reshapes it in original ways.

A large number of Norway's most individualistic players are products of the jazz department at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology in Trondheim (an institution commonly called NTNU). Among the alumni are guitarist Stian Westerhus, trumpeter Mathias Eick and pianist Maria Kannegaard.

The NTNU jazz department, which celebrates its 40th anniversary this year, has adapted the pedagogy of pianist Lennie Tristano (1919–'78) as a method of learning, where developing a unique sound and viewpoint is privileged over any single school of thought.

Bassist Michael Francis Duch is both a product of the jazz program—earning his bachelor's and master's degrees at NTNU—and the deputy head of the music department. He explained that saxophonist John Pål Inderberg, one of cofounders of the jazz department, often had performed with alto saxophonist Lee Konitz. As an educator, Inderberg adapted concepts that Konitz had learned from Tristano.

"The main idea is that jazz is used as a method of teaching," Duch said. "You listen to the music, you copy the music by singing, and then eventually you can play it on your instrument. We tend not to use any *Real Book* or fake books—we try to keep away from the papers,

the manuscripts, both in learning music and writing it down. The idea is that everything must first and foremost be learned orally. There's no official motto, but I suppose if you can't sing it, you can't play it."

Students engage with standard tunes by first singing the melody, then singing the fundamentals, and then the chords, all before ever playing the piece. According to Duch, little has changed in that methodology in four decades.

"There's a lot of independence, and the students can pretty much choose how they want to approach their instruments, although there are guidelines," he said. "When the students come here, they meet each other, and the greatest learning is when they make bands and play together—that's the most important thing."

Drummer Gard Nilssen—an alumnus who plays in Cortex and leads the trio Acoustic Unity—echoed Duch's sentiment. "In the end, it didn't feel like school, but more like a place to meet, play and hang with other musicians who were interested in the same things as I was," Nilssen said.

Although the program has grown over the years, it remains small—with only 15 or 16 students in each of the three-year bachelor's programs for performance, and even fewer in the two-year graduate program for performance.

Next year, the school intends to open up the graduate program to international students, changing a stipulation that all enrollees be fluent in a Scandinavian language. "We usually play with people from other countries and travel all over the world," Duch said, "so it's really important that it's international, [just like] so much of the music itself." —Peter Margasak

New Lab Album: The One O'Clock Lab Band at the University of North Texas has recorded a new album, *Lab 2019*, which will be available Nov. 22. It features six original student compositions, five of them by members of the 20-piece ensemble, as well as two standards with new student-penned arrangements. In addition, the recording offers new works by two UNT faculty members: Rich DeRosa, professor of jazz composition and arranging, and Alan Baylock, director of the One O'Clock Lab Band. Band member Kyle Myers (alto saxophone, soprano saxophone, flute) composed the album tracks "Third Time's The Charm," "Red Herring" and "I'll Miss You." jazz.unt.edu

Stafford's New Title: The Philly POPS orchestra has named trumpeter Terell Stafford its artistic director for jazz. Stafford will continue to direct the All City Jazz Orchestra, extending a partnership between the School District of Philadelphia and the POPS. He will expand the POPS in Schools programming to include new opportunities—bringing jazz musicians to schools in Philadelphia, while also welcoming student performers into the concert hall. Stafford is the director of jazz studies and chair of instrumental studies at Temple University. phillypops.org

Building Bridges: Ravinia's Steans Music Institute in Highland Park, Illinois, will present its third annual Bridges competition for compositions that fuse the worlds of jazz and classical music. The competition will be juried by pianist Billy Childs, bassist Rufus Reid and saxophonist Steve Wilson. The competition is open to composers who will be between 18 and 30 years old as of June 1, 2020. Entries must be submitted by Jan. 31, 2020. ravinia.org/page/bridges-competition

Scholarly Summit: The University of Guelph in Canada will host a summit examining issues of gender, sexuality and equity as they relate to the Grove Music Online resources. The event, to be held May 29–31, 2020, will address the ways in which reference publications have defined the fields of music and sound studies. uoguelph.ca



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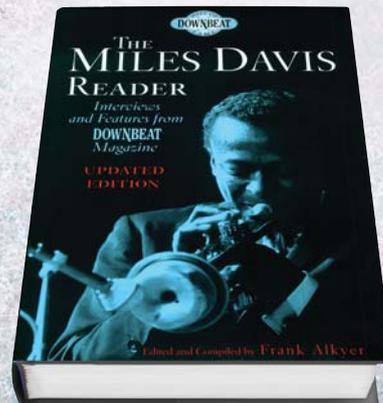
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STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, AND CIRCULATION AS REQUIRED BY 39 USC 3685. 1. PUBLICATION TITLE: DOWNBEAT 2. PUBLICATION NUMBER: 0470-770 3. FILING DATE: 10/01/19 4. ISSUE FREQUENCY: MONTHLY 5. NUMBER OF ISSUES PUBLISHED ANNUALLY: 12 6. ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION PRICE: \$29.99 7. COMPLETE MAILING ADDRESS OF KNOWN OFFICE OF PUBLICATION: 102 N. HAVEN RD, DUPAGE COUNTY, ELMHURST, IL 60126-2970 8. COMPLETE MAILING ADDRESS OF HEADQUARTERS OR GENERAL BUSINESS OFFICE OF PUBLISHER: SAME AS ABOVE 9. FULL NAMES AND COMPLETE MAILING ADDRESSES OF PUBLISHER, EDITOR AND ASSOCIATE EDITOR: PUBLISHER-FRANK ALKYER, ADDRESS SAME AS ABOVE; EDITOR-BOBBY REED, ADDRESS SAME AS ABOVE; ASSOCIATE EDITOR- DAVE CANTOR 10. OWNER: KEVIN MAHER, 102 N. HAVEN ROAD, DUPAGE COUNTY, ELMHURST, IL 60126-2970 11. KNOWN BONDHOLDERS: NONE 12. TAX STATUS HAS NOT CHANGED DURING PREVIOUS 12 MONTHS 13. PUBLICATION TITLE: DOWNBEAT 14. ISSUE DATE FOR CIRCULATION DATA BELOW: OCTOBER 2019 15. EXTENT AND NATURE OF CIRCULATION: CONSUMER MUSIC MAGAZINE (JAZZ) 15A. TOTAL NUMBER OF COPIES: AVERAGE NO. OF COPIES EACH ISSUE DURING PRECEDING 12 MONTHS (12 MO. AVG.) 29,265 ACTUAL NO. COPIES OF SINGLE ISSUE PUBLISHED NEAREST TO THE FILING DATE (ACTUAL) 31,808 15B. PAID CIRCULATION 15B(1). MAILED OUTSIDE-COUNTY PAID SUBSCRIPTIONS STATED ON FORM 3541: TOTAL NUMBER OF COPIES: 12 MO. AVG.-10,142; ACTUAL-9,862 15B(2). MAILED IN-COUNTY PAID SUBSCRIPTIONS STATED ON FORM 3541: TOTAL NUMBER OF COPIES: 12 MO. AVG.-0; ACTUAL-0 15B(3). PAID DISTRIBUTION OUTSIDE THE MAILS INCLUDING SALES THROUGH DEALERS AND CARRIERS, STREET VENDORS, COUNTER SALES AND OTHER PAID DISTRIBUTION OUTSIDE USPS: TOTAL NUMBER OF COPIES: 12 MO. AVG.-5,213; ACTUAL-5,314 15B(4). PAID DISTRIBUTION BY OTHER CLASSES OF MAIL THROUGH THE USPS: TOTAL NUMBER OF COPIES: 12 MO. AVG.-1,826; ACTUAL-1,760 15C. TOTAL PAID DISTRIBUTION: 12 MO. AVG.-17,182; ACTUAL-16,936 15D. FREE OR NOMINAL RATE DISTRIBUTION 15D(1). FREE OR NOMINAL RATE OUTSIDE COUNTY INCLUDED ON FORM 3541: TOTAL NUMBER OF COPIES: 12 MO. AVG.-0; ACTUAL-0 15D(2). FREE OR NOMINAL RATE IN-COUNTY COPIES INCLUDED ON FORM 3541: TOTAL NUMBER OF COPIES: 12 MO. AVG.-0; ACTUAL-0 15D(3). FREE OR NOMINAL RATE COPIES MAILED AT OTHER CLASSES THROUGH USPS TOTAL NUMBER OF COPIES: 12 MO. AVG.-0; ACTUAL-0 15D(4). FREE OR NOMINAL RATE DISTRIBUTION OUTSIDE OF MAIL 12 MO. AVG.-11,514; ACTUAL-14,367 15E. TOTAL FREE OR NOMINAL RATE DISTRIBUTION OUTSIDE THE MAIL: 12 MO. AVG.-11,514; ACTUAL-14,367 15F. TOTAL DISTRIBUTION: TOTAL NUMBER OF COPIES: 12 MO. AVG.-28,696; ACTUAL-31,303 15G. COPIES NOT DISTRIBUTED: 12 MO. AVG.-585; ACTUAL-505 15H. TOTAL NUMBER OF COPIES: 12 MO. AVG.-29,280; ACTUAL-31,808 15I. PERCENT PAID: 12 MO. AVG.- 59.87%; ACTUAL- 54% 16. PUBLICATION STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP: PUBLICATION REQUIRED. WILL BE PRINTED IN THE DECEMBER 2019 ISSUE OF THIS PUBLICATION.

Antonio Sánchez

Before drummer Antonio Sánchez headed to Dizzy's Den to play with his band Migration at this year's Monterey Jazz Festival, he sat down in the Pacific Jazz Café for his first DownBeat Blindfold Test.

Sánchez has been a member of Pat Metheny's Unity Band, and he won his fourth Grammy for his score to the 2014 film *Birdman* or (*The Unexpected Virtue of Ignorance*). His latest album with Migration is *Lines In The Sand* (CAM Jazz).

Tony Williams Lifetime

"Snake Oil" (*Tony Williams Lifetime: The Collection*, Sony, 1992, rec'd 1975) Williams, drums; Allan Holdsworth, guitar; Alan Pasqua, keyboard; Tony Newton, bass.

It's definitely funky. I love the opening hi-hat. It sounds familiar, but I can't put my finger on who this is. The drummer had the Tony Williams thing and a bit of Lenny White. But it's definitely not Tony. [after] It is? Well, it definitely had a lot of Tony in it. ... I'm hearing Tony in a different context than his album *Wilderness*, with Pat Metheny, Michael Brecker, Herbie Hancock and Stanley Clarke. I used to play that album for my friends, and they didn't know who that was. But I said, "He's the man."

I remember seeing him in Boston at the Regattabar. I sat just a couple of feet away from his hi-hat, and his cymbals were moving like palm trees in a storm. Tony's chops were always unbelievable.

Roy Haynes

"Diverse" (*Birds Of A Feather—A Tribute To Charlie Parker*, Dreyfus Jazz, 2001) Haynes, drums; Kenny Garrett, alto saxophone; Roy Hargrove, trumpet; Dave Kikoski, piano; Dave Holland, bass.

Roy Haynes. He's another one of the kings. He has such a specific sound. The flat ride cymbal gives it away. No one has the balls to play with a flat ride cymbal like Roy. ... One of my favorite all-time records was Chick Corea's *Now He Sings, Now He Sobs*. I studied that record so much just for Roy's right cymbal sound. I played along with that record. ... What I like the most about Roy is how recognizable his sound is with his phrasing, his flat ride cymbal, the way he whacks the snare and the hi-hat.

Kendrick Scott Oracle

"Windows" (*A Wall Becomes A Bridge*, Blue Note, 2019) Scott, drums; John Ellis, tenor saxophone; Taylor Eigsti, Rhodes; Mike Moreno, guitar; DJ Jahi Sundance, turntables.

Is the drummer the bandleader? Was that Kendrick Scott? I know he's been doing a lot of that mixing ... to come up with different sounds. I like it. This is all about the vibe and the groove. It sounds like an interlude, which makes sense because as musicians we have the ability to produce a lot more. You can do a lot in post [production]. You can piece things together and make short statements in the music, where you don't have to have people soloing all the time.

The best thing today is that it's a great time for drummers to be composers and bandleaders. Since I've been a bandleader for quite a while, I've discovered that the drums is the best instrument to lead. You are really responsible for so many dynamic changes. You have so much power.

Buddy Rich

"Mexicali Nose" (*Buddy & Soul*, Pacific Jazz, 2000, rec'd 1996) Rich, drums; Buddy Rich Big Band featuring Pat LaBarbera, tenor saxophone; Ollie Mitchell, trumpet; David Lahm, electric piano; others.

Well, you can tell who the boss is here. It's Buddy Rich—the way he could lead his big band with his power. He always had a big bass drum that he pounded on. He always played on top, and everyone else followed him. I feel Buddy never got his due. When people talk about the great



Antonio Sánchez at the 2019 Monterey Jazz Festival

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drummers—Tony, Elvin [Jones], Art Blakey, Philly Joe [Jones], Roy, Jack DeJohnette—they don't mention Buddy much. Maybe it's because he was such a technician that people forget about his musical achievements. I've heard records where he's just playing brushes or backing Ella. His technique is out of this world. Being on the West Coast was definitely a thing—Buddy's big band didn't sound anything like Mel Lewis. Buddy's drums sounded different; his cymbals sounded different. He was like a different animal, but he should be recognized as one of jazz's great drummers.

Sons of Kemet

"My Queen Is Angela Davis" (*Your Queen Is A Reptile*, Impulse, 2018) Shabaka Hutchings, saxophone; Theon Cross, tuba; Tom Skinner, Seb Rochford, drums.

I have no idea who this is, but I do know that things are super grooving. There are two drummers. I would love to be the third drummer in this group. It sounded like a lot of fun, and the tuba player is so great. The two drummers both play in an unconventional way. No one is leading with a hi-hat or ride cymbal. The sounds of the drums are almost like trash cans, which I love, like the guys playing with buckets in the streets.

Terri Lyne Carrington

"Witch Hunt" (*Jazz Is A Spirit*, ACT, 2002) Carrington, drums; Greg Kurstin, keyboards; Gary Thomas, tenor saxophone; Jeff Richman, guitar; Bob Hurst, bass; others.

If this is not Jack DeJohnette, then it's someone who has been influenced by him. Not Jack? Could it be Terri Lyne Carrington? And was that Gary Thomas? Terri Lyne would be the first to admit that she was highly influenced by Jack. She has so much power here. What doesn't make her sound like Jack are those single tones she's using. She's like a washing machine that's falling apart, but with the ride cymbal, you can hear Jack's influence. Thinking of her, you realize that we need more women playing the drums.

Art Blakey & The Jazz Messengers

"The Drum Thunder Suite" (*Moanin'*, Blue Note, 1999, rec'd 1958) Blakey, drums; Benny Golson, tenor saxophone; Lee Morgan, trumpet; Bobby Timmons, piano; Jymie Merritt, bass.

I don't know this tune, but it's Art Blakey. He has such a way on the drums. I can't imagine anyone else pounding on the toms like this. Just like Buddy Rich led a band that was so unique, so was with Art and the way he would lead. When I was in my rock phase, my mom played me an Art Blakey & The Jazz Messengers record. I thought it was horrible. I was just not ready. Many years later, I went back to listen. And I had to ask him for forgiveness.

DB

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



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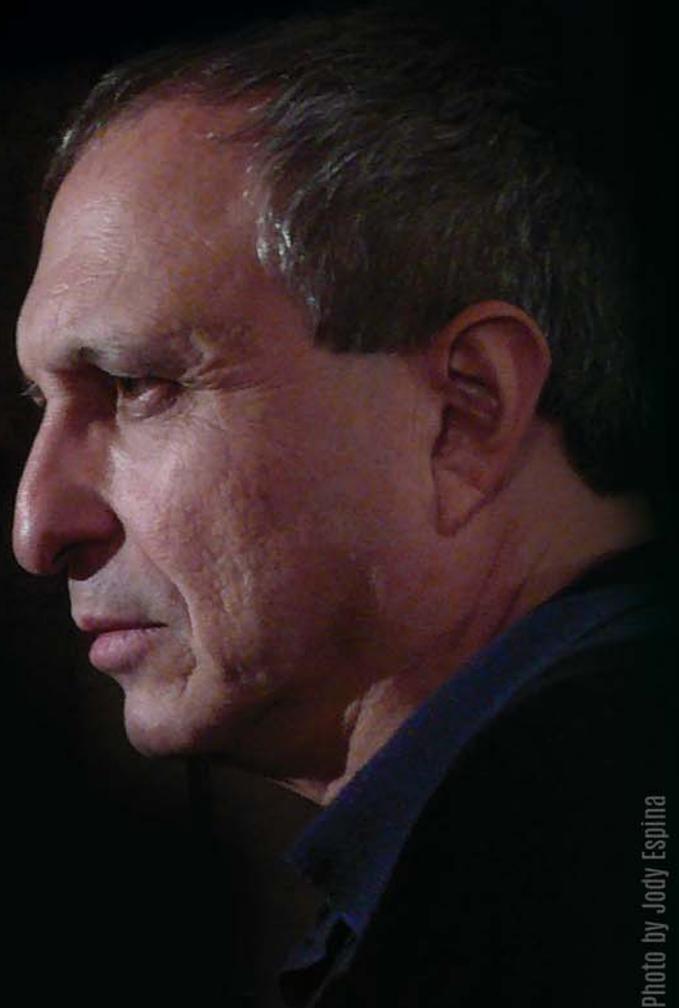


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