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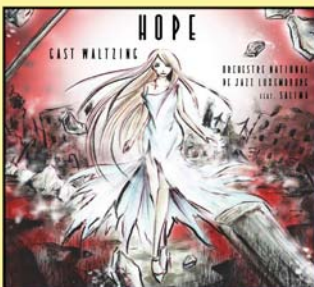
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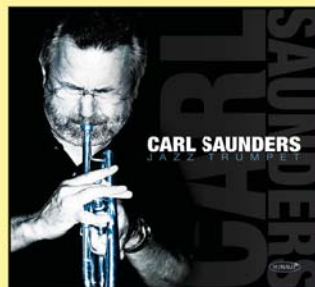
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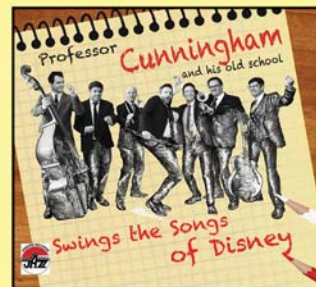
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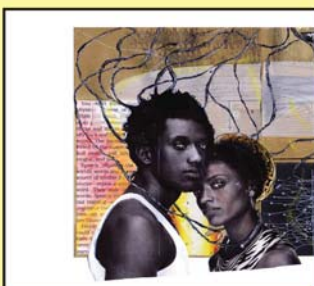
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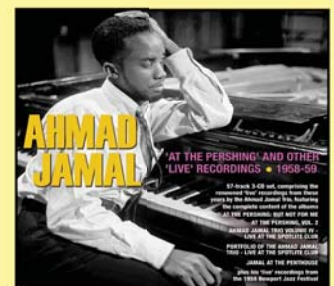
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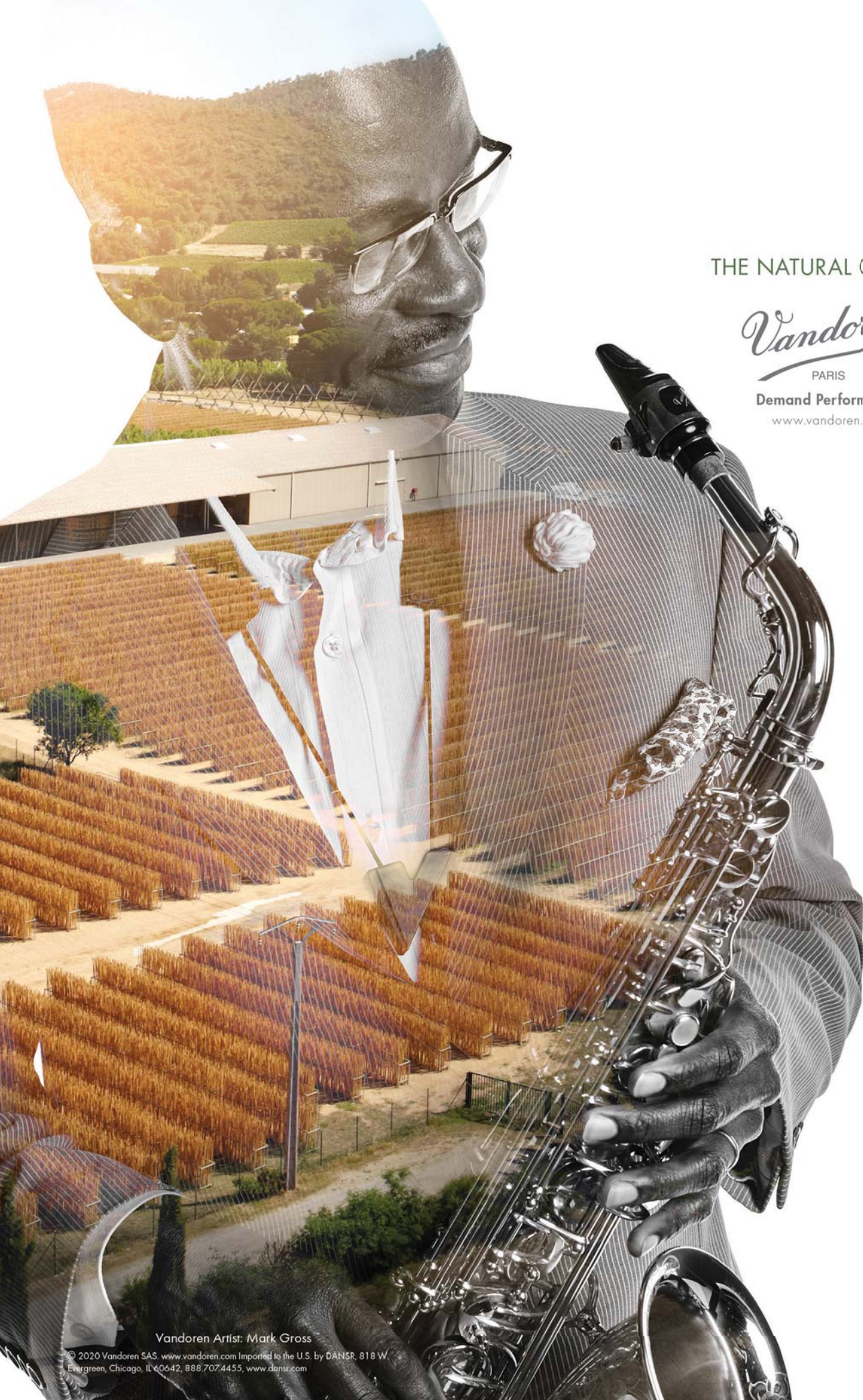
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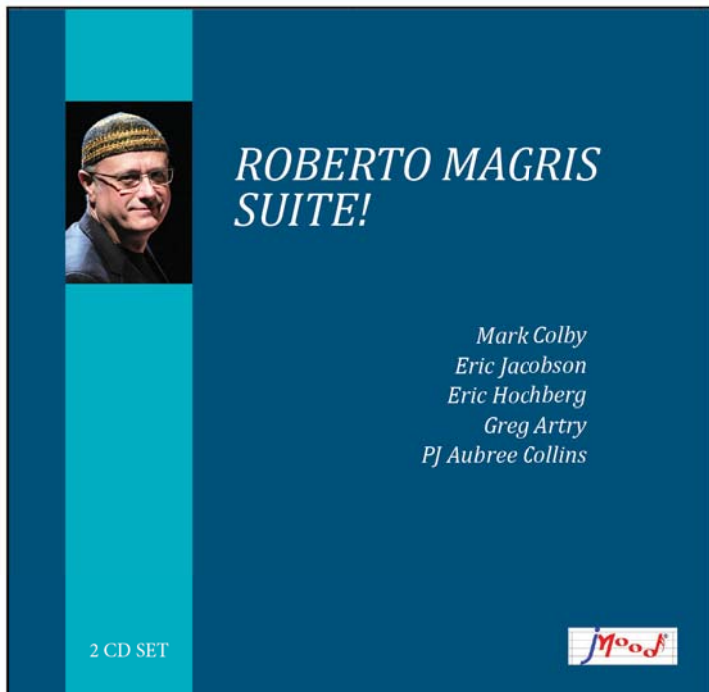
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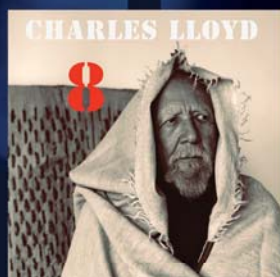
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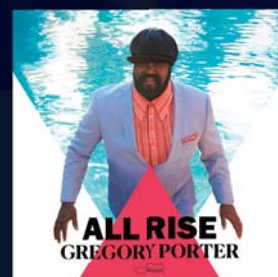
CHARLES LLOYD
8: KINDRED SPIRITS
(LIVE FROM THE LOBERO)

Jazz legend **CHARLES LLOYD** celebrated his 80th birthday in 2018 with a grouping of musical friends including guitarist **JULIAN LAGE**, pianist **GERALD CLAYTON**, bassist **REUBEN ROGERS**, and drummer **ERIC HARLAND**, with special guests organist **BOOKER T. JONES**. **8** commemorates the first 8 decades of Lloyd's remarkable journey and arrives in a limited-edition deluxe box set that includes 3-LPs, 2-CDs, and a DVD, along with a 96-page hardcover book and 2 photo prints, as well as standard LP/DVD, CD/DVD, and digital versions.



NORAH JONES
PICK ME UP OFF THE FLOOR

NORAH JONES' seventh solo studio album grew out of her acclaimed singles series, as the unreleased songs unexpectedly congealed into an album of tremendous depth and beauty. Featuring a range of collaborators from **BRIAN BLADE** to **JEFF TWEEDY**, *Pick Me Up Off The Floor* is connected by the sly groove of her piano trios, lyrics that confront loss and portend hope, and a mood that leans into darkness before ultimately finding the light.



GREGORY PORTER
ALL RISE

2-time GRAMMY Award winner **GREGORY PORTER** follows his loving tribute to Nat "King" Cole with a return to his deeply soulful original songwriting on *ALL RISE*. The album is a potent mix of jazz, soul, blues, gospel, and pop featuring longtime bandmates pianist **CHIP CRAWFORD**, bassist **JAHMAL NICHOLS**, drummer **EMANUEL HARROLD**, augmented by a horn section, string orchestra, and a dynamic production aesthetic courtesy of **TROY MILLER**.



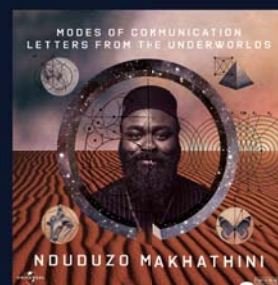
KANDACE SPRINGS
THE WOMEN WHO RAISED ME

Singer and pianist **KANDACE SPRINGS** pays tribute to the great female singers who influenced her growing up with this stirring collection of songs by Ella Fitzgerald, Billie Holiday, Nina Simone, Carmen McRae, Roberta Flack, Dusty Springfield, Astrud Gilberto, Bonnie Raitt, Sade, Lauryn Hill, Norah Jones, and Diana Krall. Produced by **LARRY KLEIN**, the album features guest appearances by **NORAH JONES**, **CHRISTIAN MCBRIDE**, **DAVID SANBORN** & more.



ART BLAKEY
& THE JAZZ MESSENGERS
JUST COOLIN'

A never-before-released studio album by **ART BLAKEY & THE JAZZ MESSENGERS** recorded at Rudy Van Gelder's Hackensack, New Jersey studio on March 8, 1959, and featuring the legendary drummer—whose centennial is being celebrated this year—along with trumpeter **LEE MORGAN**, tenor saxophonist **HANK MOBLEY**, pianist **BOBBY TIMMONS**, and bassist **JYMIE MERRITT**. The 6-song set includes 2 previously unissued compositions: "Quick Trick" and "Jimerick."



NDUDUZO MAKHATHINI
MODES OF COMMUNICATION

After collaborations with Wynton Marsalis and Shabaka Hutchings, the visionary South African pianist and composer **NDUDUZO MAKHATHINI** is set to release his Blue Note debut *Modes of Communication: Letters from the Underworlds*, an expansive album in which lyrical, plaintive horns mingle with percussion, pained yelps and urgent lyrics in a musical exploration of ancestral realms.

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MAY 2020

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'Our Ears Together'

BY STEPHANIE JONES

DownBeat sits down with drummer Antonio Sánchez and singer Thana Alexa, who are married, to talk about their collaborations and their individual work as bandleaders. The two musicians have toured extensively in the band Migration.



Marcus Printup performs on Feb. 5 at Gateway Center Plaza 4 in Newark, New Jersey

Cover photo of Antonio Sánchez and Thana Alexa shot by Jimmy and Dena Katz on Feb. 6 in New York City at Yamaha Artist Services, Inc.

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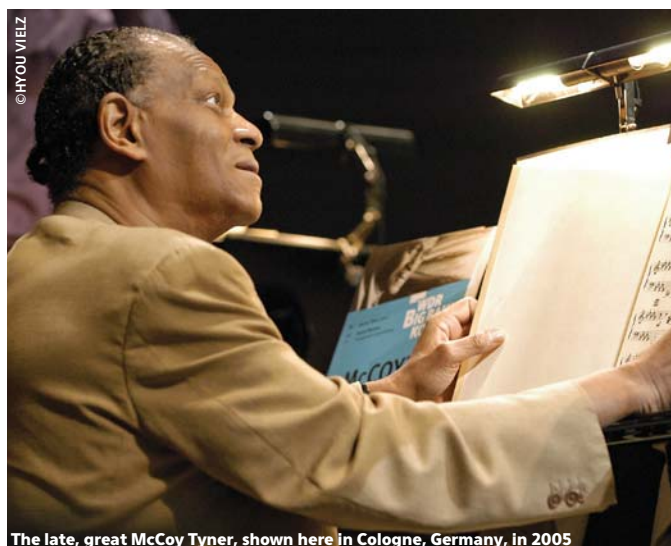
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First Take > BY BILL MILKOWSKI



The late, great McCoy Tyner, shown here in Cologne, Germany, in 2005

'A Giant of Giants'

SOON AFTER THE NEWS BROKE ON MARCH 6 THAT REVERED pianist McCoy Tyner had died at age 81, Facebook quickly was flooded with tributes (see obituary on page 14). "His is a universal sound, a religious sound," wrote pianist Matthew Shipp. "What a spiritual giant he was to multiple generations of pianists."

"McCoy was one of the most universally influential, instantly recognizable, beloved voices in all of modern music," wrote pianist Benny Green. "Thank you for the records, the melodies and the magical, undying spiritual beauty you leave behind."

On Twitter, pianist Jason Moran weighed in on the effect that Tyner's music could have on listeners: "He arrests you, then relaxes your spine, pulls you underground, then catapults you through the galaxy, and he does it all while seated. The great long distance pianist. Each stride, a tightly woven history unto itself."

In a recent interview with DownBeat, Avery Sharpe—who was Tyner's bassist for 26 years—related a revelatory anecdote about his friend and mentor: "Shortly after I joined McCoy's band, he called me up and said, 'OK, we're getting ready to go to Greece.' So, I came down from Springfield, Massachusetts, where I lived at the time, and met him and [drummer] Louis Hayes at JFK Airport in New York. We get to the ticket counter and McCoy goes, 'All right, give me your passport.' And I'm like, 'Oh! You mean Greece, *Europe*? You need a passport for that?' I'm thinking that the gig was in Greece, Ohio, or somewhere. It never dawned on me that it was in Europe. And I was like, 'McCoy, man. I'm really sorry but I didn't bring my passport.' He looked at me, blinked, looked back at the ticket [agent], and looked back at me. He said, 'We'll take your bass. We'll see you there.' And *boom!* ... they were gone! No going off in anger, like other bandleaders might've done. He didn't raise his voice. He went from Plan A to Plan B in a heartbeat. And I was like, 'Ah, that's the lesson: No matter what happens, don't panic.' Most cats would have spent five or 10 minutes getting pissed. He just saw the problem and solved it. That's the way he was: even-keeled all the way."

Tenor saxophonist Joshua Redman, who said that clutching a copy of *A Love Supreme* is one of his earliest memories, told DownBeat, "The depth of beauty in McCoy's music is powerful and physical and visceral. And yet, there's so much tenderness and melancholy and poignancy and lyricism with everything he did. I can't separate him from that music or that music from him, you know? He was a giant of giants." **DB**

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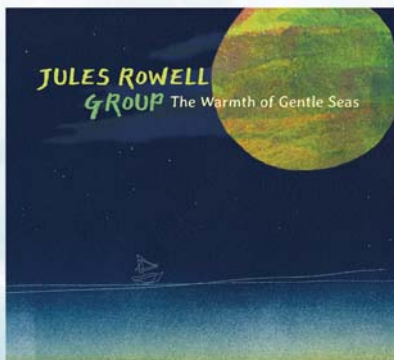
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RUDRESH MAHANTHAPPA DEPENDS ON YAMAHA

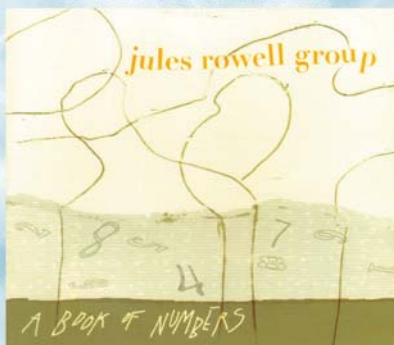
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Rudresh F. Mahanthappa
- Saxophonist, Composer, Bandleader,
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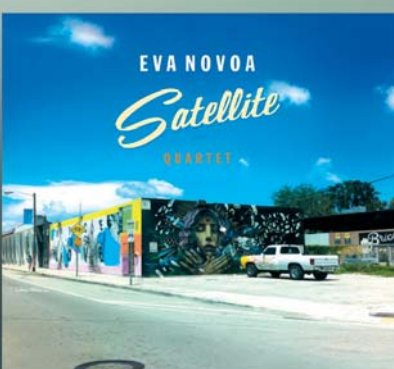
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Chords & Discords

More Than Just a Burner

I was pleased to read the long overdue piece on Eric Alexander in the March issue ("Always Adventurous"). Eric has been a major figure on the jazz scene since the early 1990s. During the years Eric was living in Chicago, he developed as a big, brawny tenor player in the grand tradition of other saxophonists associated with the city. But Dan Ouellette's article makes clear that Eric is an exquisite ballad interpreter—and not just a burner.

Thanks much to Dan for his words.

BILL BENJAMIN
BILTMORE LAKE, NORTH CAROLINA



ANTONIO PORCAR

Refreshing Manifesto

I found your February cover story on Nicholas Payton ("Creating Culture") to be a most refreshing manifesto for my people's survival, cultural flourishing and continued successes.

Mr. Payton is extraordinary in his noble character, many talents, historical understanding, showmanship, pioneering spirit, business methods and promotion of the necessary modernistic Black American Music movement in our country.

Nina Simone would call Mr. Payton "Young, Gifted And Black," while James Brown would tell him to say, "I'm Black And I'm Proud."

EMZY VEAZY III
BURBANK, CALIFORNIA

Remembering Jimmy Heath

I was saddened when I learned of the passing of Jimmy Heath on Jan. 19. But sadness quickly turned to happiness when I remembered all the times I saw him perform.

I felt very privileged to see him with the Heath Brothers band, the Jimmy Heath Big Band, the Dizzy Gillespie All-Star Big Band, and with Roberta Gambarini. In 2016, I saw him at the Kennedy Center with his big band and at the Jazz Showcase in Chicago for a special show celebrating the 90th birthday of the club's founder, Joe Segal.

At the Jazz Showcase, everyone was smiling as Jimmy worked the room. He greeted each of the other musicians and made them smile and laugh. I will never forget this jazz legend and every time I think of him, I'll probably be smiling.

MARC NEBOZENKO
EVANSTON, ILLINOIS

Saluting Lyle Mays

Lyle Mays swept me away like no musician in my lifetime, with the possible exception of his writing partner, Pat Metheny. More than even Bill Evans and Keith Jarrett, whom he loved, Mays tapped into something dazzling-

ly beautiful, something full of quiet power, something that spoke directly to the souls of all who heard it. He would take you from the smallest, subtlest scene—a pinprick of light coming through a keyhole—to a torrent of every color in the rainbow, flowing almost faster than the ear could follow. He brought poetry and power in equal measure, tapping into parts of the human spirit it seemed he alone could access.

His solos embodied the piano's split personality, beginning with crystalline single notes, often concluding with percussive, emotional thunder. From his arsenal of synthesizers, he coaxed impossibly lovely textures, often orchestrating on the fly.

He and Pat followed each other into secret corners, into the unknown; you could hear them making discoveries as they played. Together, they wrote the most distinctive body of instrumental music of the rock era, music that, even at its most epic, was unflinchingly personal.

I am, of course, playing tracks from their extraordinary, unclassifiable Pat Metheny Group albums as I write this. It's hard to use words to describe something wordless, but I keep thinking of Lyle in terms of light, not sound. He was a painter. His art seemed to marshal all the senses at once. Words are not adequate to describe it. Lyle Mays was without peer. A set of one. And now, along with all the musicians of my generation, I begin the endless task of missing him.

DON BREITHAUP
SANTA MONICA, CALIFORNIA

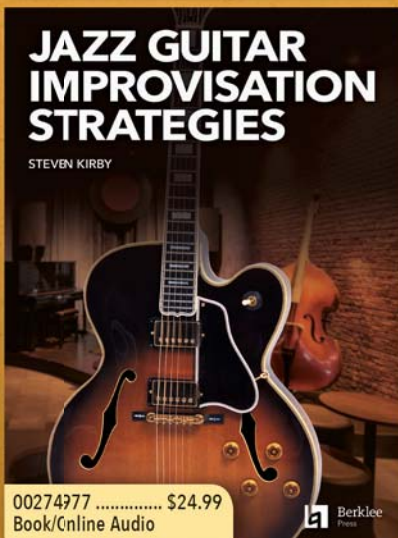
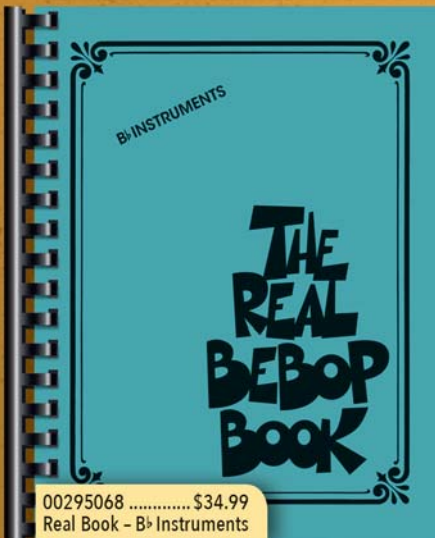
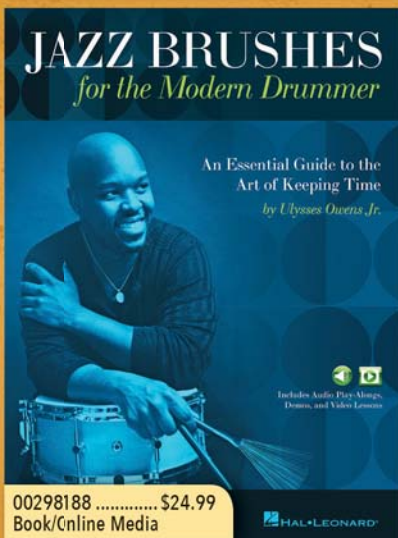
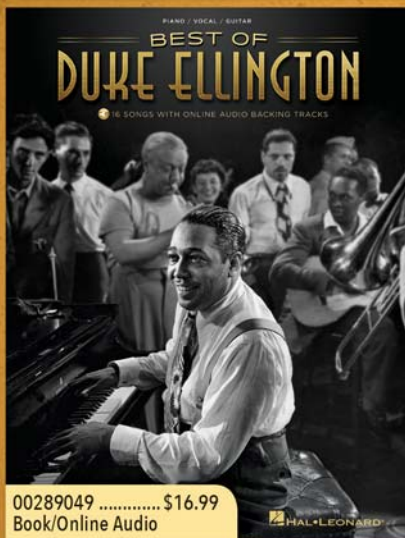
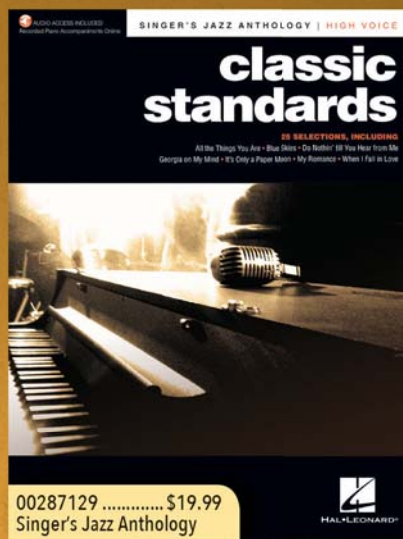
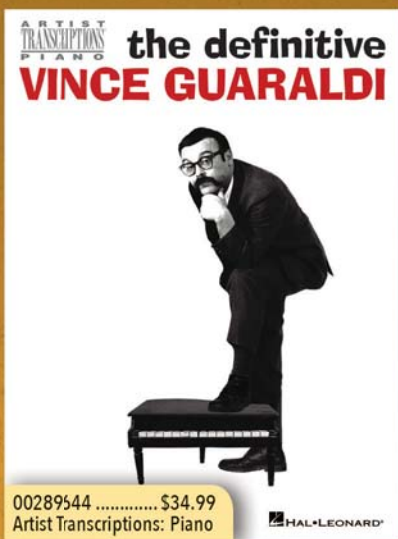
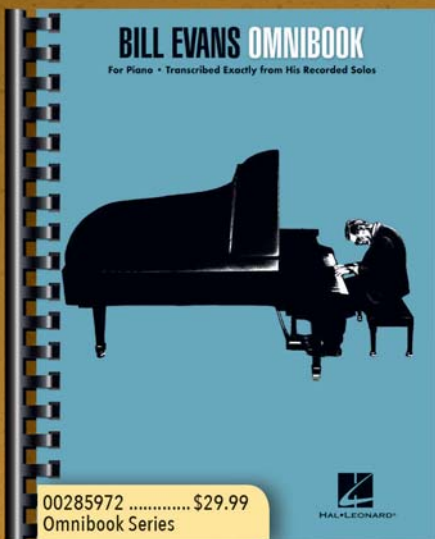
Correction

■ In the April print edition, the review of Michael Wolff's album *Bounce* misidentified the vocal contributions of Nat Wolff, the leader's son. The younger Wolff wrote and sang on the track "Cool Kids."

DOWNBEAT REGRETS THE ERROR.

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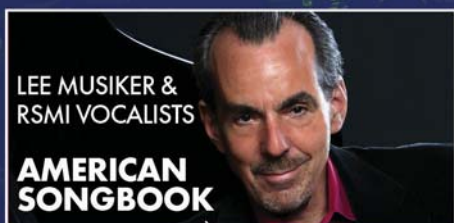


An Evening with
Michael Feinstein & Betty Buckley



Gladys Knight

HEATHER HEADLEY



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Beat

McCraven Makes the Old New Again

Chicago's Makaya McCraven is best known as a drummer and producer, mixing and matching genres until they blend as one. While he admits that hip-hop has played a major role in his musical development, marrying it to a jazz aesthetic took some time, coalescing on 2018's *Universal Beings*.

His latest album, *We're New Again: A Reimagining By Makaya McCraven* (XL), is another kind of pastiche. And this time, the producer's source material is Gil Scott-Heron's *I'm New Here*, the vocalist and poet's final studio effort from 2010. Oddly enough, though, it's already been remixed once: Jamie XX worked over the project back in 2011, the year that the politically poignant Scott-Heron passed away.

While McCraven's recent albums have centered on remixing his own live recordings, this was the first project where he'd reimagined another performer's full-length.

"I didn't choose the record. The record chose me," McCraven said about the 10-year-old Scott-Heron album. "I was approached by Richard Russell, who produced the original record with Gil. He asked me to do a remix project of sorts. I was surprised and honored to be considered."

With a bit of resequencing and the addition of new production around Scott-Heron's ragged voice crooning harsh lyrics, McCraven managed to summon avant-garde sounds perfectly suited to the project.

I'm New Here—the source material a meeting of spoken word and gruff singing layered atop beat music—almost sounds like a remix project itself. But McCraven rebuilt the music, somehow managing to maintain the original's essence. A prime example is "New York Is Killing Me," which was startling enough in its original version. In McCraven's take, added electronics build a city the singer wishes he could leave.



Drummer and producer Makaya McCraven revamps Gil Scott-Heron on *We're New Again: A Reimagining by Makaya McCraven* (XL).

The producer was taken by "the age in [Scott-Heron's] voice and [the] references to going back home and coming full circle with your whole life—the good, the bad and the ugly," he said. "That struck me, as an artist trying to survive, bringing positivity to the world through work. Gil Scott-Heron represented being honest and provocative. That being his last statement, it was something powerful in itself."

While McCraven acknowledges the impact of sample-based music on his own albums, he frequently looks further back for inspiration: "Les Paul and the use of a tape machine, and the Beatles overdubbing on four-tracks; I find that using recordings and repurposing sound is fascinating and can be done in a variety of ways."

But to hear McCraven tell it, there was no real blueprint for *We're New Again*.

"I used a variety of techniques. I don't know if I've got a recipe, but I've got a recipe book," he said. "The way I approach music in general is as a creative endeavor, something where I'm search-

ing and learning and experimenting. I enjoy utilizing the studio as a tool to create music. The recording space is a separate sonic universe than the live space. Something that [guitarist] Jeff Parker told me one time: For him, a record isn't just a document of what happened, but it's also something entirely of itself. I really like that sentiment. When I produce music, that's kind of where I'm at. When presented with something that's wild, I try to utilize a variety of techniques, putting something of myself into it."

For all of his investment in technology, McCraven avoids any contemporary sonic trappings that might make *We're New Again* sound dated in a few years' time.

"The purpose here is to make compelling art," he said, "paying homage to the past and looking towards the future."

With his reinterpretation of Scott-Heron's final album, McCraven manages to do that, while also giving listeners a new twist on an album that was unpredictable to begin with. —James Porter



McCoy Tyner (1938–2020)

Remembering McCoy Tyner

A MEMBER OF THE CLASSIC JOHN Coltrane quartet of the 1960s, as well as a powerful improviser and potent composer in his own right, iconic pianist McCoy Tyner died March 6 at his home in New Jersey. He was 81.

A 2002 NEA Jazz Master and 2004 DownBeat Hall of Fame inductee, Tyner's playing style—with its harmonic inventions, predilection for modal fourth voicings and signature emphatic left-hand attack on the low keys—made him one of the most instantly identifiable and influential players in jazz.

"Most people think of McCoy's music, and obviously I think of that, too, but I mostly think of him as a person, as a man," said bassist Avery Sharpe, who played with the pianist for 26 years. "He was a considerate cat and a sensitive cat, and amazingly funny. People don't even realize that. McCoy was like a big brother to me."

Born Alfred McCoy Tyner on Dec. 11, 1938, he grew up in Philadelphia and began studying piano at age 13 at the Granoff School of Music. Inspired by Bud Powell and Thelonious Monk, Tyner began developing quickly, and at age 15 was thrilled when Powell moved into his neighborhood, taking up res-

idence in the apartment of younger brother and fellow bop pianist Richie Powell.

"I was very fortunate to have a gentleman that inspired me right around the corner in my neighborhood," Tyner explained to Joe Maita of jerryjazzmusician.com.

By 17, the pianist joined a band led by Philadelphia-based trumpeter Cal Massey that also included alto saxophonist Clarence "C" Sharpe, bassist Jimmy Garrison and drummer Albert "Tootie" Heath.

It was at a matinee performance at the Red Rooster in Philly with Massey's band where Tyner first encountered Coltrane.

"He was with Miles [in October 1956]," he told this writer in a 2008 interview. "He came home for a sabbatical to spend some time with his mother, Alice, and it was during this period that I met him. But we really got acquainted with each other when he left Miles' band the first time [in April 1957], and returned to Philly to live with his mother. I used to go by there and play with John. She had an upright piano, and we'd play together at his home. And he'd also come by my place and play with me. My piano was in my mother's beauty shop So, we used to have jam sessions at her beau-

ty shop with John and guys from the neighborhood. He was 12 years older than me, so he was like a big brother to me."

Tyner's first recording session came on Dec. 17, 1959, for the Curtis Fuller Sextet LP *Imagination*. Around the same time, he joined The Jazztet, led by saxophonist Benny Golson and trumpeter Art Farmer. On May 1, 1960, they recorded the album *Meet The Jazztet*, which introduced Golson compositions that would become standards: "Killer Joe" and "Blues March." Tyner's stint with the ensemble lasted just six months.

By June 1960, the pianist had joined Coltrane's quartet, setting jazz destiny in motion. Together they created a musical synergy on the bandstand with bassist Garrison and drummer Elvin Jones, and recorded such forward-thinking Coltrane albums as *Ballads*, *Live At Birdland*, *Crescent* and Trane's masterwork, *A Love Supreme*.

The 2018 Impulse release *Both Directions At Once: The Lost Album* documented the classic quartet in stellar form at a March 6, 1963, session at Rudy Van Gelder Studio in Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey. It was recorded the day before the session that produced *John*

Coltrane And Johnny Hartman.

Tyner explained his perception of the quartet's work for a story titled "Tyner Talk" in the Oct. 24, 1963, edition of *DownBeat*: "People sometimes say our music is experimental, but all I can answer is that every time you sit down and play, it should be an experience. There are no barriers in our rhythm section. Everyone plays his personal concept, and nobody tells anyone else what to do. ... We have an overall different approach, and that is responsible for our original style. As compared with a lot of other groups, we feel differently about music. With us, whatever comes out—that's it, at the moment. We definitely believe in the value of the spontaneous."

After leaving Coltrane's quartet in 1965, Tyner generated a string of brilliant Blue Note albums—*The Real McCoy*, *Time For Tyner*, *Expansions* and *Extensions*—all recorded between 1967 and 1970. Add to that the important Blue Note sessions that Tyner made during the mid-'60s with Wayne Shorter, Joe Henderson, Grant Green, Lee Morgan, Hank Mobley, Lou Donaldson and Freddie Hubbard, and you've got the résumé of a bona fide jazz legend.

"It's difficult to comprehend the magnitude of McCoy Tyner's innovative contributions to music," Blue Note President Don Was said in a statement to *DownBeat*. "As a leader and sideman, he recorded dozens of monumental Blue Note albums and has played a major role in shaping the character of our catalog. As an artist, his sense of harmony and rhythm has been pervasive. Mr. Tyner's signature is forever imprinted upon the musical vocabulary of generations to come."

Tyner's albums on Milestone in the 1970s, Blue Note in the 1980s, Impulse in the 1990s and Telarc in the 2000s added to his incredibly rich recording legacy.

His late-period recordings as a leader—*Quartet* (2007), *Guitars* (2008) and *Solo: Live From San Francisco* (2009)—all were released on the Half Note label.

"People always talk about McCoy's power and the whole thing that he created with Trane, but McCoy had an incredible sense of calm," Sharpe said. "He could play behind singers, he could play behind anybody, because he was really very sensitive. The way he would comp behind my bass solos was super-sensitive. But at the same time, he could just run everybody off the stage if you want to bring the energy level up ... I've been in all-star situations where cats have egos, but they'll all look over at McCoy and go, 'He's the cat. We're all great players, but he's the cat.'"

Tenor saxophonist Joe Lovano—who toured with Tyner in 1999 and played on the live album *Quartet* alongside Tyner, bassist Christian McBride and drummer Jeff "Tain"

Watts—also has great reverence for the pianist. "McCoy elevated every bandstand he played on," Lovano said. "That was spiritual music that he played, every moment. And if you were lucky enough to be in a room with him, man, he brought you to some other place."

Guitarist John Scofield had two recorded encounters with Tyner—first on the 1989 Blue Note album *Things Ain't What They Used To Be* and again on 2008's *Guitars*, which had him swinging on "Mr. P.C." and "Blues On The Corner" in the company of Tyner and the regal rhythm tandem of bassist Ron Carter and drummer Jack DeJohnette.

"I have a very distinct memory of that *Guitars* session," Scofield said. "What I remember most is that I had the feeling that whatever notes I chose to play would work with what he was playing. I can't explain it any more than that, but I felt very free. And I loved that. It wasn't an intellectual kind of chord substitution thing that he was doing; it's about certain voicings and moving them into other keys. But it allows you to play freely over it and then all of the sudden anything works, if you're committed. And McCoy was certainly committed."

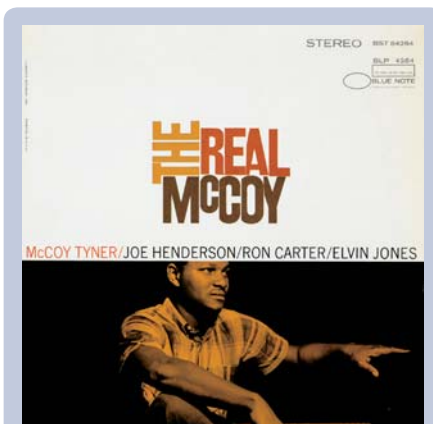
"He's certainly one of the four great modern post-bop pianists," said tenor saxophonist Joshua Redman, who played on Tyner's 1995 intergenerational Milestone release, *Prelude And Sonata*. "You can talk about McCoy and Herbie [Hancock] and Chick [Corea] and Keith [Jarrett] ... they're kind of like the Big Four. But with McCoy, his genius is almost the most mysterious of the four. And it's a weird thing to say because his style is also the most outwardly exuberant and physical. There's so much visceral force in his sound and the way he attacks the piano and the drive and intention of his lines."

"So maybe introspection, mystery and interiority aren't the first things that come to mind when you think about McCoy's style. But for me, there's mystery in his harmonic approach, the way he voiced chords, the lines that he played."

In Nat Hentoff's liner notes to Tyner's *Inception*, which was recorded in 1962-'63, Coltrane assessed the pianist's extraordinary gifts: "First there is his melodic inventiveness and along with that the clarity of his ideas. He also gets a very personal sound from his instrument. In addition, McCoy has an exceptionally well-developed sense of form, both as a soloist and accompanist. Invariably, in our group, he will take a tune and build his own structure for it. He is always looking for the most personal way of expressing himself. And finally, McCoy has taste. He can take anything, no matter how weird, and make it sound beautiful."

A fitting epitaph for a jazz legend.

—Bill Milkowski



Five Essential Albums

While his groundbreaking work with the John Coltrane Quartet and his stellar sideman appearances on a string of Blue Note releases during the 1960s were enough to enshrine him in the jazz pantheon, pianist McCoy Tyner released more than 70 albums as a leader. Here are five for the ages.

1. *The Real McCoy* (Blue Note, 1967)

Widely acknowledged as his best album, Tyner joins tenor saxophonist Joe Henderson, bassist Ron Carter and drummer Elvin Jones on his original compositions "Passion Dance," "Four By Five," "Search For Peace" and "Blues On The Corner."

2. *Expansions* (Blue Note, 1968)

Tyner expertly straddles the inside-outside aesthetic on challenging material with an incredible band, including tenor saxophonist Wayne Shorter, altoist Gary Bartz and trumpeter Woody Shaw.

3. *Extensions* (Blue Note, 1973)

Tyner pushes the envelope on four modal originals with the brilliant crew of Shorter on tenor and soprano sax, Bartz on alto sax, Alice Coltrane on harp, and the rhythm tandem of bassist Ron Carter and drummer Elvin Jones.

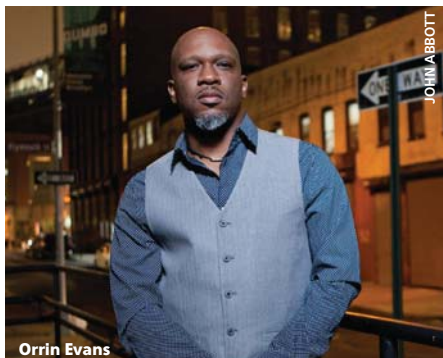
4. *Reaching Fourth* (Impulse, 1963)

On this trio date with bassist Henry Grimes and drummer Roy Haynes, Tyner's unique chord voicings and soloistic approach come to the fore on originals like "Blues Back" and the title track and on standards like "Good-bye" and "Old Devil Moon."

5. *Enlightenment* (Milestone, 1973)

This collection of galvanizing performances from the 1973 Montreux Jazz Festival—with reedist Azar Lawrence, bassist Juini Booth and drummer Alphonse Mouzo—includes a tremendous 24-minute version of "Walk Spirit, Talk Spirit."

—Bill Milkowski



Orrin Evans

Big Band's Back: Before he joined up with The Bad Plus, pianist Orrin Evans steered his Captain Black Big Band through a pair of Posi-Tone albums. Now, Evans is set to release *The Intangible Between* (Smoke Sessions), a follow-up to 2018's *Presence*, with his large ensemble. The disc, due out May 1, includes contributions from bassist Eric Revis, drummer Anwar Marshall and saxophonist Immanuel Wilkins, and features a rendition of "This Little Light Of Mine" amid a slate of original tunes.

smokesessionsrecords.com

Coronavirus Cancellations: At press time, as the World Health Organization officially declared coronavirus a pandemic, festivals and other events were being canceled or postponed. **The National Endowment for the Arts** has postponed its Jazz Masters events in April at SFJAZZ; rescheduling is being planned. The **Big Ears Festival**, which was set to run March 26–29 in Knoxville, Tennessee, has been canceled; rescheduling remains a possibility. The Jazz Foundation of America's "A Great Night in Harlem" gala concert, set for April 14 at the Apollo Theater, will be rescheduled. The University of Nevada has canceled the **Reno Jazz Festival**, which was set to run April 23–25. **Vossa Jazz** also has been canceled. And a bit outside the jazz world, both the **Coachella** and **Stagecoach** festivals—each held in Indio, California—have been rescheduled for October. The **SXSW Conference & Festivals** will not take place, after the city of Austin, Texas, canceled the events. For information about upcoming festivals, including websites, turn to page 81 for the DownBeat International Jazz Festival Guide.

Final Bar: Guitarist Charles "Little Charlie" Baty, who fronted Little Charlie and The Nightcats, died March 6 in Vacaville, California, at the age of 66. Though Baty retired from performing in 2008 and the band re-emerged as Rick Estrin and The Nightcats, the ensemble's early releases on Alligator Records are still prized for their combination of blues and rockabilly.

Becca Stevens Offers Up Pop Grooves

IN THE JULY 2016 ISSUE OF DOWNBEAT, Becca Stevens was spotlighted in the article titled "25 for the Future." In the ensuing years, she has proven to be an artist worthy of such attention. For her latest project, the ingenious classical and jazz-trained singer-songwriter took the production reins for a synth-pop opus she calls *Wonderbloom* (GroundUp), co-producing and engineering the album with Grammy winner Nic Hard, who has engineered projects for Snarky Puppy and Bokanté, among others.

With its pop veneer and danceable grooves, the 35-year-old North Carolina native's latest album might be her most accessible recording to date. Under the hood, however, it has a good deal more musical and sonic complexity and sophisticated lyric writing than is normally found in dance pop. The album's immersive soundscapes and densely layered arrangements feature intricate synth programming and innovative use of percussion (including, at one point, the squeal of a squeezable rubber pig played by percussionist Keita Ogawa).

Although Stevens' original plan was to make an album of songs she easily could perform live by herself, the project evolved into a grand collaboration with contributions from about 40 musicians, including longtime musical partner Jacob Collier; David Crosby, Michael League and Michelle Willis of Crosby's Lighthouse band, of which Stevens is a charter member; keyboardist Jason Lindner and guitarist Cory Wong.

League, the bass-playing founder of Snarky Puppy, who plays on three of *Wonderbloom's* 14 songs, spoke to DownBeat about his initial impressions of Stevens. "When I first started checking out her music," he said, "she was doing this fully acoustic music that was ... well, weird, but in the most positive sense [*laughs*]. It was like listening to an alien. I had never thought about acoustic music that way. You could hear the Appalachian roots, but also influences from Björk and Joni Mitchell—all filtered through a very Becca filter that let you know it was her. She definitely was not copying anyone."

Even though the new album might sound like pop, Stevens said she had no "target audience" in mind when she wrote the songs. "Maybe it would benefit me to work that way, in a business sense," she said by phone from her North Carolina studio. "But creative-



Becca Stevens features synthesizers and dance grooves on her new album, *Wonderbloom*.

ly, I feel that would get in the way of my process. It would take me away from serving the song and pull me more in the direction of serving myself."

She didn't set out to write a "danceable" record. "When I was first planning the album, I had envisioned it as intimate and stripped down, song-focused with sparse instrumentation. I ended up doing the total opposite of that."

Stevens wrote several of the songs while dealing with some heavy personal situations. "Instead of writing a bunch of sad songs, I thought, maybe I can challenge myself to come up with some accompaniment that I would want to dance to." The results were some fairly ecstatic—and often funky—productions, with titles like "I Wish," "Good Stuff" and "Slow Burn."

Stevens got her hands dirty with the engineering and production, and found it "empowering," giving big credit to her production partner Hard. "This is the first time I could say I was an engineer on the project. I love the engineering and the world of creating the music. It is a testament to Nick's generosity as a producer and engineer. He believed in me and shared the power with me. It meant a lot to me as a woman."

Stevens is loath to put her music in any category. Her next album will be a more classically oriented, acoustic collaboration with The Secret Trio, a group from Turkey composed of clarinet, oud and kanun (a 76-string zither).

"If you follow a genre rather than your muse," she explained, "and then you end up with something you're less excited about, and people don't like it ... then you have nothing. Whereas, if you follow your muse and it takes people 100 years to wrap their brains around it, at least you're living a happy life. You might not have any money ... but you'll be fulfilled creatively."

—Allen Morrison



Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra member Chris Crenshaw conducts during a performance of Duke Ellington's *Black, Brown And Beige*.

Blue Engine Chronicles Performances of JLCO

SINCE IT WAS FOUNDED IN 2015, BLUE Engine Records has been documenting the work of the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra—an effort gathering steam with a series of digital releases suffused with musical, social and even spiritual import.

Leading the way is the March 6 release of the Duke Ellington masterwork *Black, Brown And Beige*. Premiered by Ellington at a 1943 Carnegie Hall concert, the work, a sprawling survey of African-American history, is notable for its range of vernacular music, depth of thematic development and quality of the counterpoint in the orchestration, according to Wynton Marsalis, JALC managing and artistic director.

"*Black, Brown And Beige* is a singular piece in the history of jazz in its mastery of form," he wrote in an email.

The piece, Marsalis noted, was harshly criticized in its time, souring Ellington on performing it in its entirety after the Carnegie Hall concert: "It received an attack that was far greater than what a singular masterpiece of this kind deserved just because it so definitely challenged the racial prejudice of the day—a prejudice that still exists. The jazz musicians and black musicians were always OK as long as they stayed on the plantation. For Duke Ellington, it was too much ambition."

But the piece is revered today, and the recording will hold a special place in the Blue Engine catalog. Drawing on a 2018 performance organized and conducted by trombonist Chris Crenshaw—who synthesized the available score and previous recordings—it will be the JLCO's first album dedicated entirely to Ellington, whose music was the orchestra's focus in its early years.

"We want to remind people that *Black, Brown And Beige* still resonates and has as much value as when Duke presented it in Carnegie Hall," said Gabrielle Armand, Jazz at Lincoln

Center's vice president of brand, sales and marketing.

In its scope—and its focus on race and culture—*Black, Brown And Beige* established a template that Marsalis used in formidable works like the Grammy-winning *Black Codes From The Underground* and *Blood On The Fields*, the first jazz composition to win a Pulitzer Prize.

Building on that tradition is *The Ever Fonky Lowdown*, which is slated for a spring release. The piece, which had its premiere in 2018 and was recorded last year, features a smart, tart score and a scathing libretto delivered by actor Wendell Pierce, who, in character as the money-loving Mr. Game, is the vehicle through which economic exploitation is explored. In a 2019 speech, Marsalis likened the piece to a metaphorical "game of buying in and selling out."

"It was provocative and is provocative," Armand said, adding that she expected these works to have special relevance in an election year.

Extolling the "deep writing" of *The Ever Fonky Lowdown*, bassist Carlos Henriquez said he valued the platform such works provided for artists to adopt an activist stance.

"We as musicians feel we're part of this political movement," said Henriquez, who arranged and conducted the 2014 concert that became 2018's Grammy-nominated *Una Noche Con Rubén Blades*.

Armand said that the initial tranche of releases this year will bring the Blue Engine catalog to about 25—a number that is projected, over the next five years, to rise to 100. Ultimately, she said, the albums will be a varied lot. But they will all adhere to a set of guiding principles laid out by Marsalis. One principle, called "Legacy," reads: "Celebrate our history and traditions as we create the present moments of the future."

—Phillip Lutz



Jesse Davis - NY Model Alto



Mark Turner - Florida Model Hard Rubber



Seamus Blake - Tonamax Hard Rubber



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Drummer Ali's Survival Guide

Although the legendary jazz drummer Rashied Ali is best known for his work as one of John Coltrane's pathbreaking late-career collaborators, his next steps after Coltrane's abrupt passing in 1967 also are rich with creativity. A central node in the New York loft scene through his stewardship of Ali's Alley, the drummer also co-founded Survival Records with saxophonist Frank Lowe in the early 1970s.

Just over a decade since Ali's passing in 2009, Survival has been revived under the supervision of the drummer's family. Two new reissues—Ali and Lowe's *Duo Exchange: Complete Sessions* and the Rashied Ali Quintet's *First Time Out: Live At Slugs 1967*—are available as limited-edition double-LP vinyl sets, as well as digitally via Bandcamp. Both recordings are a beginning of sorts for the label, and each is full of remarkable musical activity: *Duo Exchange* was the imprint's first release, and *First Time Out* documents Ali's first performance as a bandleader.

After both musicians had earned a reputation as key sidemen for avant-garde jazz projects, Ali and Lowe started Survival Records to release their first album as co-leaders; it was recorded in fall 1972 and released the following year. The album uses the expressive drums-and-sax duo format that Ali had honed with Coltrane—but before it had received wide acclaim when *Interstellar Space* was released in 1974.

One benefit of the small-group format is that listeners have ample time to hear Ali's full range of drumset capabilities—during the solos, especially, he flourishes as an improvising storyteller. Lowe, too, takes full advantage of the solo spaces, unleashing everything from screams and howls to Sonny Rollins quotes. Although the album would be worthwhile if it only included the solo sections, these two are at their best playing together, conveying intimacy and creativity as they share energy and draw from one another's ideas.

This double-LP includes previously unreleased outtakes that help frame the full process that went into making the original album. The alternate takes of "Exchange Part 1, Movement II" are especially instructive in getting a sense of the shared understandings that underpin the pieces. And the warmup fragments that open the "D" side of the album—each performer making a powerful skronk that tests whether the engineer is ready and able to record—make it clear that these guys came to play.

After releasing *Duo Exchange*, Ali took primary responsibility for stewarding the



COURTESY SURVIVAL RECORDS

label, turning toward his own back catalog. *First Time Out* is the first item in this archive, documenting a May '67 date of Ali's at the renowned East Village club Slugs.

The bandleader's drum solos are absolutely gripping throughout; each time his number is called, he shifts effortlessly from an energetic accompanist into a sharp, dynamic tone poet. Ramon Morris, a tenor saxophonist best known for his later work on the Groove Merchant label, shows energy and endurance throughout. Pianist Stanley Cowell is low in the mix but always consistent; listeners who only know his playing through his work on the Strata-East label might be surprised by some of his far-out excursions. But Dewey Johnson's lyrical interpretation of "Ballade" is a powerful surprise, to which Ali and the trumpeter offer emotive underscoring as an attentive rhythm section. Reggie Johnson's bass solos also stand out for their virtuosity, presence and originality.

The purposeful and heartfelt quality that the ensemble conveys is a striking testament to the generative edge that can result from the right combination of open-eared musicians and loose, spacious compositions—which became Ali's calling card. And in keeping with the "energy music" aesthetic of the loft scene, the musicians really go for it during the open spaces that highlight featured soloists.

Unfortunately, the full performance wasn't documented—the tape cuts off abruptly amid a captivating bass solo on "Study For As-Salaam Alikum," just as Ali begins to take over. But there's more than enough tape here to get a sense of the powerful free-jazz movement that was beginning to flourish in Manhattan.

DB

Webber/Morris Band Leaders Put Composition First

CANADIAN TENOR SAXOPHONISTS ANNA Webber and Angela Morris push open the modern notion of large-ensemble music on the Webber/Morris Big Band's riveting and mercurial debut, *Both Are True* (Greenleaf Music).

Far from being yet another collection of swinging standards, the album consists of compelling explorations into the sonic possibilities of big bands. The opening tune, "Climbing On Mirrors," composed by Webber, is a dynamic burst with a tenor saxophone-flute dance, and the gripping title track, composed by Morris, is mysterious and dark with what sounds like electronic scraping in the background.

During a recent interview in Lincoln Center's David Rubenstein Atrium, Webber and Morris agreed that they were steering clear of writing traditional big band charts for their New York-based, 18-piece ensemble, which was formed in 2015. Meanwhile, the pair have pursued active solo careers on the improvised music scene.

"My lineage is pretty clear to me," said Webber, who studied composition with John Hollenbeck. "Even so, as composers we're both figuring out how to make the music sound more like ourselves than those in our lineage. It's putting our youthful energy into a historic art form."

"We know we're engaging in a form that

comes with a lot of baggage," said Morris, who studied composition with Darcy James Argue. "So, it was exciting to meet Anna to make our own music in this setting."

Earlier in their careers, neither Webber nor Morris had grand ambitions for expressing their voices in a large configuration. "There's no way I would have started a big band on my own," Webber said. "Having someone else there to support and motivate me was very important. Realizing we had this common interest, we knew we could work together along with a group of people we could call to join us."

Both were involved with the BMI Jazz Composers Workshop formed by Bob Brookmeyer in 1988 and got to know other big band composers and conductors, like Miho Hazama and Brian Krock. "We're all coming from a similar place, which I feel has helped a lot of creative big bands to develop in New York," said Webber, who broke into the big band scene in 2011–2012 while pursuing her second master's degree at Jazz Institute Berlin. "I had a big chip on my shoulder about writing for big band. As an undergrad, the big band was the football team of the music department, and I wasn't very interested in being involved in that culture. But when I was in Berlin, I had to write a chart for big band,



so I spent months listening to a lot of modern bands. That's when I decided I wasn't interested in writing traditional big band charts."

Webber's influences are in the 20th-century classical world of Karlheinz Stockhausen and John Cage, as well as in avant-leaning jazz artists like Cecil Taylor, giving her a wider scope of how to work with Morris.

"This is a great opportunity for us to be working with a band that's so good, with each player so good at disparate skills," Morris added. "That's the excitement, to bring together people to play music that's so challenging. They're reading the charts, but also making these weird extended improvisations over the changes, doing all these things that don't often happen in a big band."

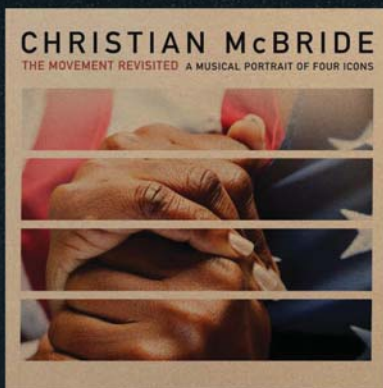
—Dan Ouellette



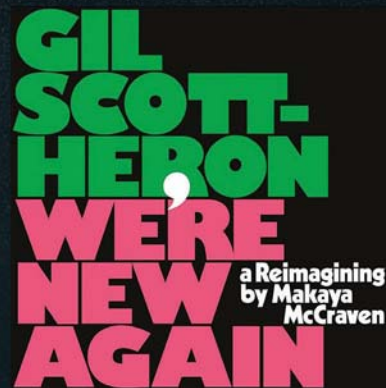
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Vocalist Nona Hendryx performs Feb. 29 during Nona Hendryx and Disciples of Sun Ra in the Temple, an event celebrating the bandleader and keyboardist, which was held in the Sackler Wing of New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art.

PAULA LOBO

Nona Hendryx Honors Sun Ra

VOCAL DOYEN NONA HENDRYX commanded the stage at New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art on Feb. 29, bedecked in a silver, winged spacesuit and dark helmet. "Welcome to this Afrofuturistic-cala-fragilistic evening," she told the crowd that assembled for "Nona Hendryx and Disciples of Sun Ra in the Temple." "We are here to honor Sun Ra."

Hendryx offered this introduction just after the first selection, an expansive medley of the visionary composer's music, including a ballad rendition of "The Sky Is A Sea Of Darkness When There Is No Sun." On the song, Hendryx's ardent free-vocals and the resounding rock groove left

no question about the event's message: Sun Ra's music is serious listening.

Regardless, there was no ignoring the multi-sensory pageantry of Hendryx's production: the swirling lights, Afrodiasporic costumes, expressive dancers and about a dozen improvising musicians on the bandstand. In the Sackler Wing of the museum, no less, right in front of the mythic, hieroglyph-covered Temple of Dendur, an ancient edifice that two millennia ago stood on the banks of the Nile.

If the Sackler Wing was the right space for the event, Hendryx was the ideal artist at its helm. Not only has she taken on multiple musical per-

sonalities during her five-decade career, but in her role as artistic director for Harlem Stage, she has the resources to craft a fitting tribute to Sun Ra's musical ingenuity.

"My work with [vocal trio] Labelle and others has involved not only elements taken from the creativity of the African diaspora, but from technology, science and fiction. My moving through those worlds is how [this project] started," she said. "Then [Harlem Stage Executive Director Patricia Cruz and Director of Programming Monique Martin] were talking about collaborating with larger institutions, and it seemed that there was a perfect storm. Many institutions were wanting to explore Afrofuturism."

For the uninitiated, "Afrofuturism is the synthesis of the African aesthetic and history, seen through the lens of science and technology," she continued. "It's about being able to express yourself from a historic view and have an ability to see an African-inspired influence in the future."

In 2019, Harlem Stage brought Hendryx on specifically to curate its yearlong initiative on the topic, "The Cosmic Synthesis of Sun Ra and Afrofuturism." This series of public events "pays tribute to the work of the jazz legend Sun Ra in imagining a black future, even when society said there wasn't one," Cruz wrote in an email.

Sun Ra, born Herman Poole Blount (1914–93), is credited as a leading pioneer of Afrofuturism, though the term itself didn't take hold until after his death. That said, his mid-20th century musical experiments at the intersection of space mythology and the African experience laid the groundwork for ongoing Afrofuturistic expressions across all manner of artistic and media platforms.

Hendryx seems to understand the power of these sorts of aesthetic statements. In recontextualizing Sun Ra's compositions, for instance, she enhanced the connection between the African diaspora and an imagined future: Her version of Sun Ra's tongue-in-cheek composition "Enlightenment"—a musical invitation to join his "space world"—was a boisterous reggae tune, with a chorus of vocalists and an overlay of reverberating spoken word.

One of Sun Ra's better-known tracks, "Space Is The Place," celebrates the freedom of an extra-terrestrial existence—especially for those of African American descent. In her take of the tune at the museum, Hendryx opted for more accessible harmonic conventions and fewer noisy accoutrements that characterized the original. A good call: In the final moments of the concert, the audience felt moved to clap in time and sing along.

Hendryx likely wasn't surprised by this spontaneous response to her finale. "We are frequencies; we vibrate. And when we are doing music together, we're vibrating together," she said. "It's one of the most beautiful things that we as humans can do."

—Suzanne Lorge



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Leroux Opens New Horizons to Music Literacy

IN A CINDERBLOCK SCHOOLHOUSE WITH A corrugated tin roof in Conakry, Guinea, reeds specialist Sylvain Leroux is opening new horizons of musical literacy for more than two dozen young students—and future generations.

Seven years ago, having made a simple but inspired modification to the age-old three-holed flute of the West African Fula (or Peul) people, Montreal-born, New York City-based Leroux instituted a free training program in a country mostly lacking formal arts education.

Thanks to his Kickstarter fund-raising efforts, production of two albums—*Les Enfants de Tyabala* (2014) and *Tyabala* (2019)—and multiple videos, Leroux's L'Ecole Fula Flute has become an alternative school with a staff of eight. Its mission is to teach boys and girls from ages 6 to 20 academic fundamentals, as well as how to approach the entire 12-note chromatic scale of Western music on an instrument previously capable of producing a more limited number of pitches.

"It's a hollow vine," Leroux said of the material from which he has hand-crafted both traditional models and the six-holed chromatic tambin he's developed and patented. "You have to go into the bush to harvest it. They grow like cones in marshes along the Niger River, with dangerous

barbs and snakes nesting in them."

Typically about two feet long, decorated with shells and very lightweight, the transversely blown tambin has an embouchure made of a beeswax substance. It presents conceptual and technical challenges.

"The Fula flute that works best is pitched to F," Leroux explained, "but balafons are always in C, so there would be an issue with B-flat. I'd use half-hole [fingering techniques] or fake it, but one day I looked at an A-flat flute and realized if I moved the holes and added some more I might have the whole thing. I tried it, and I was right. This was in 2011. I'd been playing Fula flute since 1995, when I first went to Guinea, so this blew my mind. And it became the genesis of the school."

Conakry musicians led Leroux to a government-funded community organization willing to try his idea. After being there for three weeks, then four months, he realized he couldn't stay year-round, so he enlisted other teachers. L'Ecole Fula Flute now offers training six days a week, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., in percussion, kora, acting, dancing, songwriting and arranging besides traditional and chromatic tambin, and academic topics. When engaged in fundamentals, pupils sit at desks. When learning music, they gather on a slightly raised stage in the round.



Sylvain Leroux helms L'Ecole Fula Flute.

Back home in New York, Leroux has played tambin in Karl Berger's Creative Music Orchestra and with Guinean ex-pat Bailo Bah, a Fula flute virtuoso. And he's recently organized a quartet with a percussionist who doubles on balafon, an electric bassist and an accordionist, for cross-cultural purposes.

"I want to play standards and some classical music on the Fula flute, so people can see if they can accept the sound of it with music that's familiar," said Leroux. "Some people in the intelligentsia love the Fula flute's sound and tradition, but when they hear Bach or Monk on it, they think it's been denatured. African people don't have that reaction—on the contrary."

—Howard Mandel



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With New Director, Growth and Change Apparent at PDX Festival

THE BIAMP PDX JAZZ FESTIVAL HAS undergone a number of changes during the past 15 years: the retirement of longtime artistic director Bill Royston, and the close call that almost ended the annual event when a key financial sponsor pulled its support. Yet something about the most recent evolution of the festival—the departure of artistic director Don Lucoff and the welcoming of his replacement, Nicholas Salas-Harris—felt significant.

In part, the festival lost the contacts and influence Lucoff built through DL Media, the publicity firm he founded in the late '80s. But his absence provided an opportunity, too.

The lineup for this year's festival felt more reflective of the changing sound of modern jazz, a testament to Salas-Harris' keen understanding that, as he put it, for a number of years, PDX Jazz "was just not getting the job done. The programming didn't reflect what was happening in the world we live in."

That perception was put to rest immediately during the opening night concert for



Jaimie Branch performs Feb. 19 at the Star Theater in Portland as part of the Biamp PDX Jazz Festival.

MARK SHELTON

the 2020 edition of the festival: a Feb. 19 double-bill at The Star Theater pairing trumpeter Jaimie Branch and keyboardist Mark de Clive-

Lowe, both younger players striving to deconstruct and rearrange music history.

De Clive-Lowe has taken that idea quite



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literally for his on-the-fly remixes of the Blue Note catalog. But in Portland, that came out through performances of material from his *Heritage* albums. Both releases use Japanese folk songs and traditional melodies as a foundation for de Clive-Lowe and his collaborators to tie in modern technology and production techniques. As assured as the performance was in Portland, the music worked much better in its studio guise, as the momentum of the set kept getting stalled by long explanations of each piece and a slow burn.

By contrast, Branch and her ensemble (including bassist Jason Ajemian and drummer Chad Taylor) worked through the material from her most recent album, *Fly Or Die II*, at a comfortable clip, letting compositions bleed together in an hour-long groove suite punctuated by her horn and politically charged vocalizing.

The rest of the festival swung between the old guard and the young lions—sometimes on the same bill.

When Archie Shepp ambled slowly to the Newmark Theatre stage on Feb. 22, offering a warm but shaky hour of blues and jazz standards, it was after a set by Portland's Blue Cranes, who imbue their post-bop sound with rock dynamics and a playful edge. And Kenny Barron's lyrical, elegant solo piano per-

formance sounded almost rigid compared to the wild attack of John Medeski, whose deconstruction of "Sometimes I Feel Like A Motherless Child" at the Alberta Rose Theatre on Feb. 26 was a festival highlight.

If there was any act in the event's lineup that served as a bridge between the legends and the next generation, it was the Branford Marsalis Quartet at the Newmark Theatre on Feb. 23.

Fresh off a run of shows in Seattle, the ensemble was airtight, splashing through extended jams that made great use of dramatic shifts in volume and intensity, and displayed a physicality that often was missing from many of the other scheduled acts. Pianist Joey Calderazzo, especially, looked like he was coming out of his skin during solos, cocking his shoulders to and fro and, at certain points, standing up to bear down on the keys.

The true testament of Salas-Harris' vision for the PDX festival could be seen simply in how young the audiences skewed for many of the performances.

Kassa Overall's Feb. 28 set in basement venue The Jack London Revue was packed with college-age folks held in sway by a freeform set that slid between Afrofuturist jazz and psychedelic hip-hop. The same demographic took over a ballroom at the Portland Art Museum

the following evening to worship at the altar of Thundercat, there to let his fleet-fingered bass work and genre-free sounds drum up excitement for his latest studio album, *It Is What It Is*.

Salas-Harris seemed to be testing the waters with Portland jazz fans in the same way that he did with Soul'd Out, the citywide festival that recently folded after a decade-long run. That event centered on r&b, soul and hip-hop, but worked its way out toward the fringes, booking the likes of singer Bonnie Raitt and post-rock act Tortoise.

Flickers of that mindset came alive through appearances by contemporary classical legend Terry Riley, who played a transcendental set of freeform keyboard and guitar duets Feb. 23 at the Jack London with his son Gyan, and Salami Rose Joe Louis, a young Los Angeles musician connected to Flying Lotus' Brainfeeder crew. While the latter could work her way into what might comfortably be called jazz, she preferred the lucid palette of dream-pop and psychedelia, augmented by a tight rhythm section and a reed player who added texture and weirdness with his EWI. No matter their vast age differences, those two artists alone represent the future of the festival, and the strongest indicator that the event is ready to grow in some unexpected and very welcome directions.

—Robert Ham



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In Memoriam: Jon Christensen

JON CHRISTENSEN, THE NORWEGIAN drummer who was the backbone for dozens of ECM releases and widely considered a crucial element of the Scandinavian jazz community, died in his sleep at home in Oslo on Feb. 18. He was 76. The news was announced via Facebook by his wife, actor and filmmaker Ellen Horn.

"The legend is gone and it feels really sad," Jaga Jazzist drummer Martin Horntveth said on the social media site. "The music lives forever!"

Christensen's approach to his chosen instrument was akin to a tai-chi master, the smallest amount of movement being used to maximum

effect. His gestures behind the kit seemed slight, but through them, Christensen was able to draw out powerful rhythms and expressive shuffles.

Born in Oslo on March 20, 1943, the drummer's ascendance in the Norwegian jazz community was swift. As a teen, he was playing in local groups, and by his 20s, he was gigging regularly and landing work backing up vocalist Karin Krog. But as with many young Nordic musicians of Christensen's generation, the allure of fusing jazz, r&b, psychedelia and experimental sounds proved irresistible.

Christensen's drumming helped fuel early



Jon Christensen (1943–2020)

albums by guitarist Rune Gustafsson and spurred a long relationship with ECM beginning with 1971's *Sart*, a splashy, acid rock-tinged album where the drummer got equal billing alongside Terje Rypdal, Jan Garbarek, Bobo Stenson and Arild Andersen.

"It was part of defining the sound of Scandinavian jazz," said Ingebrigt Håker Flaten, a Norwegian bassist who shared the stage with Christensen. "When I was studying jazz at the conservatory in the '90s, [*Sart*] and those records he made with Arild and Jan were the Bible. They informed everything that came out of there."

What helped introduce Christensen to a wider audience was joining forces with Keith Jarrett. Playing along with Garbarek and bassist Palle Danielsson, they became known as the European Quartet and were responsible for some of the pianist's most articulate '70s work, including the cool textures of 1974's *Belonging* and 1979's *Nude Ants (Live At The Village Vanguard)*.

Through it all, Christensen became something of the house drummer for ECM, supplying the engine for albums by Miroslav Vitous, Enrico Rava and Ketil Bjørnstad, and helping form the ensemble Masqualero, which recorded four albums beginning in the '80s.

That latter group was also emblematic of Christensen's interest in supporting new generations of jazz artists in Scandinavia. Along with Andersen, Masqualero featured then-20-something players Nils Petter Molvær and Tore Brunborg. And some of the drummer's last recorded work was backing up Danish guitarist Jakob Bro and lending his shuffling beats to an album by electronic music producers Prins Thomas and Bugge Wesseltøft.

Horntveth, in his Facebook memorial, spoke of Christensen making regular appearances at a Christmas-season hangout, where he offered up support and friendship to a new school of drummers from Sweden and Norway.

As Flaten remembers, Christensen was generous with his time, willing to jump on some live dates with the bassist and regaled the young musician with tales from a five-decade career in the music industry. "We didn't have many shows with him, but I felt like I really got to know him through those performances," Flaten said. "He was so easygoing. I don't think there was one time where he tried to take control and tell us what to play. He just wanted to make a good sound with people around him."

—Robert Ham

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Antonio Sánchez and Thana Alexa on Feb. 6
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A person wearing a vibrant red dress and black strappy sandals is lying on their back on a light-colored wooden floor. A single yellow flower with green leaves is placed near their feet. The background is a solid dark grey wall.

Antonio Sánchez & Thana Alexa 'OUR EARS TOGETHER'

By Stephanie Jones | Photos by Jimmy & Dena Katz

On a chilly January night in New York City, drummer-composer Antonio Sánchez plays a full-body phrase. He hangs back in the measures before repeating it—a provocation. Alongside saxophonist and EWI artist Chase Baird, vocalist Thana Alexa stretches vowels around quarter-tones in extended moments of dissonance on the Blue Note stage. She recites a wordless incantation she's never delivered—one she'll never repeat. These moments of intensity are typical for a show by the band Migration.



During the past decade, Sánchez and Alexa's distinct expressions have partnered. Now married, these artists of Mexican and Croatian lineages share a home studio in Queens, where they frequently collaborate on their music. "We go into our separate writing spaces to compose, and then we workshop our ideas together," Alexa says over a demitasse of espresso she's pulled in the couple's kitchen. Awards, magazine covers and clippings featuring Sánchez's longtime mentor Pat Metheny flank their studio's staircase, terminating at a framed movie poster for *Birdman* that lists the credit "drum score by Antonio Sánchez"—one that earned him a Grammy for Best Score Soundtrack for Visual Media.

"When I wrote *Meridian Suite* [released in 2015], I heard Thana's voice throughout the album," Sánchez says, leading a tour around his drum setup. Alexa contends her inner ear heard Sánchez's drumming the moment she began composing material for her sophomore release, *ONA*, which translates to "she" in Croatian. It's an album she views as a positive discourse on "what women have achieved in the face of oppression."

But the artists took time to reach a point of mutual influence. When Sánchez met Alexa at a Carnegie Hall performance in 2008, he had been

touring regularly with Metheny, as well as Chick Corea and the late Charlie Haden, and amassing a number of acclaimed album credits. At the time, the young singer had only rough sketches of what would become her debut release, *Ode To Heroes*. After a tentative MySpace exchange, the two began a monthslong friendship that evolved into a courtship and finally a life partnership—and artistic union.

After the death of Alexa's brother in 2010, their bond only strengthened. They began to turn more vulnerably to one another, a change that would affect their music. Alexa's sound began figuring more integrally into *Migration*, and she started touring with the ensemble. Sánchez supported her musically and morally as she worked through one challenge after another in realizing her ambitious vision for *ONA*. "It was an uphill battle from the beginning," Alexa says. She lost half of the roughly \$20,000 she'd raised for production and distribution when the now-defunct crowdfunding platform PledgeMusic liquidated assets in 2019. Nevertheless, she persisted. A grant from Café Royale Cultural Foundation finally allowed Alexa to complete the project and honor her pledges to fans.

Violinist Regina Carter recorded overdubs for *ONA* in the artists' home studio. "We were all

in the room together, which was very helpful as I could feed off of their energy," she says. "*ONA* is an incredibly beautiful and powerful body of work. [Thana's] compositions are rich and compelling, beautiful anthems."

Bassist Matt Brewer has observed both Sánchez and Alexa as a member of *Migration* and as part of the high-octane rhythm section on *ONA*. "They both have incredible focus and attention to detail; the level of perfectionism that goes into making an album in that way makes an enormous difference," Brewer says. "[Antonio's] playing can be extremely solid and forceful, but also incredibly dynamic and malleable. The addition of Thana to [*Migration*] has clearly elevated the music."

In their home studio in New York, the couple discussed the evolution of their individual sounds and what's next for their growing musical partnership.

Unison lines and octaves—and in many cases the subsequent departure from that sound—appear in the orchestrations for *ONA* and for *Migration*. What's so appealing about that sound, and about different instrumental combinations delivering that sound?

Alexa: Musically, I wanted to show that one woman is all women. Unison lines can be very powerful, especially when you have moments of unison that then depart and go into a harmony line. Everything is about the entrance of something new. So, when that harmony comes in, it should be a moment, and there should be a reason for that moment to happen. I wasn't consciously thinking about the unison happening in *ONA*, but it really showed itself to me after the fact.

Sánchez: I discovered over the years how effective it is to double. When I would record an album, later at home I would double a lot of stuff with my keyboard just to make it thicker. So, you have Thana and Chase playing saxophone, or Thana and John [Escreet] playing piano or the Rhodes, or any kind of combination—even the bass.

Alexa: Or just me using the doubling feature effect.

Sánchez: Right. Whenever we recorded one of my albums, and on [Alexa's] *Ode To Heroes*—and *ONA*, of course—doubling voice just a few layers, the sound starts getting thicker in a way that's unachievable with any other device. And live, you can make a big, big, big sound. We've played some really big outdoor spaces, and though we're not a rock band, we can have that power and in-your-face attitude.

Speaking of huge sound, your duo performance at this year's NAMM Show received a lot of attention. People have been checking out recordings of that via social media. Thana, can you talk down your effects rig for that set?

Alexa: It's my favorite setup: a combination of the Boss RC-505 and the TC Helicon VoiceLive Touch 2. With that combination—using effects from both pedals at the same time mixed with the things that I'm looping—I've discovered these sonic abilities that I never thought would be possible with the voice. The voice ends up sounding like a Moog [synthesizer]. And then I've been using the Telefunken M80, an incredible microphone for effects.

Antonio was supposed to play a solo NAMM set for Yamaha. And he said, "Thana is going to be with me, and she has all her effects, so would you mind if she sat in with me?" We have been threatening to do a duo project for a while, so we thought for NAMM we'd experiment with something completely improvised, like a Migration duo encore, but expanding on it using loops and effects.

Sánchez: But she started saying, "What are we gonna do?" I said, "Don't worry about it."

Alexa: I said, "Shouldn't we at least decide how we're gonna start and end?" He's like, nah.

Sánchez: Her ear is so in tune with that kind of stuff.

Alexa: Our ears together.

Sánchez: I had no doubt that whatever we were gonna do was going to be fine. I always describe a jazz musician as somebody that is comfortable being uncomfortable. Our instincts and our skills are there—and our ears. So, no matter what we do, it's going to end up being something interesting.

Thana, you have a "necessity is the mother of invention" story about what's become a hallmark of your sound.

Alexa: We recorded *Ode To Heroes* in 2012, and then I shopped it around. It had background vocals, overdubs, percussion, and the response I got from most labels was, "We really like your record. How are you going to recreate this live?"

For my birthday, Antonio got me this Boss VE-20 Vocal Processor. One pedal is effects, one is a looper. I just started messing around with my recorded tunes, figuring out how I could recreate them live. Once I figured out how to perform the tunes I had written, I started writing the next series of tunes knowing what the looper could do.

You both view digital manipulation as a device for zeroing in on something that's very naturally human, then expanding it into this atmosphere of resonant enormity, but always maintaining real human vulnerability.

Sánchez: To me, that's key. On *Lines In The Sand*, we're dealing with what's going on in the United States—politically, socially—with Mexico. In my writing, that human aspect was at the forefront. Once you have the heart and soul of the music, you think, "How can I make that effect bigger without changing it in a way that it no longer feels human?" Though I do a lot of

post-production, the focus is the human players.

On ONA and when you're improvising live, Thana, you often move microtonally. Does that tendency reflect your Croatian lineage and Serbian folkloric traditions?

Alexa: Musically, Croatia is more folkloric in the major pentatonic sense. It's not this Serbian, Bulgarian, minor-sounding, odd time-signature tradition. But when everything was Yugoslavia, it was Yugoslavia. So, I have family members from all over the place, including from Belgrade. Musically, I've been exposed to both sides. There's a very deep connection that I've always had with that Balkan minor, microtonal, odd time-signature aspect. Being born and raised around New York before moving to Croatia, I have American musical influences that inform the way I blend the two together. It's not a conscious decision. These are my two identities, and this is the way I hear it.

And speaking about rhythm, I was always so inspired by rhythm, but I didn't have the kind of exposure, as a vocalist, to rhythmic elements until Antonio and I met. He introduced me to rhythmic concepts that I studied from his drum books. It has informed so much of how I compose and think about music.

Sánchez: When we started dating, I was playing a lot with Pat, but I was a full-time sideman. Thana would come to gigs with Miguel Zenón, David Sánchez—these people who were playing crazy, rhythmically complex music. So, like osmosis, it started seeping into her subconscious.

Alexa: Just like we would workshop our own music, Antonio would sit with me and teach me rhythms. I have full GarageBand sequences where he would help me break down the tunes, and show me how to do different rhythms over the grooves that I'd learn for these tunes.

Sánchez: She always wanted to solo, but nobody at school really taught her.

Alexa: In school, I was pretty adventurous. I was one of the first vocalists in a lot of the instrumental ensembles. I remember going into one audition and they said, "You're in the wrong room." So, I was definitely taking chances even though I was super raw. Antonio was the one who told me: If you want to solo, you have to learn the vocabulary. And you have to put yourself in an instrumentalist frame of mind.

Sánchez: At that time, I was already trying to be very conceptual about my soloing, storytelling, motivic development. I was trying to apply all that conceptual, storytelling soloing I learned from Pat, who is an incredibly lyrical soloist—and Michal Brecker, Charlie Haden, Chick Corea—to my music. So, I started giving those ideas to Thana: Sing one phrase, leave space, repeat that phrase, add a little something. Because she has amazing ears, I knew it would only be a matter of having patience and just doing it. I remember



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Both Sánchez and Alexa have plans to expand upon past successes.

right around the time when we were talking a lot about it, she was getting very frustrated because it was hard for her to put it into practice.

Alexa: We're talking around 2009, 2010.

Sánchez: Right. Then she sat in with a friend of ours, the vibraphone player Christos Rafalides. I remember she started soloing and I thought, "My god!" It was like an amazing solo where she applied everything we had been talking about. I really teared up.

The lyrics on *ONA* run the gamut from figurative to didactic, even incorporating Staceyann Chin's spoken-word recitations. What was your greatest lyrical challenge for the album?

Alexa: On the title track, I struggled with the line: "I am woman/ I am free/ Every one of you/ Came from one of me." When it finally came to me, it gave me chills. On "Set Free," the song I wrote for my brother, "When your name became a stone" is the image that I had when I saw his name carved in our family [headstone] in Croatia. It was a striking visual for

me, and that was the only way I could explain it in words. So, there are ways in which the lyrics came to me naturally, and some I really labored over. Staceyann brought her own words. What she recites is an excerpt from a poem she wrote for the #BlackLivesMatter movement in her new book, *Crossfire*.

Would you discuss your intention for including female collaborators for the *ONA* sessions?

Alexa: I wanted artists that were all extremely different but were all women. The duo that Carmen [Staaf] and I did for my brother's tune, I lost it in the middle of her solo. I was feeling totally fine, and then she started playing. It felt like she was playing my grief. Regina Carter has been so supportive and inspiring. She came and recorded her parts in the studio here. Her solo on the record is the first take. When you can witness, in real time, someone doing exactly what they were put on this earth to do—amazing.

When Becca [Stevens] and I were at The New School, I remember thinking, "Man—she has a

voice, she's composing, she's doing really interesting things rhythmically." I idolized her for such a long time. The tune that I heard her on was this folksy tune I'd written for my best friend and her husband, which we recorded here in the studio. That was amazing—singing into the same mic and riffing together.

For the Croatian lyrics, I had a vision of this village of Croatian women screaming and singing in this Balkan way. I thought I was going to overdub all that myself. Then a friend of mine, Astrid Kuljanić, invited the ROSA Vocal Group to sing a tune with her during her album launch at Carnegie Hall. When I heard them singing this old Serbian folk tune, I knew they had to be on this record. In the hallway at Bunker studio, they were doing their Balkan warm-up, which includes this nasal sound using half-steps and quarter-tones. Sarah Charles said, "I'm going to record this for you." And I ended up using that sound as the very first thing you hear on the record. I invited them to the studio here and recorded them standing, holding hands around the microphone, doing that same warm-up but in the tonality of the tune. And that's what you hear.

What's on your 2020 agenda?

Alexa: I'm excited to have Dan Pugach arrange *ONA* for big band, so I can have this different sonic environment with the same message and the same story—and use it in a completely different context.

Sánchez: I have a new project for [Warner Records] based on my 2017 CAM Jazz release *Bad Hombre*. Because of Donald Trump, that term has become a battle cry for me, but also an alter ego that allows me to do some crazy shit. For that record, I learned how to use all this new gear, how to use ProTools to record myself, edit, mix, post-produce. It was a very experimental album for me, both musically and technologically. I decided I wanted to get other people heavily involved in the material.

How was your creative process different from that of the first *Bad Hombre* release?

Sánchez: I thought I could do a continuation of what I'd done before, this time having complete creative control, and also placing social justice at the forefront. I started asking other artists whom I admire thoroughly to provide me with raw material. So far, the ones who are confirmed are Meshell Ndegeocello; an incredible singer from Mexico, Silvana Estrada; Trent Reznor from Nine Inch Nails; Lila Downs; and Rodrigo y Gabriela.

I wasn't sure if Meshell sent me a tune or a sketch. It was voice, a lot of space with a click, then a bass line. I looked it up online to see if she had already put it out, and couldn't find it. So, I started piecing it together my way, and I showed it to somebody else and they said, "This is so cool, but it's so different from the original." And then

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I looked it up again, and I found it. For some reason the first time around I didn't find it.

Alexa: And it was so good he didn't hear the original because he did his own thing.

Sánchez: I feel like the artist's mission is research: What can you do that hasn't been done and is going to put you on the spot in an uncomfortable way? Through research, you're always trying to find other variations within your voice that will still make you sound like yourself. This is a chance for me to see what I can do with somebody else's material but completely transform it in the *Bad Hombre* fashion, which

means me doing absolutely every ounce of it. I tell them, "Please just know that you're probably not going to recognize your tune" [laughs]. It's a lot of fun.

You both allow syncopation to inform all aspects of your compositions, both written and spontaneous. As artists who engage in activism, in what ways do you feel syncopation reflects the human condition?

Sánchez: Just like with the universe, we all have a rhythm—a very specific rhythm. A pulse. A heartbeat. But within that same anal-

ogy, we all are messy. As a race and as a society, we're incredibly messy—we fall out of the groove. So, we are out of sync and syncopated most of the time.

Alexa: In life, we're all in counterpoint. We sometimes come in to these unison lines and then we go back into counterpoint. We're just trying to find some kind of middle ground. And with syncopation, sometimes it sounds like something's off, but really you're on.

In a past interview, Antonio, you described leading your own band as your "biggest challenge yet." What has been most surprising to each of you throughout your development as leaders?

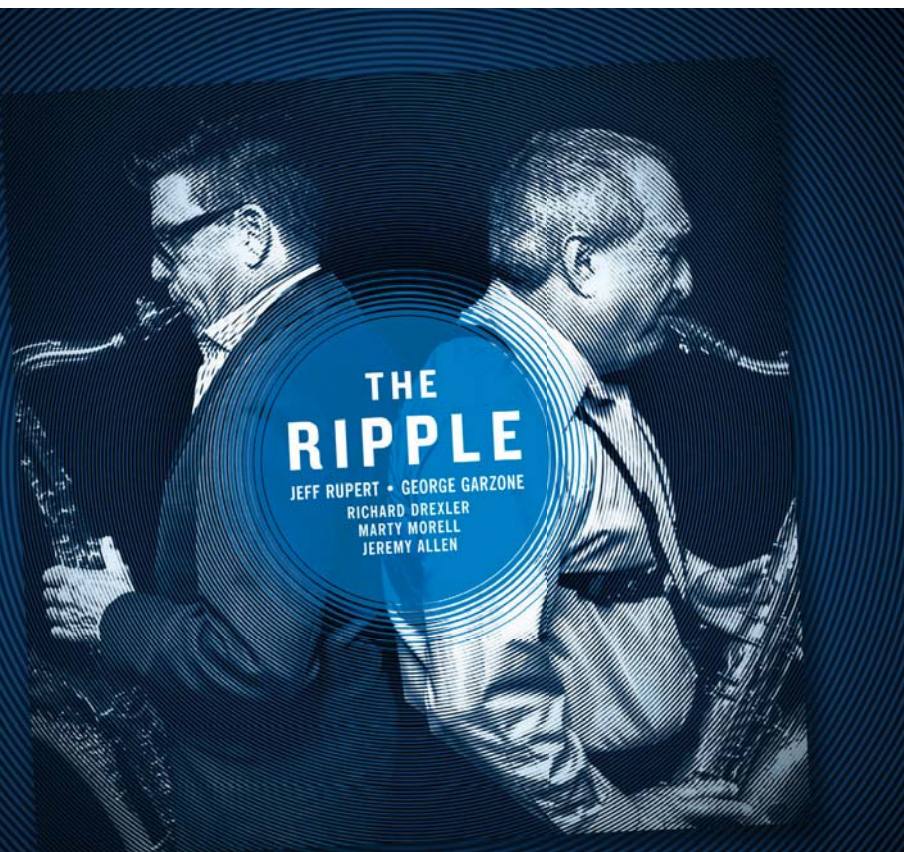
Sánchez: My writing. Migration has become my flagship band, where I can really develop compositionally. I didn't know I had all that music in me until I put it out there. And being influenced by all these amazing musicians really makes me curious about what else there is for me.

In terms of challenges, the money is just miserable when you start leading a band. I would get less money for the whole band than I would get for just me on a gig with Pat. And then you have to subtract all the expenses—it's insane. I never thought it would be that bad in the beginning. Little by little it would get better. But it's freaking hard to get the money you deserve. We have had gigs with Migration where the place looks full to me and then I get an email from the promoter saying it's not what they'd expected, so they would like us to give some of the money back—from the fee. And that's not an isolated incident. It's incredibly hard. It's how society works, people having a million different possibilities. No matter where you are, it's still a struggle.

Alexa: My having a sound that's very different from the expectation people have for singers, no one knew where to place me. They want someone who's in a nice package with a bow that they're going to be able to sell and say: "This" is "this." When you don't really know how to explain what you're hearing, even if you like it, that's difficult for most people in the industry. I really feel like this record is going to reintroduce what my identity is.

I'm self-managed and self-produced. It's been amazing for me to see how much control I can have over not just the music but my career trajectory. And if nobody wants to work for me at this time, that's OK. I'm going to work for myself and I'll probably work way harder than anybody else would [laughs]. One of the hardest things is that you spend so much time doing so many things that have nothing to do with actually creating. Then at the end of the day, you're so tired and you haven't actually written any music. So, I'm still trying to find the balance.

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Aaron Diehl **MELDING** TWO WORLDS

By Dan Ouellette | Photo by Mark Sheldon

In late January, Aaron Diehl elegantly delivered an intimate solo-piano show in front of a packed house at Mezzrow in New York's Greenwich Village.

Joking that the space was almost like his living room, Diehl eased into the set with a Clare Fischer swing tune, segued into calm balladry with deep crevices of lyrical reflection on Gordon Jenkins' "Goodbye" and then pounced on the keys in a joyful frolic through Hank Jones' "Odd Number." Diehl used the stylistically diverse tunes to create a gentlemanly confluence of flowing expression. He then revealed an audience-participation game of requesting segments of songs from a list of 17 pianists. Diehl showed his jazz prowess, emulating such greats as Jelly Roll Morton, Art Tatum and Teddy Wilson, but then stopped short on an audience member's request for Herbie Nichols. "Whoa, we'll have to save that for another day," he said with a laugh.

After offering a tasty original, "Little Branch," based on the local Seventh Avenue South speakeasy, and a moving rendition of Thelonious Monk's "Ruby, My Dear," Diehl slid easily into the classical music zone and quipped, "It all goes back to Bach." He finished the set with a special recognition to the renowned modern classical composer Philip Glass, putting his jazz touch on the master's "Étude No. 16." Glass, who has been mentoring and touring with Diehl since 2014, was in the house, no doubt admiring how this rising jazz star was able to advance his distinctive voice in another musical world.



The Vagabond merges Diehl's jazz background with his increasing interest in the classical world, in part stemming from his work with composer Philip Glass.

Ten days later at the boisterous social house Norwood Club, Diehl sat down with DownBeat to talk about his new album, *The Vagabond*, his third for Mack Avenue. Like his show at Mezzrow, the 11-track recording illustrates how Diehl gracefully melds two worlds, merging the improvisational spirit of jazz with the compositional intricacies of Western classical music. Leading a trio with bassist Paul Sikivie and drummer Gregory Hutchinson, he offers seven originals, such as the beautiful melody “Park Slope” and the playful “Kaleidoscope Road,” plus works by jazz masters Sir Roland Hanna (“A Story Often Told, Seldom Heard”) and John Lewis (“Milano”). The program also includes two classical pieces: a romping contrafact on Russian composer Sergei Prokofiev’s “March From Ten Pieces For Piano, Op. 12” and one of Glass’ more challenging piano works, the étude Diehl played at Mezzrow.

Instead of clumsily mashing together multiple genres, Diehl has developed an organic, sophisticated approach. “I try not to think of my music in terms of style, especially these days,” he said. “In my first lesson with Fred Hersch a few years ago, he directed me to lose the idea of stylization. Play less stylized, he told me, and play more with a focus on who is Aaron Diehl. Through the influence of many different pianists, I’m starting to think less about compartmentalizing and more about using the knowledge I’ve acquired up to this point—to be expressive of that and be able to have a conversation with my band members not about style but about what we’re all doing together.”

Building on his previous releases—*The Bespoke Man’s Narrative* (2013) and *Space Time Continuum* (2015)—the new album broadens Diehl’s exploration of piano in the jazz-classical nexus. It’s an aesthetic journey that seems to be leading to an “indeterminate destination.”

He said, “It’s not as much expressing where I am now, but it’s more about seeing me in motion. I’m trying to define things on my own terms. Ever since I got the opportunity to play Gershwin with the New York Philharmonic, it resurrected some deep-seated interest not just in classical music but in its practice and performance.”

Diehl, 34, has earned a reputation as one of the most important jazz players of his generation. He seems to be more focused on his artistry, though, than any squabbles within the industry. “I see the jazz scene today as very disjointed,” he said. “It’s very rich but also very polarized. There are cliques and egos defining what is and what is not jazz. I guess that’s always been the case. It’s a human need to define and clarify what you’re experiencing, but I see that there’s so much more to playing with nuance. Still, I find jazz musicians to be endlessly fascinating to be around, to share ideas and have conversations.”

A 2007 graduate of The Juilliard School, he worked closely with elite Russian piano virtuoso Oxana Yablonskaya. But Diehl sought a jazz career. He said, “I never thought that I would entertain classical music seriously because at a certain period I became more interested in jazz piano. So, classical became a dormant side of my playing because I knew I had to learn the jazz tradition. Now, I’m trying to redefine myself, not for anyone else, but for myself.”

In 2002, Diehl won the outstanding soloist prize at Jazz at Lincoln Center’s Essentially Ellington Competition and was enlisted by Wynton Marsalis to tour Europe with his sextet. He later studied with Kenny Barron and Eric Reed to hone his jazz craft. He settled into Smalls Jazz Club’s late-night sessions presided over by the late drummer Lawrence “Lo” Leathers.

In 2013, Mack Avenue released *The Bespoke Man’s Narrative*, and the following year the Monterey Jazz Festival made Diehl its commis-

sioned artist, which resulted in the original work “Three Streams Of Expression,” a project he dedicated to John Lewis. From 2014 through 2017, Diehl served as the musical director for vocalist Cécile McLorin Salvant’s trio with Sikivie and Leathers. “I was de facto musical director,” Diehl said, “because she is such a singular artist who is so strong on stage.”

Diehl’s musical life took an unexpected twist in 2014 when he was approached by Jennie Wasserman, who had been part of the programming team at Jazz at Lincoln Center and who also had worked with New Jersey-based Pomegranate Arts, which represented Glass. Wasserman told Diehl that they were looking for a jazz pianist to be a part of his études project. There were nine performers from various classical music backgrounds. “Jennie told me that Philip was looking for someone who was from the genre of jazz,” Diehl recalled. “He wanted to see his music through the prism of jazz. I accepted without knowing fully what that would entail. It was a big challenge at first and very revealing as an outsider. I was *the* jazz musician, which was a little discomforting being in a staunchly Philip Glass world, like a fish out of water.”

Others performing Glass’ études included such new classical stars as Maki Namekawa, Anton Batagov, Nico Muhly, Jenny Lin and Sally Whitwell. The cast of 10 (Glass included) performed *The Complete Piano Études* for two nights at Brooklyn Academy of Music’s Howard Gilman Opera House in early December 2014. Diehl played “Étude No. 3” and “Étude No. 4” the first night and “Étude No. 13” and “Étude No. 14” the second. Glass was so impressed that he asked Diehl to go on the road with him.

“I could feel it,” Diehl said. “He was encouraging me to play his music. What I had to do was figure out how to play his works with improvisation through my own knowledge and influences. I had the opportunity to do four or five concerts in a row with him in Europe, and he would give me some good feedback. He was very receptive to my ideas. He didn’t control me at all. It was all so open-ended. He was so confident in his music that he could take me in from the outside. That was a risk, and it spoke to me of his character.”

On the road, the pair talked about music from Africa, Mexico and India, and Glass told him stories about growing up in Baltimore and hearing club shows by jazz greats such as Horace Silver and Ornette Coleman. Of all of Glass’ études, Diehl gravitated to “Étude No. 16.” “There are a lot of lines repeated in that tune,” he said. “I had to figure out how to use the progression of the tune as a vehicle for improvisation. It took me a few tries. My first attempt was in Denmark, but I felt tentative. I tried a few more times, but it finally caught when we played a Philip Glass evening at SFJAZZ. From

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Diehl has made his itinerant existence manifest on *The Vagabond*.

then on, I was more comfortable with it. It paid off doing several concerts with Philip in Europe. Philip had given me the opportunity to experiment with it and fail. I think that's what's lacking with musicians today who don't have that opportunity. They do one show and don't have the opportunity to play multiple times to get the music right."

Another "correct circumstance" that allowed Diehl to spread his wings came a few years ago, when he was approached by the New York Philharmonic. He was asked to help launch the orchestra's 2016–17 season by performing Gershwin's "Concerto in F." As part of the 175th anniversary gala in December 2016 at David Geffen Hall, Diehl performed with the 80-piece ensemble, conducted by Alan Gilbert. Looking back, Diehl said he thinks there probably were other musicians who auditioned for the role, but that the organization was looking for a jazz musician. In April 2016, he had gone into Gilbert's dressing room and run through the whole score with him, prompting the maestro to simply say, "OK, you got the gig."

But again, Diehl was in foreign musical territory. He was nervous. He flew to Spain to meet with Yablonskaya, his former teacher, to help him prep. "I had the concerto memorized by then, so I just went to her for certain technical issues and certain ways of approaching the sound," he said. "Still, I felt a lot of pressure and it was all surreal. At times I felt I was going to collapse. Cécile was a real support. She came back-

stage during the dress rehearsal. It would have been difficult psychologically trying to do this on my own. There was a lot riding on this, not just for me, but for jazz musicians and especially for African American music. That Gershwin piece is rooted in the American vernacular of syncopation and swing, and he was experimenting with elemental folk music being inserted into the European concert format. My goal was to explore how my jazz would work in that classical composition."

Still, Diehl admits he had to face his presence as an African American artist in that world. "There's a lot of underlying racism there," he said. "I had a lot to prove. I knew I could never play the piece to the level of someone like André Previn, but then I tried to put it into perspective. How many people in that orchestra could sit in at the Village Vanguard and sound halfway decent?"

Diehl received stellar reviews for his performance, which opened up doors for improvising in other orchestral works, including last year's L.A. Philharmonic mini Harlem celebration at David Geffen Hall that included more Gershwin music: "Rhapsody In Blue" and "Second Rhapsody." This has inspired Diehl to think even bigger. "I'd like to do a collaboration with a classical composer," he said while declining to specify who. "I would want him to write a piano concerto for me as a jazz musician. But it's very difficult to marry the two genres and make it sound organic. This is one aspect of

my playing right now. I don't have it all together yet. It's not what I want it to be. But sometimes you don't have all the answers, and you definitely don't have to pretend you don't know all the answers. Any great artist will say there's a lot more to know. That's all I can say. We'll see where it goes."

At the moment, Diehl has made his itinerant existence manifest on *The Vagabond*. His bandmates are impressed. "Aaron's so creative without being formulaic," said 37-year-old Sikivie, a fellow Juilliard alumnus. "He's always been so voraciously musical with classical being so deeply ingrained in him. You can hear it in his touch. That's what's integral to the changes I've heard in his playing through all these years. Playing swing with Wynton left a big mark on Aaron, broadening his territory in the dichotomy between traditional jazz and art-jazz." He said that Diehl acted with "mental fortitude" in their "game of endurance" through Prokofiev's "March From Ten Pieces For Piano, Op. 12" and loved Diehl's "low-key and haunting" take on Hanna's melody, "A Story Often Told, Seldom Heard." He added, "Since I've known him, I've seen him continually maturing as a performer and composer."

A resident of Rome, Italy, for the past six years, 49-year-old Hutchinson said, "Aaron is smart. He's learned a lot from the generation before him—Bill Charlap, Benny Green, Brad Mehldau—but he's come up with his own voice that has an urgency in every note he plays. That's rare to come up with at such a young age. You could tell how deep he was into playing Sir Roland Hanna's piece. He has so much more to say in all the various ways he plays the piano."

Diehl said he's still learning, though: "I feel like I have a high calling. I'm not slumbering it. As I'm getting older, I'm listening more to music that's on the outskirts of what I would normally listen to. ... It's never going to hurt you to listen to anything. You may not like it, but it won't hurt you. I see Philip Glass as an example—to listen to him and see what you can take from him in all your encounters."

He then reflected on the loss of his friend and longtime partner Leathers, who was murdered last year. "It was a big blow," Diehl said. "He gave me a chance at his Smalls jam sessions. What I learned from Lawrence was how to cut through all the superficial barriers. He was a person who made everyone—from downtown to uptown—feel like an original. He helped me with how to listen to and support people. That's how posthumously he played a big part of *The Vagabond*."

Diehl recognizes he has a full future. "I'm confident in my journey," he said. "I have no idea where I'm going. That's the big question mark. But I know at some point I'll die. So, with that kind of assurance, there's really nothing to worry about."

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Marcus Printup

'I WANT MY SOUND TO SING'

By Phillip Lutz | Photo by Adam McCullough

Marcus Printup swung around New York's Columbus Circle behind the wheel of his black Cadillac SUV, stopping briefly under the Jazz at Lincoln Center sign to scoop up a writer and head home to New Jersey.

Printup, who has spent half of his 53 years in the trumpet section of the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra, would fly out with the band the next day for a European tour that would consume February. He had plenty to do before then—not least, secure the home front for his wife, harpist Riza Printup.

Despite the rush, he had agreed to talk to DownBeat at some length. And if he was antsy about it, he didn't let on. By his own account, Printup often keeps his feelings buttoned up—speaking, when possible, through his trumpet, especially when it comes to, well, tooting his own horn. It's a quality with some virtues.

"I express my emotions better musically than socially most of the time," he said as he munched on a cracker at his home.

But that reticence can, at times, leave him in a kind of professional half-light—more vulnerable to the Wynton Marsalis effect than he might otherwise be. Marsalis, a cultural monument and one of America's most famous jazz musicians, often presides over the JLCO from a seat in the trumpet section—casting a shadow that can eclipse the enormous talents of the bandmates he earnestly promotes.

Marsalis shone a spotlight on Printup at the JLCO's concert at the Elbphilharmonie in Hamburg, Germany. About 90 minutes into the performance—and a short five days after the conversation in Printup's home—Marsalis laid a laurel on his fellow trumpeter before the band launched into Marcus' "Salvation, Serenity, Reflection."

"You can't get any deeper than he is," Marsalis told the packed crowd in the concert hall and the global audience livestreaming the event.

Since he was a teenager in Conyers, Georgia, Printup has been digging into the roots of jazz—and coming up with the goods. At the Elbphilharmonie, his opening salvo on "Salvation"—a deceptively simple, decidedly soulful solo turn that led seamlessly into the heart of the gospel-inspired waltz—prompted an ovation.

"He's got something in his sound," said JLCO baritone





Marcus Printup on tour with the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra

saxophonist Paul Nedzela. “As soon as he’s done playing, the audience is already in love with the tune.”

Printup chalked up that “something” to his years in Conyers, where his family members were dutiful choristers of the Peek’s Chapel Baptist Church. Though he was the reluctant choir recruit, he listened closely to the preacher’s tremulous cadences and pitches. “There’s a certain sound I heard from those deacons. When I play, that’s where it comes from.”

His writing, too, can have the pulse of the pulpit, as the buoyant swing and sway of “Salvation” suggests. Part of a suite called *Of Thee I Sing*, the piece is just one of the 40-plus JLCO charts Printup has produced.

But the pulpit is not Printup’s sole influence. His chart for Wayne Shorter’s “Armageddon,” for example, utilizes the language of a very contemporary jazz, evoking what he called “the end of the world” with a 15-instrument cacophony of “musical chaos.”

Less scriptural, but no less spiritual, is his take on tunes with a more secular sensibility. On Ahmad Jamal’s “Manhattan Reflections,” a divine shout chorus “that’s all me” sets off range-appropriate instruments assigned to Jamal’s right and left hands. On Paul Simon’s “50 Ways To Leave Your Lover,” another such chorus blissfully enlivens a chart largely “geared for his voice and the band.”

In the past, the composers of these tunes were on hand during rehearsals, though it was Shorter who, with his unhurried way of getting precise-

ly to the point, made a particular impression. The impact of the 2015 visit on Printup was profound: “He helped me find my voice more so than any other musician has. His mere presence elevated us in so many ways.”

But it’s safe to say that Printup has felt most elevated by his collaboration with Riza. The two found each other in 2006, meeting through a mutual friend. Riza accepted an invitation to dinner, they hit it off and, by 2010, they were married. The union has proved both fruitful and comfortable.

“It’s so easy just to play with her,” he said. “I think the harp fits my brand of trumpet. Her lyricism—even if it’s just one note—it sings. I want my sound to sing.”

Given the particulars of harp technique, Riza, already an accomplished instrumentalist, nonetheless had to adjust her game to meet the chromatic demands of Marcus’ brand of jazz. She did so, appearing on his SteepleChase albums *Bird Of Paradise* (2007), *Ballads All Night* (2010), *A Time For Love* (2011) and *Desire* (2013), to which she contributed a powerful pair of tunes, “Along The Way” and “Rebirth.” All of which constituted preparation for the couple’s latest album, a duo effort titled *Gentle Rain* (SteepleChase).

“Of all the records I’ve done, this one stands out,” Marcus said as he sat back and Riza elaborated at their dining room table.

The choice of tunes, she said, came in part “from wanting to describe parts of our relationship.” And the track list includes rough analogs to that relationship’s progression. The title tune—a

Luiz Bonfá piece on which the Printups’ sonorous blend is heard to brilliant effect—grew out of Riza’s advocacy of bossa nova early in their courtship. Initially resistant to the idiom’s easy-going swing, Marcus quickly yielded to his wife’s embrace of it.

“I was the one who said, ‘Have you checked out these artists?’” Riza recalled. “With the Brazilian undertones, this represents the beginning of our relationship, the tenderness.”

The evolution of the relationship is captured in the unfolding of a moment, courtesy of the harmonically rich “When He Embraced Me With His Eyes,” a Riza original. By tactically deploying suspended chords and modulations, the tune, inspired by an actual moment shortly after they married, documents the stages of a bonding that can take place while peering into the windows of a loved one’s soul.

“It’s a really deep thing to connect with your partner’s eyes,” she said.

But the album’s deepest moments—ones that brought a tear to Riza’s eye as she gazed at Marcus—might be on the tender “Madison.” The title refers to the name of the child they might have had, had she not miscarried. Opening with Marcus playing solo, the piece closes with Riza doing the same—an acknowledgment, he said, that such an experience is ultimately “a woman’s journey.” Riza explained: “We were in the process of grieving, letting go.”

The Printups have channeled their grief into a joint educational project, *I Have a Song Inside My Heart*. Using companion literature and visual aids along with sound, the program is about “finding your song through the music of jazz,” said Riza, who worked in childhood education for two years in Georgia and seven at Jazz at Lincoln Center. The project is used in schools in the United States and Japan.

Though prerecorded material is available for use in schools, Marcus led a live band through the program’s paces on a February night on a third-floor stage at the Apollo Theater in Harlem. At the event, booked by the Apollo with the participation of radio station WBGO, the band—Marcus, Regina Carter on violin, Mika Nishimura on keyboards, Kevin Smith on bass and Henry Conerway III on drums—was fully engaged in the process of integrating the educational and musical aspects of the performance.

As Marcus took his place, Riza was an out-front presence—moving on and off the stage as she interacted with a room full of children eager to respond to her entreaties. At one point, she encouraged them to describe the emotions suggested by the instrumentalists, who, even as they swung hard, purposefully evoked a variety of anthropomorphic sounds. At another, she urged the children to scat in call-and-response mode. Beyond helping the kids develop their power of expression, the exercise might have unearthed a budding talent or two.

Call-and-response scat also was employed by Marcus on a tune of his, "Soul Vamp," at a very different kind of event: a noonday concert, four days after the Apollo program, in the atrium of an office building near Newark Penn Station in New Jersey. Produced by WBGO, the concert, part of a monthly series, found Printup leading a quartet of top students and graduates from The Juilliard School, the Manhattan School of Music and Indiana University before a mixed crowd of aficionados and casual fans. Selling CDs on the side was Riza.

The young musicians—Miles Lennox (key-board), Hannah Marks (bass) and T.J. Reddick (drums)—demonstrated great maturity as they dispatched a set of guileless Printup originals filled with simple but artful melodies

three musicians at the Newark gig, said she had valued Printup's words ever since he discovered her last year at the Betty Carter Jazz Ahead educational residency, with which he has been involved since meeting the late singer with Marsalis at a 1993 jam session.

"That was my banner year," he said.

That year, during a performance at the inaugural Jazz Ahead program in the Brooklyn Academy of Music, Printup, backing Carter on "The Nearness Of You," discovered the value of restraint. Near the tune's end, he added a coda to her final flourish, topping her high note with an even higher one. She was not amused.

"I learned my lesson," he said. "Even though I thought that would be musical, and I had the utmost respect for her, I think to her it seemed like

money, help him get dressed and everything. Marcus would give me lessons every night after the gig."

Printup, Roberts said, developed "a really intriguing balance of a sound. It sounded like it could have come from 500 years ago combined with a unique modern approach to playing jazz music. He was one of the anchors of the band I put together." That ensemble also boasted fast-rising reedists Victor Goines and Walter Blanding, as well as trombonist Ron Westray—all of whom, like Printup, ended up joining the JLCO.

"I love him," Roberts said. "He's like a little brother to me."

Printup actually is a little brother to Angela Forte, who is four years his senior and, as a reed player in school and a member of the church choir, became an early model for him.

"Watching her play, and sing in church, she was one of my first influences musically," Printup recalled.

Thinking back, Forte said, a real turning point in his life came in middle school, where Bishop Hudson—whom she praised for his compassion and dedication to hard practice—led the jazz band. "That's when Marcus took things to a whole other level," she said. "He is who he is because of the jazz band."

Printup said his understanding of Hudson's role in his life came late. "It wasn't until I got older that I realized how much he meant to me," he said. But he has shown his appreciation. When Hudson died in 2007, Printup returned to town for his funeral, where he joined saxophonist Sam Skelton, another Conyers native, in what observers remember as a poignant "Amazing Grace."

"It really did sound good," recalled James "Dub" Hudson, 89, a saxophonist and David's surviving brother.

Between his obligations with the JLCO, Printup said he would like to become more of a presence in Conyers. "Do some teaching, maybe do some kind of festival—invite all the kids just to see what jazz is."

Such thoughts are typical of Printup, Forte said: "What you see is who he is. Even in the midst of the glitz and glamour of being a jazz musician, he never changed. He never became arrogant."

Printup, in fact, has brought some of that glitz and glamour to Conyers, albeit for a sad occasion. In February 2013, members of the JLCO, including Marsalis, attended the funeral of Marcus and Angela's father, Deacon Willie "Bobby" Printup. They played "When The Saints Go Marching In."

"Marcus took a solo," Forte recalled. "When it was over, the guys stood in the middle of the aisle and walked in front of the people carrying Dad's casket. When we got to the graveside, they continued to play." Through it all, Printup tried to maintain his reserve. "Marcus had his sunglasses on; he didn't want us to see his tears," she said. "But he played the heck out of the trumpet." **DB**

'Marcus Roberts taught me how to put my upbringing into my music.'

and subtle but swinging propulsion. Some had themes harking back to the trumpeter's own youth. Among them: "Hopscotch," from 2014's *Lost* (SteepleChase), an upbeat recollection of active afternoons in the Printups' backyard, and "The Bishop," from 2015's *Young Bloods* (SteepleChase), a reverential remembrance of a mentor, the late Bishop David Hudson.

Printup said he used young musicians in part because "they have something different, something that inspires me to play." And play he did. In the JLCO, which occupies him for nearly 10 months a year, a musician rarely is assigned more than one or two solos a night. But in the context of a quartet, he had the luxury of extending improvisations and stretching forms.

Gigs like the one in Newark allow him to give young musicians a taste of the trial-by-fire apprenticeship experience that he mostly missed out on, save for working with the players from Duke Ellington's band who still populated the Lincoln Center orchestra when he arrived.

"Coming up in the 1990s," he said, "I never got to play with many older musicians, except for in the orchestra."

Meeting young musicians, Printup's reticence fades and he liberally dispenses advice. In a nutshell: "I try to get the kids to go inside themselves, not just play the notes." Those words are as relevant to high school kids (in JALC's Essentially Ellington band competition, with which he has a long association) as to college students (at Montclair State University, where he recently joined the faculty).

Bassist Marks, who at 22 was the oldest of the

I was trying to outdo her. I learned that when you play with a vocalist, you are the accompaniment."

Also in '93, he marked his Lincoln Center debut with a man he described in a recent email as "the most influential person/friend to light that spark in me"—pianist Marcus Roberts, whose epic suite *Romance, Swing And The Blues* was having its premiere. It was revived two decades later, with Printup again on board.

The piece, Roberts said, "had abstract thematic elements but also could be expressed through various approaches to blues playing." He added, "Marcus has a really, really special connection with the blues. His playing has intensity. It sounds like somebody who really enjoys life, developing as a man and as a musician."

Roberts and Printup first met in 1991, when the pianist noticed the trumpeter in the band at the University of North Florida, where he was studying when he won the International Trumpet Guild Jazz Trumpet Competition.

The meeting, Printup said, marked a turning point: "Everything started for me. Marcus taught me how to put my upbringing into my music. Before Marcus, I played things straight. He said, 'Where are you from, Georgia? Did your parents raise you in the church?' I said, 'Yup.' He went, 'How did your mama sing?' I started singing something. He started singing something and told me how I could incorporate that voice into my horn."

Soon, Printup was on the road with Roberts (who has been blind since age 5), doubling as his tour manager for a year-and-a-half: "I just wanted to hang around him. I would take care of his





Robert Cray

VINTAGE

VIBE

By Josef Woodard

Photo by Mark Sheldon

When it comes to the long, storied career of Robert Cray, time and musical fashion have been slippery slopes in the saga.

The singer-guitarist burst onto the scene in the early '80s, proudly and organically “retro,” and pledging a natural allegiance to authentic blues and classic r&b. As a 20-something “old soul” artist, Cray lit up the blues world as a fiery and tasteful young-blood guitarist.

He struck global gold when “Smoking Gun,” a track from his 1986 album *Strong Persuader*, roared up to No. 22 on the Billboard pop singles chart. MTV put a music video for the song in heavy rotation, and nowadays, the track still gets played on classic rock radio stations. That level of pop stardom naturally faded, but Cray has continued to steadily tour the globe for decades.

Cray, now 66, isn't one of those artists who cranks out a new release every 12 months. He tends to favor quality over quantity, and the five Grammy awards in his trophy case support that notion. He explored renewably relevant '60s soul turf on 2017's *Robert Cray & Hi Rhythm* (Jay-Vee), collaborating with musicians

from the legendary Memphis-based Hi Records. His new album, *That's What I Heard* (Nozzle/Thirty Tigers), sports a menu of vintage covers, rarities from the r&b and gospel archives, and old-school-style originals that fit snugly into the program.

“Some of the [older] songs on the record sound like brand-new stuff,” Cray said. “I think the music is timeless.”

Cray spoke with DownBeat on a recent morning at a coffee house in Santa Barbara, California, just over the hill from where he lives with his family in the Santa Ynez Valley. The release of *That's What I Heard* was looming large on his calendar. Two days after the interview, he would head to Port Chester, New York, to be a logical puzzle piece in the “Thrill is Gone” tribute to the late blues master B.B. King, featuring such acclaimed guitarists as Buddy Guy, John Scofield, Jimmie Vaughan and Gary Clark Jr., with drummer Steve Jordan serving as music director.



PAUL NATKIN PHOTO RESERVE, INC.

Robert Cray recorded his latest album, *That's What I Heard*, at the Capitol Records building in Hollywood.

Jordan has been Cray's close ally for decades, going back to their meeting on the Chuck Berry tribute/documentary project *Hail! Hail! Rock 'n' Roll!* in 1987. He has produced six of Cray's albums, including *Take Your Shoes Off* and *That's What I Heard*.

True to his deep blues roots, Cray boasts a sturdy link to King, an artist he opened for and shared stages with on many occasions—as has happened with a long list of now-bygone blues greats Cray had direct musical contact with.

"I was talking with [bassist and longtime friend] Richard [Cousins] about that," Cray said, discussing his connection to the past. "A lot of the younger kids now who are doing the blues, they haven't had the opportunity that we did, to play with a lot of the old people, who are gone now: Albert Collins, Albert King, John Lee Hooker, now B.B., and Muddy [Waters] and on and on.

"We talked about how different it was, and how we were able to stand shoulder-to-shoulder and pick up how to back up and just see it directly. It's a different thing now." By the logic of cultural and generational continuum, Cray's own current status finds him as a veteran blues legend in his own right.

The title of *That's What I Heard* serves as a testament to Cray's own musical upbringing, after he and Jordan settled on the largely vintage material and vibe. Call it truth in advertising. "The title came after listening and after the selection of covers that we did, the whole overall view of the varieties of music," he said. "All that is stuff that I listened to or was inspired by, coming up."

But despite appearances, the new album wasn't approached with the intent of venturing into a personal "roots discovery" mode. Jordan had thought of the 1965 Sam Cooke album *Shake* as a general template for the proj-

ect, so he sent Cray a compilation of vintage soul tracks to peruse. Cray immediately latched onto Don Gardner's snaky-funky number "My Baby Likes To Boogaloo," as well as Billy Sha-Rae single, "Do It," both of which became key tracks on the new album. Dipping further into the archival pool, Cray pays homage to his heroes Curtis Mayfield ("You'll Want Me Back") and Bobby "Blue" Bland ("You're The One").

History also sneaked into the logistics of the album's progress when Jordan booked the band for a week of recording in the fabled Capitol Records building in Hollywood. These are the hallowed studios where Cooke, Nat "King" Cole, Frank Sinatra, The Beach Boys, Michael Jackson and Paul McCartney have recorded. Jordan recruited veteran studio engineer-producer Al Schmitt, who worked with Cooke, to help with the Cray sessions, alongside engineer Niko Bolas.

"This was the first time we've ever recorded at Capitol," Cray said, "and it has such history, and there is the echo chamber that Les Paul built. You just turn the knob, and there it is. It's under the parking lot at Capitol Studios," he said with a chuckle. "They have all these old microphones, and Nat Cole's piano is in the room that our keyboard player got to use. The history there, and the vibe, rubs off at least a little bit. At least you think it does."

The new album also marks the first time Cray has cut a bona fide gospel tune, the Sensational Nightingales' 1956 "Burying Ground." Cray's testimonial fervor in gospel-singer mode seemingly comes naturally, a byproduct of his deep ties to r&b, although his background didn't come out of the church, a common lineage of such iconic soulsters as Cooke, Aretha Franklin and Al Green.

"I went to church for a little bit as a kid," Cray recalled, "but I didn't do it all the time. But my

dad played gospel music on Sundays. Later on, after he got out of the military, he started a little quartet, which I never got to see, but they practiced a lot at the house. He liked a lot of that music. I listened to it as a kid, and when I got into the r&b and blues thing and started hanging out with my buddies, I got back into it again. It became something we did.

"When Steve suggested that we do a gospel tune, I just went back to my records and pulled that one out. I played it for them, and everyone just fell right in like they knew it."

Despite his relative neophyte status as a gospel singer, Cray said, "I'm influenced by a lot of gospel-influenced singers. About my favorite singer is a guy by the name of O.V. Wright. He sang with the Sunset Travelers, a gospel group. I like him because of the fact that he comes from church and he can sing a ballad like nobody's business, and just take you on a journey with him from the start."

Once in the studio, Cray abides by the venerable method of recording live with the band, in real time, eschewing digital manipulation or excessive overdubbing. Asked to describe his approach in the studio, Cray said, "You do it and then you have to tell yourself to walk away. To me and Steve, that's how we like to work it. You can't really go for perfection. You go for performance." With a chuckle, he added, "You'd be searching forever looking for perfection."

Cray's real-time/real-feel insistence is part of the common ground he shares with Jordan, as musician and as producer. "Steve is all about the vibe. Because he's an active musician, he knows how to set the vibe. He knows how to get everybody onto the same page in the studio.

"When we did the Hi Rhythm record, I had met some of the guys from Hi Rhythm, and Steve played drums on it. When we got to Willie Mitchell's studio, Steve goes immediately behind the drum kit and starts playing. Everybody just fell in. No idea what we were doing, but just fell in, and for 20 to 25 minutes, there was just steady playing. And that's how he got the vibe going."

Jordan's assessment of Cray illustrated the mutual admiration: "First of all, [Robert is] a wonderful human being. He's a joy to be around and I'm happy to call him a very dear friend. And he happens to be incredible, as a musician and as a singer. Guitar players want to hear guitar solos, but I think of him as a singer first. When I work with him, I focus on getting the right songs for him to sing, not the right songs for him to play."

As both guitarist and singer, Cray laid the groundwork of his blues obsession during his teen years. Was he, in fact, a blues snob, to the exclusion of pop music of the day? "I think so, initially," he said with a slight smile, "because of the fact that I played guitar and was a big fan of people like Albert Collins and B.B. and all. Then, with the r&b stuff, that's all we wanted to do—play r&b and blues.

"When I grew up, I listened to music my parents were playing, especially in the early '60s. We lived in Germany for two-and-a-half years. My dad was in the military and he was stationed in Munich, Germany. My parents had bought this great big Grundig console, with the tape deck, record player, short-wave radio and all that stuff. We bought records all the time at the [Post Exchange, a U.S. Army base retail store]. In the early '60s, they bought jazz and blues, r&b and soul, all that stuff. So, I listened to all that."

"When we moved back to the States in the early '60s [to Tacoma, Washington], the Beatles came out and radio changed. I was a big fan of the Beatles, and still am. As 15- and 16-year-old kids, we got the blues bug. That just became the focus, and I shut out everything else. Then it wasn't very long afterwards, I listened to Otis Redding records and stuff like that again, and let everything else back in. But for a short while, we just absorbed all we could by listening to records by the blues people and seeing those people."

By the late '80s, Cray was part of the rootsy vanguard of young, hot blues guitarists, alongside fellow Stratocaster blaster Stevie Ray Vaughan, helping to usher in a new emphasis on blues and roots music in major label/mainstream avenues. "That was a special period," Cray said. "MTV helped a lot, too. Epic signed Stevie. That's how record companies go. One record company gets theirs and then the next one's gotta get theirs. But it was fine, because we got selected, so that was good for us."

"At the time, there was this revival of roots music. Los Lobos was signed, and The Blasters were signed. There was a big resurgence going on. The rockabilly thing was happening. So, it was a good time for more roots-oriented music."

Tragedy struck when Vaughan and four others were killed in a helicopter crash on Aug. 27, 1990, only hours after Cray's band had played with him at Alpine Valley Music Theatre in East Troy, Wisconsin. At the time, Cray and his bandmates had been friends with Vaughan since the late 1970s. "We hadn't seen [Vaughan] for a half a year or so," Cray recalled. "It was a good time backstage, reminiscing, talking with everybody. Stevie and Jimmie were just coming out with the Vaughan Brothers album [*Family Style*]. Everybody was rolling. We were on major labels and all that stuff. And then we lose Stevie. It was really rough, really sad."

On a more positive note, Cray said he appreciated "the one thing that having had the major label success has done for us: It has put us in the eyes of people in different parts of the country and outside of the country, too, so we can do the live shows."

By this point, Cray's songbook has grown to massive proportions, making the task of devising a setlist rather complicated. "Now," he said, "it's a matter of trying to remember them all."

You try to warm up some of them at sound check. Sometimes, you just take a chance. I always say to the guys, 'No guts, no glory.' If we make a mistake, we laugh it off."

That's What I Heard represents another entry in the ongoing Robert Cray story, and one with a retrospective emphasis.

"I look at it as a reflection of a lot of the different stuff that we like, and that covers a lot of bases," the guitarist said. "There's no down-and-dirty blues on it, though. That's one thing. But that's for another record."

Could that fact alienate the more hardcore blues fan contingent?

"I don't think about that," Cray said. "We've gotten knocked a lot for that, but at the same time, *Strong Persuader* wasn't a blues record, either. We are who we are. We play blues, but we play rhythm-and-blues, as well. I don't think about having a record that covers all the bases. We do what we do. If you try to please everybody with your recordings, you hurt yourself. I think you have to be who you are and do what you do, when you do it."

DB



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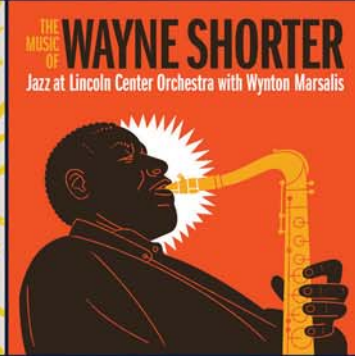
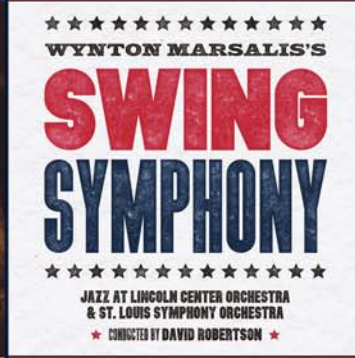
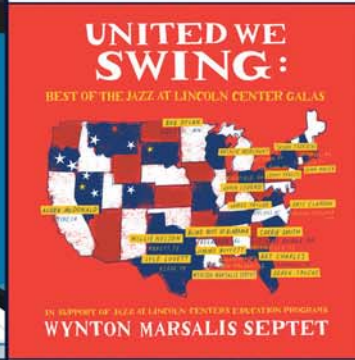
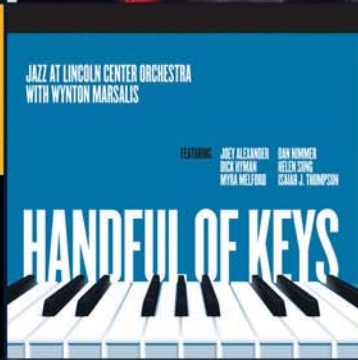
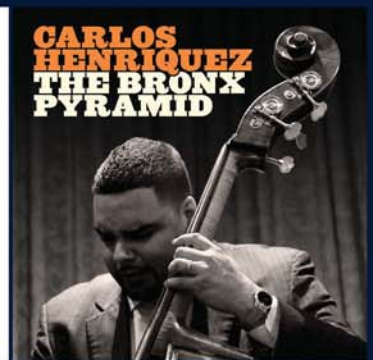
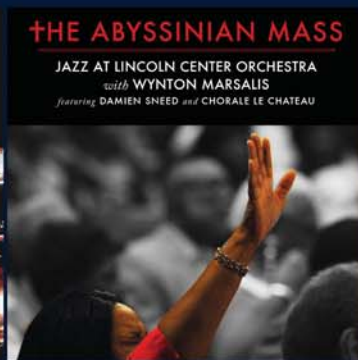
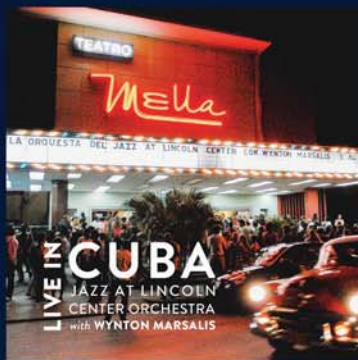


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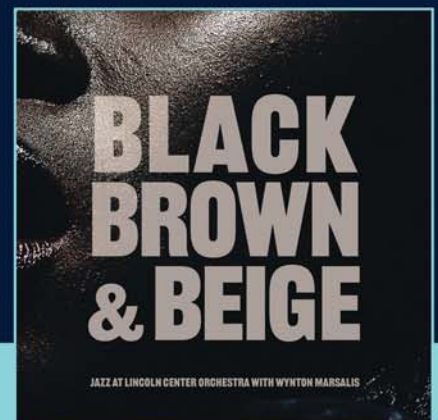
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Bassist Christian McBride is known for his ebullient precision.

Christian McBride *The Movement Revisited: A Musical Portrait Of Four Icons*

MACK AVENUE 1082

★★★★½

Christian McBride has been at work on *The Movement Revisited: A Musical Portrait Of Four Icons* in one way or another since 1998; the version heard here was recorded in 2013. So, a lot has changed in the States, as well as in music, since this document was made. An hourlong commemorative suite devoted to four heroes of the civil rights and Black Power movements, the album arrives in a nation reeling from the brutal backlash to its first black president.

When the suite soars, it follows the band-leader's strengths. The leading upright bassist of his generation, McBride is known for his ebullient precision—his joy in the details—and for savoring the nectar inside swing rhythm. This

comes through strongest in his small groups, though he ought to be more recognized for his broad-minded writing for jazz orchestra, too.

On *Movement*, a version of the Christian McBride Big Band joins up with the Voices of the Flame, a gospel choir, singing arrangements by J.D. Steele. The suite is organized into four overlapping sections devoted to Rosa Parks, Malcolm X, Muhammad Ali and Martin Luther King Jr. In each, an actor or poet reads from speeches or writings by the historical figure. Just as he blends musical styles—the overture, for instance, crescendos from stern piano chords to a passage of outright swing to a clave-inflected vamp—McBride laces together the stories of the four historical figures, always letting the words of one introduce the next.

In the past few years, it's become common for jazz musicians to superimpose words over their music, making their ideals and inspirations more explicit. At the same time, McBride is speaking back to a canon of recordings

from throughout jazz history that have relied on big bands and big voices to get a point across—Archie Shepp's *Attica Blues*, Bobby Hutcherson's *Now!*, Max Roach's *Percussion Bitter Sweet*.

But to a degree, he misses an opportunity: *Movement* treats the music a bit too much like a text of its own. For all their precision, these arrangements feel more like background and less like a force.

—Giovanni Russonello

The Movement Revisited: A Musical Portrait Of Four Icons: Overture/The Movement Revisited; Sister Rosa: Prologue; Sister Rosa; Rosa Introduces Malcolm; Brother Malcolm: Prologue; Brother Malcolm; Malcolm Introduces Ali; Ali Speaks; Rumble In The Jungle; Rosa Introduces MLK; Soldiers (I Have A Dream); A View From The Mountaintop; Apotheosis: November 4th, 2008. (64:50)

Personnel: Christian McBride, bass; Steve Wilson, alto saxophone, flute; Todd Bashore, alto saxophone; Ron Blake, tenor saxophone, soprano saxophone; Loren Schoenberg, tenor saxophone; Carl Maraghi, baritone saxophone; Michael Dease, Steve Davis, James Burton, trombone; Doug Purviance, bass trombone; Lew Soloff, Ron Tooley, Frank Greene, Freddie Hendrix, Darryl Shaw, trumpet; Warren Wolf, vibraphone, tympani, tambourine; Geoffrey Keezer, piano; Terreon Gully, drums; Alicia Olatuja, J.D. Steele, Sonia Sanchez, Dion Graham, Vondie Curtis-Hall, Wendell Pierce, Voices of the Flame, vocals.

Ordering info: mackavenue.com



Kurt Elling *Secrets Are The Best Stories*

EDITION 1151

★★★★

Secrets Are The Best Stories has a little secret of its own. Do Kurt Elling's opaquely metaphysical lyrics actually mean anything? Combined with the music of Jaco Pastorius, Wayne Shorter and collaborator/pianist Danilo Pérez, the result is one of his more challenging projects.

Audiences find Elling's dry, powdery baritone warm and welcoming at first. Then, just as they're getting comfortable, he'll bite them with a sharp twist of tartness; the seductive voice hides

elusive ambiguities. "The Fanfold Hawk (For Franz Wright)" is a Pastorius line for voice and bass whose vocalese combines a bird metaphor with self-help motivation. Even if it never comes to a point, the music is impressive, in part because it frames the virtuosity of Elling's sound so openly. But soon, listeners are pulled into philosophical questions without answers, made more puzzling by the knotty musical settings, which Elling and Pérez navigate with silky skill.

Elling's breathy interior monologue on "Stages II, III" floats on Pérez's pools of calm chords. On "Beloved," they move like shadows of each other, roaming the scales with an elusive logic that seems theirs alone. But voice and music converge on pitches and phrases that remind listeners how exactly the musical specifications are laid out. Elling sings lines that seem impossible. Dystopian dissonance and nightmarish musical images feed dense metaphors wrapped in poetic camouflage. The passion is earnest and pitch perfect. Now, if only I understood exactly what he was singing about.

—John McDonough

Secrets Are The Best Stories: The Fanfold Hawk (For Franz Wright); A Certain Continuum; Stays; Gratitude (For Robert Bly); Stage I; Beloved (For Toni Morrison); Stages II, III; Song Of The Rio Grande (For Oscar And Valeria Martinez-Ramirez); Rabo De Nube; Esperanto; Epilogo. (46:53)

Personnel: Kurt Elling, vocals; Danilo Pérez, piano; Miguel Zenón (6), alto saxophone; Chico Pinheiro (10), guitar; Clark Sommers, bass; Jonathan Blake (2, 6), drums; Rogerio Boccato (3, 4, 6, 10), Román Díaz (2), percussion.

Ordering info: editionrecords.com

Amina Figarova *Edition 113*

Persistence

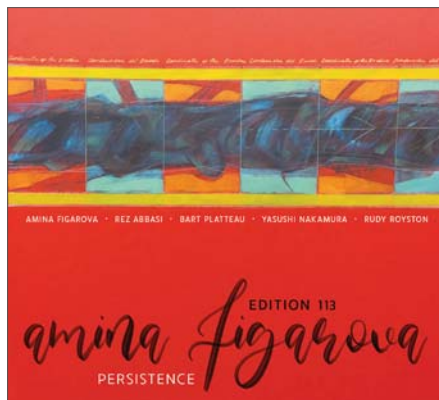
AMFI 015

★★★★

Genre-splicing fusion is a tricky thing to get right. Strike the wrong balance between structure and sound, and you can end up with a pastiche that does a disservice to each component part. For pianist Amina Figarova, it's a risky move to produce an electronic-inflected, part hip-hop and funk-jazz fusion album after 20 years leading an acoustic ensemble.

Aptly titled, *Persistence* is a surprising delight and one that seemingly avoids many of the pitfalls of fusion. The opening title track launches into enthralling rhythmic interplay between drummer Rudy Royston and bassist Yasushi Nakamura, while flutist Bart Platteau channels the spirit of the *Headhunters* in his soaring melodies. Figarova, meanwhile, artfully comps, switching between piano and synthesizer. The record continues in this breathless vein, riffing off of Robert Glasper's hip-hop mentality for "I've Got No Time," while "R Song" highlights Platteau and Figarova's almost telepathic interweaving with guitarist Rez Abbasi.

Even on slower numbers—"Morning Blue" and "Horizons"—Figarova and her band man-



age to create a convincing sonic collage of acoustic and electric sounds: jazz swing and hip-hop swagger, and a rollicking funk bottom end. Figarova does trip up on the somewhat gratuitous inclusion of rapper JSWISS for "I've Got No Time." But Paul Jost's open vocalizations, mirroring Platteau's melody on "Horizons," are genius.

Ultimately, *Persistence* stands as a worthy template for a wholly open approach to jazz that's generous enough for the inclusion of myriad influences.

—Ammar Kalia

Persistence: Persistence; I've Got No Time; Lil' Poem; Morning Blue; R Song; Horizons; Bliss. (43:07)

Personnel: Amina Figarova, keyboard; Rez Abbasi, guitar; Bart Platteau, B-flat flute d'amore, EWI; Yasushi Nakamura, bass; Rudy Royston, drums; JSWISS (2), Paul Jost (6), Skye's World (7), vocals.

Ordering info: amfi-records.com



Luciana Souza *Storytellers*

SUNNYSIDE 1575

★★★★

Big band singers were such a ubiquitous fixture in jazz at one time that the model seemed set in stone. Arrangers like Gil Evans, Bob Brookmeyer and Maria Schneider brought new shadings and textures to the instrumentation, but the perky or heartbroken role vocalists played stayed locked in the past.

Vince Mendoza is one of those arrangers who has introduced new, subtle voicings, and Luciana Souza is one of the few singers who has ably moved between singing with both symphonies and contemporary jazz orchestras. Given those credentials, it should be no surprise that combining them with the WDR Big Band Cologne—a frequent vehicle for Mendoza's arranging—and a broad selection of Brazilian compositions would yield impressive results.

Souza's vocals—sung either in Portuguese or wordlessly—are exceptionally well integrated with the band, to the extent that she sounds like a 22nd instrument on "Varanda." Highly cinematic, the piece serves as the perfect introduction to a carefully crafted version of "Matita Perê," Antônio Carlos Jobim's sweeping tribute to his country's ecology and the common man. Mendoza's arrangement is multilayered, with a flawless tempo shift at its midpoint and an effective soprano solo by Johan Hörlen. But the primary strength of WDR is that it can execute both the buttery blends Mendoza wrote for a version of "Beatriz" and clear the decks for expressive solos. In addition, veteran drummer Hans Dekker has the lithe touch and supple feel to provide the ideal accompaniment for *Storytellers*.

—James Hale

Storytellers: Varanda; Matita Perê; Se Acontecer; Beatriz; Choro #3; Meu Pai; Baião A Tempo; Chora Coração; Mar De Copacabana; Sim Ou Não. (59:34)

Personnel: Luciana Souza, vocals; Wim Both, Rob Bruylen, Andy Haderer, Ruud Breuls, John Marshall, Bastian Stein, trumpet; Ludwig Nuss, Shannon Barnett, Andy Hunter, trombone; Mattis Cederberg, trombone, tuba; Johan Hörlen, Karolina Strassmayer, Olivier Peters, Paul Heller, Jens Neufang, Stefan Karl Schmid, saxophones; Paul Shighihara, guitar; Rainer Böhm, piano; John Goldsby, bass; Hans Dekker, drums; Marcio Doctor, percussion.

Ordering info: sunnysiderecords.com

The Hot Box

Critics	James Hale	Ammar Kalia	John McDonough	Giovanni Russonello
Christian McBride <i>The Movement Revisited</i>	★★★	★★★★½	★★½	★★★★½
Kurt Elling <i>Secrets Are The Best Stories</i>	★★★★	★★★★	★★★	★★★
Amina Figarova Edition 113 <i>Persistence</i>	★★★	★★★★	★★	★★★★½
Luciana Souza <i>Storytellers</i>	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★½	★★★★½

Critics' Comments

Christian McBride, *The Movement Revisited*

A vital history lesson doesn't equal a cogent performance. With spoken word outweighing the music, this suite lacks the synthesis to compel repeated listening.
—James Hale

A mighty offering from McBride, where spoken-word interludes weave seamlessly with the pensive, intricate compositions, painting impressionistic, broad-brush imaginings of these much-eulogized icons.
—Ammar Kalia

In rather preachy readings from the canon of civil rights rhetoric, McBride provides a tissue of background music. Righteousness doesn't result in interest.
—John McDonough

Kurt Elling, *Secrets Are The Best Stories*

Elling always has excelled in situations where he can climb right inside your ear. The intimacy of this setting and the immediacy of the lyrics work to his advantage here.
—James Hale

Pérez proves a gifted and delicate accompanist for Elling's oaken vocal tone, providing angular melodic choices on "A Certain Continuum" or allowing for resonance and space on "Beloved (For Toni Morrison)." Elling's phrasing can be an acquired taste, but this collection is sure to be manna for his fans.
—Ammar Kalia

Elling's ambitions as a vocalist, writer and arranger remain as impressive as ever, and Pérez is a wonderfully adaptive accompanist. But those facts alone aren't enough to conjure feelings of risk or relatability—the big missing pieces here.
—Giovanni Russonello

Amina Figarova Edition 113, *Persistence*

A pleasant balm in an anxiety-riddled era. Figarova places the listener in a warm bath, comforted by burbling flute, guitar and electronic keys.
—James Hale

Ever been stuck on the phone in an eternal loop of electronic music and think: These are actually good players, why aren't they doing something better? That's my reaction as I listen to this flow of expert noodling with no higher purpose than fighting silence.
—John McDonough

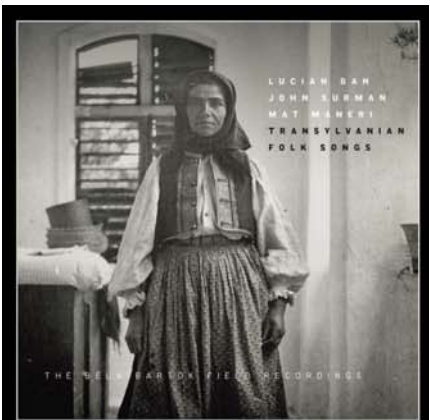
More brain-twisting, ear-filling directions in music from Figarova. Hints of Milton Nascimento's ever-coasting harmonies lift "Horizons," and the interplay among voice, reeds and guitar stays engaging throughout.
—Giovanni Russonello

Luciana Souza, *Storytellers*

An aptly grandiose backing for Souza's emotive vocals is provided by the WDR Big Band Cologne, melding orchestral arrangements with intimate interpretations on tracks like "Matita Perê" and "Baião A Tempo." The latter is a highlight, giving the band some much-needed breathing space to soar uptempo.
—Ammar Kalia

Souza's virtuosity melts into the coolish blends of WDR as seamlessly as a soap bubble. The Portuguese might be unsubtitled, but the instrumental allure of her voice is a ticket to ride with musicians of any lingo.
—John McDonough

Souza first shows up on this album in the opening moments of track 2, "Matita Perê," insinuating her way into the orchestra's sound with delicateness and surety. Things pick up, but a sensitivity to her lush environment never lets up.
—Giovanni Russonello



TRANSYLVANIAN FOLK SONGS

THE BÉLA BARTÓK FIELD RECORDINGS

**LUCIAN BAN
JOHN SURMAN
MAT MANERI**

SSC 1580 - Available MAY 15

In the early 1900s Béla Bartók was introduced to the folk music of the Romanian people in Transylvania. Bartók spent eight years traveling the Romanian countryside recording and transcribing these pieces, which he would spend the rest of his life collating into six catalogs containing over three thousand songs, simply entitled *Romanian Folk Music*. The composer's own compositions would be influenced at every level by his folk studies.

A century later, three outstanding improvisers – Mat Maneri, Lucian Ban and John Surman – and their mutual interest in the work of the Hungarian composer and ethnomusicologist led to their new recording, *Transylvanian Folk Songs*, an assortment of arrangements of folk songs collected by Bartók in Ban's native Romania.

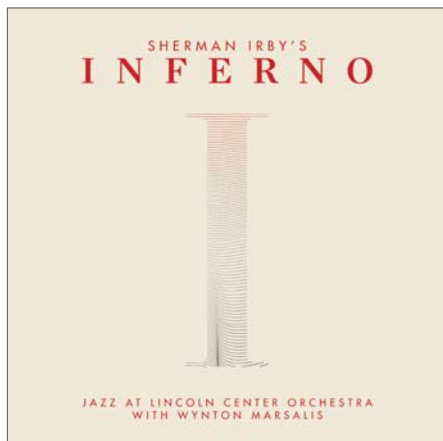
"Peasant music, in the strict sense of the word, must be regarded as a natural phenomenon; the forms in which it manifests itself are due to the instinctive transforming power of a community entirely devoid of erudition. (...) Correspondingly it has in its individual parts an absolute artistic perfection, a perfection in miniature forms which – one might say – is equal to the perfection of a musical masterpiece of the largest proportions."

—Béla Bartók

PHOTOGRAPH BY BÉLA BARTÓK
COURTESY OF BUDAPEST BARTÓK ARCHIVE



www.sunnysiderecords.com



Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra with Wynton Marsalis *Sherman Irby's Inferno* BLUE ENGINE 0022

★★★★½

Tempting as it is to say that *Sherman Irby's Inferno* sounds like hell, the fact is, it doesn't. At least, not the sort of hell you'd expect from a horror movie soundtrack, all dark groans and screaming dissonance. Irby's seven-part suite, recorded live in 2012, is based on the first book of Dante's epic *La Divina Commedia*, and is less about conjuring fire and brimstone than conveying a sense of

moral critique. But it's also a composition in the jazz vernacular, and its need for groove and blues keeps it from sounding as convincingly representational as something like Berlioz's *Symphonie Fantastique*. "Movement IV: The City Of Dis," for example, is meant to depict the Sixth Circle of Hell, which in Dante's imagining is full of heretics condemned to an eternity of torment. Irby's rendering is a sinuous fantasy—what he describes as "Iranian 'belly dancing' music"—spiked with growling trumpets that sound more bluesy than agonized. It's terrific as jazz, less so as a means of putting across the story. Still, it's hard not to be seduced by "Movement I: House Of Unbelievers," which represents Limbo, the First Circle of Hell, with a lazily relaxed groove. Moreover, the album has some gorgeous writing, including moments that serve as a commanding showcase for the mournful baritone of the late Joe Temperley. —J.D. Considine

Sherman Irby's Inferno: Overture: Lost; Movement I: House Of Unbelievers; Movement II: Insatiable Hunger; Movement III: Beware The Wolf And The Serpent; Movement IV: The City Of Dis; Movement V: The Three-Headed Serpent; Movement VI: The Great Deceiver/Finale: The Shores Of Mount Purgatory. (46:24)

Personnel: Sherman Irby, alto saxophone, soprano saxophone, flute, piccolo, clarinet; Ted Nash, alto saxophone, flute, piccolo, clarinet; Victor Goines, tenor saxophone, soprano saxophone, B-flat clarinet, bass clarinet; Walter Blanding, tenor saxophone, soprano saxophone, oboe, clarinet; Joe Temperley, baritone saxophone, soprano saxophone, bass clarinet; Ryan Kisor, Kenny Rampton, Marcus Printup, Wynton Marsalis, trumpet; Vincent Gardner, Chris Crenshaw, trombone; Elliot Mason, trombone, bass trumpet; Dan Nimmer, piano; Carlos Henriquez, bass; Ali Jackson, drums.

Ordering info: blueenginerecords.org

Tineke Postma *Freya*

EDITION 1150

★★★★

Tineke Postma has called *Freya* her "comeback album," a reference to her decision to start a family after her 2014 collaborative album with Greg Osby. It still feels like a misnomer, as the Dutch saxophonist has been recording and performing regularly since then. And it's not as if her new album is a reaffirmation of purpose or her writing and playing has an extra intensity to it. *Freya* feels like a master musician settling in and playing with a beloved cohort.

The real mark of the album's brilliance is in its economy. Postma was inspired, in part, by Chicago's avant-garde jazz community, and that influence is clear on tracks like "Heart To Heart" or "Scáthach's Isle Of Skye." Drummer Dan Weiss and bassist Matthew Brewer evoke the Art Ensemble's rhythmic clarity and angularity, leaving a wide expanse for Postma and trumpeter Ralph Alessi to swim around in and bind together like atoms. And on the few tracks that pianist Kris Davis contributes to, particularly the dreamy "Aspasia And Pericles," the mode of her playing is more Satie-like, daubing the edges of the songs with shiny streaks of color.

Postma also has said that the music for *Freya*



was drawn out by the "intense experiences and emotions of new motherhood," which certainly accounts for the punch-drunk, sleep-deprived tone of "Juno Lucina." But the album also plays out like a poignant metaphor for many first-time parents, each musician and their lines feeling, at times, disconnected and frictionous, but ultimately connecting for the common goal of birthing moments of beauty. —Robert Ham

Freya: Parallax; Scáthach's Isle Of Skye; Aspasia And Pericles; In The Light Of Reverence; Freya; Interlude #1; Heart To Heart; Juno Lucina; Geri's Print; Interlude #2. (50:16)

Personnel: Tineke Postma, alto saxophone, soprano saxophone; Ralph Alessi, trumpet; Kris Davis, piano; Matthew Brewer, bass, electric bass; Dan Weiss, drums.

Ordering info: editionrecords.com



Jason Palmer *The Concert: 12 Musings For Isabella* GIANT STEP ARTS

★★★★

Jason Palmer's second release with Giant Step Arts, *The Concert: 12 Musings For Isabella*, was inspired by the 1990 theft of 13 pieces from the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston.

Full of long Palmer originals with lots of space for solo improvisation over complex chord changes, the two-disc suite is an excellent vehicle for the bandleader and his sidemen to stretch out and deliver convincing performances. Vibraphonist Joel Ross thrives both as a soloist and chordal accompanist, and drummer Kendrick Scott's opening solo on "Christ In A Storm On The Lake Of Galilee (Rembrandt)" stands out as a moment of focused individual creativity. Palmer is at his most genuine in moments of musical dialogue—on "The Concert (Vermeer)" with saxophonist Mark Turner and with Scott on "Landscape With An Obelisk (Flinck)," for example.

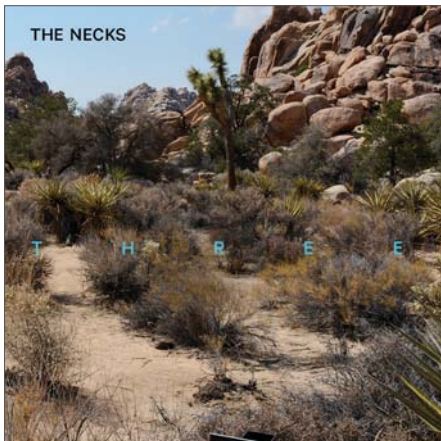
Despite its presentation as a compelling and adventuresome contemporary jazz performance, the recording falls a bit flat as a concept album. The tunes do seem loosely based on the stolen artwork, but the conceit fits awkwardly with the well-executed, hard-swinging series of challenging original tunes recorded by a successful mid-career artist and a cadre of talented, jazz-famous sidemen. In other words, it's difficult to hear these musical pieces as a tribute to the stolen artwork that inspired their composition. But there is plenty of thrilling material that won't be lost on savvy jazz listeners looking for an example of what the highest-profile artists in this genre have to offer.

—Alex W. Rodriguez

The Concert: 12 Musings For Isabella: Disc One: A Lady And Gentleman In Black (Rembrandt); Cortège Aux Environs De Florence (Degas); La Sortie De Pesage (Degas); Christ In A Storm On The Lake Of Galilee (Rembrandt); A French Imperial Eagle Finial; Chez Tortoni (Manet). Disc Two: Program For An Artistic Soiree (Degas); An Ancient Chinese Gnu; The Concert (Vermeer); Landscape With An Obelisk (Flinck); Self Portrait (Rembrandt); Three Mounted Jockeys (Degas). (69:01/65:55)

Personnel: Jason Palmer, trumpet; Mark Turner, tenor saxophone; Joel Ross, vibraphone; Edward Perez, bass; Kendrick Scott, drums.

Ordering info: giantsteparts.org



The Necks Three

NORTHERN SPY 126

★★★★

In the celebrated live performances of Australian trio The Necks, one of the group's members will initiate things with a terse, spontaneous fragment—a melodic kernel or lick that forms the foundation for the next hour or so of high-end, meticulously scaled, ensemble-oriented improvisation. The Necks move as one, with each musician contributing morphing details to a single organism. In the studio, the band long has

mixed things up, using overdubs, edits, electronics and additional instruments beyond its piano-bass-drums format to create hypnotizing atmospheres or driving grooves with countless stops in between. If there's any single common sound in both live and studio settings, it's the probing, ever-shifting piano arpeggios of Chris Abrahams, whose delicate articulation and endless motific variations hold the most far-flung excursions together. On a track like "Overhear," from the band's 2017 album *Unfold*, he sticks to organ, but such endeavors are rare.

His piano playing forms the backbone on each of *Three's* tracks, affording bassist Lloyd Swanton and percussionist Tony Buck to explore radically different aesthetics from piece to piece. "Bloom" is a kinetic storm driven by a thick bed of clattering polyrhythms, shaped by Buck and supported by needling, tightly coiled note clusters from Swanton. Its force is relentless, but the measured piano improvisations cleave the metrical churn with an elegant, soothing airiness. The piano pattern constantly changes, both in melodic accents and cadence, so its pull can keep listeners from noticing the subtly pulsing synthesizers and weightless electric guitar tones that pile up during the 21-minute performance. "Loveloek," on the other hand, is decidedly elegiac—created for the late Damien Loveloek, singer of the great Australian rock band Celibate

Rifles. The vibe is set by ritualistic tones of bells, chimes and cymbals, guitar feedback and astringent bowed bass that together slowly rise and fall in intensity; a delicate piano line takes its time, receding into extended silence between repetitions. The ambience thickens as the piece moves on, adding piano and heaping on electronics. But the spell cast by the piece remains consistent throughout—a fragile meditation that ultimately achieves a sort of uplift through its valleys of turbulence and calm.

The final track, "Further," builds from that ethereal optimism with Swanton's strong, soulful bass line—which, in typical Necks fashion, is constantly tweaked, without ever losing its spiritual center. The tune's supple groove, in 5, is padded by lush organ swells beneath the twinkling piano lines and washes of sustained electric guitar coloration. It's all driven by Buck's thick backbeat, enhanced as it is with further layers of hand percussion. While many Necks albums consist of a single piece, the band nonetheless sculpts a ravishing narrative with three disparate journeys that feel deeply connected to one another. While the basic formula is nothing new for the band, few of their recordings have packed such an emotional punch. —Peter Margasak

Three: Bloom; Loveloek; Further. (65:07)

Personnel: Chris Abrahams, keyboards; Tony Buck, drums, percussion, guitar; Lloyd Swanton, bass.

Ordering info: northernspyrecords.com

Wolfgang Muthspiel Angular Blues

ECM 2655

★★★★½

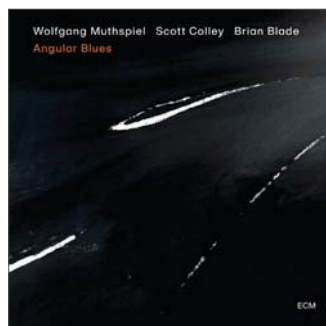
Austrian guitarist Wolfgang Muthspiel is well-served in his collaboration with bassist Scott Colley and drummer Brian Blade by ECM's characteristically sensitive, transparent sonic style. His latest dispatch for the label displays to full advantage his fingerpicking precision, attractively beady tone, melodic abilities and attention to group dynamics that gives his repertoire drama, color and shape.

Colley adds depth to the songs, being prominent from the very start of "Wondering." The bassist's solos are fleet, his sound darkly solid, his parts crucial for the full affect of pieces like "Kanon In 6/8," where Muthspiel lets loose most aggressively. Blade contributes generously, with restraint (or he's just dialed down in the mix). He uses cymbals sparsely, often for a splash coming off a roll; his fills, as on the title track, are propulsive without being pushy or hurried. Technically, the album seems faultless, realizing just what Muthspiel intends. Emotionally, it ranges from moody reverie ("Hüttengriffe," "Camino") to brisk, angular ("Ride") and relatively light-hearted ("Everything I Love," "I'll Remember April"). This is a well-played record; not earthshaking, innovative or especially challenging, but sure to interest guitarists and guitar aficionados. —Howard Mandel

Angular Blues: Wondering; Angular Blues; Hüttengriffe; Camino; Ride; Everything I Love; Kanon In 6/8; Solo Kanon In 5/4; I'll Remember April. (52:31)

Personnel: Wolfgang Muthspiel, acoustic guitar, electric guitar; Scott Colley, bass; Brian Blade, drums.

Ordering info: ecmrecords.com

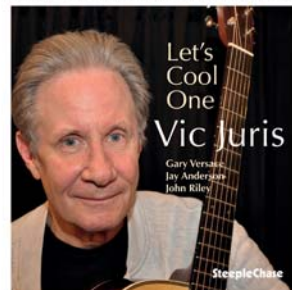


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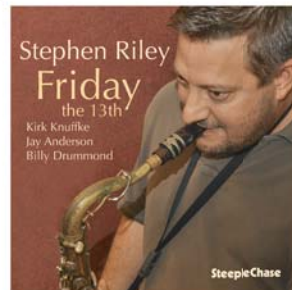
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Examining the Piano Trio



Pianist **Aruán Ortiz** recalls the cacophony of *ritmas* that pervaded his childhood in Santiago de Cuba on ***Inside Rhythmic Falls* (Intakt 339; 49:22 ★★½)**. Joining with drummer **Andrew Cyrille** and percussionist **Mauricio Herrera**, Ortiz descends into a deep feeling on these 10 tracks, each one the personalization of some aspect of his musical life. In the two disparate sections of the title cut alone, one hears the firm imprint of Cuba's musical heritage on Ortiz's compositional style: the pulse of African-derived beats, the modern vocabulary of classical pianism and the abandon of free improvisation.

Ordering info: intaktrec.ch

Eight years ago, pianist **Thollem McDonas** and guitarist **Nels Cline** recorded a lengthy jam at a studio in the hip Gowanus Arts Building in Brooklyn with bassist **William Parker** sitting in. They released one album from that date, *The Gowanus Session* (Porter), in 2012, before moving on to additional duo-plus-guest-artist albums. With the release of ***Gowanus Sessions II* (ESP Disk' 5038; 37:31 ★★★)**, the original group offers the second part of that 2012 session. The two extended tracks here speak more to impulse-driven expression than to group cohesion. But propelled by anodic effects, the trio covers all sonic ground, from the subatomic to the otherworldly.

Ordering info: espdisk.com

Composer/pianist **Brian Marsella's** latest album, ***Gatos Do Sul* (Tzadik 4029; 55:13 ★★★★★)**, got its start with a commission from celebrated composer/producer John Zorn. The group that gives the album its title—made up of woodwinds, violin, percussion and rhythm section—premiered these compositions at Brooklyn's National Sawdust in 2017. At the time, Marsella was borrowing into popular Brazilian idioms, like *choro*, finding ways to channel them through his own modern-jazz compositions. His talent for syncretism led to the exhilarating performances on this disc: avant-garde improvisations alternating with charging flute sections on "O Balanço Das Corredeiras" and

funny classical allusions on "Fire The Pandeiro Player." But most noteworthy is Marsella's nimble writing throughout.

Ordering info: tzadik.com

Chicago-based pianist **Lara Driscoll** developed the tunes that would become her debut, ***Woven Dreams (Firm Roots; 70:30 ★★½/2)***, as a graduate student in the jazz department at Montréal's McGill University. She led a trio then and, clearly, came to excel at the format. The album mostly is satisfying straightahead originals with smooth grooves, understated arrangements and meltingly delicious voicings. The standout is Driscoll's three-part suite *Forgiving—Black Dog Skirts Away*, inspired by a Fred Hersch composition. Its judicious use of space, subtle shifts in time and complementary feels reveal the depths of Driscoll's talent as both a player and leader.

Ordering info: laradriscoll.com

On ***Joie De Vivre (Twin Goat; 51:54 ★★★)***, **The Eric Lilley Trio** moves bracingly through the album's set of heady swing tunes, charming jazz waltzes and adrenalized bop revelations. Colorado pianist Lilley wrote the nine originals here, a collection as refreshing as its title suggests. And as with many acoustic trios of long association, the group's repertoire trips easily off its fingers.

Ordering info: cdbaby.com

Viscerally evocative, the music of Israeli pianist/composer **Nuphar Fey, *Serenity Island* (Hypnote 014; 54:47 ★★★★★)**, utterly captivates. The album comprises 10 impressionistic pieces that take water and other ephemera (imagination, dreams) as their theme; these slippery things serve as apt metaphors for Fey's artistry itself. Her sparkling, liquid playing lies at the center of each composition as she leads her trio from one mesmeric soundscape to the next; beyond this, the musical circuitry (jazz textures, classical forms, rhythmic perspicacity) remains hidden behind a wash of gorgeous sound. A major accomplishment. **DB**

Ordering info: hypnoterecords.com



Kirk Knuffke *Brightness: Live In Amsterdam*

ROYAL POTATO FAMILY 2002

★★★★★

A spirited voice in the subversive tradition of Lester Bowie and Don Cherry, cornetist Kirk Knuffke persuasively straddles the inside-outside divide on *Brightness: Live In Amsterdam*. A companion to 2015's *Arms & Hands*, which also paired the bandleader with drummer Bill Goodwin and bassist Mark Helias, this free-wheeling recording from Amsterdam's Bimhuis has the inventive trio calling on spirits in organic and uninhibited fashion.

Flaunting boundless technique and a creative spirit to match, Knuffke's command of his instrument allows him to go wherever his heart and mind lead him. Whether it's bracing free-bop fare like "Odds," dedicated to the late soprano saxophone master Steve Lacy, or more exploratory numbers like the intrepid Jimmy Lyons tribute "That's A Shame" and the dramatic, searching "Spares And Falls," this resourceful, highly interactive crew reaches some ecstatic peaks on this daring, highly charged set.

The title track, dedicated to Sun Ra, opens with a series of solo smears and extended techniques by Knuffke before his ultra-empathetic partners join in a kind of beguiling waltz. Goodwin exhibits an alluring, lightly swinging touch with brushes here, then shifts to a laid-back New Orleans parade rhythm on "Rise," Knuffke's dedication to drummer and colleague Kenny Wollesen. The cornetist also makes his vocal debut on two songs, demonstrating an earthy, expressive quality on the rubato "White Shoulders" and on a more grounded, groove-laden "The Mob, The Crowd, The Man," both containing bits of text from poet Carl Sandburg. It's a brief detour on this wild ride. —Bill Milkowski

Brightness: Live In Amsterdam: Brightness; Rise; White Shoulders; Odds; The Mob, The Crowd, The Mass; That's A Shame; Spares And Falls. (45:02)

Personnel: Kirk Knuffke, cornet, vocals; Mark Helias, bass; Bill Goodwin, drums.

Ordering info: royalpotatofamily.com

Bob James & Kirk Whalum *Joined At The Hip*

EVOSOUND A849M

★★★★

A remastered, well-rounded *Joined At The Hip* blends fusion and smooth-jazz. The 1996 album opens with “Soweto,” a fervent, reggae-tinged tribute to the township where South Africa’s independence germinated, dips into medium-tempo funk for the happy “Kickin’ Back” and adds a dash of rock for the bright “Tour De Fourths.”

Several successes nearly carry the day: “The Ghetto” is a shuffle peppered with vocal chants and a wiry Chris Walker bass solo. James rumbles, Whalum blows thick and guitarist Hiram Bullock cuts through clean and nasty. “The Prayer,” “Soweto” and “Deja Blue”—a brooding composition with rhapsodic James and Whalum in full cry—give the album much of its gravity and power. But there are missteps. “Out Of The Cold”—predictable next to the longer ventures—is a medium-tempo romp that finds the musicians in their comfort zone. And “Midnight At The Oasis” misses the mark. A wild intro promises novelty in an update of Maria Muldaur’s 1973 hit, but it quickly turns formulaic. The expertise is undeniable here, but another original would have been preferable in its place.

—Carlo Wolff

Joined At The Hip: Soweto; Kickin’ Back; Out Of The Cold; Deja Blue; Midnight At The Oasis; Tell Me Something Nice; Tour De Fourths; The Ghetto; The Prayer. (62:57)

Personnel: Bob James, keyboards; Kirk Whalum, saxophone; Jeff Golub, Hiram Bullock (2, 5, 8), guitar; Chris Walker, bass; Billy Kilson, drums; Leonard “Doc” Gibbs (2, 3, 4, 5, 9), percussion; Hilary James (5), Kevin Whalum (5), vocals.

Ordering info: evo88.com



Warren Wolf *Reincarnation*

MACK AVENUE 1169

★★★★

The smooth-jazz-wary might immediately have their hackles raised by the title “Smooth Intro,” the opener of vibraphonist Warren Wolf’s *Reincarnation*. Truthfully, that descriptor only applies to the intro and outro, and the only smooth things about them are the grooves and commentary from Baltimore radio personality Marcellus “Bassman” Shepard.

What *Reincarnation* delivers instead is an accomplished jazz album with just enough melody, groove and prominent funk bass courtesy of Richie Goods to suggest the flavor of r&b, circa 1990. If “Vahybing” goes down easily with its concision and lyricism, it’s not because Wolf isn’t taking chances in his solo. He creates and develops phrases until they become themes in their own right, and even gives drummer Carroll “CV” Dashiell III a race for the solo’s finish. It’s tempting to compare the vocal tracks to pop songs. And without question, “For The Love Of You” channels the vibe of, say, classic Toni Braxton. Then, two-thirds of the way through, it reboots as a funk jam with Imani-Grace Cooper wordlessly improvising.

Every time the music seems ready to retreat without any derring-do, that’s when Wolf and company provide it.

—Michael J. West

Reincarnation: Smooth Intro; For Ma; Vahybing; In The Heat Of The Night; The Struggle; For The Love Of You; Sebastian And Zoë; Livin’ The Good Life; Come And Dance With Me; Smooth Outro. (53:48)

Personnel: Warren Wolf, vibraphone; Brett Williams, Fender Rhodes, piano; Richie Goods, electric bass (1–7, 10), bass; Mark Whitfield, guitar (4, 6); Carroll “CV” Dashiell III, drums, percussion; Imani-Grace Cooper (4, 5, 6–8), Marcellus “Bassman” Shepard (1, 4, 7, 10), vocals.

Ordering info: mackavenue.com



The Darius Brubeck Quartet *Live In Poland*

UBUNTU 0033

★★★★

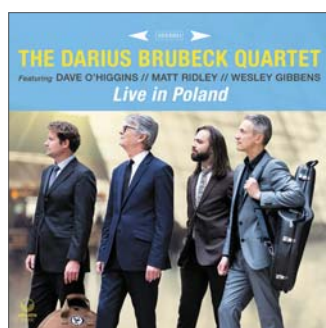
Now and then, the circumstances around a recording are almost as interesting as the content. Darius Brubeck’s 2018 tour of Poland took place during the centenary of the country’s restored independence, but also, on the anniversary of his father Dave’s pioneering 1958 tour, the first by a Western group behind the Iron Curtain. *Live In Poland* feels like an extended *dziękuję*—or “thank you,” and the title of the folksy sixth track—to the Polish people in return. The warmth of reception is evident, most obviously in the reaction to “Take Five,” but also in the palpable chemistry between the group and the crowd at the Blue Note in Poznań. Brubeck begins “Earthrise” with huge, sonorous rolls on the keyboard, before the swinging main theme announces itself. Does Dave O’Higgins sound remotely like Paul Desmond? Of course not; there’s too much Coltrane in his makeup, but he has the ability to make the tenor sound light and supple. The sheer delight of “Matt The Cat” and Hugh Masekela’s “Nomali” rescue the set from any possible solemnity. But Darius Brubeck originals are the meat of the album, his “Sea Of Troubles” a glorious Hamlet-like soliloquy with profound blue interventions from the group.

—Brian Morton

Live In Poland: Earthrise; In Your Own Sweet Way; Matt The Cat; Nomali; Sea Of Troubles; Dziekuje; Take Five. (59:14)

Personnel: Darius Brubeck, piano; Dave O’Higgins, tenor saxophone; Matt Ridley, bass; Wesley Gibbens, drums.

Ordering info: weareubuntumusic.com



Tim Berne’s Snakeoil *The Fantastic Mrs. 10*

INTAKT 340

★★★★

Saxophonist Tim Berne’s band Snakeoil makes its Intakt debut with *The Fantastic Mrs. 10* after four albums on ECM, released between 2012 and 2017. On this disc, the ensemble is augmented by the addition of Marc Ducret, a guitarist who’s been one of Berne’s favored collaborators since the late ’80s.

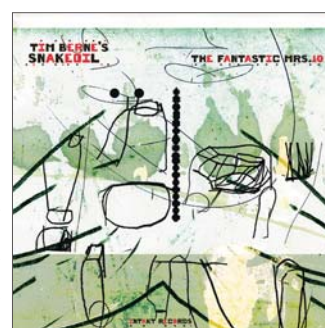
Berne has a highly identifiable musical language, his melody lines here long and meandering as ever. And this version of Snakeoil, like his other troupes, vacillates between biting, skronky free-bop and soundscape-ish ballads that seem to disintegrate as they go. The title piece is almost a suite, moving through definable phases. At first, Berne is alone, murmuring to himself. But when the band comes in, its playing is jagged and staccato, with Ches Smith’s beat thumping and clattering, his kick drum sounding like something from a parade. A later passage pits reedist Oscar Noriega against Ducret, each player snarling and sputtering from a far corner of the sonic field, requiring the leader’s intercession as his solo winds on endlessly. Even at its most unfettered, this music has guiding principles it never abandons.

—Philip Freeman

The Fantastic Mrs. 10: The Fantastic Mrs. 10; Surface Noise; Rolo; Dear Friend; The Amazing Mr. 7; Third Option; Rose Colored Assive. (67:31)

Personnel: Tim Berne, alto saxophone; Oscar Noriega, B-flat clarinet, bass clarinet; Marc Ducret, guitar; Matt Mitchell, keyboards; Ches Smith, drums, vibraphone, glockenspiel, Haitian tanbou.

Ordering info: intaktrec.ch



New Energy and Devotees

Roomful of Blues, *In A Roomful Of Blues* (Alligator 4998; 44:51 ★★★★★) Fifty-three years and more than a dozen albums after starting off in Rhode Island bars and coffeehouses, Roomful of Blues now gives fresh credence to the old assertion that this horn band is “in a class by itself.” On the first Roomful studio album in nine years, Phil Pemberton’s sure and steady voice shows his understanding of the emotional fiber of 10 high-quality original tunes and a few well-chosen obscurities, “What Can I Do?” and “Too Much Boogie.” Talented guitarist and primary songwriter Chris Vachon, the boss since the ‘90s, continues to promote the famous Roomful jump-blues sound where tight arrangements and concise solos help realize the full power of the music. Lots of raw new energy comes courtesy of young saxophonist Alek Razdan, a recent hire who parlays his integrative studies of Rahsaan Roland Kirk, Red Prysock and Boots Randolph into an exciting new personal style.

Ordering info: alligator.com

Phantom Blues Band, *Still Cookin’* (VizzTone 002; 48:22 ★★½) Originally Taj Mahal’s band during the 1990s and through the years the go-to guys for many blues sessions, Phantom Blues Band delivers its sixth and best recording. Drummer Tony Braunagel, keyboardist Mike Finnigan, guitarist Johnny Lee Schell, bassist Larry Fulcher, saxophonist Joe Sublett and trumpeter Les Lovitt share an easy rapport, specializing in melding intelligent rock (influences include The Band and Little Feat) with Memphis soul and even reggae, trad-jazz and south-of-the-border strut. Finnigan, Sublett and Fulcher are resourceful songwriters, plus the group has a talent for choosing superior material, like the 1965 Wilson Pickett hit “Don’t Fight It” and two numbers by the late Louisiana music force David Egan. As singers, Finnigan, Schell and Fulcher all have the aplomb and personality to transform the most hackneyed sentiments into something vital.

Ordering info: vizztone.com

Anthony Geraci, *Daydreams In Blue* (Shining Stone 006; 50:43 ★★½) Asured of his status as the premier blues pianist in New England, Geraci on his latest solo album employs focused and animated execution to carry originals and a sharply observant treatment of the Earl “Fatha” Hines classic “Jelly Jelly.” The Northeasterner and his gang of friends, including guitarist Monster Mike Welch and string bassist Mudcat Ward (like Geraci, members of Sugar Ray & the Bluetones), achieve an imposing level of collective empathy. Guest guitarist Walter Trout is possessed of an almost limitless enthusiasm. But roots-rocker Dennis Brennan’s half-satisfying voice weighs down



rather than elevates songs. (Geraci has spoiled us: Previous records, 2015’s *Fifty Shades Of Blue* and 2018’s *Why Did You Have To Go*, used outstanding singers Sugar Ray Norcia, Darrell Nulisch, Sugaray Rayford, Toni Lynn Washington and Michelle Wilson.) Nonetheless, the piano man prevails.

Ordering info: shiningstonerecords.com

Whitney Shay, *Stand Up!* (Ruf 1279; 43:21 ★★½) This San Diego-based singer’s third album, made in Austin, Texas, is life-affirming and generous in spirit. Songs she composed with Adam J. Eros have her establish emotional stakes in female empowerment and equality, as blues-rock guitarist Laura Chavez, the Texas Horns and others in a soul-rock-blues mode urge listeners to cut loose on the dancefloor. Shay works a relaxed approach to good advantage in presenting the strong feelings at the core of her choice original, “I Thought We Were Through.” But she should have stayed away from Etta James’ “I Never Meant To Love Him” and Tina Turner’s “Tell The Truth.” Those two foremothers gave definitive performances born of hard-won experience.

Ordering info: rufrecords.de

Alex Dixon, *The Real McCoy* (Dixon Landing 1070866; 36:16 ★★★) Willie Dixon’s grandson—bassist, pianist and songwriter Alex—takes a back seat on his rawboned Chicago blues album to Lewis “Big Lew” Powell. That’s OK. Powell is one of those uncelebrated roughshod singers who squeezes every ounce of his being into a line of a lyric, here tackling four of Willie’s less-hallowed songs and four so-so ones that Alex penned. While the title of Alex’s “Nothing New Under The Sun” is a summation of the album, given its dependence on trapped-in-time genre conventions, there’s no questioning the honorable intentions of Alex, Powell and the other Willie Dixon devotees, among them harmonica extrovert Sugar Blue and veteran guitarist Melvin Taylor.

Ordering info: dixonlandingmusic.com



Irreversible Entanglements *Who Sent You?*

INTERNATIONAL ANTHEM/
DON GIOVANNI 0031

★★★★★

Who Sent You? is an expansive, meditative follow-up to Irreversible Entanglements’ explosive 2017 debut. Camae Ayewa leads the quintet through searing lyrics of black survival and power, and calls forth liberating black futures. On “The Code Noir/Amina,” she explores the history of black subjugation and intergenerational trauma, and asks, “At what point do we stand up? At what point do we give a shit?” Saxophonist Keir Neuringer and trumpeter Aquiles Navarro’s sinewy horns answer her call-to-action, accelerated by drummer Tcheser Holmes’ feverish percussion.

Self-described as a liberation-oriented free-jazz collective, IE formed after three of its members performed at a 2015 protest against police brutality. Its self-titled debut was a confrontational improvisation session that felt more like a release of today’s ugly realities than a conceptualization of a better tomorrow. Since then, the troupe has become more methodical and forward-looking. In December 2019, it previewed new visions with “Homeless/Global,” a 23-minute single that found Ayewa chronicling forgotten history and border violence, while the band worked through celestial grooves. But the quintet explores its Afrofuturist underpinnings more deeply for *Who Sent You?* For “No Más,” Navarro and Neuringer engage in astral synergy while Ayewa charts a path toward “infinite possibilities ... coming back around to love ourselves fully.”

IE’s latest effort peels back the layers of black existence to celebrate resilience and community while continuously moving toward liberation.

—Ivana Ng

Who Sent You?: The Code Noir/Amina; Who Sent You—Ritual; No Más; Blues Ideology; Bread Out Of Stone. (43:38)

Personnel: Camae Ayewa, vocals; Keir Neuringer, saxophone, percussion; Aquiles Navarro, trumpet, percussion; Luke Stewart, bass, percussion; Tcheser Holmes, drums, congas.

Ordering info: intlanthem.bandcamp.com

Ibrahim Ferrer

Buenos Hermanos

WORLD CIRCUIT A 18931

★★★★★

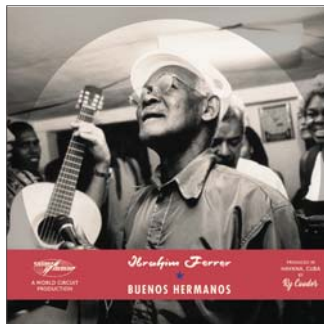
When Ry Cooder's *Buena Vista Social Club* galvanized the global music scene in 1996, it established Ibrahim Ferrer as one of Cuba's breakout elder stars. In the States, his spotlight previously had been denied because of the country's relations with Cuba. But with Cooder's help, the singer released *Buena Vista Social Club Presents Ibrahim Ferrer* in 1999, solidifying his eminence as a torchbearer of pre-revolution idioms. *Buenos Hermanos*, his follow-up, dazzled in more surprising ways. In addition to showcasing Cuban pianist Chucho Valdés on a few cuts, the 2003 album recruited some eyebrow-raising special guests. Even when The Blind Boys of Alabama harmonize behind Ferrer on the *danzón* "Perfume De Gardenias," nothing sounds out of place. This re-issued, remixed version of the album ups the ante with four additional tunes, the strongest being Cristina Saladrigas' "Ojos Malvados."

—John Murph

Buenos Hermanos: Boquillón; Música Cubana; Boliviana; Me Voy Pa Sibanicú; Buenos Hermanos; Mil Congas; Ojos Malvados; Guaguancó Callejero; Hay Que Entrarle A Palos A Ése; Perfume De Gardenias; Como El Arrullo De Palma; Mujer; No Tiene Telaraña; Ven Conmigo Guajira; Naufragio; Fuiste Cruel; Oye El Consejo. (60:16)

Personnel: Ibrahim Ferrer, Jimmy Carter, Carla Commagere, Juliette Commagere, Joey Williams, Alberto Valdés, The Blind Boys of Alabama, Dennis Manuel, Eric "Ricky" McKinnie, José Antonio Rodríguez, vocals; Angá Díaz, Bernardo García, Amadito Valdés, percussion; Orlando "Cachaíto" López, bass; Luis Alemañy, Jon Hassell, Alejandro Pichardo, trumpet; Roy Avila, Gladys Lo, cello; Gil Bernal, Alfred Thompson, tenor saxophone; Joachim Cooder, Jim Keltner, drums; Ry Cooder, acoustic guitar, electric guitar; Roberto Fonseca, Chucho Valdés, piano; Manuel Galbán, vocals, guitar, keyboards; Roberto Herrera, Marta Salgado, viola; Flaco Jiménez, accordion; Modero Mekanisi, Javier Zalba, alto saxophone; Demetrio Muniz, congas, vocals; Mario Villalta, cornet.

Ordering info: worldcircuit.co.uk



Ken Fowser

Morning Light

POSI-TONE 8204

★★★★

Ken Fowser's latest album, *Morning Light*, looks to nature's transient qualities as a source of inspiration.

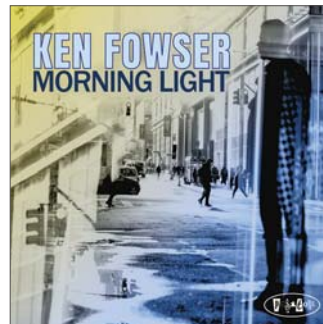
Fowser's tenor saxophone gliding through a short series of notes that fluidly descend and then just as quickly ascend combine with Tadataka Unno's flurry of chords and trills on piano, and Joe Strasser's complementary cymbal work, making *Morning Light's* opening a signpost for straight-ahead work. When listening with an imaginative mentality to that phrase on "Moving Forward," it suddenly feels like a swell of warm, springtime air. Then, when Fowser's saxophone and Josh Bruneau's trumpet settle into a unison melody that's pushed ahead by Unno's offbeat chords, the band truly channels spring's emergence. But *Morning Light's* crisp production is a precarious double-edged sword. While Fowser's band is stellar, sticking with tradition results in the heavily polished sound weakening the impact of any idiosyncratic surprises. That's not to say that the album is devoid of abstract character, though: The rotation of featured instruments (and all their distinct attributes) on "Firefly" and the pairing of drums with piercing trumpet on "Vitamin E" conclude *Morning Light* on a modern-sounding but, more importantly, memorable note.

—Kira Grunenberg

Morning Light: Moving Forward; Three For Leathers; In The Blue; Seventy Sixers; This That & The Other Thing; Morning Light; That Was Then; The Instigator; Without Saying; Firefly; Vitamin E. (55:03)

Personnel: Ken Fowser, tenor saxophone; Josh Bruneau, trumpet, flugelhorn; Tadataka Unno, piano; Vince Dupont, bass; Joe Strasser, drums.

Ordering info: posi-tone.com



Wolfgang Haffner

Kind Of Tango

ACT 9899

★★★★★

This album expands composer and drummer Wolfgang Haffner's *Kind Of* series with its best-integrated offering. Not only because the rapport he shares with bassist Lars Danielsson and pianist Simon Oslender is as involuntary as breathing, but also because the music spinning out from that core trio is reflective of a band leader who understands that comfort is born of experience.

Whether in the understated groove of "La Cumparsita," the inward glance of "Respiro" or the somber farewell of "Recuerdos," Haffner figures that every dance doesn't need to be a competition. And he's not afraid to let melodies awaken slowly, as on "El Gato." But the tango is best drawn between a leap and a crawl, and the brilliance of Haffner's tempi lie in that balance. Quintessential in both concept and execution is his handling of Astor Piazzolla. By wrapping the familiar strains of "Libertango" in mystery and the lesser-known neorealism of "Chiquilín De Bachín" in the warmth of an open fire, he brings out a blush of sanctity from the secular. What we end up with, then, is a welcoming examination of tango: something personal, fresh and unforced.

—Tyran Grillo



Kind Of Tango: Tango Magnifique; Tres Hermanos; La Cumparsita; El Gato; Close Your Eyes And Listen; Libertango; Dando Vuelitas; Tango Cordoba; Respiro; Chiquilín De Bachín; Para Tito; Recuerdos. (49:45)

Personnel: Wolfgang Haffner, drums; Lars Danielsson, bass, cello; Christopher Dell, vibraphone; Simon Oslender, piano; Vincent Peirani, accordion; Ulf Wakenius, guitar; Alma Naidu, vocals; Sebastian Studnitzky, trumpet; Bill Evans (7, 9), saxophone; Lars Nilsson (3), flugelhorn.

Ordering info: actmusic.com

Lisa Marie Simmons

NoteSpeak (Amori E Tragedie In Musica)

ROPEADOPE 512

★★★★★

Vocalist Lisa Marie Simmons was born in Colorado, studied music and drama in New York and traveled the world before finally settling down in Northern Italy. A serene r&b groove opens "Chillax," introducing an album that blends poetry and jazz while speaking out against war, ignorance and racism. Marco Cremaschini's rippling piano and the subtle, syncopated drumming of Valerio Abeni support Simmons as she urges listeners to relax, let go and let their minds fly off into the mystic. "Returning From Pluto" offers a vision of global unity as seen through the eyes of astronauts, reminding us that we all share this one small planet. Simmons intones a prayer for unity as the band slips into a lengthy Latin coda, featuring congas, muted trumpet and clarinet. Across *NoteSpeak*, the band's playing remains understated, granting Simmons' poetry the spotlight. Her words are full of internal rhymes, verbal inflections that move the rhythm in unexpected directions and juxtapositions of imagery that veer from predictable to wildly creative.

—j. poet

NoteSpeak (Amori E Tragedie In Musica): Chillax; Gnawing On That Bone; Samia; Returning From Pluto; Virtuoso; Decapitation Blues; Every Generation's War; Reduction, Honey, Chip, Cosmic Confusion; Heavy, A Fazioli. (70:40)

Personnel: Lisa Marie Simmons, Machan Taylor, Miles Simmons, Lisa Bell, vocals; Marco Cremaschini, keyboards; Laura Masotto, violin; Fulvio Sigurtà, trumpet; Guido Bombardieri, alto saxophone, bass clarinet; Valerio Abeni, drums; Joy Grifoni, bass; Marco Cocconi, electric bass; Valeria Bonazzoli, Maurizio Giannone, Marco Mondini, percussion.

Ordering info: ropeadope.com



Moving Past Expectations

It's not easy for a musician who uses finger-style solo guitar to present a personal synthesis of folk, blues and other material to escape having their work characterized as American Primitive. You don't even have to be an American for it to happen; two years ago the Spanish musician Conrado Isasa played at 1000 Incarnations of the Rose Festival, an event dedicated to the style, and he fit right in. But while **Marisa Anderson** (who also appeared at the festival), **Ben Chasny** and **C Joynes** all are acquainted with American Primitive's roots and methods, none of them have stuck with the genre. And on a trio of new recordings, each guitarist seeks to move beyond what's come to define their personal approaches.

Anderson lives in Portland, Oregon, but before settling there, she spent years crisscrossing the States, engaged in social and environmental activism. It was an experience that instilled an appreciation for the community-building aspects of folk music in general and the communicative force of blues and gospel songs in particular. Between 2009 and 2018, Anderson issued at least four solo LPs and several shorter recordings on which such material served as launchpads for pithy, melodic instrumental statements. But on ***The Quickenin' (Thrill Jockey 511; 38:26 ★★½)***, the debut effort by Anderson and drummer Jim White, the guitarist shifts focus to connect with a fellow musician. White's best known as a member of the extravagantly dramatic Australian rock act Dirty Three, and more recently he's exercised his mastery of pacing and coloration in the adventurous duo Xylouris White. Here, both musicians forgo some of their trademarked strengths in order to find a common improvisational language. The drummer's spare beats cut through Anderson's churning, electric figures like a canoe cleaving little whirlpools. And while Anderson never completely forgoes melody, she rarely references folkloric themes. Old fans might understandably wish for a bit of the extroverted passion and rootsy lyricism of their other projects, but the exploratory spirit of this music delivers its own subtle pleasures.

Ordering info: thrilljockey.com

C Joynes is also a traveler. A resident of Cambridge, England, who grew up loving the blues, he's spent time in Africa and Asia, absorbing diverse folk and pop styles. But it was John Fahey, a guitarist credited with originating the American Primitive style, who modeled for him a way to assemble an array of musical interests into a cohesive, personal sound. In wry tribute, Joynes characterized his early solo recordings as "Anglo-Naïve" and "Contemporary Parlour Guitar." But on recent



efforts, he has traded solitary music-making for more collective endeavors, and now has joined a band. ***Waterless Hills*** also includes three musicians from Manchester: drummer Andrew Cheetham, bassist Gavin Clarke and violinist dbh. They improvised their debut, ***The Great Mountain (Cardinal Fuzz 0151/Feeding Tube 516; 40:08 ★★★★★)***, in a single day, but there's nothing tentative about the chemistry here. Fahey's influence is still evident in Joynes' tense rhythms, but they alternately counter and complement the other musicians. The album's eight instrumentals are built upon indelible electric guitar melodies and austere bass pulses, which provide a foundation for intricate percussive forays and bold fiddle elaborations.

Ordering info: feedingtuberecords.com

The records that Ben Chasny has been making since 1998 under the name Six Organs of Admittance run the gamut from rustic psychedelia to crunchy, power-trio rock. Chasny's connection to American Primitive rests upon his fluid acoustic fingerpicking, which can easily stand on its own, but more often is used to frame his dynamic, soulful singing. ***Companion Rises (Drag City 777; 39:38 ★★★★★)*** revisits the layered, home-recorded approach of the earliest Six Organs LPs, but with 21st-century gear. Instead of hand-shaken percussion and a four-track tape machine, Chasny used computers to enable a multistep methodology that renders composition and recording indivisible. He began by layering acoustic guitar parts over drum programs, then circled back to recompose the rhythms, accenting the strumming and electronically treating the guitars until they come off like synthesizers. While the sounds are distorted and foreign, the tunes have the cohesion and urgency of a tight band performance, and chunky riffs ground lyrics that tie together cosmic musings and fly-fishing references.

DB

Ordering info: dragcity.com



Thundercat *It Is What It Is*

BRAINFEEDEER 100

★★★★★

Thundercat's *It Is What It Is* opens with a multi-part track that defies gravity and brings to mind "Space Traveler," a 1970s cut by jazz-rock guitarist James Vincent. Like that tune, the underpinnings of *It Is What It Is* are laced with reverb-drenched vocals and lush, distant strings. Thundercat's fifth album eventually comes down to Earth with drum-and-bass-influenced cuts like "I Love Louis Cole," which features the titular singer-songwriter and producer.

Including Cole, as well as a handful of other high-profile collaborators, extends a trend for the bassist: Vocalists Kenny Loggins and Michael McDonald both were featured on Thundercat's previous album, 2017's *Drunk*. And saxophonist Kamasi Washington is a constant companion.

The bandleader's latest disc concerns itself thematically with the heights of love and the depths of longing. And while roughly half of *It Is What It Is* defies gravity, songs like "Black Qualls" (which features Steve Arrington, best known as vocalist and percussionist in funk band Slave) and "How Sway" are earthly delights, brimming with bouncy synthesizers and liberal helpings of thump. Memorable guest verses from Childish Gambino and Ty Dolla \$ign add some welcome seasoning, while the album's closing title track marries floating harmonies and funk: the perfect conclusion to an album full of celestial moments and bassy underpinnings. —Ayana Contreras

It Is What It Is: Lost In Space/Great Scott/22-26; Innerstellar Love; I Love Louis Cole; Black Qualls; Miguel's Happy Dance; How Sway; Funny Thing; Overseas; Dragonball Durag; How I Feel; King Of The Hill; Unrequited Love; Fair Chance; Existential Dread; It Is What It Is. (40:41)

Personnel: Thundercat, bass, vocals; Stephen Ellison, keyboards, production; Kamasi Washington (2, 9), saxophone; Niki Randa (2), Childish Gambino (4), Ty Dolla \$ign (13), Lil B (13), Zack Fox (8), vocals; Miguel Atwood-Ferguson, keyboards (5), strings (2, 4, 12, 15); Scott Kinsey (1), Brandon Coleman (2, 15), Taylor Graves (10), Dennis Hamm (6, 7, 8, 12), keyboards; Louis Cole (3), keyboards, drums, production; Steve Lacy (4), vocals, guitar; Steve Arrington (4), vocals, keyboards; Mono/Poly (4), Charles Dickerson (7), Mark Spears (8, 13), production; Pedro Martin (15), guitar; Ronald Bruner Jr. (15), drums.

Ordering info: brainfeeder.site.com



Chris Dingman *Embrace*

INNER ARTS INITIATIVE

★★★★½

On his first two albums as a leader—*Waking Dreams* and *The Subliminal And The Sublime*—vibraphonist Chris Dingman worked within ambient, classical and jazz idioms to turn out meditative soundscapes for sextet. With his latest release, *Embrace*, though, he raises the compositional stakes a few notches: The new album centers on vibes, backed only by bassist Linda May Han Oh and drummer Tim Keiper. The challenge, Dingman holds, was to deliver the

same melodic and harmonic richness as on his previous releases, but with half the players.

This pared-down ensemble actually suits the thematic thrust of the album's nine originals, each one a facet of Dingman's ever-evolving creative vision. At the heart of the disc is his desire to understand relationships—whether personal or musical—at their most elemental level: The opening softly lilting air “Inner Child” flirts briefly with harmonic distortions, written soon after the death of Dingman's idol, vibraphonist Bobby Hutcherson; and the deeper-toned, persistently rhythmic “Find A Way” served as a palliative in the face of his father's passing.

Dingman also seeks to express his deepening fascination with non-Euro-derived musical traditions on tunes like “Forgive/Embrace,” a reflection of the harp-like sounds of the kora, and “The Opening + Mudita,” an allusion to the Buddhist concept of sympathetic joy.

In stepping away from chordal instruments and horn soloists, Dingman willingly forgoes some of the lushness found on his earlier albums. But in these simpler compositions he speaks to deeper complexities—those that arise when one follows the heart.

—Suzanne Lorge

Embrace: Inner Child; Find A Way; Ali; The Opening + Mudita; Goddess; Forgive/Embrace; Hijinks And Wizardry; Steps On The Path; Folly Of Progress. (52:54)

Personnel: Chris Dingman, vibraphone; Linda May Han Oh, bass; Tim Keiper, drums.

Ordering info: inner-arts.org

Swamp Dogg *Sorry You Couldn't Make It*

JOYFUL NOISE 327

★★★★★

Jerry Williams Jr., professionally known as Swamp Dogg, has been releasing half-cocked soul records for 50 years now. Even though his music is fairly mainstream, his humorous, off-the-wall lyrics have garnered him a cult following that places his albums in the same collections as Captain Beefheart.

During the past 20 years, the Dogg has expanded his scope a bit, waxing a country album, a Christmas album, a rock album and even a disc devoted to calypso. Last spring, he promised that his next record would be another country effort, something he'd been burning to do before “time closes in on [his] ass.” But *Sorry You Couldn't Make It* doesn't sound like a country album, even though several songs here could be interpreted that way. It comes off more like a low-key singer-songwriter effort, like what you'd wish Bill Withers would do if he decided to make a comeback. After a string of records designed to shock, the relative sanity of this disc might be the biggest shock of all.

The Dogg revisits some older compositions: eulogizing a wife on “Billy” and examining a dysfunctional household on “Family Pain.” While



the entire album is stellar, two collaborations with John Prine deserve special attention.

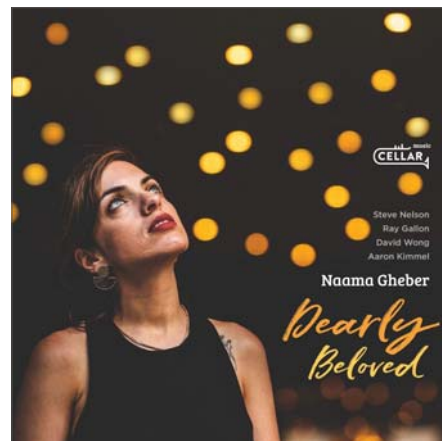
Despite *Sorry's* moody overtones, it's tough to think of this as a late-career statement. It just seems as if Swamp Dogg might have a few more good records in his system yet.

—James Porter

Sorry You Couldn't Make It: Sleeping Without You Is A Drag; Good, Better, Best; Don't Take Her (She's All I Got); Family Pain; I Lay Awake; Memories; I'd Rather Be Your Used To Be; Billy; A Good Song; Please Let Me Go Round Again. (38:11)

Personnel: Swamp Dogg, Channy Leaneagh, Mina Moore, Jenny Lewis, Courtland Williams, Leona Leshon, Carmen Marks, Sherron Crenshaw, Taj London, Harry Watkins, John Prine, Jenny Lewis, vocals; Derrick Lee, keyboards; Moogstar synthesizer, congas; Justin Vernon, guitar, piano, vocals; Chris Beiden, bass; Carmen Camerei, French horn, trumpet; Alistair Sung, cello; Sam Amidon, fiddle; Jake Hanson, Jim Oblon, guitar.

Ordering info: joyfulnoiserecordings.com



Naama Gheber *Dearly Beloved*

CELLAR 100119

★★★★½

Vocalist Naama Gheber specializes in standards from the '30s and '40s, when romantic, often obsessive love songs countered the harsh realities of the Great Depression and World War II. While she's hardly the first young vocalist to revisit that canon in our own uneasy times, the Israeli-born Brooklynite brings a fresh perspective and emotional nuance to the Great American Songbook on her debut album, which was honed during a yearlong residency at West Village club Mezzrow.

Gheber also has a crack ensemble backing her up. Steve Nelson's vibes sing on the opening title track, winging us back to a smoky '30s cocktail lounge. Ray Gallon's keyboards and David Wong's bass keep the conversation lively on swinging uptempo numbers like “S Wonderful,” while Aaron Kimmel's drums conjure up the tropical jungle of an obsessed heart on “So In Love.” But it's Gheber's skill at finding the emotional core of every song that gives the album its heart.

On her tour de force “So In Love,” Gheber's voice evokes a honeyed warmth in the opening lines, then swoops up and plummets down into lovestruck madness with Cole Porter's quintessentially masochistic lyrics. Elsewhere, her voice drifts into a pillow of dreams on a lovely version of “Good Night My Love (Layla Tov),” which conflates the old standard with a lullaby from her own Israeli childhood.

It's a promising debut for a vocalist who's only started to tap the wellspring of romantic standards on her first album, which augurs well for future releases.

—Cree McCre

Dearly Beloved: Dearly Beloved; So In Love; S Wonderful; Since I Fell For You; I Can't Give You Anything But Love; Get Out Of Town; This Time The Dream's On Me; You Stepped Out Of A Dream; What's New; Just Squeeze Me; Sometimes I'm Happy; Good Night My Love (Layla Tov). (50:38)

Personnel: Naama Gheber, vocals; Steve Nelson, vibraphone; Ray Gallon, piano; David Wong, bass; Aaron Kimmel, drums.

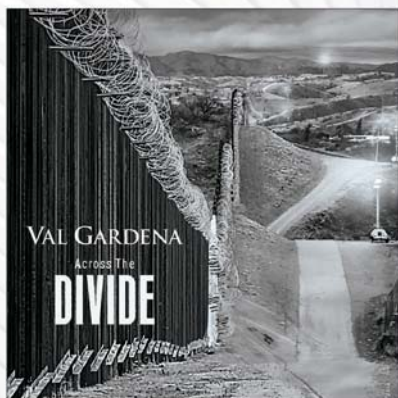
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Historical / BY JOHN MURPH

Elementally Ella Fitzgerald

Ella Fitzgerald mesmerized when she unleashed her virtuosic voice, especially when she engaged in quicksilver scats while fronting jazz orchestras. But she could be as bewitching when it came to ballads involving just her and a piano. ***The Complete Piano Duets* (Verve 003151902; 70:49/76:37 ★★★★★)** makes that perfectly clear.

Fitzgerald's other major superpower was her interpretive brilliance. She could deliver any song because she brought so much respect and emotional care to its melodies and lyrics. So, it's no coincidence that her renditions of Great American Songbook tunes rank as standard bearers.

When it came to Fitzgerald's duo partners, pianist Ellis Larkins is possibly the most renowned. He established a rapport with Ella that was on par with the accord Billie Holiday sparked with Lester Young. And it's the duets here with Larkins that are given the most attention—he's featured on 20 of the set's 43 tracks.

Larkins was one of those rare jazz pianists whose genius revealed itself as being a sublime accompanist, instead of being an exhilarating improviser or a noteworthy composer.

The compilation begins with music from Fitzgerald albums *Ella Sings Gershwin* (1950) and *Songs In A Mellow Mood* (1954). Milt Gabler produced both albums for Decca at a time when he was positioning Fitzgerald for more pop superstardom than jazzworld renown. And that might explain why she adhered so closely to the songs' melodies. On the spunky "Looking For A Boy" and the forlorn "But Not For Me," Larkins underscored Fitzgerald's gleaming voice with orchestral-like sensibilities toward dynamics, pacing and rhythmic alertness.

Oscar Peterson was on the other end of the spectrum. Whereas Larkins came off as elegantly reserved, Peterson displayed devilish capriciousness. Although Fitzgerald worked with Peterson in Norman Granz's Jazz at the Philharmonic touring ensemble, they didn't officially team up as a duo until they signed with Granz's Pablo imprint for 1975's *Ella And Oscar*.

It's fascinating to listen to Fitzgerald's takes of George and Ira Gershwin's "How Long Has This Been Going On?" with Peterson, as well as the version she recorded 25 years prior with Larkins. Of course, the obvious difference is the weightier quality of Fitzgerald's voice as she aged. While her crisp articulation and precise intonation remained on the later version, she lost some of the girlish innocence conveyed alongside Larkins. With that, though, she imbued the lyrics with more worldly maturity and sassiness, accentuated by Peterson's punchy, subtly coruscating approach to



Ella Fitzgerald

melody.

With Peterson, Fitzgerald cut loose like she never had with previous piano-duet partners. A perfect example of this is their take of Einar Aaron Swan and James Horner's "When Your Lover Has Gone," on which she follows Peterson's frisky, stride-leaning solo with a scat exchange. Even when they both peacocked their virtuosity, the pair still could get at the emotional meat of the more bruising ballads, as evidenced on their reading of Mack Gordon and Harry Revel's torchy "There's A Lull in My Life" and their take of Billy Strayhorn's "Lush Life."

When it came to brooding, though, Fitzgerald's best piano partner was Paul Smith, who contributed to many of her landmark songbook albums on Verve. Together, they shined at selling melancholy, as illustrated by the stunning, almost cinematic reading of Cole Porter's "Miss Otis Regrets" and the stark treatment of Earl Brent and Matt Dennis' "Angel Eyes" from 1960's *Ella Fitzgerald Sings Songs From Let No Man Write My Epitaph*.

Tommy Flanagan was another important pianist in Fitzgerald's orbit. They first officially collaborated in 1956 for a stint that last roughly a month and included a performance at the Newport Jazz Festival. They reconvened beginning in 1962 with an on-and-off run that concluded during the late 1970s. At one point, Flanagan even served as her musical director. That said, he appears only once on this compilation—a 1964 rendition of Billy May and Milton Raskin's "Somewhere In The Night," a tune taken from the live 1964 LP *Ella At Juan-Les-Pins*. The performance runs less than two minutes, but still offers a stirring beauty that reveals the musical magnetism between Fitzgerald and Flanagan.

Collectively, *The Complete Piano Duets* could rank as a revelation for those who solely associate Fitzgerald with extravagance and flash, while being only passingly familiar with her flickering, lo-fi ingenuity.

Ordering info: vervelabelgroup.com

DB

Sigurd Hole

Lys/Mørke

ELVESANG 005

★★★★½

Sigurd Hole, an acclaimed accompanist for Tord Gustavsen and others, ventured to the Norwegian island Fleinvær to record his latest album. There, he tapped the area's atmospheric inspirations, allowing ambient sounds to make cameo appearances on the solo bass recording, emphasizing the importance of nature and ecology in his conceptual mix.

An especially rich spectrum of harmonics, overtones, percussive effects and arco colorations make up the essential vocabulary on the contemplative double-disc *Lys/Mørke*, a follow-up to 2018's solo *Elvesang*. But what pushes Hole's bass work into the realm of the sublime are his refined sense of improvisation and painterly subtlety. From the *Lys* disc, a folkish pulse graces "Yngeldans," while "Havsang" suggests a low, loamy elegy.

The *Mørke* disc opens with the timbral wash of arco sweeps on "Bølge" and closes with a resolving sigh of the introspective, melodic "Epilog." In between come "Mørke," with its pizzicato gravitas and the primal rhythmic vigor of "Refleksjon." As an integrated whole, deserving a listen from beginning to end, the recording transports listeners to the realms of Norwegian wilderness and the wilderness of double bass, no additives necessary.

—Josef Woodard

Lys/Mørke: Disc One: Lys; Yngeldans; Duggdråper; Trestein; Vaktson; Speilbilde; Vindu; Skygge; Havsang. Disc Two: Bølge; Himmelrik; Arringer; Varde; Horisont; Ritual; Refleksjon; Mørke; Epilog. (38:38/41:16)

Personnel: Sigurd Hole, bass.

Ordering info: sigurdhole.bandcamp.com



Sinne Eeg & The Danish Radio Big Band

We've Just Begun

BFM JAZZ 4675

★★★★★

Sinne Eeg's seductive earth-toned vocals combine with the swinging Danish Radio Big Band on the singer's ninth leader date.

Sinne's sophisticated delivery is just about flawless on the title track, while the lyrics of "Those Ordinary Things" sagely comment on life's journey: "We don't often understand the importance of things until they've gone," Eeg said. Her "Samba Em Comum" unites the music of Brazil with Portuguese and English lyrics, while Per Gade's delicious guitar rhythms perfectly match Peter Dahlgren's mellow trombone.

"To A New Day," with a credit split between Martin Schack and Eeg, adds an infectious r&b-gospel influence, a sound suited to the singer's positive message and serving as an inspired closer to *We've Just Begun*.

—Kerlie McDowall



We've Just Begun: We've Just Begun; Like A Song; Those Ordinary Things; Talking To Myself; Hvor Er Lykken Så Lunefuld; My Favorite Things; Samba Em Comum; Detour Ahead; Comes Love; To A New Day. (46:59)

Personnel: Sinne Eeg, Sille Grønberg, Birgitte Soojin, Ninna Milner Juel, Maja Hanghø, Alice Carri, vocals; Henrik Gunde, piano; Per Gade, guitar; Kaspar Vadsholt, bass; Søren Frost, drums; Nicolai Schultz, flugelhorn, flute, saxophone; Peter Fuglsang, clarinet, saxophone; Dave Vreuls, Bjarke Nikolaisen, Thomas Kjærgaard, Mads la Cour, Lars Vissing, Gerard Presencer, trumpet; Peter Fuglsang, Nicolai Schultz, Hans Ulrik, Anders Banke, Frederick Menzies, Anders Gaardmand, Jan Harbeck, saxophone; Peter Dahlgren, Vincent Nilsson, Kevin Christensen, Annette Saxe, Jakob Munck, trombone; Rune Harder Olesen (3), Luis Conte (7), percussion.

Ordering info: bfmjazz.com

Audrey Ochoa

Frankenhorn

CHRONOGRAPH 080

★★½

There's a distinctly camp aesthetic to trombonist Audrey Ochoa's work. But it's a bit hard to tell the irony-to-sincerity ratio when both her melodies and visuals lift from the likes of Herb Alpert.

A pair of tracks on *Frankenhorn* are run through the electronics wringer by Battery Poacher, but rather than taking the risks a Colin Stetson or Robert Glasper might take with technology, the songs mostly just end up sounding like Flaming Lips instrumentals from about 20 years ago. Elsewhere, the sounds are even less adventurous, hewing closely to mainstream jazz-pop. A few tracks here find Ochoa making a foray into working with strings, and while the arrangements are a bit syrupy, they're not unpleasant. There also are some fun quasi-Latin tinges on tracks like "Bunganga," which still seems campy, though buoyant and energetic.

The bandleader has a confident way with a melody, and her playing is big and bright. If her band takes precious few risks, they do so in the interest of giving their intended audience a good time. And with that goal in mind, *Frankenhorn* is perfectly serviceable. Not everything needs to be at the vanguard, of course, but Ochoa's music would benefit from her and her compatriots pushing a bit further.

—Dustin Krcatovich



Frankenhorn: Swamp Castles; Benchwarming; Silver Linings; The Huggy Dance; Bunganga; Groundhog Day; Postcards; My Reward. (38:57)

Personnel: Audrey Ochoa, trombone; Chris Andrew, piano, keyboards; Sandro Dominelli, drums (1, 3); Mike Lent, bass (1, 3, 8); Luis Tovar (2, 5), Raul Tabera (2), percussion (2); Rubim De Toledo, bass (5); Kate Svrcek, violin; Shannon Johnson, violin; Ian Woodman, cello; Battery Poacher, production (4, 6).

Ordering info: chronographrecords.com

Day Dream

Originals

CORNER STORE JAZZ 0125

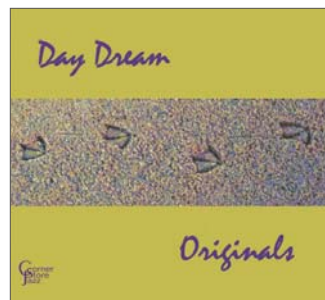
★★★★½

It's been about a decade since drummer Phil Haynes, pianist Steve Rudolph and bassist Drew Gress recorded *Day Dream*, the fine standards collection after which their trio is named. Returning to the fold, the distinguished threesome have flipped the conceptual switch and delivered a set of buoyant originals.

Their chemistry has lost nothing to the intervening years. This is a trio that truly is more than the sum of its parts, attaining vibrancy and color through a melding of Gress' deep, shapely tones, Haynes' probing, loose-limbed accents and Rudolph's heady lyricism. There's a fullness to the performance that you don't usually hear in occasional trios—or even steadily working ones.

Extrapolating from Bill Evans' "Blue In Green," Haynes' tender ballad "Paul-Christian" is an affecting dual tribute to two departed friends and colleagues, trumpeter Paul Smoker and producer Christian Kvech. Perhaps the highlight of *Originals*, produced by Haynes, is his lovely, offbeat celebration of his wife, "Beloved Refracted." Proceeding from a stately drum introduction and fragmented melody that offers hints of Abdullah Ibrahim's folk-tuneful sound, the performance coalesces around Gress' heartfelt lines and opens up like a pretty flower.

—Lloyd Sachs



Originals: Zebra (For Claude); Wedding Waltz; Beloved Refracted; Afterward; Vesper; Last Lullaby; Spell; Bossa 21 (For Katie); Paul-Christian; Let Fly. (57:44)

Personnel: Steve Rudolph, piano; Drew Gress, bass; Phil Haynes, drums.

Ordering info: cornerstorejazz.com

Gauging the Future of the Blues

Buddy Guy often speaks about arriving in Chicago during the late 1950s and hearing live blues music spilling out from storefronts on every block along certain commercial streets. That's certainly not the case anymore. You really have to know where to look, and Chicago music writer **David Whiteis** is an expert at ferreting out the best of what's still around. Blues aficionados in the past regarded his "Critic's Choice" recommendations in the Chicago Reader as a weekly road map to the city's blues scene. But Whiteis is more than a tour guide for the city's signature sound, as he demonstrates with ***Blues Legacy: Tradition and Innovation in Chicago*** (University of Illinois Press).

In *Blues Legacy*, his passionate assessments of Chicago artists reflect his eclectic tastes, as well as his optimistic view of the future of this Mississippi Delta-born, Chicago-bred music. To Whiteis, the blues idiom is an ever-evolving art form that remains vital, even as its progenitors pass on and its historical audience moves further afield from its inspirations.

His spot-on assessments of the social and economic forces that drive these changes are as essential as his encyclopedic knowledge of the artists' backgrounds and discographies. The author mined this same territory with his 2006 work, *Chicago Blues: Portraits and Stories*. But while that earlier volume was more focused on musicians' life stories and atmospheric vignettes from their nocturnal workplaces, *Blues Legacy* is more ambitious in scope. The book, divided into four sections, explores the evolution of the music from its cradle in the agricultural South to its latter-day home in the urban North. Muddy Waters might have coined the phrase *Fathers And Sons* to reflect the metaphorical torch-passing of the music from its originators to younger artists who were also influenced by rock, jazz and soul, but Whiteis follows this lineage all the way to its great-grandchildren.

Part one, "Bequeathers," offers lengthy profiles of five of Chicago's most prominent blues players of the past 50 years. Regrettably, three of them, James Cotton, Eddy Clearwater and Eddie Shaw, have died since Whiteis conducted the interviews. Part two, "Council of Elders," is a briefer examination of the careers of eight other postwar Chicago blues stars, such as Guy and the late Otis Rush. Guy's story, Whiteis writes, was included among these more condensed profiles, as opposed being given more space, because his background's already so well known. The third—and perhaps most important—section, "Inheritors," profiles about a dozen musicians who are the biological and/or musical descendants of prominent bluesmen, including



Big Bill Morganfield, Shemekia Copeland and Ronnie Baker Brooks, along with four blues-playing offspring of the late Eddie Taylor, Jimmy Reed's longtime accompanist. This book would be a must-read solely for Whiteis' description of the 1980s evening when Taylor walked into a West Side club and, with a single tune, blew away the author and his fellow patrons. Part four, "Heirs Apparent," offers thumbnail biographies of 21 acts that Whiteis suggests might move the blues into the future.

Despite its wider scope, *Blues Legacy* is not always as compelling a read as *Chicago Blues*, because some of its subjects lack the romantic backstories of the earlier Delta-bred artists. Also, Chicago blues comes prepackaged these days in the relatively sanitized environs of white clubs on the North Side that could never approximate the South and West Side establishments where newly arrived players once gathered to relieve their homesickness.

Whiteis and his interviewees excoriate today's "set lists from hell," as well as white audiences' bogus expectations of "authenticity" that prevent African Americans from incorporating other influences into their music and keep talented white artists from plying their trade in local establishments. Still, every musician profiled in *Blues Legacy* is African American, and they sound a common alarm that this profoundly original art form is endangered by cultural appropriation and lack of opportunity for those who won't give in to watered-down consumer tastes. Whiteis' optimistic conclusions notwithstanding, the musicians' own testimony points to an increasingly marginalized future for the Chicago blues. **DB**

Ordering info: press.uillinois.edu



Yuri Goloubev *Two Chevrons Apart*

BASHO 572

★★★★

A great bandleader is one who knows when to step back and let their arrangements shine through the collective power of their group. Look to Thelonious Monk hopping away from his piano to dance to his rhythm section, or Miles Davis' piercing, drawn-out lines sporadically cutting through his cluster of musicians' swirling interplay. Often, the best improvisation is in the support of others, and bassist Yuri Goloubev seems to understand that on *Two Chevrons Apart*.

Initially trained in classical music, and embracing jazz in 2004, Goloubev has been in demand, working with the likes of Gwilym Simcock and Jason Rebello. Collaboration seems hard-wired into Goloubev's makeup, and as such, he lets saxophonist Tim Garland run through delicately interlaced melodic lines on "Just Another Week" and softly flutter in a high register on "Elegiac."

Throughout, though, is Goloubev's warm, undulating tone, providing the thoughtful foundation to this understated music. While "Sweet Nothings" posits a cloying melody and "Cemetery Symmetry" drags somewhat during its pensive middle section, Goloubev really hits his stride in the more propulsive sections, neatly slotting in between drummer Asaf Sirkis and pianist John Turville's fast-paced back-and-forth.

In many respects, this is an uncomplicated record, one that swings evenly and plays straightahead. Yet, that doesn't relegate *Two Chevrons Apart* to mere background music. In fact, its beauty lies in a perceived simplicity; in employing his years of collaborative experience to function on equal footing with his accomplished band, Goloubev produces an impressively subtle work.

—Ammar Kalia

Two Chevrons Apart: Beethoven & Schubert: Friends ... ?; Two Chevrons Apart; Just Another Week; Dead End Date; Cemetery Symmetry; Sweet Nothings; Elegiac; Parisian Episode VII. (56:45)
Personnel: Yuri Goloubev, bass; Tim Garland, soprano saxophone, tenor saxophone, John Turville, piano; Asaf Sirkis, drums.

Ordering info: bashorecords.com

Jeff Rupert/ George Garzone *The Ripple*

RUPE MEDIA 013020

★★★★

On *The Ripple*, two sages of the tenor saxophone, Jeff Rupert and George Garzone, demonstrate the nuances of voice. Working through standards and Rupert originals, the release aims to honor “the ripple effect” that saxophonist Lester Young had in ushering in a modern era of improvisation. But there’s also more than a passing nod to other greats who developed their individual approaches after Young. For “Stardust,” following a bravura call-and-response, the pair lingers slightly behind the beat as the rhythm section kicks in. They play it the way Hoagy Carmichael sang it, trading the theme in a relaxed and assured way; Rupert references John Coltrane’s take of the tune in the album’s liner notes. On “Without A Song,” Garzone’s first solo dances on the edge of out, hinting at the discordant but never venturing further. A take of “Detour Ahead” is golden and shows off pianist Richard Drexler’s masterful comping, bassist Jeremy Allen’s precise support and drummer Marty Morell’s light brushwork. A cover of Ben Kynard’s “Red Top” features the joyful collaborative mastery found in Gene Ammons and Sonny Stitt duets. It doesn’t get much better than that. —Hobart Taylor

The Ripple: Bahia (AKA Baia); GO-GO; Stardust; Without A Song; The Shadow Of Your Smile; Detour Ahead; The Red Door; Red Top; Hoboken; Beauty Becomes Her; Lester Left Town; Alone Together. (68:37)

Personnel: Jeff Rupert, George Garzone, tenor saxophone; Richard Drexler, piano; Jeremy Allen, bass; Marty Morell, drums.

Ordering info: cdbaby.com



Dave Glasser *Hypocrisy Democracy*

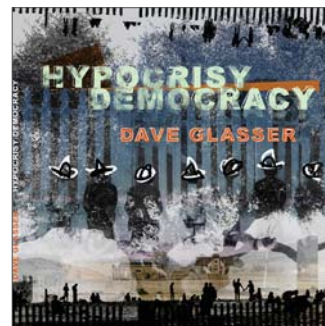
HERE TIZ 003

★★★★½

There might have been a few political references on saxophonist Dave Glasser’s previous albums. But those nods are more evident on *Hypocrisy Democracy*, which to some degree makes sense for the son of Ira Glasser, the former executive director of the American Civil Liberties Union.

On “Justice,” the vigorous exchanges between pianist Andy Milne and drummer Matt Wilson are nicely mediated by Glasser’s interpolations. “Freedom” plays off the album’s title, as well as providing the group with an expansive tableaux, a kind of mixed-bag approach to ensemble creativity. Indices of bebop blend with hard-bop urgencies—always with Glasser’s horn upfront and lyrical. But his lyricism on flute becomes all the more poignant on “It’s A Small World,” the only track here not composed by the leader. “Revolver” offers urban nuances with Wilson practically replicating rounds of gunfire, followed by Milne’s pianistic teardrops.

When all is said and done on this absolutely engaging album, “It’s Nothing New,” with its abstract smears of colorful sounds, sums up Glasser’s work, one that’s steeped in the bebop canon, yet replete with an ever-evolving freshness. —Herb Boyd



Falkner Evans *Marbles*

CONSOLIDATED

ARTISTS PRODUCTIONS 1067

★★★

Let’s begin with the positive: Falkner Evans possesses superb writing chops. Though well known for his trio recordings, he demonstrates throughout *Marbles* that he can arrange sensitively for three horns. His ear for voicing is fine-tuned; the charts he produces are without flaw.

They are also without much drama or surprise. The first nine tracks here purr over grooves that never quite ignite. Some of them swing a bit, like the jaunty “Dear West Village.” Others drift by more slowly, such as “Sing Alone,” which Evans kicks off with a thoughtful unaccompanied rumination. But these departures occur within a fairly narrow range of tempi; no deep ballads or post-bop sprints. As a result, the improvisations—even the overblown tenor moments on “Marbles”—feel reined in, if not *de rigueur*.

The 10th track does stand out, and not coincidentally, it’s the only one Evans didn’t write. It’s also the shortest selection—less than a minute-and-a-half—consisting of a single chorus of Mercer Ellington’s “Things Ain’t What They Used To Be.” Briefly, we glimpse what these players can do if allowed to stretch a bit. Then, too soon, they’re done and already it’s closing time. —Bob Doerschuk



Marbles: Pina; Civilization; Sing Alone; Global News; Hidden Gem; This From That; Mbegu; Marbles; Dear West Village; Things Ain’t What They Used To Be. (51:27)

Personnel: Falkner Evans, piano; Michael Blake, tenor saxophone, soprano saxophone; Ted Nash, alto saxophone, clarinet, flute; Ron Horton, trumpet, flugelhorn; Steve Nelson (5, 8, 10), vibraphone; Belden Bullock, bass; Matt Wilson, drums.

Ordering info: falknerevans.com

Amanda Gardier *Flyover Country*

GMR

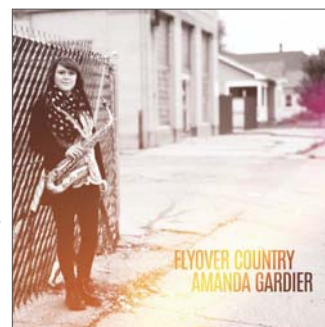
★★★★

Complex harmonies, tantalizing melodies and smooth ballads enrobe Amanda Gardier’s *Flyover Country* as she claims a space among rising saxophonists.

From the opening “Midwest Gothic” to the closing “Sea Day,” Gardier and her ensemble deliver ruminations on the band-leader’s Midwestern life, the troupe emulating the spaciousness of a rural landscape.

But the rhythm-heavy “Buddy” somehow conjures up Elton John’s “Bennie And The Jets,” and Ellie Pruneau’s percussive and harmonically sophisticated piano solo elevates “40 Tattoos” from a good performance to an extraordinary one. Likewise, the saxophone-and-bass duet “Hidden” allows rhythmist Brendan Keller-Tuberg to emerge, adding colorful counterpoint. Drummer Carrington Clinton holds the band together, driving that beat when needed, and gently pulling back to deliver a soft touch when required.

As Gardier heads out on the road with her ensemble, it’s likely that her band also will prove to concertgoers that they’re the perfect accompanists. —Michele L. Simms-Burton



Flyover Country: Midwestern Gothic; Boss Lady; Void; Buddy; 40 Tattoos; Hidden; Red-Headed Unde; Flyover Country; Sea Day. (63:20)

Personnel: Amanda Gardier, alto saxophone, soprano saxophone; Carrington Clinton, drums; Ellie Pruneau, piano; Brendan Keller-Tuberg, bass.

Ordering info: agardier.com



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MAHANTHAPPA

Rudresh Mahanthappa (Photo: David Crow)



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By Rudresh Mahanthappa

Crafting Improvised Lines from 3-Note & 4-Note Cells

I am often asked how I come up with my “lines.” It’s almost as if there’s a perception that the lines I play are independent of the harmony on which I am improvising.

I have always been a proponent of taking familiar material and breaking it down into smaller blocks of information. That is to say that most everything I play is based on the same chords and scales that have been a part of our jazz vernacular since Charlie Parker and Duke Ellington. There might be a freshness in my approach, but I hesitate to ever call it “new” or “innovative” or describe it as independent of the harmonic context.

Of the many concepts that I have explored, I find three- and four-note cells to be a relatively straightforward concept that yields a wellspring of ideas and inspiration. By virtue of being essentially ambiguous with regard to harmony or even a fixed tonal center, these small pitch collections have a multitude of implications and applications. Their use is equally effective when playing over standard chord progressions, modal and vamp-based scenarios, “free” and collectively improvised settings, and solo work. As a composer, there are limitless possibilities in constructing cohesively organized music that’s not rooted in a scale-based conception. Implementing three- and four-note cells will add a new dimension to one’s musical vocabulary and will enhance one’s own artistic identity. Furthermore, I believe that immer-

sion in these ideas changes the way we hear more traditional jazz forms and also provides a clear window into the work of later Coltrane (*Impressions* onward) and many modern players including Dave Liebman, Steve Coleman, Chick Corea, Craig Taborn, Vijay Iyer, Steve Lehman and many others. Working with these ideas is certainly not unique to me.

Technically, it’s easiest to describe these pitch sets in terms of half-steps from a starting note. For example, A–B \flat –C#–D would be (0, 1, 4, 5), where 0 (A) is our starting point, B \flat is 1 half-step from A, C# is 5 half-steps from A and D is 5 half-steps from A. You can see a full table of all pitch sets by searching for “list of pitch-class sets” on Wikipedia.

In spring-boarding from a familiar base, I will divide our derivations into three families: cells based on the half-whole diminished scale; cells based on the whole-tone scale; and cells based on intervals alone. Let’s look at four-note cells first.

DIMINISHED FAMILY

The diminished scale divides the octave into four equal parts by minor thirds (i.e., one diminished scale is actually four diminished scales). In Figure 1, the half-whole diminished scale starting on A is the same as a half-whole diminished scale starting on C, E \flat or F#. My favorite four-note pitch cell here is (0, 1, 6, 7) or A, B \flat , E \flat , E. Notice that this cell is symmetrical, as E \flat –E–A–B \flat is also (0, 1, 6, 7) but starting on E \flat . Since this

scale is built in minor thirds, we also can look at the same cell starting on C, which would be C–C#–F#–G, symmetrical to F#–G–C–C# (see Figure 2). Figure 3 shows a line made from that first cell, and Figure 4 shows another using both cells. I always try to keep the integrity of the cell by completing each one before moving to another. Otherwise, we lose the core sound of the aforementioned familiar base, which in this case is the underlying cohesive glue of the diminished sonority. Try playing these over A7, C7, E \flat 7 and F#7. Try to explore all of the inversions and keep in mind that you do not need to start on the (0) note.

Another related set that I like is (0, 1, 5, 6) or A, B \flat , D, E \flat . It’s not exactly diminished but has a similar sound. It is also not symmetrical, which yields more possibilities for voice-leading between cells. If I move it around along the diminished axis (minor thirds), I get C–C#–F–F#, E \flat –E–A \flat –A and F#–G–B–C. The diminished sonority comes through more because of the root movement, rather than the cell itself. Figure 5 shows a line using this particular set. It works well over the last six bars of “Donna Lee,” for example. The reality is that you could build this cell with any two or three starting notes of your choosing and come up with an interesting line of your own.

Continuing with diminished, let’s go back to (0, 1, 6, 7) and extract three-note cells. I like (0, 1, 6) and (0, 1, 7), or A–B \flat –E \flat and A–B \flat –E. As before, we can move them around the minor-





Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 4



Figure 5



third axis: C-C#-F# and C-C#-G; Eb-E-A and Eb-E-Bb; F#-G-C and F#-G-C#. For clarity, limit yourself to two, three or four (see Figure 6). More than that will sound chromatic or conventionally diminished. Try playing this over the first four bars of “I Love You” or any ii-V in D. Check out saxophonist Gary Thomas: He’s a master of these types of cells.

WHOLE-TONE FAMILY

Now, let's look at cells based on the whole-tone scale. My favorite cell here is (0-2-6-8). There are three distinct versions starting on F, G or A (see Figure 7): F-G-B-C#, G-A-C#-D# and A-B-D#-F. Note also that this cell is symmetrical; the inversion of F-G-B-C# is B-C#-F-G. It's amazing to me that simply removing two notes from a whole-tone scale can create such a beautifully ambiguous sound. With this cell, I actually like to mix two whole-tone scale sources. An example would be F-G-B-C# and C-D-F#-G#. They are actually a half-step apart if we view it as F-G-B-C# and F#-G#-C-D (see Figure 8). Try playing it on the first or last five bars of "There Will Never Be Another You."

One special aspect of this cell is that it also occurs in the diminished scale (see Figure 9). It's conceivable to play a whole-tone-oriented cell and move it around the diminished axis! Now, that's *heavy*. I'll let you play around with that one.

You certainly can make three-note sets from the whole-tone scale such as (0, 2, 6). The other three-note extractions end up being inversions of smaller sets that sound conventionally whole-tone. Personally, I don't find the three-note sets derived from the whole-tone realm to be particularly interesting.

INTERVALS FAMILY

In this vast category, let's look at two very basic three-note sets that are not scale-based: (0, 3, 5) and (0, 2, 5). If nothing else, we know (0, 3, 5) from "A Love Supreme" (see Figure 10). Figure 11 shows the same idea with (0, 2, 5). In mixing these cells that are very small in range, we can create some interesting tight-knit lines that have a logic of their own that perhaps defies tonality. I have always believed that humans gravitate toward organized systems and can perceive them in myriad ways.

Figure 12 shows the melody lines from a composition I wrote called “The Decider” from my 2006 album *Codebook* (Pi Recordings). The melodies are almost exclusively derived from these cells voice-led by common tones or neighbor tones. There’s a sense that they would sound good anywhere on anything. The melody at letter “D” shows which starting notes (0) were used to build each cell of all three lines.

PRACTICING WITH CELLS

Musicians often wonder how to practice this type of material. Here's my advice:

- Don't create patterns. If you practice patterns, you'll play patterns on the bandstand. Not good. No one wants to hear that.

- Become "friends" with the cell that you would like to bring into to your vocabulary. Take your time to get its sound in your ear. Maybe work on a new cell with only one or two starting notes. Once you begin to hear its inherent logic, it will be easy to expand to others keys in a natural way.

- Write out your own lines and memorize them. Make sure that you are really hearing them and not just playing from muscle memory. They will be yours and only yours forever and will continue to evolve in your subconscious.

- Compose solos. Take one or two cell types and try to compose three or four choruses on a standard. Then try other harmonic progressions like "Countdown," "Moment's Notice," etc.

- Try practicing this material with play-along tracks from iReal Pro, Jamey Aebersold publications and other sources. If you can make it sound good in that setting, you will sound great playing with human beings.

- Listen for these cells in the work of players and composers that you like of any genre. It's always helpful to hear how others are approaching these same concepts. We are not trying to reinvent the wheel. We are ideally trying to add our voice to a continuum of musical communication.

- Look for more information about these sorts of concepts from as many sources as you can find. Some of what I describe in this article was beautifully put forth in the work of 20th century composer, pianist and ethnomusicologist Béla Bartók (1881–1945). Definitely check out *Concerto for Orchestra*, *Music for Strings, Percussion and Celesta*, and, of course, any of his string quartets. Also check out analyses of Bartók's work by Elliott Antokoletz and Ernő Lendvai. Other good sources include Vincent Persichetti's *Twentieth Century Harmony* and Allen Forte's *The Structure of Atonal Music*.

I hope that this information is interesting and inspiring. I believe that the story of jazz is told by way of embracing the traditional and modern simultaneously. This is the musical equivalent of Picasso placing recognizable facial features in unconventional places, as in *Buste de femme au chapeau (Dora)*. If Charlie Parker is twelve noon, this is 12:01.

DB

New York-based alto saxophonist Rudresh Mahanthappa is the Anthony H. P. Lee '79 Director of Jazz at Princeton University. Mahanthappa's most recent album, *Agrima*, features his Indo-Pak Coalition with guitarist Rez Abbasi and drummer/tabla player Dan Weiss. His upcoming album *Hero Trio* with François Moutin and Rudy Royston will be released on Whirlwind Recordings in June. Visit him online at rudreshm.com.

Figure 6



Figure 7

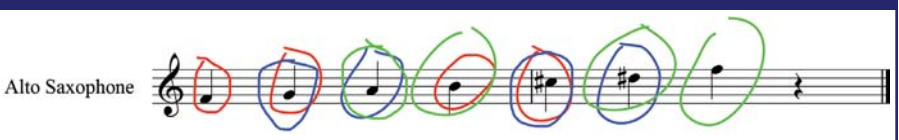


Figure 8



Figure 9



Figure 10



Figure 11



Figure 12





DANIEL JAMES/PURSUIT PHOTOGRAPHY & DESIGN

Keith Oxman

Using Non-Scale Tones To Craft Better Solos

For more than four decades, I have been teaching jazz improvisation to students of all ages, while at the same time trying to deepen my own understanding of this prodigious art form.

As a middle school and high school student, my improvisational journeys were limited to applying the blues scale in the key that the piece was written. Periodically this was successful but it obviously had its deficiencies and limitations. Understanding chord structures and formulating a concept of how to couple them with their related scales materialized in college. Accustomed with an expanded array of tools in addition to the blues scale—including a more mature ear developed through intensive listening and transcribing solos of the jazz greats—a new world of possibilities was realized. The additional freedom attained, in conjunction with the augmented harmonic and scale vocabulary, was valuable in that it allowed me to construct lines that better fit the harmonic progressions of pieces selected as vehicles for improvisation.

As we learn from transcribing, the notes chosen by an improviser are not always in the chord structure or its most basically related scale. Periodically, the artist adopts a common alteration on a dominant seventh chord such

as a flat nine, sharp nine, flat five or sharp five or will utilize non-harmonic tones to encircle a target pitch that exists within a chord or its associated scale. Often, the jazz musician with the more interesting and authentic approach makes use of appropriate altered tones in concert with encircling target pitches.

Following are some examples that will help advancing students develop a more sophisticated approach to improvisation, one that allows them to “play in the cracks,” so to speak, and use non-chord or non-scale tones to ultimately create more interesting and authentic-sounding solos.

Encircling the Root & 5th

Example 1 is a simple example of isolating the root and fifth of the chord. In this case, G is the fifth scale degree in C major and C is the root. These two target tones are each approached from a half step above and then a half step below. Those approach notes are G#, F#, D \flat , and B. Only B is in the Cmaj7 chord, as well as the C major scale. After initially discovering chords and their related scales, some students would quite possibly not choose the G#, F# or D \flat to play over the Cmaj7 chord structure, but these chromatic neighbors can add so much character to a solo. They are so

much a part of the jazz language. In this example the chord tones fall on beats 2 and 4. In some cases it might be desirable to shift this idea one beat to the left so that the chord tones fall on beats 1 and 3.

Encircling Target Tones From 2 Chromatic Tones Below & Above

Example 2 is a slightly more complex affair, as the target tones are now approached from below using two ascending chromatic tones followed by two descending chromatic tones from above. Cmaj7 is the harmony in the first measure, and the target tone is C. The A# and the D \flat are nowhere to be found in the Cmaj7 chord or its related C major scale. However, the B and the D are both related to the chord or its associated scale. In the next measure, the target tone is the F that falls on beat 3 as we reach the G7 chord. On the Dm7 chord that precedes the G7 chord, a D# and G \flat appear. Both of these tones are relatively unrelated to Dm7. The E and the G fit the dorian mode that is associated with Dm7 in this case.

Measure 3 is similar in concept to measure 1, except that the approach notes are now one octave higher. Measure 4 has a C# and an E \flat sounded on the Dm7 chord. Played in concert with the C and E, this works just fine to approach the target tone of D on beat 3. The target tone in measure 5 is the G on beat 3. The approach tones are F, F#, A and A \flat . The F# and A \flat are not directly related to Cmaj7 or the C major scale. The F is the fourth scale degree and one that I was advised in college not to use on a Cmaj7 chord. While I understand why that was taught to me, I don't agree with that restriction any more. In each of these cases, the target tone is approached from two chromatic tones below and two chromatic tones above. When applied in an appropriate manner, this concept can add variety to the solo, as well as lead to a more dynamic and interesting musical line.

Encircling Target Tones From 2 Tones Above & 1 Chromatic Tone Below

Example 3 is the same idea but in reverse. The approach tones start from above the target pitches. The chord tones of D, F and A all occur on the strong beats. There are two chromatic notes above the target pitch and one chromatic note below the target pitch. In this case the chord is a Dm7. Once the student has the three-note pickup idea internalized, he or she can think of the starting notes of the anticipation being from the chord that is one step

higher. In this case the starting pitches for the anticipations are E, G and B.

Encircling Target Tones From 2 Tones Below & 1 Chromatic Tone Above

Example 4 is similar to Example 2 except there are three approach tones that start as an anticipation of beat 4. This particular line is reminiscent of something that Sonny Stitt used in his saxophone solos. The target tone is the B on beat 1 of the second measure, but the approach begins on the upbeat of 3 in the previous measure with the notes G#, A and C. The last half of the second bar uses altered notes on the G7 chord. They are the flat nine (A \flat) and the sharp nine (B \sharp).

This brings us to another method of using pitches outside of the chord or scale that is being dealt with at a given time. We can employ on a dominant seventh chord any of the four altered pitches mentioned in the third paragraph. There are certainly scales that utilize these pitches. Common examples would be the whole-tone scale, diminished scale and diminished whole-tone scale. The whole-tone scale has a flat five and a sharp five. The diminished scale has a flat 9, sharp 9 and flat five. The diminished whole-tone scale has a flat five, sharp five, flat nine and sharp nine. Sometimes it is easier to not think of the scale but instead to visualize a formula as discussed in the next example.

Using Minor 1-2-3-5 Patterns To Achieve Altered Dominant 7 Chord Pitches

In Example 5, the same four-note cell structure is used throughout. The cell utilizes the fifth, third, second and root of any minor scale. The chord progression here is a basic iii7-VI7-ii7-V7-IM7. On the two minor chords, we use 5-3-2-1 scale degrees of each chord. On the two dominant seventh chords we move up a half step from the last note used in the previous minor seventh chord, and that becomes the new starting note. This example starts with 5-3-2-1 in A minor (E, C, B, A).

At this point, the chord moves to D7, but instead of following with A, F#, E, D, we can move up one half step from A (last note used on the Am7 chord). This B \flat now is the fifth scale degree of E \flat minor. If we play the related cell for E \flat minor we get B \flat , G \flat , F, E \flat . Keep in mind that the chord at this point is a D7 and not an E \flat m7. Against the D7, these pitches represent the sharp five (B \sharp), third (G \flat), sharp nine (F) and flat nine (E \flat).

After the four pitches on the D7 chord are played, move down a half step from E \flat to D, and this now represents the fifth of the Gm7 chord. The process continues and we can play our way through a common iii7-VI7-ii7-V7-IM7 progression. The note choices used here

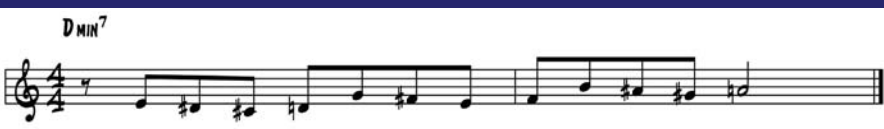
Example 1



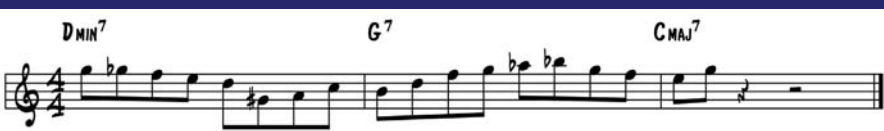
Example 2



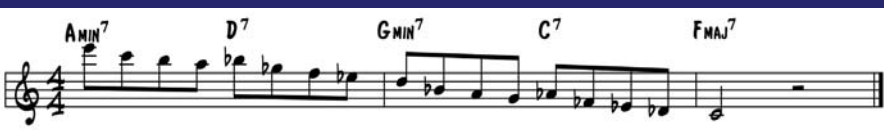
Example 3



Example 4



Example 5



Example 6



on the dominant seventh chords have been used by many jazz musicians, but this idea reminds me of Gene Ammons as this idea is present in many of his solos.

Encircling the Start of the Minor 1-2-3-5 Pattern Used for an Altered Dominant 7 Chord

Example 6 uses the same type of idea in the last two beats before the resolution to the major seventh chord, but in this case there are two approach tones that are used to encircle the target tone, which is A \flat . This is different from the previous examples, as the A \flat here is not a chord tone but an altered tone in the form of a sharp five. The beginning of the C7 measure starts with a flat nine (C \sharp), but it is the A (13th) and the G (fifth) that encircle the A \flat (sharp five), which sets up the Ammons idea mentioned above.

It's important to develop the tools needed to take advantage of melodic and harmon-

ic possibilities that present themselves to us when we are improvising. We don't always have to encircle target pitches or use altered tones. When used in an appropriate manner, these two techniques can add much melodic and harmonic interest.

While it's always a safe bet to rely on the basic scales that are related to the given chord structures in a piece, remember that there are possibilities that lie outside of those basic scales that can add chromatic interest to the story we are trying to impart every time we play an improvised solo. **DB**

Keith Oxman is a native of Colorado who teaches at East High School in Denver and serves as a director for the Colorado Jazz Workshop. As a tenor saxophonist, he has recorded 11 CDs as a leader on the Capri record label with numerous artists, including Curtis Fuller, Dave Liebman, Houston Person and Joe Bonner. Oxman also appears on Capri recordings as a sideman to Fuller and Charles McPherson. He has performed with Dave Liebman and the Antonio Faraò Trio, Pete Christlieb, Phil Woods, Jack McDuff, Red Holloway, Bobby Shew, Tom Harrell, and Buddy Rich. Oxman's new CD, *Two Cigarettes In The Dark* (Capri), features fellow tenor saxophonist Houston Person. For more information, visit caprirecords.com.

ENID FARBER PHOTOGRAPHY

T.K. Blue

T.K. Blue's Flute Solo on 'It's Really All About Love'

T.K. Blue had this to say about “It’s Really All About Love,” from his 1999 release *Another Blue* (Arkadia): “Although this composition was recorded 21 years ago, the title is certainly applicable to today. As [Louis Armstrong] once said, the world would be a wonderful place if we just give love a chance.” This track is certainly filled with that sentiment, between all the bright major seventh sounds and Blue’s choice of flute (and lack of drums) for the entire song. It’s a highly positive vibe. As a side note, Blue’s original charts were written in 2/4, but I’ve opted to present it as 4/4 so as not to force you to read too many 32nd and 64th notes.

One aspect of Blue’s playing on this track is how careful and specific he often is in his note and scale choices. In the first six bars, for the most part, Blue plays a standard C major scale on the Cmaj7/G; for the A \flat +B \flat chord, being a more exotic harmony, he makes the more exotic choice of F melodic minor. The chord consists of the notes A \flat –C–E–B \flat , which all occur in this scale, making it a good fit.

There are simpler choices: the ii–V–I in B in measures 12–13, where we hear a B major scale, and the Emaj7 in bar 15, where there’s an E major scale. In fact, on most of the major seventh chords Blue goes with a major scale, such as in bars 9, 24, 28, 31–33 and 45. There’s also a lydian run on the D \flat 6/9 in measure 16. All of

these major-chord sounds help emphasize the brightness of this composition.

A choice Blue makes quite often that also helps is to omit the root note on these major passages, emphasizing the seventh and ninth. Bar 13 is a clear example, where Blue plays ninth, seventh and fifth—in actuality an F# triad—on the B major chord. At the end of bar 15 he does a similar thing playing the ninth and seventh, as well as at the beginning of bar 19, where he jumps from the fifth to the ninth. With the bass and piano stating the changes, Blue isn’t restricted to defining the chords, and he uses this freedom to play groupings that stress upper parts of the chord and sometimes imply other harmonies.

The same kind of precision is applied to other types of chords (like the F# mixolydian run in bar 21), and chromaticism is reserved for passing tones, such as the A \flat s in measure 14, the C natural at the end of bar 17 and middle of 18, and the G \flat in bar 51; or enclosures, as in the F natural in 18; or ornaments such as the D \flat in bars 39 and 48. What’s more curious is what might appear to be chromaticism but is actually Blue anticipating changes.

To give some examples: The A \flat in the final beat of measure 5 at first might appear as a chromatic ornament of the G, since this is on a C major chord. But all of the notes in this beat fit the harmony coming up in the next

bar, which also could make this sound like an anticipation.

Blue uses this same technique in more apparent ways later in the solo: the descending augmented triads at the end of bar 7 that seamlessly continue over the bar line from the Cmaj7/G (which they definitely don’t fit) to the E7+ in the next (which they are a match for). More subtly, the G \flat in the scalar passage on the E \flat maj7 in measure 9 presages the E \flat m7 that follows. We hear varying degrees of this idea at the ends of bars 16, 19, 21, 23 and 38.

A crucial element of this improvisation is Blue’s facility with subdivisions. Starting with straight eighths and in the second bar moving right into triplets sets us up immediately, and though he stays with triplet-based rhythms for most of the next seven bars, at measure 10 the quintuplet that morphs into 16ths takes us back to duple-oriented subdivisions (only more dense, building the energy).

At bar 16, triplets are reintroduced, and from here Blue gets more free with his switching of subdivisions—moving from duple to triple easily, and sometimes rapidly, like the triplets he peppers through bars 23–27, while keeping most of the rhythms in this passage 16th-note based.

DB

Jim Durso is a guitarist and bassist based in the New York area. Visit him online at jimidurso.com.

♩=124

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Chords: Cmaj7/G, Ab7/Bb, Cmaj7/G, Ab7/Bb, Cmaj7/G, E+7, Ebmaj7, Ebm7, Ab7, Dbmaj7, C#m7, F#7, Bbmaj7, B7(sus4), B7, Ebmaj7, F#7(sus4), F#7, Bbmaj7, B7(sus4), F7, Cmaj7, Amaj7, F#maj7, Ebm7, Ab7(b9sus4), Dbmaj7/A, Eb7/F#, F#7, Bbmaj7, Abmaj7, Fmaj7/G, Dm7, G7, Fm11/Gb, Ebmaj7/F, F+7(sus4), Bbmaj7, Gbmaj7/A, Ebmaj7/F#, C#m7/F#, Dm7, G+, Cmaj7/G, Bb7, Cmaj7/G, Bb7, Cmaj7/G, Bb7.

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P. Mauriat Professional Clarinets

Exquisite Build, Well-Rounded Sound

Woodwind and brasswind manufacturer P. Mauriat has introduced a completely new line of professional clarinets that complement its acclaimed saxophone and trumpet offerings. The lineup consists of two series—the 17-key PCL 721 series with either nickel- or silver-plated keys, and the 18-key PCL 821 series with either silver- or rose gold-plated keys—for a total of four models. Each is made of aged grenadilla wood, with pro appointments like blued steel springs, premium leather pads and a nickel-silver bell ring. They are designed for clarinetists seeking an exquisitely built instrument with sufficient “ping,” projection and response to excel in a variety of ensembles and playing environments.

I checked out the PCL 721 model and immediately recognized that it was a huge improvement over the intermediate-level instrument I’ve been doubling on—and frequently struggling with—for 20 years.

I was pleased to see two barrels provided in the case—a standard 66mm barrel (model 660) and a 65mm barrel (model 650)—which really comes in handy if you’re primarily a saxophone player such as myself, or when ensemble tuning starts to nudge above A=440. I found that the smaller barrel helped initial intonation when I play-tested the clarinet on a big band gig.

The PCL 721’s adjustable thumb rest is another great design idea that allows players to adjust for maximum comfort, regardless of the size of their hands. My hands are on the large side, and it was easy to select

a thumb-rest position to accommodate me. Comfort is key when playing clarinet for any length of time, and I never once felt fatigued on the PCL 721. In fact, I was drawn into it so much that I had a hard time putting the instrument down after blowing on it for extended periods.

Play-testing the PCL 721 in the practice room, I used my Vandoren mouthpiece with #3 and #3½ Vandoren reeds to get a classic, straightahead clarinet sound. I was able to achieve a consistent, focused tone throughout the instrument’s various registers. The chalumeau register was rich and responsive; throat tones were nice and clear, without a hint of stuffiness; and the clarion and altissimo registers were strong and brilliant. Intonation was impressive throughout the full range of the PCL 721.

The keywork was extremely comfortable and held up well during difficult passages that required fast, precise fingering. I found I was able to navigate smoothly across the break without a second thought or a single hitch.

I later played the PCL 721 on a raucous big band gig and was impressed with its well-rounded tone and its ability to project far beyond the bandstand. Lead parts on this clarinet were easy for the section to hear, and I had plenty of power for soloing over busy brass-section backgrounds.

The PCL 721 comes in a GL Traveler Single Case containing a PM Accessory Package. The case can be worn as a backpack and has an expandable storage compartment.

—Bruce Gibson

pmauriatmusic.com

Large-Chamber Tenor Saxophone Mouthpieces

JodyJazz HR Custom Dark, Theo Wanne Ambika 3 Offer Warm, Vintage Tones*

Two new tenor saxophone mouthpieces designed to produce decidedly dark, classic sounds reminiscent of the 1940s recently have become available from JodyJazz and Theo Wanne.

The JodyJazz HR* Custom Dark series was designed by Jody Espina and his team to produce a dark, yet warm, tenor saxophone tone. They are beautifully crafted hard rubber mouthpieces featuring a gold ring (based on the design of JodyJazz’s Power Ring ligature) built into the shank. This not only strengthens a critical area of the mouthpiece, but contributes to the full body of the sound, according to JodyJazz.

Looking inside the HR* Custom Dark, you don’t see a hard edge anywhere. It’s a big chamber, and all the sidewalls are nicely rounded. This design gives as much room in the chamber as possible for the sound to enlarge and spread. The mouthpiece is made from JodyJazz’s proprietary “CHR” Chedeville Hard Rubber, which is used throughout the Chedeville line of classical clarinet and saxophone mouthpieces recently acquired by JodyJazz. It’s a softer type of rubber, contributing to the warmth and traditional quality of the HR* Custom Dark’s tone.

As I warmed up with the HR* Custom Dark on my 1945 Martin “The Martin” tenor, my first impression was that it would be sweet for playing jazz ballads that emphasize the instrument’s low register. This mouthpiece clearly produces exactly what the designers intended. It’s the darkest of all the mouthpieces in the JodyJazz line, which are known among jazz play-

ers for their lively sizzle. But I was still concerned that its deep, dark focus might come at the expense of the ability to project and play at high volumes, especially in the horn’s upper register.

I would soon found out when I tried the HR* Custom Dark (8* tip opening) in a live performance. The sound I got was noticeably dark, yet had a beautiful tonal body. I would describe it as a fat, full-bodied sound—something I consistently strive for, especially on ballads. Yet, when I put some extra air behind a phrase or two for emphasis, the mouthpiece responded accordingly, and I discovered that any concerns I initially had about playing louder and more aggressively were unwarranted. This mouthpiece sounded great playing both soft and loud, and it remained free-blowing at all volume levels. I was also happy with the upper-register tone and response at higher volumes, and I had no trouble hitting basic altissimo notes on my old horn. The brightness is there when you need it.

The JodyJazz HR* Custom Dark comes in tip openings from 5* to 10*.

Theo Wanne’s new Ambika 3 is designed to produce a full-bodied vintage sound that’s even more dark-sounding than its predecessors (the original Ambika and the Ambika 2). It offers improved projection and dynamics.

The Ambika 3 is available in hard rubber and metal versions. The hard rubber model comes with Theo Wanne’s Enlightened Ligature, which has just three points of contact with the mouthpiece. One of those points is an interchangeable pressure plate that’s used to cradle the reed and secure it

to the mouthpiece. I found that moving the Enlightened Ligature up and down the reed, and adjusting the tension, clearly works well in achieving different types of tones.

The metal Ambika 3 mouthpiece also benefits from the same pressure plate system for its 24K Gold Plated Liberty Ligature, but it's permanently attached and adjusts along five sets of slots on the body of the piece. Just as with the hard rubber version, I found that moving this ligature up and down the reed, and adjusting the tension, produces dramatically different response and sound. Theo Wanne recommends moving the ligature forward to focus the sound and backward to spread the sound.

Both versions of the Ambika 3 have a recessed and replaceable bite pad built into the tip. I really like this feature. I am one of those saxophonists who inevitably cuts a tooth groove into the top of a mouthpiece over time, but I have never felt comfortable using the sticker pads that adhere to the surface of the mouthpiece.

Looking inside, you can tell where the Ambika 3's big sound comes from. The chamber is very open and large. The side rails are thin, maximizing the size of that chamber and increasing the resonance. Regarding tip openings, both mouthpieces I play-tested were size 7*. I tried the hard rubber version first. I normally play my vintage tenor with an Otto Link Tone Edge 7 and a Rovner Platinum ligature, a combination I have used for years to get "my sound," which I would describe as traditional-leaning. My first reaction to the Ambika 3 was that I loved the fullness of the tone and was impressed with the response. To my ear, it does produce a dark, more traditional sound in all registers of the tenor. I also liked the amount of control I had over a range of tones. I could easily take a soft ballad approach and get nice subtones with that rich, dark sound. But I found that I could increase air speed to make the mouthpiece project with a feeling of less resistance than what I'm used to. I still got that rich, vintage

sound at a higher volume, without things becoming overly bright.

I played the hard rubber Ambika 3 on a straightahead bebop gig and then a blues jam. On my jazz set, the dark, robust sound was well-suited for my old-school style of playing. I wasn't sure how this mouthpiece would work in the louder environment of the blues jam, but I was pleasantly surprised. I moved the ligature slightly higher on the reed to make it feel a bit stiffer, and found I could really put some air behind a phrase and make it pop when I wanted to, without a loss in that traditional tenor tone.

The Theo Wanne Ambika 3 is available in tip openings of 6* (.095 inches), 7* (.105) and 8 (.110).

—Peter McCormack

theowanne.com



Antigua 5200 Series Alto, Tenor Saxophones

Professional Line With Blend in Mind

Antigua Winds has added the AS5200 Alto Saxophone and TS5200 Tenor Saxophone to its professional line. The new instruments represent a different concept all together for Antigua, known for its Power Bell and Pro One series saxophones.

Antigua is positioning the 5200 series as horns with an overall neutral sound that are well suited for wind ensemble work yet are still capable of standing on their own for solo work in both jazz and classical music environments. The company describes its tonal profile as a mellow, focused sound that lands somewhere in between the robust sound of the Power Bell series and the overtone-rich, jazzy flexibility of the Pro One series.

Having spent 33 years in a big band playing mostly the 2nd tenor chair, I can identify with the need for such a horn. The nature of a big band is, of course, ensemble work. When you are part of an ensemble playing arranged music, one always must listen and blend with the other horns.

I play-tested the TS5200 tenor on a pair of jazz quintet gigs and in big band performances, outfitted with a vintage Otto Link metal mouthpiece. I found the keywork to be very efficient and easy to get used to. I was able to get a pleasing sound with subtle overtones and plenty of core to it. Like the AS5200, the TS5200 has a new A25 neck that's designed to make it easier to nail notes in the altissimo register; I normally use that range of the horn sparingly, but when I needed to climb up there I was on solid footing all the way.

I am a straightahead jazz player who likes ballads, so naturally I wanted to see how this horn sounded in the lower register and at subtone levels. I really liked its response and mellow sound, and intonation was consistent at all dynamic levels.

Playing the TS5200 in the big band setting was a different kind of test

altogether. This horn proved to be a great fit, as it blended with the saxophone section, and the entire ensemble, beautifully. As the band's set progressed, I became eager to see how this tenor stood out when it was my turn to solo. I was

not disappointed in the least. I had no trouble projecting my sound with this horn and keeping up with the Tenor 1 soloist during a couple of classic big band tenor battles. It got plenty of response at the higher volume level and felt virtually no limitations during my improvisations.

Features of the AS5200 and TS5200 include a combination of straight and rolled tone holes, fully ribbed construction, standard-size one-piece bell, redesigned key ergonomics, high F-sharp key, Pisoni Pro pads with metal resonators, vintage lacquer finish, mother-of-pearl key touches, power-forged keys, adjustable thumb rest, beautiful hand engraving and a deluxe contoured backpack case.

—Peter McCormack

antiguawinds.com



GT sax A70GL Alto, S30TIS Soprano

Impressive Action, Quality Craftsmanship

Taiwan-based GT saxophone's professional tenor, alto and soprano models are now being distributed in the States by East Coast-based Old Dog New Saxophones. I took the company's the alto model GT-A70GL alto and GT-S30TIS soprano for a test-drive recently, with outstanding results.

The GT-A70GL is made of brass alloy with gold lacquer finish and elegant engraving on the bell. The body of the instrument incorporates ribbed construction, a triple annealed bell/bow/neck, a pointed pivot screw and a rocking table mechanism. The keywork includes power-forged keys, high-quality Italian Pisoni waterproof leather pads, wool felt and convex nickel-plated brass resonators. The horn's key action was fast and accurate, with properly adjusted blued steel springs and Italian corks. And its genuine abalone shell buttons feel great under the fingers. Other features include a high F# key, an adjustable metal thumb hook and an ergonomically designed front F key.

I outfitted the GT-A70GL with my usual setup of a hard rubber Claude Lakey #4*3 mouthpiece paired with a #2½ Vandoren Java Red Box reed for play-testing in a straightahead jazz setting. The first thing I noticed was how relaxed I felt with the instrument's key locations. The action was very similar to my vintage Selmer Mark VI alto, so it felt great right away and took very little getting used to. Other Mark VI players likely will have a similar positive experience with it. The sound I got with my trusty Lakey

was powerful and flexible, which proved perfect for playing lead alto on big band charts.

Switching to my metal Yanagasawa mouthpiece produced a response that would be great for rock and contemporary music. I had the GT-A70GL alto projecting wonderfully, especially when soaring up into the altissimo range. I also enjoyed the warmth and easy response of low passages and subtone sections.

The GT-S30TIS soprano is a lightweight, one-piece horn that's made of a titanium alloy and is currently available in brushed silver finish. Featuring an internal bore that's unique among modern sopranos, it's designed to give the player a big, resonant voice similar to that of vintage horns, while at the same time offering the best in contemporary keywork. In addition to its beautiful, complex tone, the GT-S30TIS is a sight to behold, with its detailed engraving and elegant golden keywork.

Each GT sax is hand-hammered more than 500 times and play-tested to ensure that the timbre is just right. I recommend that any serious player shopping for a pro-quality horn take one for a spin.

—Bruce Gibson

olddognewsaxophones.com



Alexander Superial I Jazz Hard Rubber

Tenor Mouthpiece Has Vintage Aesthetic, Plenty of Punch

Since the 1970s, saxophone specialist Tom Alexander has worked with some of the top names in jazz, including Michael Brecker, Dave Liebman, Joe Lovano, Joshua Redman, Donny McCaslin, Ravi Coltrane and Greg Osby. Saxophonists have been playing and singing the praises of his company's Alexander Superial NY and DC Reeds for years.

Now, Alexander has developed a mouthpiece that lives up to his reputation: the Superial I Jazz Tenor. In designing it, he envisioned a way to capture the essence of some great vintage mouthpieces while still having the ability to project enough for modern, amplified playing situations.

This mouthpiece is capable of producing a large, focused sound from low B-flat up to the altissimo register, with considerable punch and projection, an even scale and an enhanced upper register. Its large chamber supports a classic tone with full, warm body but without any stifling stuffiness. It also generates a well-defined harmonic edge.

Superial I Jazz Tenor gave me the sensation that my chops were somehow elongated into the very back of my throat. And, like a diving board that gets more pliable the farther out you step, that extra length of air-column control functioned like a springboard for dramatic inflections when pressed upon. All of this came easily—it felt as natural as singing or talking, which was revelatory. And even if I were tempted to get carried away with the bends, whinnies, vibrato, swells and other saxophonic effects that are possible with the Superial I Jazz Tenor, the mouthpiece provides just the right amount of well-balanced resistance to keep everything focused and properly governed.

I loved the mouthpiece's immediate response and the way it gave me

access to complex tonal qualities that were even and consistent from one register to the next. I was knocked out by just how neatly my altissimo notes slotted; in that regard, the Superial I Jazz Tenor is unlike any other piece I've tried. It helped me locate where those overtones resonated, so I was able to nail them every time.

Superial I Jazz Tenor mouthpieces are made of German hard rubber bar stock, and the ones I play-tested featured a cool red marble swirl. Something about it brings out tones that are ideal for straightahead jazz. After playing these mouthpieces for several months, I was able to find their center and do pretty much anything I wanted, tenor-wise.

Thanks to precise facings and the resonant body shell of these mouthpieces, you can use a more open tip if you want a larger sound with a wider dynamic range. They come in sizes 7–10* (other tip openings may be available by special request).

Superial I Jazz Tenor mouthpieces are available from select retailers, including Virtuosity in Boston and Second Wind Music in Lincolnville, Maine.

—Ed Enright
superial.com



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1. Spit Happens

Spit Sponge pad dryers from Key Leaves remove the moisture left on woodwind pads and toneholes that swabs miss, resulting in extended pad life and consistently cleaner instruments. Spit Sponge uses an ultra-absorbent top to clean delicate pads, while the bottom has micro-texture grooves to trap and remove gunk that grows on toneholes. The universal woodwind-size Spit Sponge can clean a flute, clarinet, oboe, bassoon and other instruments. The saxophone-size Spit Sponge has an easy-fit shape to care for large sax pads and those hard-to-reach places like G# or between key guards.

More info: keyleaves.com

2. Classic Clarinet Solos

Hal Leonard has announced the *Clarinet Omnibook* for B-flat instruments. Similar to the *Trumpet Omnibook* Hal Leonard released in 2018, the *Clarinet Omnibook* compiles 43 famous jazz clarinet solos transcribed directly from the artist recordings. The book includes solos from Sidney Bechet ("Okey-Doke"), Eddie Daniels ("I'm Beginning To See The Light"), Buddy DeFranco ("Fascinating Rhythm"), Pete Fountain ("Ja-Da"), Benny Goodman ("Runnin' Wild"), Ken Peplowski ("All The Things You Are"), Artie Shaw ("My Blue Heaven"), Phil Woods ("Azure") and others.

More info: halleonard.com

3. Reed Sculptor

The Ultimate from R.S. Berkeley is a tool with a curved blade that allows woodwind players to sculpt, balance and fine-tune their reeds for maximum vibration and performance. It features a wood handle that fits in the palm of the player's hand and works on all single and double reeds. Instructional videos for how to properly use The Ultimate can be found at the R.S. Berkeley website.

More info: rsberkeley.com

4. Low Harps, High Enthusiasm

Inspired by popular demand among enthusiastic harp players, Lee Oskar has introduced four new lower-key major diatonic harmonicas in the keys of low C, low D, low E and low F-sharp. The new lower-key harmonicas can play a full octave lower than the company's other major diatonic harmonicas.


More info: leeoskar.com

5. Reverse-Engineered Cane

Venn from D'Addario Woodwinds combines the stability, longevity and durability of a synthetic reed with the sound and feel of natural cane. To mimic the organic structure of cane, D'Addario reverse-engineered cane itself, layering different strengths of polymer fibers with resin and organic reed elements to make up the reed blank. Venn lasts up to 20 times longer than a cane reed and is resistant to splitting, chipping and breaking. It requires no prep, and consistency is identical from reed to reed. Venn is available for B-flat clarinet and alto and tenor saxophone in core strengths.

More info: daddario.com





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- Create dignified work and pass on the legacy of jazz and blues through our Agnes Varis Jazz in the Schools program.
- Provide free medical care and operations through our angels at Englewood Hospital & Medical Center.



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SHOWTIME!

Your Guide to Jazz Fests Around the Globe

Bria Skonberg (left) and Devin Starks perform at the 2019 Monterey Jazz Festival in California. (Photo: ©Monterey Jazz Festival/Grason Littles)

SPOTLIGHT FEATURES

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Festival in Vermont**

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Jazz Festival in Norway**

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 This trumpet denotes a corresponding ad in this guide.

LINDSEY VICTORIA PHOTOGRAPHY



Wycliffe Gordon at the Litchfield Jazz Festival in Washington, Connecticut



Christian McBride at the Montclair Jazz Festival in New Jersey

NEIL GRABOWSKY FOR JAZZ HOUSE KIDS

Berks Jazz Fest

Reading, Pennsylvania

March 27–April 5

The 30th annual Boscov's Berks Jazz Fest is presented by the Berks Arts Council. The programming includes tributes to Dave Brubeck and Stevie Wonder.

LINEUP: Marcus Miller, Béla Fleck & The Flecktones, Randy Brecker, Brubeck Brothers, Chris Botti, Pat Bianchi Quartet, Felix Pastorius & Hipster Assassins, Gerald Albright & Jonathan Butler, Brian Culbertson, Keiko Matsui & Kirk Whalum, Rick Braun, Peter White, Mindi Abair, Brian Bromberg, Boney James, Tab Benoit, Zaccai Curts & Albert Rivera Latin Jazz Band, Pieces of a Dream, Kenny Neal & The Neal Family Revue (with Frank Bey).

berksjazzfest.com

Center City Jazz Festival

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

April 25

Part of Philadelphia Jazz Appreciation Month, this festival presents a jam-packed schedule of more than 20 bands performing at several venues over six hours, all within walking distance of each other. One ticket provides access to all performances.

LINEUP: Past performers include Marcus Strickland, David Kikoski Trio, Arturo Stabile, Sharel Cassity, V. Shayne Frederick, Nicole Sapphos, Danny Janklow, Leon Jordan Jr., Yessah Furaha-Ali, Ken Foswer, Lena Seikaly.

ccjazzfest.com

Mary Lou Williams Jazz Festival

Washington, D.C.

May 8–9

The Kennedy Center celebrates the 25th anniversary of this event, as well as the upcoming 70th birthday of an artist who performed at the first Williams Festival in 1996: host and NEA Jazz Master Dee Dee Bridgewater.

LINEUP: Artemis, Dee Dee Bridgewater, more.

kennedy-center.org/whats-on/explore-by-genre/jazz/2019-2020/mary-lou-williams-jazz-festival-70413

Plymouth Rock Jazz Fest

Plymouth, Massachusetts

May 8–9

At the seventh edition of this festival, on May 9, guitarist Mark Whitfield will perform with his son Davis Whitfield on piano and longtime cohorts Eric Wheeler on bass and Kush Abadey on drums.

LINEUP: Amanda Carr with special guest Elan Trotman, The Mark Whitfield Family Band.

spirecenter.org/events

Vision Festival

Brooklyn, New York

May 19–25

The Vision Festival celebrates its 25th year with legendary and emerging stars of improvised music. Also featuring dance, poetry and film, this multi-arts festival returns to Roulette in Brooklyn. The opening night festivities pay tribute to Amina Claudine

Myers, with a Lifetime Achievement award and three distinct performances.

LINEUP: Amina Claudine Myers, David Murray, Joëlle Léandre, Peter Brötzmann, Wadada Leo Smith, Matthew Shipp, Ingrid Laubrock, John Zorn Piano Trio, Angel Bat Dawid, Joe McPhee, Tomeka Reid, Oliver Lake, Nicole Mitchell, Tyshawn Sorey, Dave Burrell, Jamalaadeen Tacuma, Jason Kao Hwang, D.D. Jackson, Adam Rudolph, Nels Cline, Zeena Parkins, William Parker, Craig Taborn, Joshua Abrams, Hamid Drake & Gerald Cleaver, Whit Dickey.

artsforart.org/vision

Westsylvania Jazz & Blues Festival

Indiana, Pennsylvania

May 23 (pre-session May 22)

This free festival of jazz and blues, sponsored by Delaney Chevrolet, takes place in a picturesque small town in western Pennsylvania, with music from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. Music continues in local establishments after hours.

LINEUP: Past performers include Sean Jones, Sonny Landreth, Dwayne Dolphin.

westsylvaniajazzandblues.org

New York Guitar Festival

New York City

(Dates TBA)

Founded in 1999, this festival has presented many of the world's most influential guitarists at Carnegie Hall, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, National Sawdust, (Le) Poisson Rouge and other venues. Performers have come from many genres: jazz, classical,

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Poogie Bell at the Westsylvania Jazz & Blues Festival in Indiana, Pennsylvania

blues, pop, rock, folk and world music.

LINEUP: Last year's performers included Fantastic Negrito, Kaia Kater, Rafiq Batia, Amythyst Kiah.

newyorkguitarfestival.org

Michael Arnone's Crawfish Fest

Augusta, New Jersey

May 29-31

What started as a small crawfish boil in Butler, New Jersey, in 1989 has turned into an annual celebration of the music and food of New Orleans and Louisiana. Musical genres represented include jazz, Cajun, zydeco, Delta blues, New Orleans r&b, brass bands and gospel, performed on three stages.

LINEUP: Tab Benoit, Amanda Fish, Samantha Fish, Christone "Kingfish" Ingram, Southern Avenue, Anders Osborne, Elektric Voodoo, Soul Project NOLA, Big Sam's Funky Nation, Honey Island Swamp Band, Jonathon Long, Pine Leaf Boys, Marcella Simien & Her Lovers, Terry & The Zydeco Bad Boys, Big Mamou, Erica Falls, Bonerama, New Orleans Suspects, Jeffery & The Creole Cowboys.

crawfishfest.com

City Parks Foundation's SummerStage

New York City

June-October

SummerStage is New York's largest free outdoor performing arts festival, annually presenting more than 100 performances in 16 parks throughout the five boroughs, with performances ranging across genres and artistic disciplines.

LINEUP: Indigo Girls, Ani DiFranco, The Decemberists, Sharon Van Etten, Grace Ives, more.

summerstage.org

Blue Note Jazz Festival

New York City

June 1-30

This festival features more than 150 shows at music venues around New York City during a monthlong celebration of jazz featuring some of the

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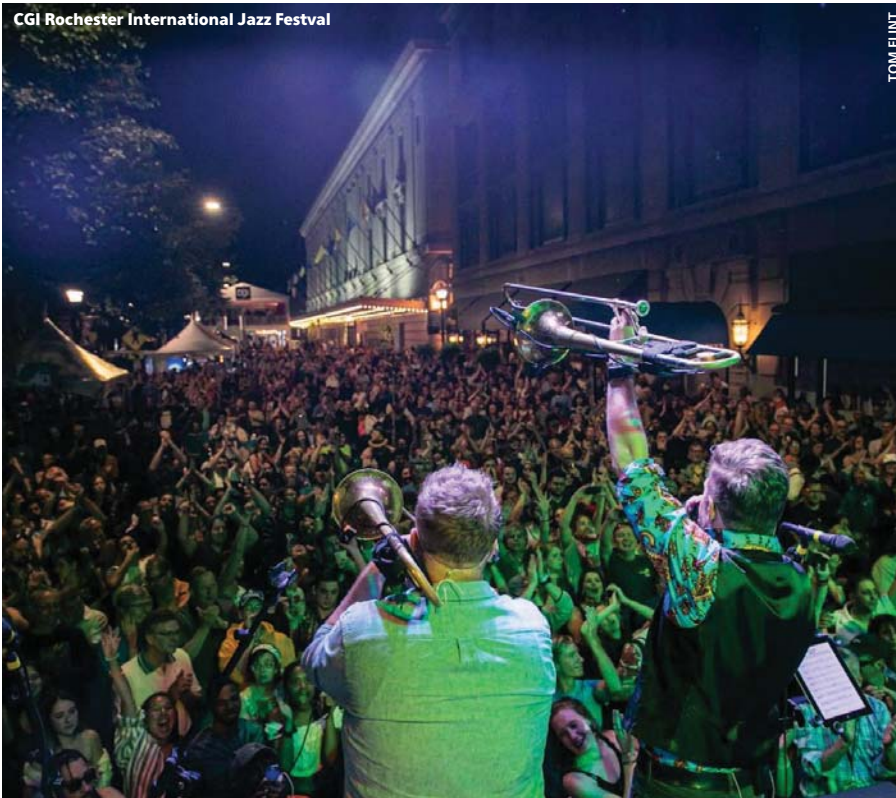
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CGI Rochester International Jazz Festival

TOM FLINT



biggest names on the scene. Presented by the owners of the Blue Note jazz club, the festival is celebrating its ninth anniversary this year.

LINEUP: Marcus Miller (residency), John Scofield, Al Di Meola, Joey Alexander, Buddy Guy, Jack DeJohnette/Ravi Coltrane, Matthew Garrison, Chris Botti, Kenny G, Lisa Fischer, George Clinton, Sweet Honey in the Rock.
bluenotejazzfest.com

Capital Jazz Fest

Columbia, Maryland

June 5-7

Tens of thousands of music lovers from throughout the country flock to the suburbs of Washington, D.C., to attend "the jazz festival with soul." Between musical sets, fans can enjoy fine art and crafts at the Festival Marketplace, culinary treats at the food court, and meet-and-greet events with the artists.

LINEUP: Last year's performers included Gregory Porter, George Clinton, Gladys Knight, India Arie, Brian McKnight.

capitaljazz.com/fest/2020

Burlington Discover Jazz Festival

Burlington, Vermont

June 5-14

This festival spans 10 days and reaches more than 80,000 people with over 100 hours of free live music in 38 venues, including two stages that bookend the four-block Church Street Marketplace, in addition to ticketed shows at the historic Flynn Theater, intimate Flynn Space and Waterfront Tent.

LINEUP: Pharoah Sanders, Fantastic Negrito, Bill Charlap, Joel Ross, Jaimie Branch,

Yosvany Terry, Lakecia Benjamin, Marc Ribot, Nubya Garcia, more.

discoverjazz.com

Berkshire Gateway Jazz Weekend

Lee, Massachusetts

(Dates TBA)

This weekend of top-shelf jazz features concerts, al fresco jazz, food vendors, a jazz brunch and more—all in the town of Lee, known as the "Gateway to the Berkshires." In 2019, the event was held in mid-June.

LINEUP: Past performers include Frank Vignola Trio, Jeff Holmes Big Band, Di-ego Figueiredo, Ken Peplowski.

berkshiregatewayjazz.org

Jazz in June

Camden, Maine

June 11-14

At this year's festival, events will take place at the Camden Opera House and the Hillside at the Camden Snowbowl. The ocean, lovely inns and delicious lobster combine with great music to make Jazz in June a must.

LINEUP: Brubeck Brothers Quartet, Frank Vignola, Harry Allen Quartet, Jim McNeely Trio with Adam Nussbaum & Jay Anderson, more.

jazzinjunecamdenme.com

DC Jazz Festival

Washington, D.C.

June 12-21

The 16th edition of this festival includes 165 stylistically diverse performances, in 40-plus venues, in 25 neighborhoods citywide. The event is renowned for its wide array of

Tomoka Reid (left), Tomas Fujiwara and Patricia Brennan at the Vision Festival in Brooklyn



KEN WEISS

emerging and distinguished performers. Programming will include centennial tributes to Dave Brubeck and Charlie Parker.

LINEUP: Gregory Porter, Joshua Redman, Kenny Garrett, Lakecia Benjamin, Pedrito Martinez, Eubanks-Evans-Experience, Smithsonian Jazz Masterworks Orchestra, Antonio Hart, Donald Harrison, TK Blue, Matt Wilson's Honey & Salt, Shabaka and The Ancestors, Warren Wolf, Al Di Meola, Jazzmeia Horn, Cyrus Chestnut/Allyn Johnson (The Gospel According to

Jazz), Raul Midón, Avery*Sunshine, Jamie Baum & Short Stories, Matthew Whitaker, The Baylor Project, Allison Au Quartet.
dcjazzfest.org

Clifford Brown Jazz Festival

Wilmington, Delaware

June 17-20

Wilmington honors trumpeter and hometown hero Clifford Brown (1930-'56) with the largest annual free jazz festival on the East Coast.

LINEUP: Past performers include Marcus Miller, Hiromi, Rufus Reid, Branford Marsalis, Terence Blanchard.

cliffordbrownjazzfest.com

Pittsburgh International Jazz Festival

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

June 18-21

Curated by the August Wilson African American Cultural Center, the PIJF is celebrating its 10th anniversary and features three stages, outdoor bars, jam sessions, a jazz bar crawl, food trucks and an opening night party.

LINEUP: Dianne Reeves Beleza Brazil, The Bad Plus, Jazzmeia Horn, Chaka Khan, Jeff "Tain" Watts, Nate Smith & Kinfolk, Sean Jones, Christian Scott aTunde Adjuah, Aymée Nuviola & Gonzalo Rubalcaba, The Baylor Project, Chico Freeman, The Nth Power, Lakecia Benjamin, Christone "Kingfish" Ingram, Lauren Talese, Brett Williams.

pittsburghjazzfest.org

CGI Rochester International Jazz Festival

Rochester, New York

June 19-27

This event is one of the world's leading jazz festivals, drawing more than 200,000 people annually. More than 1,750 established artists and rising stars from around the world will perform in 330-plus shows at 21 venues. The 100-plus

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HANNAH MAXWELL PHOTOGRAPHY

Eric Person at the Hudson Valley Jazz Festival



NICK FATA

Eric Marienthal at the Scranton Jazz Festival in Pennsylvania

free shows/events include nightly jam sessions and jazz workshops led by visiting artists.

LINEUP: Cassandra Wilson, Kurt Elling & Danilo Pérez, Puss N Boots (Norah Jones/Sasha Dobson/Catherine Popper), Taj Mahal, Jeremy Pelt, Bob James Trio, Nile Rodgers & Chic, Garth Fagan Dance with Monty Alexander, Kool & The Gang, The Allman Betts Band, Harvey Mason Trio with Elliott Farmer, Ms. Lisa Fischer with Taylor Eigsti, Marc Broussard, Tuck & Patti, Christone "Kingfish" Ingram, Tommy Emmanuel, Spyro Gyra, Ranky Tanky, Stacey Kent, The Cookers, Sammy Miller & The Congregation, Arturo O'Farrill, Wayne Escoffrey, Sarah McKenzie, Kokoroko, Jason Miles, The Reverend Peyton's Damn Big Band, René Marie & Experiment In Truth, Brubeck Brothers, Bobby Rush, Helen Sung, Lew Tabackin Trio, Jamie Baum 5tet, Peter Bernstein Quartet, Stephane Wrembel, Lioness, Davina & The Vagabonds, Drum Battle! (Kenny Washington vs. Joe Farnsworth), Yazz Ahmed, Giveton Gelin, Connie Han Trio, Mike LeDonne Trio, Shayna Steele, George Garzone Quartet with Frank Tiberi, Sunna Gunnlaugs Trio, Jonathan Kreisberg, Alexa Tarantino, Dwayne Dopsie & The Zydeco Hellraisers, Emmaline, Huntertones, Vanessa Collier, Wynonna & The Big Noise.

rochesterjazz.com

Boston Art Music and Soul Festival

Boston, Massachusetts

June 27

Boston Art Music and Soul (BAMS) Festival celebrates Afro-centric identity and Black artistry, while amplifying the voices and creative contributions from local, regional and national entertainers of color. Since its debut in June 2018, more than 8,500 people have attended the annual summer event at the historic Franklin Park-Playstead Field.

LINEUP: Last year's performers includ-

ed Eric Roberson and Cliff Notez.

bamsfest.org/bamsfestival

Freihofer's Saratoga Jazz Festival

Saratoga Springs, New York

June 27-28

Founded in 1978, this event is one of the longest-running jazz festivals in North America and—with a capacity of more than 25,000—one of the largest. The two-day, two-stage festival features a lineup of international talent at the Saratoga Performing Arts Center in the idyllic Saratoga Spa State Park.

LINEUP: Cassandra Wilson, Kurt Elling & Danilo Pérez, Taj Mahal, Eliane Elias, Nile Rodgers & Chic, Kool & The Gang, Issac Delgado & His Afro-Cuban Big Band, The Brubeck Brothers, Ozmosys (Omar Hakim, Rachel Z, Linley Marthe & Kurt Rosenwinkel), Fly Higher: Charlie Parker @ 100, Matthew Whitaker, Amina Figarova Sextet Plus Strings, Charles R. Wood, Matt Wilson's Honey & Salt, Nadjé Noordhuis, Jeff Lederer & Martin Wind, Javon Jackson Quartet (feat. Jimmy Cobb), Ranky Tanky, Little Freddie King, Tiempo Libre, Connie Han Trio, Carolyn Wonderland, Emmaline, Ryan Keberle & Catharsis (feat. Camila Meza), Scott Robinson, Jorge Roeder & Eric Doob.

spac.org

Briggs Farm Blues Festival

Nescopeck, Pennsylvania

July 9-11

What began as a single day of music in 1998 has evolved into a three-day celebration of music and togetherness.

LINEUP: Shemekia Copeland, Ana Popovic, Lil' Ed & The Blues Imperials, The Campbell Brothers, Victor Wainwright & The Train, Celisse Henderson, Mac Arnold & Plate Full O' Blues, Swampcandy, Scott Pemberton Band, The National Reserve, King Solomon

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NEWPORTJAZZ.ORG

Hicks, Gracie Curran, The Mighty Susquehannas, Bret Alexander & Friends, Miz.
briggfarm.com

North Atlantic Blues Festival

Rockland, Maine

July 11-12

This annual blues music festival featuring national blues performers is considered one of the most prestigious on the East Coast. The festival is held at the Public Landing overlooking the picturesque Rockland Harbor. In addition to all-day live entertainment, the festival has vendors selling

a wide array of food, drinks and crafts.

LINEUP: Thornetta Davis, Johnny Rawls Soul Revue, Ronnie Baker Brooks, Ruf's Blues Caravan, Gumbo Grits & Gravy, Tullie Brae, Tennessee Redemption, Ana Popovic, Jason Ricci, Coco Montoya, RB Stone.
northatlanticbluesfestival.com

Caramoor Jazz Festival

Katonah, New York

July 18

At this festival, presented in collaboration with Jazz at Lincoln Center, fans can enjoy expanded food options,

child-friendly activities, complimentary house tours and outstanding talent.

LINEUP: Eliane Elias, Sean Jones & Dizzy Spellz, Sherman Irby & Momentum, Jeremy Bosch, Endeia Owens & The Cookout, Jon Thomas Quintet (feat. Samara Joy), Alexa Tarantino Quartet, Pasquale Grasso, Kenny Banks Jr. Trio, Tatiana Eva-Marie Duo, Felix Moseholm Quartet, Summer Camargo Trio, Jazz at Lincoln Center's Summer Jazz Academy Big Bands with special guests Ingrid Jensen, Sean Jones & Sherman Irby.
caramoor.org/events/jazz-festival-2020

92Y Jazz in July

New York City

July 21-30

Artistic Director Bill Charlap is at the helm for the 36th edition of this event, presented by the 92nd Street Y. Jazz in July features jazz musicians in unique, once-in-a-lifetime performances. On July 30, the all-star concert will feature Joe Lovano, Jon Faddis, Anat Cohen, Bill Charlap, John Patitucci and Lewis Nash.

LINEUP: Bill Charlap, Dee Dee Bridgewater, Jeremy Pelt, Lew Tabackin, Ken Peplowski, Ann Hampton Callaway, Veronica Swift, Ted Rosenthal, Sandy Stewart, Harry Allen, Warren Vaché, Steve Wilson, Renee Rosnes, Dennis Mackrel, Sullivan Fortner, Aaron Diehl, Emmet Cohen, Miki Yamanaka, David Wong, Carl Allen.

92y.org/jazz

Central Pennsylvania Jazz Festival

Greater Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

July 23-26

This festival celebrates the 40th anniversary of Central Pennsylvania Friends of Jazz. Events include a riverboat cruise, party, jazz walk and a picnic. The festival features local and student musicians in addition to a national headliner.

LINEUP: Past performers include George Cables, Benny Golson, Delfeayo Marsalis.
friendsofjazz.org/festival

Northeast Jazz & Wine Festival

Syracuse, New York

July 24-25

Jazz, funk, soul and late-night jam sessions are presented on three stages in Clinton Square. A scholastic festival provides performance opportunities for local youth bands. This festival anchors Syracuse Artsweek, showcasing the area's visual and performing arts.

LINEUP: Past performers include Delfeayo Marsalis, Huntertones, Jackiem Joyner, Will Donato, Special EFX, Joshua Breakstone, Davina & The Vagabonds.

nejazzwinefest.org

Litchfield Jazz Festival

Washington, Connecticut

July 25-26

Nestled in the Berkshire foothills, this festival has presented jazz titans since 1996. Fans can enjoy two days of music and 25th anniversary parties at the new state-of-the-art performing arts center on The Gunnery campus.

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litchfieldjazzfest.org 860.361.6285

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Veronica Swift at Freihofer's Saratoga Jazz Festival

LINEUP: Bobby Watson, Donald Harrison, Benny Green & Veronica Swift, Avery Sharpe, Arturo O'Farrill Quartet, Charlie Parker Centennial Band, Art Blakey Tribute Band, Melinda Rodriguez, Nicole Zuraitis, more.
litchfieldjazzfest.org

Rockport Jazz Festival

Rockport, Massachusetts
 July 26-August 2

The ninth edition of this festival features top jazz artists performing in the sea-side Shalin Liu Performance Center.

LINEUP: Stefon Harris, Joey DeFrancesco, Veronica Swift with Benny Green, more.
rockportmusic.org

Montclair Jazz Festival

Montclair, New Jersey
 August 1-15

Directed by Christian McBride and produced by Jazz House KIDS, this fest features performances at multiple venues, a DJ dance party and film series. It features two stages, a beer garden, shuttle, bike valet and concessions. About 250 artists, including 150-plus student musicians, perform at the Grand Finale.

LINEUP: Past performers include Christian McBride, Eddie Palmieri, Bettye LaVette, Dee Dee Bridgewater, Joey DeFrancesco, George Coleman.
montclairjazzfestival.org

Newport Jazz Festival

Newport, Rhode Island
 August 7-9

This year marks the 66th anniversary of America's most revered jazz festival, held at beautiful Narragansett Bay. The festival features four stages of music, food and crafts, two beer and wine gardens and a number of displays.

LINEUP: Robert Glasper (Artist In Residence), Norah Jones, Wynton Marsalis, Diana Krall, Angélique Kidjo, Jimmy Cliff, A Christian McBride Situation, Charles Lloyd, Maria Schneider Orchestra, Joe Lovano, Makaya McCraven, Nicholas Payton, Nubya Garcia, Cory Wong, Hiromi, Nate Smith & Kinfolk, Chris Potter Circuits Trio (feat. James Francies & Eric Harland), The Comet Is Coming, Khruangbin, The Jazz

Gallery All-Stars (feat. Jaleel Shaw, Morgan Guerin, Joel Ross, Charles Altura, Gerald Clayton, Linda May Han Oh, Kendrick Scott, Renee Neufville), The Soul Rebels, The Arturo/Zack/Adam O'Farrill Quintet, Avery*Sunshine, Jeff "Tain" Watts, Michela Marino Lerman, Warren Wolf, Somi, Catherine Russell, Miguel Zenón Quartet, Vince Giordano & The Nighthawks, Tuba Skinny, Colin Hancock & His Signature Seven, Mike Davis' The New Wonders, David Ostwald's Louis Armstrong Band, more.

newportjazz.org

Scranton Jazz Festival

Scranton, Pennsylvania
 August 7-9

This festival will celebrate its 16th year at the historic Radison Lackawanna Station Hotel and various downtown venues. It features international, national and regional jazz, blues and world-music artists.

LINEUP: Past performers include Chuck Mangione, Manhattan Transfer, Spyro Gyra, Stanley Clarke, Randy Brecker, Tierney Sutton, The New York Voices, John Pizzarelli.
scrantonjazzfestival.org

Springfield Jazz & Roots Festival

Springfield, Massachusetts
 (Date TBA)

This year's festival will be the seventh edition of an annual celebration that draws approximately 10,000 fans to downtown Springfield. The internationally heralded festival has become a powerful expression of civic pride, uniting the region's diverse cultural communities through music and education.

LINEUP: Last year's performers included Elio Villafranca, Tia Fuller, Cory Henry, Fiery String Sistas!, Samite, Elan Trotman.
springfieldjazzfest.com

Provincetown Jazz Festival

Cape Cod, Massachusetts
 August 12 & 17

Since 2005, the Provincetown Jazz Festival has been held in the oldest continuous art colony in the United States. The festival is a non-profit organization that donates a portion of the proceeds to wor-

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WARREN WOLF
AND WOLFPACK

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AND MORE!

NEWPORTJAZZ.ORG



Gregory Porter at the Pittsburgh International Jazz Festival

thy causes, including jazz in the schools.

LINEUP: Peter & Will Anderson, Steve Ahern, Mark Greel, Johnny Souza, Leslie Boyle, Alan Clinger, Fred Boyle, Ron Ormsby, Bart Weisman.

provincetownjazzfestival.org

Hudson Valley Jazz Festival

Sugar Loaf & Warwick, New York

August 13-16

This is the 11th season for this award-winning event, designed to highlight local artists deserving wider recognition. The Sugar Loaf Performing Arts Center will be home base for several shows.

LINEUP: Past performers include The Vanguard

Jazz Orchestra, Dave Liebman, Wallace Roney, Arturo O'Farrill, Lenny White, Buster Williams, Steve Swallow, John Abercrombie, Mark Egan, James Emery.

hudsonvalleyjazzfest.org

Norfolk Waterfront Jazz Festival

Norfolk, Virginia

August 21-22

Hampton Roads' longest-running outdoor jazz festival returns for two nights along the waterfront. This festival features a variety of ticket and seating options, including VIP Club, reserved seating, designated tent areas and festival lawn seating, plus food and beverages, a festival marketplace with crafts, retail items and more.

LINEUP: George Benson, David Sanborn, Jackeim Joyner, Adam Hawley, Euge Groove, The Fabulous Blondes (Cindy Bradley & Paula Atherton).

festevents.org/events/2020/jazz-fest

Charlie Parker Jazz Festival

New York City

August 28-30

Each year, City Parks Foundation assembles some of the finest musicians in the world who reflect Charlie Parker's musical individuality and genius, to promote appreciation for this highly influential and world-renowned artist. The 28th iteration of the festival will celebrate Parker's 100th birthday. This free celebration brings together veteran players and the next generation of jazz artists.

LINEUP: Past performers include Gary Bartz, Jack DeJohnette, Buster Williams, Catherine Russell, Monty Alexander, Keyon Harrold, Dee Dee Bridgewater, Matthew Whitaker.

cityparksfoundation.org/charlieparker

Baltimore Jazz Festival

Baltimore, Maryland

August 29-30

This festival celebrates jazz legends and up-and-coming jazz greats in downtown Baltimore.

LINEUP: Chelsea Green, Larnell Lewis, Blackman Murray Russo, Kevin Jackson, Isaac Parham.

baltimorejazzfestival.com



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JazzFest White Plains

White Plains, New York

September 9-13

Returning to the City of White Plains for its ninth year, JazzFest White Plains is a five-day celebration of jazz for music lovers of all ages. JazzFest has become a signature White Plains event of free and affordable jazz performances attracting jazz enthusiasts from throughout Westchester and beyond.

LINEUP: Last year's performers included Emmet Cohen Trio with George Coleman and Jimmy Cobb, Joel Ross, Melissa Aldana, Keyon Harrold, Mwenso & The Shakes, Camille Thurman with The Darrell Green Trio, Albert Rivera Quartet, Nanny Assis Trio, Kristina Koller, Pablo Mayor's Folklore Urbano NYC Trio, The Brian Carter Quartet, Gilberto Colón Jr. & Ensalada De Pulpo, Pete Malinverni's Jazz-Chester, Kotoko Brass, The Marcio Garcia Trio, Alphonso Horne and The Gotham Kings.

artsw.org/jazzfest

Delaware Water Gap Celebration of the Arts

Delaware Water Gap, Pennsylvania

(Dates TBA)

The 42nd Annual COTA (Celebration of the Arts) and Jazz Festival includes all-day jazz in three venues. The festival also features food, beer and craft vendors, an open jazz

jam and a judged art exhibit. In 2019, the festival was held in early September.

LINEUP: Past performers include Dave Liebman, Bill Charlap, Dave Stryker, Clarice Assad, Bill Goodwin, Carolyn & Jay Leonhart, Joey De-Francesco, Sherrie Maricle Organ Trio with Aki-ko Tsuruga, Nancy Reed, Paul Jost Quartet, Annie Sciolla Quartet, Water Gap Jazz Orchestra.

cotajazz.org/festival

Pittsfield City Jazz Festival

Pittsfield, Massachusetts

(Dates TBA)

The Pittsfield City Jazz Festival was founded in 2005 to present mainstream and traditional jazz in a downtown setting. There will be ticketed shows, as well as a number of free events. In 2019, the festival was held in October.

LINEUP: Last year's performers included Christian McBride's New Jawn, Veronica Swift.

berkshiresjazz.org

TD James Moody Jazz Festival

Newark, NJ

(Dates TBA)

This festival presents dozens of free and ticketed events. As always, the Sarah Vaughan International Jazz Vocal Competition closes the festival at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center. In 2019, the festival was held in November.

LINEUP: Last year's performers included Christian McBride, Spyro Gyra, Cather-

ine Russell, Lee Ritenour & Dave Grusin, Christian Sands, Helen Sung, Buddy Guy, Mavis Staples, Chaka Khan, The Roots.

njpac.org/series/td-james-moody-jazz-festival

Reading Blues Fest

Reading, Pennsylvania

November 20-22

This festival, which is presented by Berks Arts, features contemporary and traditional blues. The three-day celebration includes concerts, seminars, films and public talks.

LINEUP: Last year's performers included Christone "Kingfish" Ingram, Ed Palermo Big Band, Vanessa Collier, John Primer, Rick Estrin & The Nightcats, Deanna Bogart Band, Nick Moss Band (feat. Dennis Gruenling), Rob Paparozzi.

readingbluesfest.com

Manchester CT Jazz Festival

Manchester, Connecticut

December 5

The 5th Annual Manchester CT Jazz Festival presented by Beth Sholom B'nai Israel will take place in historic Cheney Hall. The festival will bring a mix of regional and international musicians to central Connecticut.

LINEUP: Last year's performers included John Patitucci, Greg Abate, Avery Sharpe.

myshul.org/jazzfest2020

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PITTSBURGHJAZZFEST.ORG



With its combination of indoor venues and outdoor stages, the Burlington Jazz Festival appeals to a wide variety of music fans.

BURLINGTON FEST MAKES JAZZ AVAILABLE TO EVERYONE

IN A NEW YORK TIMES INTERVIEW LAST year, Trey Anastasio reminisced about the night that he and his three bandmates in a less-than-1-year-old band called Phish attended a concert at the inaugural Burlington Jazz Festival in 1984 (not 1983, as he said in the article). The Modern Jazz Quartet headlined the show in the city's 1930 art-deco movie palace, then called the Flynn Theatre.

Anastasio remembered looking up at the stage that night and thinking, "That is the model for the band we want to be. We're going to be the Modern Jazz Quartet of rock 'n' roll." Thirty-five years later, he shared that memory with his colleagues, and they all agreed. "We were all like, 'Oh, my God. That's what happened!' Which is really weird."

The four musicians still attend the festival whenever their schedules permit, and their non-profit WaterWheel Foundation funds a lot of the free and reduced-price concerts. Those affordable options make the Burlington Discover Jazz Festival more accessible to low-income jazz fans than most summertime music events. This year's edition begins with a free, four-hour kick-off party on June 5, followed by nine days of music—each of those days offering free music downtown from noon to 8 p.m.

There will be ticketed events, as well, including an impressive variety of jazz artists, from pianist Bill Charlap to saxophonist Pharoah Sanders to guitarist Marc Ribot. The festival's emphasis on affordability is a nod to its origin as a collaboration between the Burlington City Arts organization and the Flynn Center for the

Performing Arts. Back then, the city's mayor put a big emphasis on making sure arts and culture were available to everyone in town, no matter how rich or poor they were. That mayor's name was Bernie Sanders.

"It's important to us that everyone in the community is able to participate in the festival," said Chelsea Lafayette, the managing director, now preparing for her fourth festival. "That was part of our original mission, and we try to stay true to that. For many, the arts are seen as a luxury, something that's the first thing to be cut in school. So, it's more important than ever to make sure that the arts are available to everyone. They're an enriching experience and no one should be excluded."

Not only does the festival try to offer something for every income level, it also offers something for most tastes. Every year, it books a blues act and a Latin-jazz act; this year it's Fantastic Negrito and Cuban saxophonist/percussionist Yosvany Terry, respectively. The programming is rounded out with many school bands, as well as professional jazz bands from Vermont.

"The art scene in Vermont overachieves for a place this size," Lafayette said. "That's especially true for jazz; there's a much stronger local scene than you'd expect. That's because of people like Big Joe Burrell, a saxophonist who played with B.B. King and Count Basie before settling down in Vermont and becoming our Jedi master, a mentor to many musicians in the area, including Trey. Joe died in 2005, but we start every festival with Big Joe Burrell Day."

In addition to offering free outdoor music

and ticketed indoor music for each of its 10 days, the festival also offers workshops, discussion forums and public interviews, so the audience can make a more personal connection with the performers.

Lafayette cited saxophonist Lakecia Benjamin as a particularly good example of an artist establishing a strong connection with fans: "Lakecia came here in 2016 as part of vocalist Charenée Wade's band. A lot of people were blown away by Lakecia, and they wanted us to bring her back. When I saw her playing new work at the Winter JazzFest in January, I knew I had to book her for this year's festival. We're a small enough festival that people get close to the performers, and when they get excited about someone, they want us to bring him or her back."

Likely to have a similar impact at this year's festival is trumpeter Jaimie Branch, who brings her quartet to the Flynn Space, a 180-seat, black-box theater, on June 8. Touring behind her second album, last year's *Fly Or Die II*, Branch doesn't plan to take any breaks onstage.

"We're playing 70 to 90 minutes of continuous music in our sets now," she said, "because we don't lose momentum that way. It's one long trip together. We're playing in the moment, and everything is on the table. How the music unravels each night can depend on how much we traveled that day, the sound onstage, the vibe of the band, the response of the audience. That way, every show is going to be different from the one before or the one after it."

—Geoffrey Himes

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 This trumpet denotes a corresponding ad in this guide.



French Quarter Festival

New Orleans, Louisiana

April 16-19

The French Quarter Festival features more than 1,700 musicians on 25 stages, 60 food vendors from New Orleans' favorite restaurants and countless special events scattered throughout the Quarter. It all ranks as one of the largest showcases of Louisiana food, music and culture in the world.

LINEUP: Irma Thomas, Tank and The Bangas, George Porter Jr., Rickie Lee Jones, Charmaine Neville, The Dixie Cups, Erica Falls, Lost Bayou Ramblers, Tim Laughlin, James Andrews, Jeremy Davenport, Little Freddie King.

fqfi.org

Festival International de Louisiane

Lafayette, Louisiana

April 22-26

The family-friendly event in downtown Lafayette brings a variety of unique and emerging performers to Louisiana and is committed to keeping the festival free to the general public.

LINEUP: Leyla McCalla, Tab Benoit, Geno Delafosse & French Rockin' Boogie, CimaFunk, 47soul, Nomadic Massive, Five Alarm Funk, The Waifs, Radio Radio, Pianorama, Ayrad, Delgres, Natu Camara, Sinkane, The Meditations, Lakou Mizik, Francisco, El Hombre, Ram, Les Filles de l'Illighadad, Doolin', Warren Storm, Yvette Landry & The Jukes, Chloé Breault, Great Gambion Griots, The Hip Abduction, Dave Puhacz, Dos Santos, Spoutnique, La Raiz, Dwayne Dopsie & The Zydeco Hellraisers, Jelly Toast, Lone Piñon, Julian Primeaux, Soul Creole, Brother Dege & The Brethren, Marina Orchestra, Nathan & The Zydeco Cha Chas, Feufollet, Jacques Surette, The Good Dudes, T'monde, Radio Zydeco, The Bucks, Major Handy & The Louisiana Blues Band, The Underhill Family Orchestra, Gerald Gruenig & Gentilly Zydeco, The Daiquiri Queens, The Debtors, Amis Du Teche,

Dg & The Freetown Sound, Sailor Mouth, UI Lafayette Latin Ensemble, Boma Bango, Sick Ride, Acadiana Symphony Youth Orchestra, Burke Riley Cajun Quintet, Board to Tears.

festivalinternational.org

Seabreeze Jazz Festival

Panama City Beach, Florida

April 22-26

This Panama City Beach festival brings together performers from the smooth and contemporary jazz worlds steps away from white-sand beaches, shopping and restaurants. Twenty performances are slated for the main stage in addition to an all-star jam session.

LINEUP: Marcus Miller, Brian Culbertson, Mindi Abair, Gerald Albright, Boney James, The Isley Brothers, The Rippingtons feat. Russ Freeman, Average White Band, Najee, Jeffrey Osborne, Michael J. Thomas, Peter White and Euge Groove, Nick Colonne, Guitar G Force feat. Tim Bowman, Nils, Steve Oliver, Marqueal Jordan, Jazz Funk Soul with Jeff Lorber, Everette Harp and Paul Jackson Jr., Cindy Bradley and Chris Standring, Eric Darius, Damien Escobar.

seabreezejazzfestival.com

Jacksonville Jazz Festival

Jacksonville, Florida

May 21-24

Fans can experience all that downtown Jacksonville has to offer during the 40th edition of this festival. The event features two stages and a vibrant street-festival atmosphere with local food, drinks and shopping in the area.

LINEUP: Past performers include Chick Corea, Yellowjackets, Gregory Porter, Gladys Knight, Delfeayo Marsalis, Snarky Puppy, Christian Scott aTunde Adjuah, Jon Batiste, Trombone Shorty, Jane Monheit, Alfredo Rodriguez Trio, Gerald Albright, Lizz Wright, Somi.

jacksonvillejazzfest.com

Spoletto Festival USA

Charleston, South Carolina

May 22-June 7

Established in 1977, Spoleto presents leading artists in jazz, as well as classical and popular music, dance, theater and opera. The 2020 jazz series features three outdoor evening concerts in the picturesque Cistern Yard: the ebullient Preservation Hall Jazz Band, The Cookers and A New Orleans Jazz Celebration—a star-studded tribute to Danny Barker.

LINEUP: Aruán Ortiz and Don Byron, Preservation Hall Jazz Band, Two Wings: The Music of Black America in Migration, A New Orleans Jazz Celebration, Linda May Han Oh and Fabian Almazan, The Cookers.

spoletousa.org

Atlanta Jazz Festival

Atlanta, Georgia

May 23-24

The annual Atlanta Jazz Festival celebrates jazz legends and up-and-coming jazz greats in venues throughout Metropolitan Atlanta. The festival culminates each Memorial Day Weekend with show-stopping performances at Piedmont Park.

LINEUP: Ron Carter, Jazzmeia Horn, Sean Jones, Miguel Zenón, Theo Croker, Nate Smith & Kinfolk, Patti Austin, Archie Shepp, India Aire, Mike Phillips, Logan Richardson.

atlantafestivals.com

Eureka Springs Blues Weekend

Eureka Springs, Arkansas

June 5-7

This weekend-long festival boasts rock-in' blues and mountain views, and features concerts in Eureka Springs, as well as in the surrounding areas.

LINEUP: Past performers include Selwyn Birchwood, John Nemeth, Mark Shields & Good Company, Coyote Claw, Blew Reed & The

Flatheads, Brick Fields Band, Coco Montoya with Carolyn Wonderland, Scott Garner & The Speedshift Band, Los Roscoes, Tom Baker, Tony Redman, Fast Johnny Ricker Band.
eurekaspringsblues.com

Jazz in June

Norman, Oklahoma

June 18-20

For the 37th year, this free event returns to Norman for three days of jazz and blues. Jams and clinics will be made available to patrons.

LINEUP: Past performers include The Chebon Tiger Band, Eric Gales, 145th Army Band, Smoochie Wallus, Huntertones.

jazzinjune.org

W.C. Handy Music Festival

Florence, Alabama

July 17-26

The W.C. Handy Music Festival returns for 10 days of performances, exhibits and events celebrating W.C. Handy, a Florence native known as the "Father of the Blues." More than 300 events take place during the week, ranging from live performances and film screenings to art exhibits, parties and educational talks.

LINEUP: Past performers include Mike Howard, Mike Dillon, The Swinging River Jazz Band, Lillie Mae, Col. Bruce Hampton, The Manhattans featuring Gerald Alston, Tommy Womack, Latimore, Trojan Drive Jazz Band, The Midnighters, Johnny Collier & The Misbehavers, Clara Belle & The Creeps, Dee Lucas.

wchandymusicfestival.com

Satchmo SummerFest

New Orleans, Louisiana

July 31-August 2

Now in its 20th year, Satchmo SummerFest is the premier festival dedicated to celebrating the life, legacy and music of Louis "Satchmo" Armstrong. The annual festival features contemporary and traditional jazz, brass bands, New Orleans cuisine, and insightful seminars about Armstrong's life and the history of New Orleans music.

LINEUP: Past performers include Irma Thomas, Cory Henry, Ashlin Parker's Trumpet Mafia, Charmaine Neville, Robin Barnes & The Fiyabirds, Jeremy Davenport.

satchmosummerfest.org

Mighty Mississippi Music Festival

Greenville, Mississippi

September 27-30

At its core, this festival is centered on the blues, which makes sense given the locale's significance in the music's history. The all-ages event features two stages hosting a variety of genres of music.

LINEUP: Past performers include Lucinda Williams, The Dirty Guv'nahs, Ashley McBryde, Dwayne Dopsie & The Zydeco Hellraisers, Steve Azar & The King's Men, Cedric Burnside Project.

mightymississippimusicfestival.com

Amelia Island Jazz Festival

Fernandina Beach, Florida

October 4-11

This festival provides a rich, cultural offering to northeast Florida by exposing thousands of people to the sounds, excitement and vitality of jazz. Situated on the Atlantic coast near Jacksonville, the festival presents world-class jazz in many styles, including swing, bebop, Dixieland, big band, Latin and contemporary. Performances are staged in several venues around Amelia Island, including the historic seaport village of Fernandina Beach.

LINEUP: John Pizzarelli Trio, Ken Peplowski, Trio Caliente, Les DeMerle Little Big Band feat. Bonnie Eisele.

ameliaislandjazzfestival.com

Clearwater Jazz Holiday

Clearwater, Florida

October 15-18

The 41st edition of this acclaimed event is a collaboration between the Clearwater Jazz Holiday Foundation, the City of Clearwater, Visit St. Pete/Clearwater and Ruth Eckerd Hall. The diverse programming has included jazz, r&b, funk, rock and Americana.

LINEUP: Past performers include Chicago, Trombone Shorty, The Soul Rebels, Boyz II Men, Blood, Sweat & Tears, Alison Krauss, Yonder Mountain String Band, Robert Randolph & The Family Band, Marcia Ball, University of Miami's Frost Jazz Ensemble featuring Dafnis Prieto.

clearwaterjazz.com

Jazz for All Ages Festival

Hilton Head Island, South Carolina

(Dates TBA)

Bob Masteller's Jazz for All Ages Festival is a charity event that supports jazz education in schools. Several scholarships, programs and instruments are provided to students and schools—specifically the Junior Jazz Foundation—through funds raised at the event. Special room rates are available. In 2019, the festival was held in late October.

LINEUP: Past performers include Deasguyz Orchestra, Jane Monheit, Clint Holmes.

jazzforallages.com

Suncoast Jazz Festival

Clearwater Beach, Florida

November 20-22

This year marks the 30th anniversary of the Suncoast Jazz Festival. In its early years, the event featured bands and musicians with a focus on early jazz styles, but more recently, working with guitarist Nate Najjar, the festival has expanded to include swing, big band, zydeco and Cajun, as well as a little rockabilly and samba.

LINEUP: Past performers include Jason Marsalis, Wycliffe Gordon, Harry Allen, Tommy Cecil, Nate Najjar, Adrian Cunningham, Dave Bennett, Daniela Soledade, Molly Ryan.

suncoastjazzfestival.com

October 4 thru 11

AmeliaIslandJazzFestival.com

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Jazz Hotline: 904-504-4772

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Pianist Craig Taborn leads his Daylight Ghosts Quartet at the 2019 Iowa City Jazz Festival.

IOWA CITY CELEBRATES 30 YEARS OF AWESOME JAZZ

THE IOWA CITY JAZZ FESTIVAL WILL CELEBRATE its 30th edition on the July 4 weekend, and the estimated audience of 25,000 might include someone like Gabe Medd. He's an active trumpeter on the New York scene nowadays, but childhood and teen years in Iowa set him on his musical path. Medd had some crucial youthful encounters at the city's festival with such visitors as trumpeters Ron Miles and Ambrose Akinmusire. Equally crucial to his early artistic development was an environment that fostered his creativity.

"There were so many opportunities to play and challenge myself," Medd said. "The jazz festival is a celebration and symbol of that. It's a family reunion and big display of the power of music that combines people from the community with bigger names."

A number of large and small local institutions join together to host this annual event. Iowa City Summer of the Arts is its presenting organization, which also is behind the Soul & Blues Festival, the Friday Night Concert Series and other seasonal celebrations. The University of Iowa has also been a strong supporter. Guitarist Steve Grismore, who founded the festival, teaches at the university. Located just a few blocks away from the array of small stores and restaurants that line Iowa City's downtown, the university also provides this festival's picturesque staging ground.

"The festival is on the Pentacrest, which is the heart of the University of Iowa campus," said John Kenyon, chair of the festival committee. "The center is the Old Capitol building,

which the university was formed around. It's a beautiful site. We put big stage right in front of the Old Capitol, so you have the sun setting behind the stage. It's a beautiful venue."

Kenyon, who also serves as the executive director of the Iowa City UNESCO City of Literature Organization, occasionally combines the city's literary and jazz traditions. The university hosts the prestigious Iowa Writers' Workshop, and the bookstore Prairie Lights is located near the festival site. Past events included combining the late Jimmy Heath's performance with a conversation about his 2010 memoir, *I Walked with Giants*. Others included drummer Matt Wilson's musical presentation of Carl Sandburg's poems and saxophonist Jane Ira Bloom's homage to Emily Dickinson.

"[Bloom's concert] happened to be a wonderful confluence of things coming together," Kenyon said. "It doesn't always work, but we're always looking for [multidisciplinary events]."

This year's festival headliners will include vocalist Sara Gazarek, trombonist Jennifer Wharton's Bonegasm and saxophonist Paquito D'Rivera. During D'Rivera's first visit to the festival in 1993, the event had just begun to book nationally known artists. Although this celebration has expanded considerably in the decades since then, D'Rivera feels that much of the festival's essence should remain unchanged, especially the exchanges between musicians and the legions of students who comprise much of the Iowa City audience.

"Every contact with young students is very useful because students sometimes pose ques-

tions that you never figure out yourself," he said. "You have to figure out a way to answer it. It's wonderful."

While the main stage has hosts an array of free performances, nearby indoor venues, such as The Mill, have served as spaces for ticketed events later at night. Acclaimed guitarist Jeff Parker will play two sets at The Mill on July 5. Over the years, the festival has booked a variety of artists who fall under the jazz umbrella, but who don't focus on swing or bop, such as Thumbscrew, The Bad Plus or pianist Craig Taborn's Daylight Ghosts Quartet (with reedist Chris Speed, bassist Chris Lightcap and drummer Dave King).

"We're trying to provide something for everyone," Kenyon said. "More often than not what we're hearing is that people appreciate that. Listening to somebody on record and then going to see them onstage, they can win you over. Not going way out—but pulling people a little off of that kind of classic bop/hard-bop/post-bop world—is important for us to do."

The festival remains focused on jazz, whereas similar events in other cities of this size use pop acts in an attempt to expand the audience. At the same time, the Iowa City festival avoids strict idiomatic boundaries.

"We occasionally push in a direction that doesn't please everyone and we want to sometimes push that comfort level a little bit," Kenyon said. "We want to do that while also providing people with plenty of opportunity to sit back and enjoy things they love."

—Aaron Cohen



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MIDWEST

 This trumpet denotes a corresponding ad in this guide.



Tri-C JazzFest Cleveland

Ravinia Festival Highland Park, Illinois March–September

Ravinia, North America's oldest music festival, will present more than 140 events this season, representing a variety of genres. The 36-acre park is nestled in a wooded area that makes it an enchanting place to experience music. Guests can bring their own picnics or eat at one of the park restaurants. Guests can enjoy music from the lawn or up close in reserved seats.

LINEUP: Chick Corea & The Spanish Heart Band with Rubén Blades, Trombone Shorty, The Roots, Tony Bennett, Macy Gray, King Crimson, The Zappa Band, Willie Nelson, John Legend, Ms. Lauryn Hill, Musiq Soulchild, Jill Scott, Rodrigo y Gabriela, Andrew Bird, Patti LaBelle, Michael Feinstein, Betty Bluckley, Chicago Symphony Orchestra.
ravinia.org

The Greater St. Louis Jazz Festival St. Louis, Missouri April 15–18

Presented by the University of Missouri—

St. Louis, this event features jazz stars and student bands.

LINEUP: John Scofield's Combo 66, Sean Jones, student bands.
music.umsi.edu/GSLJazzFestival/index.html

18th & Vine Jazz and Blues Festival Kansas City, Missouri April 16–18

This festival is a partnership between Metropolitan Community College–Penn Valley and the American Jazz Museum. This festival presents jazz stars, as well as hosting a noncompetitive event that provides middle school, high school and college students with an opportunity to gain a deeper appreciation for Kansas City's rich jazz heritage. Student participants will benefit from clinics and performances with musicians and have the opportunity to tour the American Jazz Museum.

LINEUP: Past performers include Meshell Ndegeocello, Lucky Peterson.
mcckc.edu/programs/music/penn-valley/jazz-festival

Wichita Jazz Festival Wichita, Kansas April 16–19

For about 50 years, this festival has been dedicated to fostering great jazz in Wichita and supporting the next generation of jazz musicians in Kansas. The event brings some of the greatest names in jazz to Wichita, and its educational programs offer young players the opportunity to work with professional musicians. Programming includes concerts at the Crown Uptown Theatre, a movie night and the Wichita State University Jazz Invitational.

LINEUP: Christian McBride, Sean Jones, Marcus Lewis.
wichitajazzfestival.com

Eau Claire Jazz Festival Eau Claire, Wisconsin April 24–25

Since 1967, this festival has maintained a standard of excellence in jazz education and performance. This educational and cultural jazz festival—the largest student-run festival in the United States—features



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A glance at this year's lineup:



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local, national and international artists.

LINEUP: Sean Jones, Diane Schuur.
eauclairezjazz.com

Chicago House Music Festival

Chicago, Illinois
 May 21-23

The Chicago House Music Conference and Festival will feature an industry gathering, DJs and live performances showcasing the various sounds and styles of house music, the genre born in Chicago that has gone on to revolutionize dance music internationally.

LINEUP: Past performers include Marshall Jefferson, Tony Humphries, Gene Hunt, Mark Grusane, First Lady.
chicagohousemusicfestival.us

Chicago Gospel Music Festival

Chicago, Illinois
 May 26-30

Celebrating the influence of the music genre born in this city more than 80 years ago, this festival will present the top gospel artists in the country. Over the years, the festival has featured traditional choirs and contemporary urban gospel mixed with dashes of hip-hop and house music.

LINEUP: Past performers include the Canton Spirituals, Israel & New Breed, Wendell Parker.
chicagogospelmusicfestival.us

Chicago Blues Festival

Chicago, Illinois
 June 5-7

With a diverse lineup celebrating the genre's past, present and future, the 37th annual Chi-

cago Blues Festival is a free event that will feature performances by more than 100 national, international and local artists. The programming features blues stars and spotlights the genre's contributions to soul, r&b, gospel, rock and hip-hop. The Jay Pritzker Pavilion will feature headliners from 5 to 9 p.m.

LINEUP: Catherine Russell, Shemekia Copeland, Lil' Ed & The Blues Imperials, Jimmy Johnson & Billy Branch, Tinsley Ellis, John Primer, The Kinsey Report, Cedric Burnside, Lurrie Bell, Johnny Rawls, Candi Staton, Cristone "Kingfish" Ingram, Tab Benoit, Mud Morganfield, Eric Gales, Mary Lane, Freddie Dixon Chicago Blues All-Stars, Carl Weathersby with Corey Dennison Band, Harmonica Hinds, Bob Stroger, Kilborn Alley Blues Band.
chicagobluesfestival.us

Glenn Miller Jazz Festival

Clarinda, Iowa
 June 11-14

Set in the birthplace of Glenn Miller (1904-'44), the festival celebrates the music and memory of the legendary bandleader. Fans can visit the Glenn Miller Birthplace Museum and the Birthplace Home, watch the music scholarship competition and stage shows, attend picnics, dances and the swing dance competition, and see historical displays.

LINEUP: Glenn Miller Orchestra (led by Nick Hilscher), St. Joseph Big Band (feat. Kathleen Holeman), Craig Irvin, Offutt Brass Band, Tama-na Girls High School Band, NWMS Jazz Ensemble, GMBS Big Band (led by Tom Daugherty).
glennmiller.org/festival

Blues on the Fox Festival

Aurora, Illinois
 June 19-20

Blues icons and fresh new talent will be featured at the 24th annual edition of this festival, held at RiverEdge Park in downtown Aurora.

LINEUP: Buddy Guy, Kenny Wayne Shepherd, Billy Branch, Mindi Abair & The Boneshakers, Melody Angel, Southern Avenue.
riveredgeaurora.com

Summer Solstice Jazz Festival

East Lansing, Michigan
 June 19-20

This festival is held in the heart of downtown East Lansing, simultaneously celebrating jazz and the beginning of the summer season. This free festival highlights the best in local, regional and national jazz.

LINEUP: Past performers include Etienne Charles, Rodney Whitaker, Xavier Davis Quartet with Regina Carter, Stanley Ruvinov, Jordyn Davis, Jeff Shoup, 496 West, Max Colley, Root Doctor, Maureen Choi, Straight Ahead.
eljazzfest.com

Elkhart Jazz Festival

Elkhart, Indiana
 June 19-21

Since 1988, jazz legends and fans have gathered each summer for a memorable weekend at this festival. Combining warm, intimate, small-town hospitality with the excitement of big-city jazz, this festival has become an internationally acclaimed event with more than 100 performers.

LINEUP: Lin Rountree, Dave Bennett, Marbin, Lucia Sarmiento, Derek Brown, Joan Collaso and The Larry Hanks Trio, Blair Clark, Kris Brownlee, After Ours, Q Sonics, The Sofia Goodman Group, Bassel & The Supernaturals, Carol Albert, Gene Knific Trio, Charles Troy with Edelfelt & Doyle, Charlie Ballentine, Generations Trio, Emily Cavanaugh, Margaret Davis.
elkhartjazzfestival.com

Tri-C JazzFest Cleveland Cleveland, Ohio June 25-27

The 41st edition of this festival, which takes place at Playhouse Square, offers a variety of musical styles. The lineup recognizes both the roots of jazz and the forward-thinkers in music today. A Charlie Parker tribute on June 26 will feature Rudresh Mahanthappa, Terri Lyne Carrington, Charenée Wade, Adam O'Farrill, Kris Davis, Larry Grenadier and Kassa Overall.

LINEUP: Charles Lloyd, Julian Lage, Emmet Cohen, Joel Ross, Karriem Riggins, Take 6, Kirk Whalum, Angélique Kidjo, Spanish Harlem Orchestra, Punch Brothers, Fly Higher: Charlie Parker @ 100, John Mayall, Walter Trout, Cha Wa, Quiana Lynell.
tri-cjazzfest.com



Twin Cities Jazz Festival

St. Paul, Minnesota

June 25-27

The Twin Cities Jazz Festival is a nonprofit organization with a mission to keep jazz alive and well in Minneapolis and St. Paul. The 22nd annual festival continues as a free family-friendly event, expecting to attract

about 35,000 people to the vibrant sounds of jazz. Festival events are held in and around Mears Park in the heart of downtown St. Paul's historic Lowertown neighborhood.

LINEUP: Kenny Barron Trio, Paquito D'Rivera & The Dizzy Gillespie Afro-Cuban All-Stars, Matthew Whitaker.
twincitiesjazzfestival.com

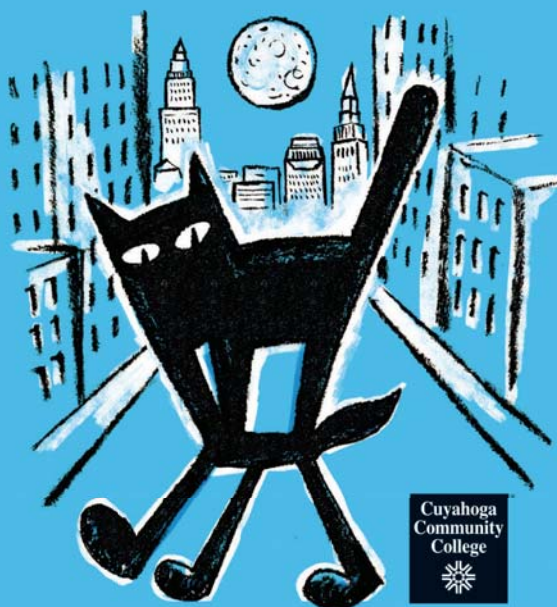
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Iowa City Jazz Festival

Iowa City, Iowa
July 3-5

Every year, fans flock to downtown Iowa City for jazz performances on multiple stages. This festival showcases a variety of well-known national and international jazz musicians, up-and-coming talent and local groups. Food, artist booths and kids' activities also are on site.

LINEUP: Paquito D'Rivera, Jeff Parker, Sara Gazarek, John Daversa, Bonegasm, Sammy Miller & The Congregation, Peter Kogan Quintet, Big Fun, Sweetie & The Toothaches (feat. Chase Garrett), United Jazz Ensemble, North Corridor Jazz All-Stars, Giveton Gelin.

summerofthearts.org/sota-events/iowa-city-jazz-festival

Lowertown Blues & Funk Festival

St. Paul, Minnesota
July 17-18

The largest free blues festival in the Twin Cities started in 2003 as Famous Dave's BBQ and Blues Festival in Minneapolis' Peavey Plaza. In 2013, it was moved to Mears Park in the Lowertown neighborhood of St. Paul, and the first Lowertown Blues Festival was held in 2014. The programming features national and local acts representing a wide variety of genres, including blues, funk, r&b and zydeco. The Youth Performance Stage showcases new and upcoming musicians and helps promote future achievements in the performing arts.

LINEUP: Ana Popovic, Selwyn Birchwood, Dumpstaphunk, Mark Cameron Band, Alex Rossi, Reverend Raven & The Chain Smokin' Altar Boys, Joyann Parker, Midnight Soulmates Motown Revue with Steve Clarke & Wilbur Cole.

lowertownbluesfestival.com

Michigan Jazz Festival

Livonia, Michigan
July 19

Held on the campus of Schoolcraft College, the Michigan Jazz Festival hosts performances on multiple stages, celebrating jazz in all of its forms.

LINEUP: Past performers include Dave Tatrow's Dixieland All Stars, Kate Patterson Trio, Dr. Teddy Harris' New Breed BeBop Band, Schoolcraft College Jazz Band.

michiganjazzfestival.org

Prairie Dog Blues Festival

Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin
July 24-25

Held each year on St. Feriole Island—a piece of land in the middle of the Mississippi River nestled between cliffs and hills—this festival offers blues and roots supplemented by New Orleans tunes, Texas boogie, zydeco and gospel. Barbecue, cajun cuisine and other types of food are available from multiple vendors. On-site camping is available.

LINEUP: Past performers include Davina & The Vagabonds, Toronzo Cannon, Devon Allman, Danielle Nicole, Kris Lager Band, Anthony Gomes, Moreland & Arbuckle, Reverend Peyton's Big Damn Band, Sarah Grace & The Soul, Tas Cru & The Tortured Souls, Craig Erickson & The Roadhouse Rockers, Eliza Neals, Nikki Hill, Tommy Bentz Band, Ghost Town Blues Band, Eliminator, Girls with Guitars.

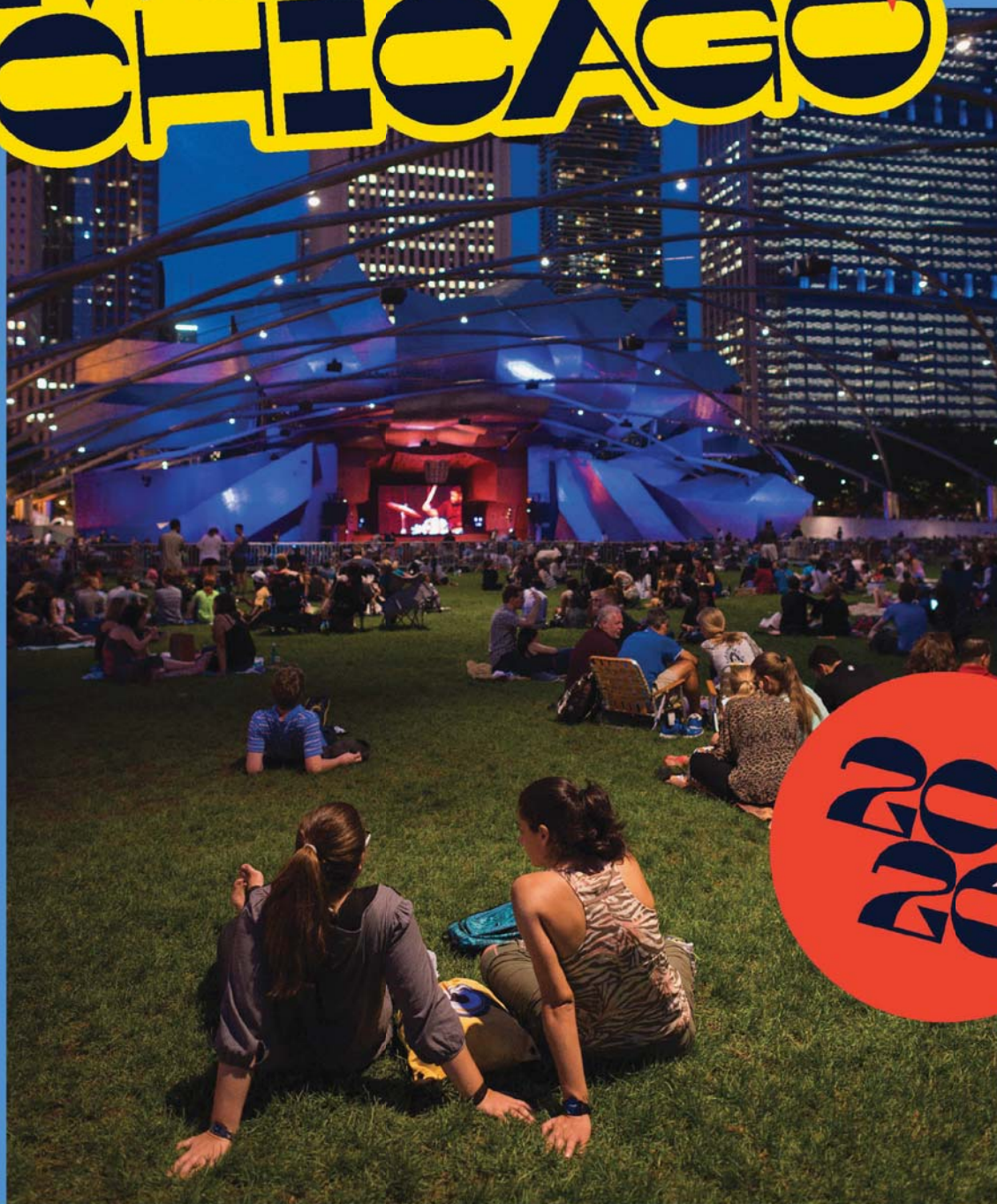
prairiedogblues.com

Jazz & Rib Fest

Columbus, Ohio
July 24-26

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hot ribs and cool jazz. The 41st edition of the festival features local and national jazz artists, along with the tastiest barbeque from around the nation.

LINEUP: Past performers include The Squirrel Nut Zippers, Robert Randolph & The Family Band, Brian Culbertson, Norman Brown, Columbus Jazz Orchestra, The Soul Rebels, GZA.
hottribscooljazz.org

Bix Beiderbecke Memorial Jazz Festival

Davenport, Iowa
July 30-August 1

The 49th annual edition of this festival will be held in the Events Center at the Rhythm City Casino in North Davenport.

LINEUP: Jeff Barnhart, Hal Smith, Dave Bennett, Hot Jazz Alliance, Joe Smith & Spicy Pickles, Chicago Cellar Boys, Vine Street Rumble, Josh Duffee's All-Star Graystone Monarchs, NOLA, Manny Lopez Orchestra, Bix Youth Band.
bixsociety.org

Soul & Blues Festival

Iowa City, Iowa
July 31-August 1

This festival celebrates music, dance, food and art of the African and African-American communities that have influenced the culture of the United States. On Friday evening, a fashion show and dance party is scheduled. On Saturday, festivalgoers can enjoy great music, food and children's activities.

LINEUP: JC Brooks Band, Nora Jean.
summerofthearts.org/sota-events/soul-and-blues-fest

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kerrytownconcerthouse.com/edgefest

Lansing JazzFest

Lansing, Michigan
August 6-8

This event takes place in the streets of Old Town surrounded by art galleries, unique retail stores and grand architecture. Its stages offer outstanding talent, from local favorites to national acts. Music lovers come for the melodies, food and craft vendors, beverage tent, children's activities and more.

LINEUP: Past performers include Diego Rivera Quartet, Planet D Nonet, Atomic Boogaloo, Moonduck, Andrew Speight, Gayelynn McKinney & McKinfolk, Tenth World featuring Kevin Bujo Jones & Kelvin Sholar.
jazzlansing.com

Chicago Jazz Festival

Chicago, Illinois
August 29-September 6

This festival showcases the greatest jazz artists from Chicago and around the world. New extended festival dates feature concerts at venues across the city. The fest then moves into the iconic Millennium Park for four full days of music on multiple stages. The Chicago Jazz Festival is produced by the Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events and programmed by the Jazz Institute of Chicago.

LINEUP: Past performers include Christian McBride, Kenny Barron, Amina Claudine Myers, The Art Ensemble of Chicago, Cécile McLorin Salvant, Eddie Palmieri.
chicagojazzfestival.us

Detroit Jazz Festival

Detroit, Michigan
September 4-7

The 41st edition of this festival will present performances by legendary national and international artists, as well as emerging game-changers. Grammy and Tony-Award winning jazz singer Dee Dee Bridgewater will serve as Artist-In-Residence.

LINEUP: Herbie Hancock, Gregory Porter, Dee Dee Bridgewater, The Summit: The Manhattan Transfer meets Take 6.
detroitjazzfest.org

Blues at The Crossroads

Terre Haute, Indiana
September 11-12

The 20th anniversary edition of this event will feature two stages of music, food and lots of fun for all. Admission for adults is \$10 at the gate; children younger than 16 are admitted without charge.

LINEUP: Max Allen, Mike Milligan & Steam Shovel, Soupbone's Blackwater Mission, Henthorn/Feaster Band, James Neary & The Bevy Blue.
bluesatthecrossroads.com

Indy Jazz Fest

Indianapolis, Indiana
September 11-20

The 22nd edition of this festival celebrates Indianapolis' jazz legacy with performances in venues across the city. Ticketed and free concerts are scheduled. Tributes to Indy jazz greats such as Wes Montgomery, Freddie Hubbard, J.J. Johnson and others are part of the free community outreach concerts.

LINEUP: Past performers include Arturo Sandoval, Bill Frisell, Gretchen Parlato, Michael Lington, Cyrille Aimée, Emmet Cohen, Charlie Hunter, Mike Clark.
indyjazzfest.net

World Music Festival

Chicago, Illinois
September 11-27

The 22nd Annual World Music Festival is presented by the City of Chicago and produced by the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events. This city-wide, multi-venue festival has

attracted more than 650,000 concert-goers and has presented more than 650 artists and ensembles from more than 80 countries since it began in 1999.

LINEUP: Past performers include Seun Kuti, Betsayda Machado.
worldmusicfestivalchicago.org

Michigan BluesFest

Lansing, Michigan
September 17-19

This event transforms Old Town's Turner Street into a stage for one of the largest, most diverse blues festivals in mid-Michigan. Outstanding talent—from local favorites to national acts—are featured. The festival includes food and craft vendors, a beverage tent, children's activities and more.

LINEUP: Kathleen & The Bridge Street Band, Nicky T & The Snake Charmer's, Southern Avenue, Grady Hall & The Disciples of Funk, Kathleen Murray & The Groove Council, Jamiah Rogers Band.
oldtownbluesfest.com

Mississippi Valley Blues Festival

Davenport, Iowa
September 18-19

Hosted by the Mississippi Valley Blues Society, the 35th anniversary edition of this festival aims to instill an appreciation of the blues tradition in a new generation of music aficionados with programs like BlueSKool. Held at Murphy Park along the Mississippi River, the festival features two stages and offers a relaxed atmosphere with acoustic and electric strains of the blues. The 2019 festival was held in early July.

LINEUP: Past performers include Heather Gillis, Samantha Fish, Tab Benoit.
mvbs.org

Ouibache Music Festival

West Lafayette, Indiana
September 25-26

The Ouibache Music Festival is a roots-music festival with stages featuring local, regional, national and international acts. Free jam sessions and workshops will be held on the grounds. Part of the net proceeds go to support local school music programs and local music organizations.

LINEUP: Tad Robinson Band, Pretty Little Goat, Bon DeBarras, Tucker Brothers, Shiny Penny, Black Voices of Inspiration, Westbound Situation, Tuxedo Junction, Scott Greeson and Trouble With Monday, Brent Laidler Quartet.
ouibache.com

Hyde Park Jazz Festival

Chicago, Illinois
September 26-27

The 14th edition of this festival features two full days of free jazz music in the historic center of Chicago's jazz community on the South Side. The festival will include more than

150 jazz musicians performing at 14 different venues across the Hyde Park neighborhood.

LINEUP: A collaboration between Qwanqwa and Hear in Now, featuring Tomeka Reid, Mazz Swift, Silvia Bolognesi, Chad Taylor, Eddy Kwon.
hydeparkjazzfestival.org

 **Edgefest**
Ann Arbor, Michigan
October 14-17

Kerrytown Concert House presents its 24th annual experimental, avant-garde jazz

and creative music festival, and this year's event focuses on brass. The programming highlights the contributions of various brass instrumentalists and also will feature other distinguished instrumentalists.

LINEUP: Dave Douglas, Anthony Braxton, Frank Lacy, Jaimie Branch, Ingrid Laubrock, Ray Anderson, Jen Baker, Bobby Bradford, Jason Hwang, Andrew Bishop, Joe Daley, Andrew Drury, Dan Peck, William Roper, Steve Swell, Jennifer Ellis, Ken Filiano.
kerrytownconcerthouse.com/edgefest



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Dawn Clement performs at the Ballard Jazz Festival in 2019.



Gary Bartz (left) and Matt Jorgensen play during the 2013 edition of the Ballard Jazz Festival.

BALLARD FEST BOOSTS SEATTLE SCENE

NAMED FOR THE CHARMING OLD WOOD-and-brick Scandinavian neighborhood where it takes place, the Ballard Jazz Festival is a May 27–30 celebration of Seattle’s vibrant local jazz community that weaves national headliners into the mix.

Over the years, the festival has hosted Gary Bartz, Lee Konitz, Orrin Evans, Ernie Watts and Sonny Fortune, among others, often pairing them artfully with local rhythm sections. This year, much-admired trumpeter Jeremy Pelt and up-and-coming Danish vocalist Sinne Eeg share the festival’s big final show, held May 30. But the real heartbeat of the spree will come the previous evening at the Ballard Jazz Walk, which has a Mardi Gras-like vibe, with fans strolling in and out of a dozen bars and restaurants, greeting old friends or musicians taking five on the sidewalk.

“What’s special is the hang,” said drummer John Bishop, who co-founded the festival in 2003 with drummer Matt Jorgensen, also his partner at Origin Records. “The gathering of musicians and that audience we’ve had now for 18 years, they show up every year.”

That faithful audience tops out at about 2,000 people—modest, but pretty much “at capacity” for the venues, Bishop said.

No doubt because Bishop and Jorgensen are drummers, the Ballard festival begins on a Wednesday with a bash called Brotherhood of the Drum, followed by the Guitar Summit and the Jazz Walk, which this year features Eeg, as well as a trio with Matt Wilson (drums), ex-Seattleite Dawn Clement (piano) and Seattle bassist Chuck Deardorf. Also on the walk are trum-

peters Dmitri Matheny and Thomas Marriott, the George Colligan Trio, Seattle vocalists Greta Matassa and Gail Pettis, and a showcase of local avant-garde players organized by Seattle label Table & Chairs.

For the past two years, the Saturday show has taken place in a jewel of a venue, the luxuriously wood-paneled and acoustically exquisite, 300-seat concert hall at the National Nordic Museum, which opened in 2018. The museum provides the venue rent-free in exchange for showcasing Scandinavian acts, and this year Eeg fits that bill. (Last year, it was Norwegian guitarist Lage Lund.) In a phone interview from Denmark, Eeg said the Nordic connection resonates with her.

“There is a ton that Scandinavians contribute [to jazz], kind of an open concept of rhythm, a very horizontal way of thinking in time,” she said. “And also different harmonics that we adapt from the folk music and classical music of our countries. You can hear that in some of my songs.”

This will be Eeg’s debut at the Ballard festival, but not her first encounter with Origin: Her swinging, dusky voice appeared on the 2013 album *Hymn For Life* by Denmark-based reed man Marc Bernstein. Eeg has been steadily working to make a name for herself in the States with appearances at the Vail Jazz Festival and A-list clubs like Dizzy’s, Birdland, Dimitriou’s Jazz Alley and Yoshi’s. Her two most recent albums, *Dreams* (ArtistShare), with drummer Joey Baron, bassist Scott Colley and her longtime pianist Jacob Christoffersen, and *We’ve Just Begun* (BFM), a punchy and evocative col-

laboration with the Danish Radio Big Band, have been well received.

As always, locals will be aiding and abetting visiting artists in Ballard this May. Eeg will be backed by Seattleites Paul Gabrielson (bass) and Xavier Lecouturier (drums), plus Portlander George Colligan (piano). Behind Pelt will be Jorgensen and Seattle’s Michael Glynn (bass).

Supporting and nurturing the Seattle jazz scene is what Bishop and Jorgensen are all about. They not only spotlight regional players at their festival, but their label, Origin Records—and its affiliates, OA2 and Origin Classical—showcase Northwesterners along with national and international artists. Since 1997, when Bishop founded the label, the imprint has released more than 600 CDs, including titles by Seattle stalwarts Clement, Deardorf, Jay Thomas, Marc Seales and Bill Anschell, as well as national figures such as David Friesen, Hal Galper, Ray Vega, Jessica Williams and Ira Sullivan. In addition to the festival and label, the label honchos also oversee the online chronicle, Seattle Jazz Scene.

Bishop and Jorgensen were recognized for their efforts by the Jazz Journalists Association with a 2019 Jazz Heroes award, but Bishop, an aw-shucks kind of guy, modestly argues that doing service for your community is merely a matter of survival—and common sense.

“Every town needs to have activity, a sense of self,” he said. “You need to feel like you’re part of something. Mostly, this is just about saying, ‘Hey, that might work, why don’t we give it a try?’”

—Paul de Barros



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Gregory Porter at the San Jose Jazz Summer Fest in California



Connie Han at the Monterey Jazz Festival in California



Regina Carter at the Healdsburg Jazz Festival in California

Las Vegas City of Lights Jazz and R&B Festival

Las Vegas, Nevada

April 18-19

This event, which will be held in the Clark County Government Center Amphitheater, offers free parking and a picnic-style atmosphere.

LINEUP: Lalah Hathaway, Eric Benet, Pieces of a Dream, Joe, Kenny Lattimore, Ginuwine, Rashaan Patterson, Down to the Bone, Leela James, Eric Roberson, Loose Ends, Anthony David.

yourjazz.com

UNC/Greeley Jazz Festival

Greeley, Colorado

April 23-25

Celebrating its 50th year, the UNC/Greeley Jazz Festival brings together internationally recognized artists, jazz lovers, award-winning clinicians and more than 250 school ensembles. On April 24, the festival presents the world premiere of An Electronic Wonderland featuring trumpeter Ingrid Jensen and the UNC Jazz Lab Band I.

LINEUP: Ingrid Jensen, DIVA Jazz Orchestra, Miguel Zenón, Delfeayo Marsalis, Wayne Bergeron, The Swingles, UNC Jazz Lab Band I.

uncjazzfest.com

Jazz Party Weekend

McCall, Idaho

April 24-26

This 20-hour event, held at Shore Lodge in McCall, Idaho, is presented by the Sun Valley Jazz & Music Festival.

LINEUP: Paolo Alderighi, Eddie Metz Jr., Terry Myers, Brian Casserly, Josh Collazo, Russ Phillips, Stephanie Trick, Greg Varlotta, Brian Holland, Paul Keller, Shirley Van Paepeghem, Rob Verdi, Bob Leary.

sunvalleyjazz.com/jazz-parties

Juneau Jazz & Classics

Juneau, Alaska

May 1-9

This fest presents world-class artists in ticketed and free performances, educational workshops and clinics, and community outreach events. It is presented in different locations throughout the community.

LINEUP: Bill Charlap Trio, Jane Bunnett & Maqueue, Amanda Fish Blues Band, Marine Jazz Band, Amernet String Quartet, Yinzi Kong, William Ransom, Adam Frey, Franz Felkl.

jazzandclassics.org

Ballard Jazz Festival

Seattle, Washington

May 27-30

Origin Records' 18-year-old festival has grown along with Seattle's historic Ballard neighborhood. Now housed in a new hall at the National Nordic Museum, among the shops, restaurants and bars on cobblestoned Ballard Avenue, 100 musicians from the Northwest and beyond perform over four days.

LINEUP: Jeremy Pelt, Matt Wilson, George Colligan, Greta Matassa, Steve Rodby, John Stowell, Scenes, Dmitri Matheny, Dawn Clement, Thomas Marriott, Sinne Eeg.

ballardjazzfestival.com

Bellevue Jazz & Blues Festival

Bellevue, Washington

May 27-31

The 13th edition of this festival will present an expected 30-plus live shows at various venues across Bellevue.

LINEUP: Past performers include Dr. Lonnie Smith, Branford Marsalis, Booker T. Jones, Shemekia Copeland, Poncho Sanchez, Dianne Reeves, Bill Frisell, Charles Lloyd, Terence Blanchard, Mingus Big Band.

bellevuedowntown.com/events/jazz-and-blues-festival

Durango Blues Train

Durango, Colorado

May 28-30, August 20-22

The Durango Blues Train is a moving musical experience of live blues performances on board the Historic Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad's coal-fired, steam-powered train traveling through the canyons of the San Juan National Forest. Each artist performs in their own vintage coach, while passengers are free to dance their way from coach to coach and delight in a variety of musical performances.

LINEUP: The May lineup is Kent Burnside, The Sugar Thieves, Cary Morin, One Roof Blues, Mike Munson, Jacob T. Skeen. The August lineup is The Reverend Peyton's Big Damn Band, Guitar Shorty, Hymn for Her, Héctor Anchondo, Dustin Arbuckle & Matt Woods, Big Jon Short.

durangobluestrain.com

Newport Beach Jazz Festival

Newport Beach, California

May 29-31

Celebrating its 25th anniversary this year, the festival will feature three days of contemporary jazz and vocals, with two alternating stages on the Back Bay of Newport Beach. Fans can enjoy food and beverage options, a vendor village and after-parties on the grounds of the Hyatt Regency.

LINEUP: David Sanborn, Tower of Power, Marcus Miller, Lalah Hathaway, The Rippingtons, Anthony Hamilton, Avery Sunshine, Jeff Lorber.

hyattconcerts.com

Healdsburg Jazz Festival

Healdsburg, California

May 29-June 7

For its 22nd edition, this festival, set in Sonoma County wine country, will honor women by bringing top female artists (and some male artists) to the wineries, theaters, parks and



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restaurants of this intimate town located 60 miles north of San Francisco. Saxophonist Charles Lloyd will present "The Ballad of Juana Maria," a multimedia collaboration with Dorothy Darr.

LINEUP: Dianne Reeves Belez Brazil, Charles Lloyd, Artemis, Jane Bunnett & Maqueque, Tia Fuller, Terrance & Marcella Simien with Krewe de Magnifique, Tiffany Austin, Christelle Durandy Afro-Cuban Sanktet, Babatunde Lea/Azar Lawrence/Clairdee, Marcus Shelby Orchestra, Sylvia Cuenca Trio, Ruth Ahlers Trio.

healdsburgjazz.org

Central Jazz

Central City, Colorado
(Dates TBA)

Central Jazz is the revival of the Central City Jazz Festival, which ran continuously from 1976 through 1992. The festival spotlights jazz musicians from New Orleans and Mardi Gras-style attractions presented in the streets of Central City, located 40 miles west of Denver. There will be music on four stages across two days of entertainment, including late-night sets at the Teller House and open jams in the Grand Z Hotel. In 2019, the festival was held in early June.

LINEUP: Last year's performers included Dumpstaphunk, The New Mastersounds, Ian Neville, George Porter Jr.

centraljazz.co

Playboy Jazz Festival *Los Angeles, California* June 6-7

For the seventh year in a row, the Los Angeles Philharmonic Association will present the annual Playboy Jazz Festival at the Hollywood Bowl. George Lopez will once again host the event.

LINEUP: Artemis, Dee Dee Bridgewater, Terri Lyne Carrington & Social Science, The Crosscurrents Trio (Dave Holland/Zakir Hussain/Chris Potter), Christian Scott aTunde Adjuah, Gerald Clayton, Gordon Goodwin's Big Phat Band, The Isley Brothers, Bokanté, Musiq Soulchild, Cimafunk, Mr. Sipp, Femi Kuti & The Positive Force, José James Celebrates Bill Withers, Incognito, Azar Lawrence Experience, St. Paul & The Broken Bones, The Lao Tizer Band.

hollywoodbowl.com/playboyjazz

San Francisco Jazz Festival *San Francisco, California* June 9-21

The 38th edition of this festival will present 43 concerts over 13 days in four venues in the city's Hayes Valley neighborhood.

LINEUP: SFJAZZ Collective, Terri Lyne Carrington & Social Science (with Angela Davis), GoGo Penguin, A Christian McBride Situation, Gonzalo Rubalcaba & Aymée Nuviola, Shabaka and The Ancestors, John Scofield & Dave Holland, David Grisman's Dawg Trio, Jane Monheit, Deltron 3030,

Edna Vazquez/Flor de Toloache, Kokoroko, Joachim Cooder, Zach Brock, Giveton Gelin, Los Aurora, Isaac Delgado, Kim Nalley.
sfjazz.org

Greeley Blues Jam *Greeley, Colorado* June 12-13

This festival offers a family-oriented atmosphere, and the intimate Blues 101 Stage gives children of all ages the opportunity to learn about the blues. Camping and RV sites are available just outside Island Grove Arena, with opportunities to visit food vendors or picnic in the park.

LINEUP: Southern Avenue, Vintage Trouble, Jimmy Hall, Johnny Sansone, Ronnie Baker Brooks, Erica Brown & The Cast Iron Queens, Kerry Pastine & The Crime Scene, The Movers & Shakers, Grace Kuch Band.
greeleybluesjam.com

Stanford Jazz Festival *Stanford, California* June 19-August 1

Integrated with Stanford Jazz Workshop jazz camps, this festival presents world-famous artists in combinations that can't be heard anywhere else. The festival takes place on the campus of Stanford University.

LINEUP: Eliane Elias, Anat Cohen, Chris Potter, Dianne Reeves, George Cables, Larry Grenadier, Victoria Swift and the

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Cross Currents Trio
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and CHRIS POTTER

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SUN, JUNE 7, 3PM

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**Dee Dee Bridgewater
and The Memphis Soulphony**

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Artemis

featuring RENEE ROSNES, ANAT COHEN, INGRID JENSEN,
NICOLE GLOVER, NORIKO UEDA, and ALLISON MILLER

Lean on Me:

José James Celebrates Bill Withers

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Newport Beach Jazz Festival in California



BOB STESHETZ

Emmet Cohen Trio, Andrea Motis.
stanfordjazz.org

Jazz Aspen Snowmass June Experience

Aspen, Colorado
June 25-28

Kicking off the JAS 30th anniversary season, the newly reformatted JAS June Experience brings more than 15 artists to several venues within walking distance in downtown Aspen.

LINEUP: Take 6, Dee Dee Bridgewater, David Sanborn, Anat Cohen, Galactic (feat. Anjelika Jelly Joseph), The Family Stone, Monty Alexander, Kermit Ruffins & The Barbecue Swingers, Ulysses Owens Jr., Sammy Miller & The Congregation, Charlie Hunter & Lucy Woodward, Delvon Lamarr Organ Trio, Tuba Skinny, Badi Assad, Juanito Pascual.
jazzaspensnowmass.org/jas/june-experience.html

Jazz in the Pines

Idyllwild, California
June 28-July 12

Jazz in the Pines occurs during the Summer Jazz Intensive Program at Idyllwild Arts. Throughout the two weeks on campus, and in the beautiful mountain town of Idyllwild, concerts by world-renowned jazz artists, educators and students accompany open rehearsals, master classes, book signings, wine tastings and conversations with the artists.

LINEUP: Past performers include SeaHawk MOJO, Harry Pickens, Evan Christopher, Euphoria Brass Band, Sherry Williams/Yve Evans/Rose Colella.

jazzinthepines.com

Waterfront Blues Festival

Portland, Oregon
July 2-5

The largest blues festival west of the Mississippi, this annual event presents more than 80 acts over four days on four stages, plus after-hours shows, themed blues cruises and July 4 fireworks. Music takes place in the waterfront park on the Willamette River in downtown Portland.

LINEUP: Ben Harper & The Innocent Criminals, Charlie Musselwhite, Mavis Staples, Femi Kuti & The Positive Force, Lettuce, Antibalas, The

War and Treaty, Ghost-Note, Chubby Carrier & The Bayou Swamp Band, Johnny Rawls, Curtis Salgado, Cedric Burnside, New Breed Brass Band, Terry & The Zydeco Bad Boys.

waterfrontbluesfest.com

Vail Jazz Festival

Vail, Colorado
July 4-August 30

This series of concerts includes diverse artists in multiple settings, including free shows. Vibraphonist Warren Wolf plays a ticketed concert on July 30.

LINEUP: Warren Wolf, Catherine Russell, Arturo Sandoval, Davina & The Vagabonds, Curtis Stigers, Dexter Payne Quartet, Chuck Lamb, Kathy Morrow, Bob Rebolz, Lynn Baker, Steve Kovalcheck.

vailjazz.org

Sunset Jazz at Newport

Newport Beach, California
July 8-September 16

Combining outdoor dining, ocean views and sunsets with national jazz and cabaret artists in the Rose Garden of the Newport Beach Marriott Hotel & Spa, this 11-week Wednesday-night series has become a must-see event for jazz fans. Season seats and individual nights are offered.

LINEUP: Past performers include Byron Stripling, John Pizzarelli, Ken Peplowski, Jeff Hamilton, Barbara Morrison, Tom Scott, Champion Fulton, The Four Freshmen, Emmet Cohen, James Morrison.

sunsetjazzatnewport.com

New Mexico Jazz Festival

Albuquerque and Santa Fe, New Mexico
July 9-27

A bi-city, collaborative effort between Outpost Performance Space and The Lensic Performing Arts Center, this festival features concerts and events at indoor and outdoor venues throughout Albuquerque and Santa Fe by major touring artists, as well as New Mexico-based practitioners of jazz, r&b, Latin music and more.

LINEUP: Count Basie Orchestra, Bobby McFerrin, Chick Corea's Spanish Heart Band with Rubén Blades, Ruthie Foster, Okan.

newmexicojazzfestival.org

Jazz Port Townsend

Port Townsend, Washington
July 19-26

Under the direction of John Clayton, Jazz Port Townsend is one of the leading summer jazz festivals in the West. This festival is held on 434 acres of pristine parkland, beaches and trails on the shores of Puget Sound.

LINEUP: John Clayton, George Cables, Anat Cohen, Tia Fuller, Wycliffe Gordon, Jeff Hamilton, René Marie, Miles Okazaki, Sunny Wilkinson, Matt Wilson, Gary Smulyan, Terell Stafford, Chris Symer, Katie Thiroux, Tanya Darby, Michael Glynn, Juliana Grall, Randy Halberstadt, Chuck Deardorf, Alex Dugdale, Chuck Easton, Dawn Clement, Brianna Thomas, Ellen Rowe, Jay Thomas, Eric Verlinde, John Hansen, Marion Hayden, Gary Hobbs, Kelby MacNayr.

centrum.org

Port Townsend Acoustic Blues Festival

Port Townsend, Washington
July 26-August 2

The down-home, back-porch vibe of this early acoustic blues program makes this week feel like a family gathering. The country's best acoustic blues musicians take fans on a journey through history and tradition.

LINEUP: Jontavious Willis, Keb' Mo', Phil Wiggins, Junious Brickhouse, Hubby Jenkins, Little Pink Anderson, Washboard Chaz Leary, Corey Harris, Mark Puryear, Bruce Sunpie Barnes, Del Rey, Andrew Ali, Carl Sonny Leyland, Ernie Vega, Ben Hunter, Joe Seamons, Josh White Jr., Judy LaPrade, Lakota John, Lightin' Wells, Luke Anthony, Mark Brooks, Suzy Thompson, Valerie Turner, Shari Kane and Dave Steele, Albanie Falletta, Ricky Nye.

centrum.org

Jazz Plus at the Hollywood Bowl

Los Angeles, California
July 26-September 23

These two Wednesday evening concert series at the Hollywood Bowl are curated by Herbie Hancock and feature jazz as well as pop and r&b.

LINEUP: Chick Corea's Spanish Heart Band with Rubén Blades, Herbie Hancock, Jaimie Cullum, Brubeck Brothers Quartet, MONK'estra Big Band, Count Basie Orchestra, Charlie Wilson, Sheryl Crow, Lake Street Dive, John Fogerty, Hiatus Kaiyote.

hollywoodbowl.com

San Jose Jazz Summer Fest

San Jose, California
August 7-9

Set in downtown San Jose, this festival features 12 stages of international stars and rising artists serving up jazz, blues, Latin, r&b, salsa, New Orleans and more. It's the perfect summer weekend with great food, drink and friends.

LINEUP: Last year's artists included Dianne Reeves, Fred Hersch, Gregory Porter, Sons of Kemet, The O'Jays, En Vogue, The Family Stone, The Suffers, Marquis Hill Blacktet, Ivan Lins, Orquesta La-33,

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healdsburgjazz.org

Pink Martini, Roberta Gambarini, Elio Villafranca.

summerfest.sanjosejazz.org

Telluride Jazz Festival

Telluride, Colorado

August 7-9

Since 1977, Telluride's perch in the San Juan Mountains has been the site of an annual cultural event combining natural aesthetics with artistic creativity.

LINEUP: Preservation Hall Jazz Band, Catherine Russell, Pancho Sanchez, Allison Miller's Boom Tic Boom, Christian Sands, Amadou & Miriam, Blind Boys of Alabama, The Beach Boys, The Budos Band, The Hot Sardines, Marco Benevento, Bonerama, The Hooligans Brass Band, The Harlem Gospel Travelers, Kelly Finnigan & The Atonements, Rico Jones Countercurrent, Speakeasy Jazz Quintet.

telluridejazz.org

Montavilla Jazz Festival

Portland, Oregon

August 15-16

This festival presents world-class talents who are creating new music and pushing the boundaries of jazz. MJF seeks to enrich the revitalized Montavilla neighborhood by showcasing the best of Portland's thriving jazz scene.

LINEUP: Rich Halley with Matthew Shipp Trio, Bryn Roberts & Lage Lund, Javier Nero, Idit Shner, Alan Jones.

montavillajazz.org

Vail Jazz Party

Vail, Colorado

September 3-7

The grand finale of the Colorado summer season, this event features more than 35 headliners who join together to play in group performances, jam sessions and inspiring tributes.

LINEUP: James Morrison, Ken Peplowski, Veronica Swift, Emmet Cohen Trio, Joel Frahm Quartet, Adrian Cunningham, Mitch Forman, Bobby Floyd, Jerohn Garnett, Niki Haris, Zach Brock, Julien Labro, Lyndon Rochelle, Byron Stripling, Frank Vignola, Vail Jazz Party House Band: John Clayton/Bill Cunliffe/Lewis Nash/Dick Oatts/Terell Stafford/Wycliffe Gordon, Mile High Gospel Choir.

vailjazz.org

Jazz Aspen Snowmass Labor Day Experience

Snowmass, Colorado

September 4-6

Closing out the JAS 30th anniversary season is the JAS Labor Day Experience. Surrounded by the Elk Mountains, this festival brings an eclectic group of well-known, chart-topping artists for three days of music and fun.

LINEUP: Stevie Nicks, Eric Church, Kings of Leon, Maren Morris.

jazzaspensnowmass.org/jas/labor-day-experience.html

JazzFest White Plains

White Plains, New York

September 9-13

This festival has become a signature White Plains event, featuring free and affordable jazz performances attracting fans from throughout Westchester and beyond.

LINEUP: Last year's performers included Emmet Cohen Trio with George Coleman and Jimmy Cobb, Joel Ross, Melissa Aldana, Keyon Harrold, Mwenso & The Shakes, Camille Thurman with The Darrell Green Trio, Albert Rivera Quartet, Nanny Assis Trio, Kristina Koller.

artsw.org/jazzfest

Big Blues Bender

Las Vegas, Nevada

September 10-13

Because the seventh annual edition of this blues festival takes

place at the Westgate Las Vegas Resort & Casino, organizers claim that all the performances are merely “an elevator ride away.”

LINEUP: Buddy Guy, Delbert McClinton, Jonny Lang, Tab Benoit, North Mississippi Allstars, The Allman Betts Band, Christone “Kingfish” Ingram, Jimmy Hall, Jimmy Carpenter Band, Bettye LaVette, Mike Zito & His Big Blues Band, Colin James, Jon Cleary & The Absolute Monster Gentlemen, Albert Castiglia, Southern Avenue, Carolyn Wonderland, Sugaray Rayford, Monster Mike Welch, Dwayne Dopsie, Cary Morin.
bigbluesbender.com

SLO Jazz Festival

San Luis Obispo, California
September 18-20

This festival presents jazz on multiple stages in Mission Plaza. SLO Jazz Festival Inc. is a non-profit organization dedicated to “celebrate jazz and nurture the human spirit.”

LINEUP: Past performers include Sergio Mendes, Anton Schwartz.
slojazzfest.org

Telluride Blues & Brews Festival

Telluride, Colorado
September 18-20

Held in a picturesque mountain town, this multi-stage celebration offers an eclectic mix of music paired with some of the best craft breweries in the country.

LINEUP: Last year’s performers included John Fogerty, Boz Scaggs, George Clinton & Parliament Funkadelic, Anders Osborne, Ryan Bingham, Tab Benoit.
tellurideblues.com

Monterey Jazz Festival

Monterey, California
September 25-27

Celebrating its 63rd edition, the Monterey Jazz Festival is the longest continuously running jazz festival in the world. Thirty hours of performances, panels, conversations and exhibits take place over two days and three nights on seven stages at the oak-studded Monterey County Fairgrounds.

LINEUP: Christian Sands (Artist-in-Residence), Miho Hazama (Commission Artist), Herbie Hancock, Artemis, Pat Metheny Side-Eye, Terri Lyne Carrington & Social Science, George Benson, Joshua Redman/Brad Mehldau/Christian McBride/Brian Blade, Buddy Guy, Nicholas Payton, Kandace Springs, The Bad Plus, Jamie Cullum, Lila Downs, PJ Morton, Emmaline, Our Native Daughters, The Cookers, Jaimie Branch.

montereyjazzfestival.org

Angel City Jazz Festival

Los Angeles, California
September-October

This adventurous jazz festival was founded in 2008 and has grown into an essential multi-day celebration of cutting-edge jazz held at multiple venues. The festival consistently features national and international jazz musicians, balancing established artists with emerging talent and focusing on West Coast creative jazz—past, present and future.

LINEUP: Last year’s performers included Makaya McCraven, Artifacts Trio, Anna Webber Simple Trio, Terry & Gyan Riley, Dwight Trible, Aaron Parks Little Big, JBL Quintet, Dan Rosenboom A.I.T.A., Kris Davis, Katisse, Jacob Mann, Iridescent, Darius Jones & Joshua White, Kokayi, Ego Mondo, David Binney, Motoko Honda.

angelcityjazz.com

Palm Springs Women’s Jazz Festival

Palm Springs, California
(Dates TBA)

The Palm Springs Women’s Jazz and Blues Association fosters an appreciation of jazz and blues and supports female jazz and blues musicians. The festival includes concerts, exhibits, presentations,



The poster for the San Jose Jazz Summer Fest 2020 features a vibrant orange background. At the top, a quote reads: "ONE OF THE WORLD'S GREAT URBAN JAZZ FESTIVALS..." attributed to DownBeat. Below this is a large, stylized graphic of a target or bullseye with concentric circles in yellow, orange, and red, and a white arrow hitting the center. The text "SAN JOSE JAZZ" is in a dark blue, sans-serif font, followed by "SUMMER FEST" in large, bold, white letters. To the right of "FEST" is "AUG 7-9" and "2020" in dark blue. Below this, it says "12 Stages of Jazz, Blues, R&B, Latin, Salsa, New Orleans and more!" in white. Further down, it says "Artists, tickets, hotel deals:" in white, followed by the website "SUMMERFEST.SANJOSEJAZZ.ORG" in large, bold, white letters. At the bottom, there are logos for sponsors: DownBeat, Cultural Arts, KCSM, Adobe, Gordon Biersch Brewing Company, the David & Lucile Packard Foundation, Hewlett Foundation, and Castellano Family Foundation.

“ONE OF THE WORLD’S GREAT URBAN JAZZ FESTIVALS...”
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films and other events. The 2019 festival was held in late September and early October.

LINEUP: Past performers include Claudia Acuña, Kandace Springs, Jazzmeia Horn, Miki Howard, Sherry Pruitt, Rose Mallett.
palmspringswomensjazzfestival.org

Oregon Coast Jazz Party

Newport, Oregon
October 2-4

This festival features multiple sets from jazz stars, nightclub performances and educational events. The Newport Performing Arts Center features a state-of-the-art sound system.

LINEUP: Charles McPherson, John Clayton, Diego Figueiredo, Jeff Hamilton Trio, Jason Palmer, Jeremy Pelt, Dave Captein, Randy Porter, Eric Reed, Katie Thiroux, Charles Turner, Matt Witek.
oregoncoastjazzparty.org

Earshot Jazz Festival

Seattle, Washington
October 8-November 8

Earshot Jazz celebrates Seattle's progressive pace with a festival of expansive jazz tradition. Presenting Seattle artists alongside renowned jazz masters and emerging artists, Earshot's 32nd edition offers more than 55 events across the city.

LINEUP: Ahamfule Oluo (Resident Artist), Charles Lloyd, Marc Ribot's Songs of Resistance, Jamie Baum Septet, Terri Lyne

Carrington & Social Science, João Bosco, Rez Abbasi's Django-shift, Steve Lehman's Wind Quartet, Jaimie Branch, Marquis Hill, Giveton Gelin, The Tiptons, Qwanqwa, Hafez Modirzadeh, Marina Albero.
earshot.org

Sun Valley Jazz & Music Festival

Sun Valley Idaho
October 14-18

Multiple venues around the Sun Valley resort present a new act every 90 minutes, for a total of 200 shows in five days. Jazz, swing, zydeco, folk, gypsy, big band, blues and Western swing styles are all represented, as are tribute sets to music legends.

LINEUP: Hot Jazz Collective with Jeff Barnhart & Terry Myers, Tom Rigney & Flambeau, Cornet Chop Suey, Side Street Strutters, Black Market Trust, Carolyn Martin Western Swing, Professor Cunningham & His Old School, Gator Nation, Yve Evans & Co., Pearl Django, Blue Street Jazz Band, Boise Straight Ahead, High Street Party Band, Brian Holland & Danny Coots, Clint Baker's Hot Jazz Band, The Midiri Brothers, Ivory & Gold, Bob Draga.
sunvalleyjazz.com

Roseville Jazz Festival

Roseville, California
October 18

The third edition of this festival brings world-class jazz to Roseville. An all-day pass is \$45 per

person, and it's \$20 for attendees under 21.

LINEUP: Last year's headliners included The Stan Kenton Legacy Orchestra, The Four Freshmen.
rosevillejazzfest.com

Silicon Valley Jazz Festival

San Carlos, California
(Dates TBA)

The fourth edition of this festival will feature nationally known headliners, Silicon Valley-based musicians and events at local schools. This free fest also includes master classes and workshops. The 2019 festival was held in mid-October.

LINEUP: Past performers include Jon Faddis, Donald Brown Jr., Pascal Bokaer, Carl Saunders, Scott Dailey, Rebecca Dumaine, Dave Miller Trio.
svjazzfest.com

Frank Morgan Taos Jazz Festival

Taos, New Mexico
November 11-14

Since 2015, this festival has presented world-class jazz artists and fans from far and wide. Presented by Taos Jazz Bebop Society, the festival was created to honor the late alto saxophonist Frank Morgan, who called Taos home.

LINEUP: Grace Kelly Quartet, George Cables, Django Festival All-Stars, Red Hot & Red, more.
taosjazz.org



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John Clayton,
Artistic Director

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CANADA

 This trumpet denotes a corresponding ad in this guide.



SaskTel Saskatchewan Jazz Festival

Festival International de Musique Actuelle de Victoriaville (FIMAV) Victoriaville, Québec

May 14-17

The 36th edition of FIMAV will include world premieres, world-renowned musicians, visual arts, short films and a circuit of sound art installations in public spaces. FIMAV is a true laboratory of all avant-garde art forms.

LINEUP: Bill Frisell/Ikue Mori/John Zorn, Eve Egoyan, Colin Stetson/Mats Gustafsson, Dakh Daughters, Kathleen Yearwood, Ensemble Ire, Jeff Reilly, Dither, Lee Ranaldo/Jim Jarmusch/Marc Urselli/Balázs Pándi, Mopcut, Vervan Weston/Christine Duncan/Jean Martin.

fimav.qc.ca

World Guitar Festival (FGMAT)

Rouyn-Noranda, Northern Québec

May 23-30

The 16th edition of this festival showcases top international and local artists playing a wide spectrum of musical styles on stringed instruments. The fest features ticketed indoor concerts during the evenings, as well as free outdoor performances.

LINEUP: Keb' Mo', Tommy Emmanuel, more.

fgmat.com

Suoni Per il Popolo

Montreal, Québec

June 3-21

For 20 years, this festival has maintained

its commitment to presenting an exciting mix of local and international avant-garde music. Suoni has grown from a single room to a multi-venue festival without losing its intimate vibe. Each year features film screenings, workshops, late-night jams alongside a program of cutting-edge music.

LINEUP: Sun Ra Arkestra, Marc Ribot, Angel Bat Dawid, Amirtha Kidambi & Lea Bertucci, Blacks' Myths, Matana Roberts, Illegal Crowns (Mary Halvorson, Taylor Ho Bynum, Benoît Delbecq, Tomas Fujiwara), Joe McPhee, Claire Rousay.

suoniperilpopolo.org

TD Winnipeg International Jazz Festival

Winnipeg, Manitoba

June 11-19

Since 1990, this annual festival has been presenting dozens of top-tier touring acts at downtown concert venues. The festival includes ticketed events, free performances and workshops. The 2019 festival was held in mid-June.

LINEUP: Past performers include Donny McCaslin, Bobby McFerrin, Curtis Nowosad, Galactic, Common, Colin Linden.

jazzwinnipeg.com

Franco de Montreal

Montreal, Québec

June 12-20

Franco de Montreal offers a taste of summer

during the 32nd edition of the festival. There will be French-speaking artists for all tastes.

LINEUP: Isabelle Boulay, Félé & Leeroy, Vincent Delerm, FA, National Song School with special guest Andréanne A. Mallette, Marie-Pierre Arthur.

francosmontreal.com

TD Toronto Jazz Festival

Toronto, Ontario

June 18-28

The 34th edition of this festival showcases the very best in jazz from Toronto, across the country and around the world while hosting jazz legends, emerging artists and established musicians.

LINEUP: Gregory Porter, David Crosby & Friends, John Scofield & Dave Holland Duo, Ana Moura, Shabaka & The Ancestors, Femi Kuti & The Positive Force, Marc Jordan & Barbra Lica.

torontojazz.com

TD Victoria International JazzFest

Victoria, British Columbia

June 19-28

The 37th edition of this festival will present more than 70 performances of jazz, blues, r&b, soul and world music on various stages around downtown Victoria.

LINEUP: Tower of Power, Hiromi, Jazzmeia Horn, Julian Lage Trio, Veronica Swift, Emmet Cohen Trio, Nubya Garcia, Kokoroko, Charlie



Hunter & Lucy Woodward, Count Basie Orchestra with Carmen Bradford, Elizabeth Shepherd & Michael Occhipinti, Les Filles de Illighadad, Gene Perla Quintet, Sunna Gunnlaugs Trio, Los Aurora, Katherine Penfold, Dirty Radio, Matt Savage, Ghost-Note, The Funk Hunters, Lowdown Brass Band, Halie Loren, Harry Allen & Grant Stewart Quintet, Delgres, Jocelyn Gould Quartet.
jazzvictoria.ca

TD Ottawa Jazz Festival

Ottawa, Ontario
June 19-July 1

The TD Ottawa Jazz Festival celebrates its 40th anniversary in the heart of the nation's capital with the jazz world's most renowned and celebrated artists.

Festivalgoers have access to more than 800 musicians performing at more than 100 paid and free concerts.

LINEUP: Past performers include Dee Dee Bridgewater, Herbie Hancock, Norah Jones, Bria Skonberg, Béla Fleck, The Roots, Chicago.
ottawajazzfestival.com

TD Vancouver International Jazz Festival

Vancouver, British Columbia
June 19-July 1

This festival will feature 1,800 artists, 300 performances, 35 venues and more than 150 free shows, including outdoor presentations downtown and at David Lam Park.

LINEUP: Hiromi, Jazzmeia Horn, Ghost-Note, Angel Bat Dawid, Julian Lage, Allison Miller's Boom Tic Boom, Les Filles de Illighadad, Kokoroko.

coastaljazz.ca

Festival International de Jazz de Montreal

Montreal, Quebec

June 25-July 4

Every year for 10 days, the French-speaking metropolis of North America becomes a unique site designed to meet festivalgoers' needs, where fans of all types of jazz-related music rub shoulders with aficionados of the genre. Fans can enjoy great music, delicious food, wonderful architecture, ticketed concerts and free outdoor shows.

LINEUP: Gregory Porter, Hiromi, Jack DeJohnette/Ravi Coltrane/Matthew Garrison, John Scofield & Dave Holland, Christian McBride, Marcus Miller, Avishai Cohen Trio, The Bad Plus, Ambrose Akinmusire Quartet, Marianne Trudel & John Hollenbeck, Mark Guiliana, Brubeck Brothers Quartet, Shabaka & The Ancestors, Al Di Meola, Bebel Gilberto, Taj Mahal Quartet, Charlie Cunningham, Femi Kuti & The Positive Force, GoGo Penguin, Joss Stone, Macy Gray, The Cinematic Orchestra, Woodkid, Petit Biscuit, Rilès, Protoje, Ana Moura, The Barr Brothers & Les Filles de Illighadad, Tommy Emmanuel, BJ The Chicago Kid, Ezra Collective.

montrealjazzfest.com/en-ca

SaskTel Saskatchewan Jazz Festival

Saskatoon, Saskatchewan
July 3-12

Every summer, this festival hosts hundreds of world-class artists. More than 75,000 music fans devour the sounds of jazz, blues, funk, pop and world music each year.

LINEUP: Past performers include Jann Arden, Lyle Lovett, Johnny Reid, The Roots, Walk Off the Earth.

saskjazz.com

TD Halifax Jazz Festival

Halifax, Nova Scotia
July 7-12

Since 1987, this festival has organized a diverse range of musical and educational activities. The festival, formerly known as the Atlantic Jazz Festival, is the oldest jazz festival and largest summer festival in Atlantic Canada. The festival attracts up to 65,000 visitors, involves 400 volunteers and employs more than 350 local musicians.

LINEUP: Alessia Cara, Half Moon Run, Andy Shauf, The Larnell Lewis Band.

halifaxjazzfestival.ca

TD Kitchener Blues Festival

Kitchener, Ontario
August 6-9

The 20th anniversary of this festival will showcase international and Canadian blues



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JUNE 19-JULY 1, 2020

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THE FUNK HUNTERS · GHOST-NOTE

JULIAN LAGE TRIO · VERONICA SWIFT

CHARLIE HUNTER AND LUCY WOODWARD

EMMET COHEN TRIO · KOKOROKO

LOWDOWN BRASS BAND · HALIE LOREN

NUBYA GARCIA · GENE PERLA QUINTET

DELGRES · LES FILLES DE ILLIGHADAD

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Complete festival lineup and schedule available at:
JAZZVICTORIA.CA | Festival Info: 1-250-388-4423



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TD Vancouver International Jazz Festival

and roots artists on multiple stages with shows following in clubs and restaurants.

LINEUP: Past performers include Buddy Guy, Shemekia Copeland, Booker T. Jones, Buckwheat Zydeco, Devon Allman Band, Tab Benoit, Dianna Greenleaf.

kitchenerbluesfest.com

Edmonton Blues Festival

Edmonton, Alberta

August 28-30

This 22nd edition of this event will continue its tradition of presenting legends and award-winners. In 2008, it was honored by the Blues Foundation with a Keeping the Blues Alive award.

LINEUP: Taj Mahal, Joe Louis Walker, Ruthie Foster, Arsen Shomakhov, Sue Foley Band with The Texas Horns, Guy & Jeska, Steve Kozak Band, Bywater Call, Boogie Patrol, CJ Chenier & The Red Hot Louisiana Band, Dianna Greenleaf, Derek O'Brien, Guy Forsyth, Fiona Boyes, Harpdog Brown & The Uptown Blues Band, Kat Danser & The Tall Tales, Mitch Woods & His Rocket 88's.

bluesinternationaltd.com

Vancouver Island Blues Bash

Victoria, British Columbia

September 5-7

Fans can celebrate the end of summer by catching live blues, r&b and more during the 27th annual Vancouver Island Blues Bash at Ship Point in Victoria's Inner Harbor.

LINEUP: Past performers include Tinsley Ellis, Davina & The Vagabonds, Ana Popovic, Mike Farris & The Fortunate Few, Kevin Burt & Big Medicine, Lindsay Beaver, The Harpoonist & The Axe Murderer,

Matt Schofield, Nick Moss Band, David Gogo Band, The 24th St. Wallers.

jazzvictoria.ca

Pentastic Hot Jazz & Music Festival

Penticton, British Columbia

September 11-13

The 24th edition of this festival will feature 11 bands and a guest artist with music ranging from Dixieland, big band, swing, zydeco and rockabilly. Four venues within a 10-minute walk of each other host the shows, and free shuttle service is offered for pass holders.

LINEUP: Dave Bennett Quartet, Bob Draga with Friends, Tom Rigney & Flambeau, Groovus, Dave Bennett & The Memphis Speed Kings, Black Swan Classic Jazz Band with Marilyn Keller, Jamie's Jazz Gangsters, Professor Cunningham & His Old School, South Okanagan Big Band, Lance Buller.

pentasticjazz.com

Guelph Jazz Festival

Guelph, Ontario

September 16-20

This festival features world-class improvising musicians in a range of styles and complementary contexts, including ticketed and free concerts, as well as artist talks, interviews and workshops.

LINEUP: Past performers include Jen Shyu, Tomas Fujiwara, Ingrid Laubrock/Tom Rainey/Hank Roberts, Brodie West Quintet, Susan Alcorn, Guillermo Gregorio/Paula Shocron/Pablo Diaz, Erwan Keravec, NAIL: Lori Freedman/Nicolas Caloia/Ig Henneman/Ab Baars.

guelphjazzfestival.com



A Glance at this year's lineup!

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GREGORY PORTER

JULY 4 • MAISON SYMPHONIQUE, PdA

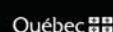
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VEHICLE



Gard Nilssen Acoustic Unity performs at the 2019 Molde Jazz Festival in Molde, Norway, joined by trumpeter Ambrose Akinmusire (left) and saxophonist Joshua Redman.

MOLDE AIMS TO INTERMINGLE INTERNATIONAL JAZZ SCENES

"HANS-OLAV SOLLI AND THE CREW AT Molde International Jazz Festival let my dreams come true as the artist-in-residence last year," drummer and composer Gard Nilssen said. "They were totally open to whatever I wanted to present musically, and that is not very common these days. I felt that my artist-in-residence lineup, as well as the rest of the festival program, turned out to be a great musical success at what I consider to be one of the finest jazz festivals in the world."

The Molde International Jazz Festival, held in the titular Norwegian city, is set to celebrate its 60th anniversary with this year's edition, which runs July 13–18. Composer and saxophonist John Zorn is at the center of the event.

It will mark Zorn's fourth time playing at Molde: During the 1990s, he fronted his Naked City project and Painkiller band. The following decade, he performed with Electric Masada. And this year, Zorn will be involved in 11 concerts, including three shows he's curated that count Norwegian musicians on the bill.

Some of those concerts include "Midsummer Moons," at which guitarists Gyan Riley and Julian Lage will be interpreting Zorn's wily compositions; "The Hierophant," a concert consisting of drummer Kenny Wollesen, bassist Trevor Dunn and pianist Brian Marsella exploring Zorn's work that was inspired by tarot card readings; and "The Hermetic Organ," a solo performance where Zorn will be playing alto saxophone and organ at the Molde Cathedral.

Unrelated, but just as auspicious as Zorn's residency, will be a reading of "Driving Miles," a musical monologue, composed by Henning

Mankell, which was performed at the Molde festival a decade ago in celebration of its 50th anniversary. Solli, the Molde festival's director, hopes that the eclectic, international lineup—which is set to include homegrown musicians like bassist Ellen Andrea Wang, violinist Ola Kvernberg, and pianist Espen Berg—will inspire some surprising impromptu collaborations that now have become signature events at the Molde festival.

Solli makes sure to point out highlights from last year's festival, including when drummer Nilssen joined guitarist Bill Frisell and bassist Thomas Morgan for a spur-of-the-moment reading of "We Shall Overcome." Or when trumpeter Ambrose Akinmusire and saxophonist Joshua Redman joined Nilssen's Acoustic Unity ensemble onstage.

"Those moments are so magical," Solli said. "It's one of our trademarks. They're so magical because you never know what will become of those encounters. They could lead to future collaborations or even new bands."

In addition to the various musicians related to Zorn's residency, this year's lineup includes vibraphonist Joel Ross, singer Cécile McLorin Salvant and singer John Legend. The festival also will present some legacy-facing concerts from keyboardist Herbie Hancock, who first performed there in 1971; saxophonist Charles Lloyd, who first performed at the festival in 1966; and vocalist Karin Krog, who performed at the festival's 1961 inaugural event when she was 23 years old.

"There has always been a strong connection between the U.S. and the Molde Jazz Festival.

Charlie Haden and Wayne Shorter were here in 1966," Solli said. "We always try to merge the American and Norwegian jazz scenes. And we always create new music."

Opportunities aside, another major draw for the festival is its idyllic location. The town is a part of Norway's western Romsdal Peninsula, which contains breathtaking scenery like the Romsdal Fjord—Norway's ninth longest fjord—and 222 mountain peaks. Within the city are The Romsdal Museum and Alexandra Park, where the festival hosts some of its more DJ-centric and pop acts.

Solli became the festival's director back in 2014 after working under Jan Ole Otnæs, who's now the director of the Nasjonal Jazzscene, a concert venue in Oslo. Solli commends his predecessor for being a torchbearer of the festival's programming history; it's been a place where musicians early in their careers are given a platform. Bassist Esperanza Spalding made her European debut there in 2007, and vocalist Melody Gardot still was early in her career when she performed at Molde in 2009.

But Solli has helped to rebrand and expand some of the festival's performance spaces. During his second year as director, he added the Molde Cathedral as a venue, where in 2015 both the Oakland Interfaith Gospel Choir and Norway's SKRUK choir performed "Roots from the West," featuring Scandinavian folk songs, black American spirituals and jazz.

"We're always working towards throwing the perfect festival," said Solli with a typical combination of Scandinavian warmth, restraint and pride.

—John Murph

2020



Monaco
Monte-Carlo Jazz Festival
November 6–30
www.montecarlosbm.com



London
EFG London Jazz Festival
November 13–22
www.efglondonjazzfestival.org.uk



Turkey
Istanbul Jazz Festival
June 27–July 14
www.caz.iksv.org



Belgium
Gent Jazz
July 8–18
www.gentjazz.com



Switzerland
Montreux Jazz Festival
July 3–18
www.montreuxjazz.com



France
International Jazz Festival
in Juan-les-Pins
July 9–22
www.jazzajuan.com



France
Jazz à Vienne
June 25–July 11
www.jazzavienne.com



Spain
Festival de Jazz
de Vitoria-Gasteiz
July 13–19
www.jazzvitoria.com



Austria
Jazz Fest Wien
June 23–July 12
www.jazzfest.wien



Italy
Umbria Jazz–Perugia
July 10–19
www.umbriajazz.com



Norway
Molde International
Jazz Festival
July 13–18
www.moldejazz.no



Finland
Pori Jazz Festival
July 10–18
www.porijazz.fi



Holland
North Sea Jazz Festival
July 10–12
www.northseajazz.com



Canada
Festival International
de Jazz de Montréal
June 25–July 4
www.montrealjazzfest.com



USA
Playboy Jazz Festival
June 6–7
www.hollywoodbowl.com/playboyjazz



USA
Monterey Jazz Festival
September 25–27
www.montereyjazzfestival.org



USA
Newport Jazz Festival
July 31–August 2
www.newportjazzfest.org

EUROPE

 This trumpet denotes a corresponding ad in this guide.



DAVID PETAN

International Jazz Festival Bern

Bern, Switzerland
March 17–May 3

More than 200 individual concerts at Marians Jazzroom are included in this festival, now in its 45th year.

LINEUP: Jason Marsalis, Cécile McClorin Salvant, Tom Harrell, Shemekia Copeland, Curtis Salgado, Cedric Burnside, Guy Davis, Monty Alexander Trio, Stanley Jordan & The Christian Galvez Trio, Jon Faddis All-Star Quintet, Youn Sun Near, Tuba Skinny.

jazzfestivalbern.ch

Menorca International Jazz Festival

Menorca, Spain
March–June

Founded in 1998 by a nonprofit association, this festival is held in various towns: Ciutadella, Mahón, Ferreries, Es Castell and Sant Lluís.

LINEUP: Sarah McKenzie, Eli Degibri Quartet, Yazz Ahmed Quartet, Shaun Martin Three-O, Irene Reig Quintet, Lion Sphere.

jazzobert.com/en

La Linea

London, England
April 15–May 4

This Latin music festival will celebrate its 20th anniversary with its biggest lineup to date.

LINEUP: Tino Contreras, Steam Down & Theon Cross.

comono.co.uk/la-linea

Jazz Festival Basel

Basel, Switzerland
April 19–May 17

Jazz artists perform in venues around the city, including the Bird's Eye Jazz Club.

LINEUP: Cécile McClorin Salvant, Sullivan Fortner, Tingvall Trio, Kyle Eastwood Group, Lisette Spinnler New Quintet, Kinga Glyk & Band.

offbeat-concert.ch

Ulrichsberger Kaleidophon

Ulrichsberg, Austria
April 30–May 2

Jazzatelier Ulrichsberg presents the 35th edition of Ulrichsberger Kaleidophon.

Thirty musicians from all over the world will perform in a program of diverse genres, including jazz, other forms of improvised music and contemporary composed music.

LINEUP: Lina Allemanno Four, Coyote: Michel Doneda & Natacha Muslera, The Sea Trio: Masahiko Satoh/Otomo Yoshihide/Roger Turner, Matthias Bauer, Judith Insell, Jakob Gnigler, Biliana Voutchkova, Hildegard Kleeb/Roland Dahinden/Alexandre Babel, Peter Evans' Being and Becoming.

jazzatelier.at/kal.htm

Jazzfest Bonn

Bonn, Germany
April 30–May 30

Jazzfest Bonn aims to promote young jazz musicians and give them the opportunity to present their music alongside international stars.

LINEUP: Jan Gabarek Group, Michael Wolny Trio, Mathias Eick Quintet, Till Brönner, Rolf & Joachim Kühn, Django Bates, Jacky Terrasson Trio, Bundesjazzorchester, Klaus Doldinger's Passport, EOS Kammerorchester Köln & Niels Klein Trio, Kinga Glyk, Norbert Scholly & Rainer Böhm, Roger Hanschel & Aurny Quartet, Laura Jurd, Denis Gäbel Quartet, Richie Beirach & Sirius Quartet, Simon Oslander Trio, Jazzanova, Jazzrausch Bigband.

jazzfest-bonn.de/en

MaiJazz

Stavanger, Norway
May 4–10

Founded in 1989, MaiJazz (aka the Stavanger International Jazz Festival) is the city's oldest festival. It features international stars and local artists.

LINEUP: Mike Stern & Jan Gunnar Hoff

Quartet, Bendik Hofseth Band, Håker Flaten & Nilssen-Love's Guts and Skins Octet.

maijazz.no

Cheltenham Jazz Festival

Cheltenham, England
May 5–10

One of Europe's leading jazz festivals returns to Montpellier Gardens with its trademark mix of contemporary jazz, blues, soul, r&b and pop.

LINEUP: Gregory Porter, Booker T. Jones, Imelda May & Ronnie Scott's Big Band, Tribute to Hugh Masekela (featuring Tony Allen, Makaya McCraven, Laura Jurd, Gary Bartz & Maisha), Kokoroko, Seb Rochford's Pulled By Magnets.

cheltenhamfestivals.com/jazz

Trondheim Jazz Festival

Trondheim, Norway
May 6–10

Launched in 1980 as JazzMazz, this diverse festival focuses on Norwegian and European performers.

LINEUP: Bjørn M. Hegge, Jan Garbarek Group & Trilok Gurtu, Sinne Eeg Group, Klabbes Bank, Jazzmeia Horn, Louisiana Avenue, Steinar Raknes, Timo Lassy, Ghost-Note, Tineke Postma.

jazzfest.no

Ravenna Jazz

Ravenna, Italy
May 7–16

Ravenna Jazz 2020 will be a festival of extremes: from solo concerts to the performance of a huge 250-piece orchestra and chorus dedicated to Miles Davis.

LINEUP: Jazzmeia Horn, Sarah McKenzie, Pat Metheny's Side-Eye, Paolo Fresu, Petra Magoni, Enrico Rava, Shai Maestro, Julian Lage, Derek Brown, Ghost-Note.

ravennajazz.it

Newbury Spring Festival

Newbury, England
May 9–23

This festival will present concerts by international artists from the worlds of jazz, classical music, theater, folk and cabaret.

LINEUP: Clare Teal, Bollywood Brass Band, IDMC Gospel Choir, Paul Lewis, The Sixteen.

newburyspringfestival.org.uk

Vicenza Jazz

Vicenza, Italy
(Dates TBA)

Vicenza Jazz features about 150 shows, covering many styles, from New Orleans to avant-garde. Concerts will be held in a variety of settings: theaters, clubs, antique buildings, churches, museums and open air.

In 2019 the festival took place in mid-May.

LINEUP: Last year's performers included Chucho Valdés, Peter Erskine, Paolo Fresu, David Virelles, Ambrose Akinmusire.

vicenzajazz.org

EUROPAfest

Bucharest, Romania
(Dates TBA)

Jazz, blues and classical music by more than 300 artists from more than 30 countries will take over the Romanian capital during the 27th edition of this event. In 2019, the festival took place mid-May.

LINEUP: Last year's performers included Tara & Benjamin, ShekBand, 4WayClose, Entropy, Gniewomir Tomczyk Project, Project Connections, Anoesis, Masala Quartet.

jmevents.ro

Kerava Jazz Festival

Kerava, Finland
May 21-24

This festival has prospered by presenting a lineup of avant-garde, free-jazz and spiritual jazz for the past two decades.

LINEUP: Björkenheim, Mikko Innanen, Eero Hämeenniemi "EKG," Samuel Blaser Quartet.

keravajazz.fi

Sibiu Jazz Festival

Sibiu, Romania
May 21-24

The Sibiu Jazz Festival is the oldest jazz fest of its kind in the country.

LINEUP: Last year's performers included Silhouette, Jorge Pardo, Childo Tomas, Aylin Cadir & The Lucky Charms, Josiah Woodson.

sibiujazz.eu

Nattjazz

Bergen, Norway
May 22-30

Nattjazz will feature more than 60 concerts. In the converted sardine factory at USF Verftet, both upcoming and established artists perform at the "all-in-one venue" comprising four stages under one roof.

LINEUP: John Scofield Trio, Avishai Cohen Trio, Nils Petter Molvaer, Nate Wooley, Dungen, Jaga Jazzist, Mathias Eick, Thomas Dybdahl, Fieh, Ghost-Note, Les Amazones D'Afrique, Johan Lindström Septett, El Comité, Amason, Hanna Paulsberg Concept, Jonas Alaska, Trygve Seim Ensemble, Silja Sol.

nattjazz.no

INNtöne Jazz Festival

Diersbach, Austria
May 29-31

This festival fills three stages over three days with groups of various sizes and backgrounds. Performances include a main stage and smaller acts at local clubs. In 2019, the festival took place in early June.

LINEUP: Last year's performers included Ray Anderson, Han Bennink, Ernst Glerum,

Abdullah Ibrahim, The Como Mamas, Sylvain Luc, Delvon Lamarr Organ Trio, Theon Cross Trio, The Azar Lawrence Experience.

inntoene.com

Moers Festival

Moers, Germany
May 29-June 1

At the 49th edition of this festival, fans will encounter jazz, avant-garde, electronics, experimental soundscapes and unique collaborations.

LINEUP: John Zorn, Stephen Gosling, Barbara Hannigan, Chorwerk Ruhr, Mariá Portugal, Donny Benét.

moers-festival.de

Ljubljana Jazz Festival

Ljubljana, Slovenia
(Dates TBA)

Founded in 1960, this festival will feature more than 30 concerts, as well as films, a lecture and two exhibitions. In 2019, the festival was held in June.

LINEUP: Past performers include Snarky Puppy, John Zorn, Ecliptic, Fish in Oil.

ljubljanajazz.si

JazzBaltica

Timmendorfer Strand, Germany
June 18-21

Jazz legends and emerging talents will perform not only in concerts on a large stage but also in free concerts on the beach, in a park and at lounges.

LINEUP: Nils Landgren and the JazzBaltica Ensemble Special Edition (including Michael Wollny, Leszek Możdżer, Ulf Wakenius, Lars Danielsson, Wolfgang Haffner), Dirty Loops, Raul Midón, Joel Lyssarides, Caecilie Norby, Jazzrausch Bigband, Tonbruken.

jazzbaltica.com

Llandudno Jazz Festival

Conwy, Wales, UK
June 19-21

Only five years old, this festival in a seaside resort town in North Wales takes place on Bodafon Fields and highlights key UK and international jazz figures. Fans can camp on site.

LINEUP: Art Themen's New Directions Quintet, Shannon Barnett with Gareth Williams Trio, Dave Newton Trio, The Jazz Worriers Contrabass Quintet, Sara Oschlag & Nigel Price, Alan Barnes Originals Trio, Tori Freestone & Nikki Illes.

llandudnojazzfestival.com

Jazz Fest Wien

Vienna, Austria
June 23-July 12

Stars of jazz are set to play at 11 landmark venues, including the Vienna State Opera, the courtyard of the Neo-Gothic Rathaus and the Baroque Saal in Altes Rathaus.

LINEUP: Paolo Conte, Bryan Ferry, Herbie Hancock, Beth Hart, Manhattan Transfer,



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BALKAN PARADISE ORCHESTRA



www.menorcajazzfestival.com



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Pink Marini, Postmodern Juke Box, Gipsy Kings.
viennajazz.org

Jazz in the Park

Cluj-Napoca, Romania
June 25-28

Jazz in the Park is appreciated by concertgoers for its friendly vibe, free concerts and diverse lineup.

LINEUP: Kamasi Washington, Anna Calvi, Cécile McLorin Salvant, Omar Sosa & JazzyBIT.
jazzinthepark.ro

JazzAscona/The New Orleans Experience

Ascona, Switzerland
June 25-July 4

This festival offers about 15 concerts a day, spotlighting numerous styles, from New Orleans jazz to swing, and from blues to r&b.

LINEUP: Last year's performers included The NOJO Brass Band, Alexey Marti, Frank Salis & Michael Watson.
jazzascona.ch

Jazz à Vienne

Vienne, France
June 25-July 11

At this festival, 1,000 artists appear on four stages, including at the Roman Theatre. About 200 of the 250 concerts are free.

LINEUP: Past performers include Gregory Porter, Rokia Traoré, Morcheeba.
jazzavienne.com

Istanbul Jazz Festival

Istanbul, Turkey
June 29-July 22

Featuring a diverse program with jazz, rock, pop and world music, this festival has been held since 1994. The venues include concert halls, historical sites, landmark buildings, streets, and even trams and ferries.

LINEUP: Gregory Porter, Joshua Redman/Brad Mehldau/Christian McBride/Brian Blade, Mare Nostrum (Paolo Fresu/Richard Galliano/Jan Lundgren), Foals, Kutiman, Emma-Jean Thackray, Enrico Pieranunzi, Matthew Halsall & Gondwana Orchestra, John Pizzarelli Trio, Monsieur Perine, TRT Big Band.
caz.iksv.org/en

Kongsberg Jazzfestival

Kongsberg, Norway
July 1-4

Founded in 1964, this festival is one of Norway's most popular jazz events.

LINEUP: Dee Dee Bridgewater, Snarky Puppy, Melissa Aldana, Chris Potter, Craig Taborn, Marius Neset, Nils Petter Moldaer, Arild Andersen, Barre Phillips, The Necks, Marilyn Mazur, Lionel Richie, Angelina Jordan.
kongsbergjazz.no

A to Jazz Festival

Sofia, Bulgaria
July 3-5

A huge meadow in one of the city's central parks hosts three days of music with 12 acts, daily programming for children and a jam session. Admission is free.

LINEUP: Last year's performers included Christian Scott aTunde Adjuah, Ghost-Note, Jacob Collier, Koka Mass Jazz, Bodurov Trio.
atojazz.bg

Love Supreme Jazz Festival

Glynde Place, East Sussex, England
July 3-5

Europe's biggest greenfield jazz festival returns to Glynde Place in East Sussex. The programming features 50 acts across four stages.

LINEUP: Charles Lloyd, Nubya Garcia, Louis Cole Big Band, Anita Baker, TLC, The Isley Brothers, Candi Staton, Sergio Mendes, Tom Misch & Yussef Dayes.
lovesupremefestival.com

Copenhagen Jazz Festival

Copenhagen, Denmark
July 3-12

Featuring more than 100 stages around the city, this festival, which began in 1979, offers a sumptuous musical feast. Fans can enjoy live jazz on the city's streets, in its clubs, cafés and concert halls, and at open-air night venues.

LINEUP: Herbie Hancock, Shabaka and The Ancestors, Veronica Swift with Emmet Cohen Trio, Bremer/McCoy, Jeppe Zacko Quartet, Sinne Eeg & Jacob Christoffersen, Jon Roniger & The Good For Nothin' Band, Lindy Syncopators, Mads Tolling Quartet, Hans Knudsen & Bjørn Ingelstam Band, Curtis Stigers, Cha Wa.
jazz.dk

Montreux Jazz Festival

Montreux, Switzerland
July 3-18

This acclaimed festival takes place during two weeks in a breathtaking setting on the shores of Lake Geneva. Fantastic stories have been unfolding at Montreux since 1967.

LINEUP: Lenny Kravitz, Lionel Richie, Black Pumas, Brittany Howard.
montreuxjazzfestival.com

Gent Jazz Festival

Ghent, Belgium
July 8-18

This prestigious jazz festival—started in 2002 as the Blue Note Festival—takes place in the picturesque historic courtyard gardens of De Bijloke.

LINEUP: Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra, Darcy James Argue's Secret Society, Sting, Van Morrison, Ibrahim Maalouf, Maisha, Antoine Pierre, Tigran Hamasyan, Yes! Trio.
gentjazz.com

Lugano Festival Jazz

Mendrisio and Lugano, Switzerland
July 9-11

Founded in 1979, this open-air, free-admission festival presents concerts of jazz, world-music, rock and other genres.

LINEUP: Past performers include Mike Stern, Randy Brecker, Vinicio Caposela, L'Orchestra di Piazza Vittorio.
estivaljazz.ch

Jazzopen Stuttgart

Stuttgart, Germany
July 9-19

This festival consistently has presented an exciting blend of adventurous music and mainstream performers since 1994.

LINEUP: Herbie Hancock, Stanley Clarke, Arturo Sandoval, Spyro Gyra, James Carter Organ Trio, Joey Alexander, Matthew Whitaker, Taj Mahal, Van Morrison, Yusuf/Cat Stevens, Sting, John Legend, Jessie J, Emmet Cohen, Lenny Kravitz, Jamie Cullum, Corinne Bailey Rae, Nils Frahm, David Sanborn, Lisa Simone, Robben Ford & Bill Evans, Pablo Held Trio, Kandace Springs.
jazzopen.com

Jazz à Juan

Juan Les Pins, France
July 9-22

One of the world's oldest jazz festivals, this event presents its 60th edition in the exceptional setting of the Pinède Gould, facing the Mediterranean Sea.

LINEUP: Joe Lovano US5, Herbie Hancock, Gregory Porter, Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra, Maceo Parker, Marcus Miller, Joey Alexander Trio, Soul Rebels, The Roots, Melody Gardot, Lee Ritenour & Dave Grusin, Diana Ross, Anne Paceo, Ibrahim Maalouf, Lionel Richie, Amadou & Miriam and The Blind Boys of Alabama.
jazzajuan.com

NN North Sea Jazz Festival

Rotterdam, Netherlands
July 10-12

Now in its 45th year, the world's largest indoor music festival returns to the Ahoy Centre in Rotterdam.

LINEUP: George Benson, Gregory Porter, John Legend, Diana Ross, Lionel Richie, Jill Scott, Alicia Keys, Michael Kiwanuka, Little Simz, Burna Boy.

northseajazz.com/en

Pori Jazz

Pori, Finland
July 10-18

The 55th edition of this festival will feature a variety of international jazz stars and the best of Finnish talent. During the main concerts, music will be performed on several different stages located in beautiful Kirjurinluoto Concert Park.

LINEUP: Herbie Hancock, Charles Lloyd, Cécile McLorin Salvant, Kenny Garrett Quintet, Avishai Cohen Trio, Kris Davis, Joel Ross, Shabaka and The Ancestors, John Legend, Gwen Stefani, Emeli Sandé, Dido, Metronomy, Gov't Mule, BANKS, Moses Sumney, Yola, Mayer Hawthorne, Kokoroko, Resavoir, Myra Melford's Snowy Egret.

porijazz.fi

Umbria Jazz

Perugia, Italy
July 10-19

Founded in 1973, Umbria Jazz offers dozens of concerts in a variety of genres. Santa Giuliana Arena will be home to the main events, while the more specialized concerts will take place at the Morlacchi Theatre. There also will be midday concerts at the prestigious National Gallery of Umbria. Additionally, there will be a full program of free outdoor concerts and a marching band. For those who wish to combine fine food and wine with great music, there are open-air restaurants at the arena.

LINEUP: Wynton Marsalis, Branford Marsalis, Joshua Redman/Brad Mehldau/Christian McBride/Brian Blade, SFJAZZ Collective, Stefano Bollani, Jamie Cullum, Anita Baker, Gilberto Gil, Djavan, Gonzalo Rubalcaba, Lenny Kravitz, Tom Jones, Mika, Joe Lovano, Christone "Kingfish" Ingram, Veronica Swift.

umbriajazz.com

Aarhus Jazz Festival

Aarhus, Denmark
July 11-18

This festival offers more than 350 concerts at 40 venues. Most concerts during the day are free of charge.

LINEUP: Past performers include Gregory Porter, Marcus Miller, Caro Emerald with Aarhus Jazz Orchestra, Denzel Sinclair, Carsten Dahl Trinity, Michala Petri/Daniel Murray/Marilyn Mazur.

jazzfest.dk

Molde International Jazz Festival

Molde, Norway
July 13-18

This jazz festival, commonly known as Moldejazz, has been running continuously since 1961. Located in Molde, right by a fjord, the festival offers beautiful mountain views. For six days, the best of Norwegian and international jazz is presented at about 120 concerts in nine venues.

LINEUP: Herbie Hancock, John Legend, Charles Lloyd, John McLaughlin & The 4th Dimension, John Zorn, Astrid S, Emilie Nicolas, Bendik.

moldejazz.no

Festival de Jazz de Vitoria-Gasteiz

Vitoria-Gasteiz, Spain
July 13-19

Now in its 44th year, this festival historically has brought a taste of the current jazz scene to Vitoria. Organizers of the event seek to present unique collaborations in three venues.

LINEUP: Past performers include Cory Henry, Mingus Big Band, Joel Frahm, Camila Meza, Seamus Blake, Carla Bruni, Kool & The Gang.

jazzvitoria.com

Bohemia JazzFest

Prague, Plzen, Liberec, Domazlice, Tabor and Brno, Czech Republic
July 13-21

Beginning at Prague's historical Old Town Square, this free-admission festival travels throughout Czechia.

LINEUP: Cécile McLorin Salvant, João Bosco, Paolo Fresu.

bohemiajazzfest.cz

Hull Jazz Festival Summer Edition

Hull, England
July 16-18

This festival is back for its 28th summer edition. The three-day lineup celebrates three 20th century landmark figures and recordings: Van Morrison's classic *Astral Weeks*, Cannonball Adderley and Ella Fitzgerald.

LINEUP: David McAlmont, Binker Golding Quartet, Orphy Robinson All-Stars, Alina Bzhezinska Hip Harp Quartet, Tony Kofi 5tet, Kate Peters Big.

hulljazzfestival.co.uk

Nice Jazz Festival

Nice, France
July 17-21

A mainstay of the French Riviera jazz scene for decades, this fest showcases performers on two stages at once (there are a total of six). Local artists open for headliners.

LINEUP: Mey featuring JCAT, others.

nicejazzfestival.fr

Langnau Jazz Nights

Langnau, Bern, Switzerland
July 21-25

During the past 30 years, this festival featured an international lineup, a jazz workshop

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jazz fest bonn

Bundesjazzorchester
Klaus Doldinger's Passport
EOS Kammerorchester Köln
& Niels Klein Trio
Dell/Lillinger/Westergaard
& Peter Evans
Michael Wollny Trio
Mathias Eick Quintet

Kinga Glyk
Tobias Feldmann
& Frank Dupree
Frank Dupree Trio
Iiro Rantala solo
Iiro Rantala
& Galatea Quartett
Peter Gall Quartett
Malia

Jan Garbarek Group
Jacky Terrasson Trio
Norbert Scholty &
Rainer Böhm
Django Bates
Roger Hanschel
& Aurny Quartett
Silje Nergaard Duo
Laura Jurd DINOSAUR
Denis Gäbel Quartet
Richie Beirach
& Sirius Quartet
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www.jazzfest-bonn.de/en
Tickets:
www.bonnticket.de/jazzfest-bonn

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as well as an amazing atmosphere.

LINEUP: Last year's performers included Charles Lloyd, Ethan Iverson & Ron Carter, Ben Wendel, Theo Croker, Aaron Parks, Ozmosys, Jean-Louis Martinier & Kevin Seddiki.
jazz-nights.ch

Heineken Jazzaldia

San Sebastian, Spain
July 22-26

Founded in 1966, this is the longest-running jazz festival in Spain. The festival offers three main stages featuring jazz, blues, soul and world music.

LINEUP: Dave Holland/Kenny Barron Trio, Hiromi, John Zorn New Masada Quartet, Cécile McLorin Salvant, Paolo Fresu, Scott Bradlee's Postmodern Jukebox, Fire! Orchestra, Graham Nash.
heinekenjazzaldia.eus

Ystad Sweden Jazz Festival

Ystad, Sweden
July 29-August 2

This festival presents concerts, a jazz parade, a special stage for up-and-coming artists, children's concerts and jam sessions. All venues are within walking distance of the medieval town center.

LINEUP: Yellowjackets, Lucky Peterson, Stacey Kent, Jazzmeia Horn, Cyrille Aimée, Grégoire Maret & Edmar Castaneda, Emile Parisien, Scott Hamilton, Jan Lundgren, Wolfgang Haffner, Lars Danielsson, Ulf Wakenius, Bill Mays, Alvin Queen, Christopher Dell, Nduduzo Makhathini & Karl-Martin Almqvist, Yamandu Costa, Nils Landgren Funk Unit, Viktoria Tolstoy.
ystadjazz.se

Jazz em Agosto

Lisbon, Portugal
July 30-August 9

A festival held by Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation since 1984 and distinguished by its main venue—an amphitheater located in the gardens—Jazz em Agosto is a showcase dedicated to innovative jazz and creative music.

LINEUP: Past performers include Marc Ribot, Mary Halvorson, Ingrid Laubrock, Tom Rainey.
gulbenkian.pt/jazzemagosto/en

JazzFest Passau

Passau, Germany
(Dates TBA)

Concerts take place in the prestigious Cafe

Museum Passau, and outdoor concerts are held in Rathausinnenhof Passau. In 2019, the festival was held in July and August.

LINEUP: Ziv Ravitz Trio, others.
cafe-museum.de/jazzfest-passau

Gouvy Jazz & Blues Festival

Gouvy, Belgium
August 7-9

This festival, featuring jazz and blues, is held at Madelonne Farm. Area pastures, wooded areas and streams create a tranquil environment in which to enjoy music.

LINEUP: Past performers include Chico Freeman, Benny Golson, Marcus Belgrave, Rhoda Scott.
madelonne.be/festival

Nisville Jazz Festival

Nis, Serbia
August 7-16

A polygonal fortress in Nis will be taken over by jazz, blues and soul, presented on six main stages and several smaller venues.

LINEUP: Last year's performers included Christian Scott aTunde Adjuah, Malina Moye, Jamal Thomas Band.
nisville.com

Time in Jazz

Sardinia, Italy
August 7-16

Founded in 1988 and directed by the trumpeter Paolo Fresu, this festival has several venues, including a large arena set up in the central square of Berchidda for evening concerts, but also the woods, churches, beaches and historical sites. The festivities include book presentations, workshops, shows for children, exhibitions and documentary films.

LINEUP: Last year's performers included Paolo Fresu, Nils Petter Molvaer, Danilo Rea, Claudio Fasoli, Daniele di Bonaventura, Dino Rubino, Giovanni Falzone, Omar Sosa.
timeinjazz.it

Oslo Jazz Festival

Oslo, Norway
August 9-15

Since 1986, this festival's concerts take place at large, glamorous venues like the National Opera & Ballet, but also at small intimate jazz joints like Herr Nilsen and Victoria.

LINEUP: Anthony Braxton, Craig Taborn, Jason Moran & Trondheim Jazz Orchestra, Maria Schneider & Oslo Jazz Ensemble, Kongle

Trio, The Source, Daniela Reyes, Karin Krog & Hanna Paulsberg, Atomic, Ellen Andrea Wang, Arild Andersen, Erlend Apneseth, Espen Eriksen with Andy Sheppard, Fieh.
oslojazz.no

Jazz Middelheim

Antwerp, Belgium
August 13-16

Contemporary jazz, pop and rock are the mainstays of this festival, which takes place at Park den Brandt in Antwerp.

LINEUP: Iggy Pop, Bill Laswell, others.
jazzmiddelheim.be

Roccella Jazz Festival

Roccella Jonica, Calabria, Italy
August 16-19; August 24-30

Venues for this festival include an amphitheater, a 16th-century convent, a 17th-century chapel and a park by the water.

LINEUP: Pino Ninfa, Francesco Cafiso, Ronnie Burrage & Holographic Principle, Giancarlo Schiaffini, Cinzia Tedesco, Ioannis Vafeas Trio.
rocellajazz.org

International Jazzfestival Saalfelden

Saalfelden, Austria
August 20-23

The 41st edition of this festival is set to host about 200 musicians in more than 70 concerts.

LINEUP: Rucker, Christoph Cech, Chuff-drone, Mario Rom's Interzone, Katharina Ernst, Astrid & Beate Wiesinger, Georg Vogel & Dsilton, GeoGeMa (Georg Vogel, Gerald Preinfalk & Matheus Jardim), Orwah Saleh Band, Karl Ritter.
jazzsaalfelden.com

We Out Here

Abbots Ripton, Cambridgeshire, England
August 20-23

With the goal of being an inclusive and generations-spanning event, the festival is billed as "A Worldwide Family Gathering." In addition to music and camping, the event includes well-being activities. Featured styles range from jazz and soul to post-punk and dancehall.

LINEUP: Archie Shepp, Ezra Collective, Underground Resistance, Adrian Younge & Ali Shaheed Muhammad, Overmono, Ashley Henry, Greentea Peng Shackleton, Sarathy Korwar, Sam Wise, Steam Down, Erika de Casier, Sessa, International Anthem Showcase, Lynda Dawn, Muriel Grossmann.
weoutherefestival.com

Kotkebel Jazz Party

Kotkebel, Russia
August 21-23

Kotkebel Jazz Party is an annual international jazz festival on the coast of the Black Sea and one of the top jazz events in Russia. Per tradition, the organizers are keeping the names of celebrity guests a secret. This summer, Kotkebel will host a music week featuring various genres. The week will begin in the artists' village on Aug. 17.

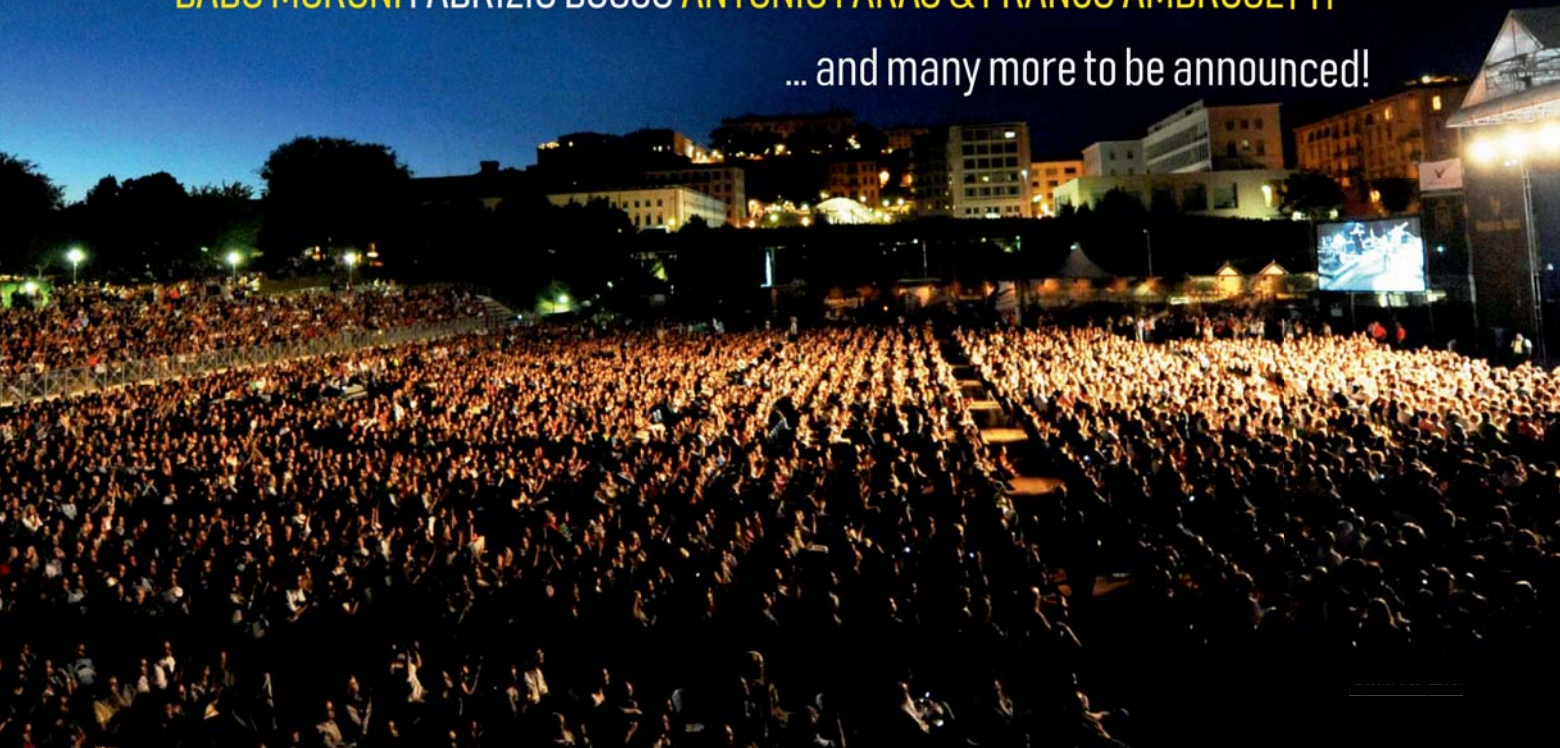


Umbria Jazz 20

Perugia, July 10-19
www.umbriajazz.com

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 DANILO PEREZ EDMAR CASTANEDA & GRÉGOIRE MARET RENÉ MARIE TUBA
 SKINNY SHAKE 'EM UP JAZZ BAND CHA WA ANTHONY PAULE SOUL
 ORCHESTRA KING PLEASURE & THE BISCUIT BOYS ENRICO RAVA PAOLO
 FRESU FRANCO D'ANDREA STEFANO BOLLANI DANILO REA RITA MARCOTULLI
 DADO MORONI FABRIZIO BOSSO ANTONIO FARAÒ & FRANCO AMBROSETTI

... and many more to be announced!





Charles Lloyd at Langnau Jazz Nights in Switzerland

LINEUP: Past performers include Stanley Clarke, Jimmy Cobb, Gonzalo Rubalcaba, Robert Anchipolovsky.
en.koktebel-jazz.ru

Jazz Festival Willisau

Willisau, Switzerland

August 26-30

European jazz, pop and folk are the key ingredients in this festival, which was founded in 1966 now features four venues in Willisau.

LINEUP: Past performers include James Blood Ulmer with The Thing, Jaimie Branch, Nate Wooley, Oliver Lake Organ Quartet.
jazzfestivalwillisau.ch

Jazz District Festival

Paris, France

August 29-30

Art District Radio hosts the Jazz District Festival, where fans can enjoy two free afternoons of music on the outdoor stage of the GoodPlanet Foundation.

LINEUP: Last year's performers included Sarah Thorpe Quartet, Xolot Corp, David Pastor Quartet, Julia Perminova Paris Trio.
jazzdistrict.fr

Scarborough Jazz Festival

Scarborough, England

September 25-27

This festival hosts a bevy of UK talent each year.

LINEUP: Fergus McCreadie, John Pearce, Elftet, VEIN, Julian Joseph, Zoe Gilby, Nikki Iles.
scarboroughjazzfestival.co.uk

Angrajazz Festival

Angra do Heroísmo, Terceira Island, Azores, Portugal

October 1-3

Angrajazz—held in Angra do Heroísmo, a UNESCO World Heritage city—is set to hold its 22nd festival.

LINEUP: Orquestra Angrajazz, Veronica Swift Quartet, Bill Frisell Trio.
angrajazz.com

Enjoy Jazz

Heidelberg, Mannheim and Ludwigshafen, Germany

October 2-November 14

The 22nd edition of this festival will feature jazz, classical, pop, rock, hip-hop and electronic music. Fans can enjoy concerts, master classes, matinees and symposiums. Dionne Warwick is scheduled to perform on Oct. 17.

LINEUP: Past performers include Snarky Puppy, Cécile McLorin Salvant, Joshua Redman, Herbie Hancock.

enjoyjazz.de

Akbank Jazz Festival

Istanbul, Turkey

October 8-18

Launched in 1991, this festival has expanded to include panels, workshops and films.

LINEUP: Past performers include The Bad Plus, Jamie Cullum, Till Brönner, Avishai Cohen, The Comet Is Coming, Nubya Garcia, James Carter's Organ Trio, Kokoroko, Mats Ellertsen.

akbankcaz.com

Skopje Jazz Festival

Skopje, North Macedonia

October 18-20

Established in 1982, this festival features all styles of jazz, plus Latin-American and African music, as well as the best Macedonian jazz musicians.

LINEUP: Last year's performers included Nicola Conte, David Torn, Tord Gustavsen Trio.

skopjejazzfest.com.mk

Voll-Damm Barcelona International Jazz Festival

Barcelona, Spain

(Dates TBA)

Programming for this festival balances heavyweight artists with up-and-coming performers. In 2019, the festival ran from mid-October to late December.

LINEUP: Last year's performers included Andrea Motis, Lizz Wright, La Locomotora Negra, Martín Leito Big Band.

jazz.barcelona

Jazz Festival Umeå

Umeå, Sweden

(Dates TBA)

Since 1968, this festival has featured legends, as well as Scandinavian and local greats. In 2019, the festival was held in late October.

LINEUP: Last year's performers included Sten Sandell, Sisters of Invention, Jennie Abrahamson, Theo Croker.

umeajazzfestival.se

Baloise Session

Basel, Switzerland

October 24-November 12

This festival is held in a club, allowing fans to be seated very close to their favorite musicians. The programming includes jazz, soul, funk, blues, world music and many other genres.

LINEUP: Last year's performers included Brittany Howard, Dido, Rag'n'Bone Man, Raphael Saadiq.

baloisession.ch

Jazzfest Berlin

Berlin, Germany

November 5-8

Founded in 1964, Jazzfest Berlin is one of the longest-running European festivals, drawing fans and musicians from around the globe.

LINEUP: Last year's performers Ambrose Akinmusire, Anthony Braxton, Angel Bat Dawid, Marc Ribot, Melissa Aldana, Miles Okazaki.

berlinerfestspiele.de/en/jazzfest-berlin/start.html

Monte-Carlo Jazz Festival

Monte Carlo, Monaco

November 6-30

This festival hosts a spate of top-tier talent each year, including jazz greats and more pop-oriented performers.

LINEUP: Past performers include Herbie Hancock, Snarky Puppy, Eli Degibri, Becca Stevens.

montecarlosbm.com

EFG London Jazz Festival

London, England

November 13-22

The UK's largest celebration of the genre, this festival continues to highlight the diversity of jazz, rising stars to world-renowned legends.

LINEUP: Last year's performers included Jan Garbarek, Makaya McCraven, Herbie Hancock, Gary Bartz, Cécile McLorin Salvant, Terri Lyne Carrington, Dave Holland, Chris Potter.

efglondonjazzfestival.org.uk

Umbria Jazz Winter

Orvieto, Italy

(Dates TBA)

For five days, this festival presents 90 events featuring 30 bands and more than 150 musicians in seven locations. In 2019, the festival began in late December and continued through Jan. 1.

LINEUP: Last year's performers included John Scofield, Paolo Fresu, Joel Ross, Warren Wolf.

umbriajazz.it



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Jazzmandu, held in Kathmandu, Nepal, features artists from around the world.

Tobago Jazz Experience

Scarborough, Trinidad and Tobago
Dates TBA

This fest features jazz derived from the unique style of music in Trinidad and Tobago. In previous years, the festival has been held in April.

LINEUP: Past performers include Michael Bolton, Jacquees, Vaughnette Bigford.

facebook.com/tobagofestivals

Saint Lucia Jazz Festival

Saint Lucia
May 7–9

Following last year's collaboration, Saint Lucia Jazz and Jazz at Lincoln Center are partnering again for this year's edition. The festival will feature contemporary jazz artists performing in intimate venues and public settings in Saint Lucia. Jazz at Lincoln Center has programmed a lineup of performers who will be joined by a parade of Caribbean and Saint Lucian jazz musicians.

LINEUP: Chucho Valdés with Joe Lovano & Esperanza Spalding, Chick Corea Trio (feat. Carlitos Del Puerto & Antonio Sánchez), Patti LaBelle, Willie Jones III Quintet celebrating Roy Hargrove (feat. Renée Neufville & Chucho Valdés), Lisa Simone, Poppy Ajudha, Sheléa, Alphonso Horne & The Gotham Kings, Ruben Fox's London Brass (feat. Theon Cross & Mark Kavuma).
stlucia.org/jazz

Melbourne International Jazz Festival

Melbourne, Victoria, Australia
May 28–June 7

From concert halls and clubs to city streets and iconic cultural spaces, Melbourne will come alive with jazz improvisation and the spirit of inclusion.

LINEUP: Past performers include Herbie Hancock, José James, Ambrose Akinmusire.
melbournejazz.com

Jamaica Ocho Rios Jazz Festival

Runaway Bay, Jamaica
June 7–14

The 30th edition of this festival celebrates

the legacy of its founder, Sonny Bradshaw, with the inaugural SB Memorial Lecture, a memorial concert and awards.

LINEUP: Past performers include Randy Corinthian, Pat Braxton, Earl "Chinna" Smith.
ochoriosjazz.com

Rio das Ostras Jazz & Blues Festival

Rio das Ostras, Brazil
June 11–14

During the 15th edition of this festival, performers will play near 15 beaches around Rio das Ostras.

LINEUP: Vasti Jackson, Roberto Fonseca, others.
riodasostrasjazzblues.com

Devonport Jazz

Devonport, Tasmania, Australia
July 23–26

Celebrating 19 years, this festival presents Australian artists in venues in and around Devonport, showcasing jazz and blues.

LINEUP: Katie Noonan, others.
devonportjazz.com.au

Savassi Festival

Belo Horizonte and Nova Lima, Minas Gerais, Brazil
August 1–9

The Savassi Festival has developed from its beginnings as a street festival in Belo Horizonte into a matrix of activities that includes artistic residencies and collaborations, exhibitions, competitions and a host of concerts representing the full spectrum of jazz. Invited composers this year are Davi Fonseca, Marcus Paiva and Deangelo Silva.

LINEUP: Past performers include Antônio Adolfo, Sérgio Santos, Marcus Paiva, Deangelo Silva.
savassifestival.com.br

Dominican Republic Jazz Festival

Punta Cana, Santiago, Puerto Plata, Sosua and Cabarete, Dominican Republic
August 30–November 3

The 23rd Dominican Republic Jazz Festival hosts Grammy-winning musicians and jazz legends at free concerts on the

north coast and in Punta Cana. Shows are free and open to the public.

LINEUP: Past performers include Chucho Valdés, Justin Kauflin Trio, Miguel Zenón.
drjazzfestival.com

KL International Jazz & Arts Festival

Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
September (Dates TBA)

Since its 2012 inception, this festival has presented a lineup of international Grammy-winners, NEA Jazz Masters and regional jazz talent.

LINEUP: Past performers include Gina Panizales, Eric Wyatt, Lewis Pragasam & Friends, Hiroyuki Yagi Jazz Quartet.
klinternationaljazz.com

Casibari Jazz Festival

Oranjestad, Aruba
Dates TBA

In 2019, the organization behind the Caribbean Sea Jazz Festival relocated and changed the name of its long-standing event. The Casibari rock formation is a heritage site and its location is unique, offering a cozy feel with local cuisine available. The 2019 festival was held in late September.

LINEUP: Past performers include Count Tutu, Antonio Bello & Friends, Oruba, Michael Bremon.
casibarifestival.com

Jarasum International Jazz Festival

Gyeongju, South Korea
October 9–11

This Korean music festival showcases artists from more than 50 countries in performances across more than a dozen venues.

LINEUP: Past performers include Black String, Heo So Young.
jarasumjazz.com

Wangaratta Festival of Jazz & Blues

Wangaratta, Victoria, Australia
October 30–November 1

The 30th installment of this festival will combine Australian and international musicians who play jazz and blues.

LINEUP: Past performers include Dave Holland, Kurt Elling, Kurt Rosenwinkel, Charles Tolliver.
wangarattajazz.com

Jazzmandu

Kathmandu, Nepal
November 5–11

Now in its 18th year, Jazzmandu has a growing renown as a hidden gem of the international festival scene.

LINEUP: Past performers include Ari Hoenig, Trilok Gurtu, Claudia Quintet, Banda Magda, Marlow Rosado.
jazzmandu.com

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Jason Hainsworth instructs students at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music.

RJAM Students Dig into History

FOUR YEARS AGO, VETERAN JAZZ EDUCATOR Simon Rowe landed the dream gig of launching the Roots, Jazz and American Music degree program at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. Championed by SFCM President David Stull and SFJAZZ founder and Executive Director Randall Kline, the goal of RJAM was to allow students to work with members of the SFJAZZ Collective and study jazz through a lens that focuses on roots that reach far beyond the elements in New Orleans that led to the birth of the genre.

"We're going to dig into the complex rhythmic history of this music," Rowe said in an interview with *DownBeat* in 2016.

Midway through the program's third year, saxophonist Jason Hainsworth, who has replaced Rowe while the latter is on sabbatical, said, "We're still babies on the block, but it's been encouraging to see RJAM develop an identity and vibe of its own."

One thing that sets the four-year program apart is a first-year course that traces American music back 300 years to Africa, then forward through places like Haiti, Cuba and South America before finally reaching Congo Square in New Orleans, and continuing from there.

"It's more like a senior course, and really puts freshmen students through their paces," Hainsworth explained. "It takes them from lecture to performance."

And those first-year students also get to know what more seasoned students know because, rather than follow the traditional combo approach, RJAM places students in ensembles that mingle freshmen, sophomores and juniors (and, beginning this fall, seniors), and then throws in an SFJAZZ Collective member like bassist Matt Brewer or vibraphonist Warren Wolf.

"We completely eliminate the usual hierar-

chy," Hainsworth said. "The students cover all the same music; they learn and they play it together."

The program also sends young players on what Hainsworth calls a "deep dive"—a monthly unit consisting of four components based on the music of composers such as Benny Golson, John Coltrane and Jerome Kern. First, students are called on to make an oral presentation on the composer. Next, they transcribe a solo based on the music. Then, they learn a half-dozen of the subject's compositions. Finally, they write a tune in the style of the composer.

"We aim to develop a culture where students feel safe to take risks, but also become very aware of where this music comes from," Hainsworth said.

"As everyone learns and blossoms at his or her own pace, being a contributor to that growth is fantastic to watch," said faculty member Carmen Bradford, the veteran singer who worked with Count Basie and Benny Carter.

Above all, putting students in close contact with seasoned performers is a primary element in RJAM's goal of graduating students who are ready to take on a career in music.

"Along with jazz vocalist Clairdee, I work very hard to prepare our vocal students for a successful career," Bradford said. "We want them to leave our program prepared to actually make a living singing jazz music, be it a club date, recording, cruise ship, commercial jingles or as a background vocalist."

"This is like a finishing school," Bradford added. "That's what is so special about the RJAM program. If you, as a student, don't take advantage of the opportunities that flow through this conservatory from week to week—with some of the greatest musicians of our generation—then you weren't listening and you will have failed finishing school." —James Hale



Gerald Clayton

Fostering Talent: Pianist and educator Gerald Clayton, who recently signed to Blue Note Records, has been appointed artistic director and conductor of the Monterey Jazz Festival's Next Generation Jazz Orchestra for 2020–'22. Created in 1971, the NGJO is the festival's flagship high-school student honors ensemble. Clayton, whose Blue Note debut is scheduled for June release, first appeared at the Monterey Jazz Festival in 2000 and 2001 as a member of the Los Angeles County High School for the Arts Vocal Ensemble. This year, the Next Generation Jazz Orchestra will perform on the festival's Jimmy Lyons Stage on Sept. 27 with artist-in-residence Christian Sands. The NGJO will also play sets on the festival grounds throughout the weekend.

montereyjazzfestival.org

Essentially Ellington Finals: Jazz at Lincoln Center has announced that 18 finalists will compete in its 25th Annual Essentially Ellington High School Jazz Band Competition & Festival on May 7–9. The bands were selected from a pool of 106 school ensembles that submitted recordings of three tunes from Jazz at Lincoln Center's Essentially Ellington Library. Students from across the nation will participate in workshops, jam sessions and sectionals before competing for top honors at Jazz at Lincoln Center's Frederick P. Rose Hall. Following the competition events, a concert and awards ceremony will take place featuring this year's top three bands alongside the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra with Wynton Marsalis. jazz.org

Parks Project: The New Music Ensemble at Grand Valley State University in Allendale, Michigan, takes inspiration from U.S. national parks on *Dawn Chorus*, due out April 24 on Innova Recordings. The album features 11 new works commissioned by composers, including Phil Kline, Molly Joyce, Patrick Harlin, Paula Matthusen and Rob Deemer—all of whom visited the likes of Arches, Badlands, Grand Teton and Yellowstone national parks. Under Director Bill Ryan, the ensemble has performed this music in the locations that inspired it on three national tours, with a fourth planned for this summer. gvsu.edu



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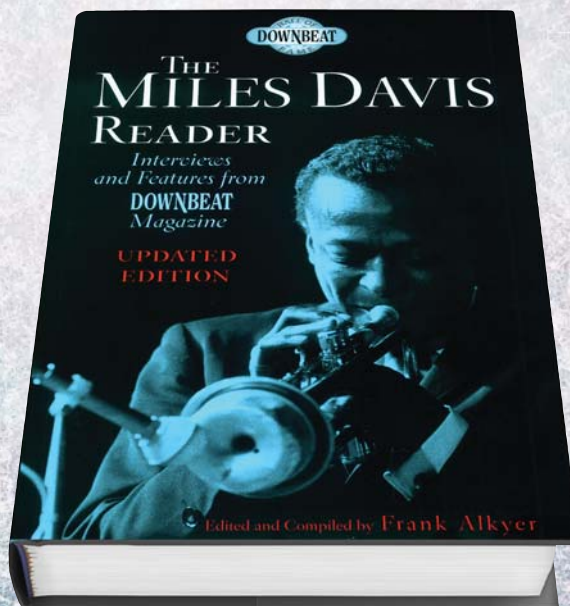
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Carmen Lundy

Grounded in the jazz tradition with eyes firmly fixed on the future, Carmen Lundy is a luminous singer and a master musician, as demonstrated on her 2019 album, *Modern Ancestors* (Afrasia), the 15th leader date she has released during her 40-plus years in the business.

Dee Dee Bridgewater/New Orleans Jazz Orchestra

"It's Raining" (Songs: *The Music Of Allen Toussaint*, Storyville, 2019) Bridgewater, vocals; Victor Atkins, arranger.

That's Dee Dee Bridgewater. Nice chart! She's singing her behind off. The tune is really soulful. I love the honesty, and the lyric is there. Everything is there. But it sounds like she wasn't present during the mix. The horns are too much in your face, thick on the bottom, and a lot of it is in her way. I would've loved to have pulled those horns back a little bit and gave her a little more depth in the overall sonic value.

Angélique Kidjo

"Toro Mata" (Celia, Verve, 2019) Kidjo, vocals; Amen Viana, backing vocals; Shabaka Hutchings, tenor saxophone; Julién Duchet, bass saxophone; Gangbé Brass Band, horns, bells; David Donatien, congas, bells; Dominic James, guitar; Benoît Avinhoué, shekere; Crespin Kpitiki, agomé; Meshell Ndegeocello, bass; Tony Allen, drums.

Angélique Kidjo. Talking about mixes, you hear how her voice is couched right in the center of the track. I've listened to and loved Afro-Cuban music for most of my adult life, and it doesn't feel like the bassist is playing from a true Afro-Cuban concept. It's more like Afro-Pop than a *tumbao* bass line; it doesn't propel what's happening in the rhythm. When the bass dropped out, suddenly it was swinging more, with a buoyancy in every beat on every bar.

I saw Angélique doing this tribute to Celia Cruz at the Hollywood Bowl. To me, this lady is the closest to being a direct extension of what Celia Cruz was all about. To take on Celia Cruz? *Huge*. And she straight-up delivered.

Jazzmeia Horn

"Green Eyes" (Love And Liberation, Concord, 2019) Horn, vocals; Victor Gould, piano; Ben Williams, bass; Jamison Ross, drums.

Jazzmeia Horn. Victor Gould on piano? I don't know her true vocal influences—what precedes how she arrived here. I'm sure she checked out Betty Carter—how can you not, if you're really coming into this zone of the whole realm of vocal expression?

This is probably something she wrote. No? Who wrote this? [*Erykah Badu.*] So, she's doing her jazzified take on an Erykah Badu tune. Jazzmeia has a great sense of rhythm. Once she moves a little farther into her career, she is going to do things for the vocal art form that will stand the test of time. It's a question of maturation, a bit more experience learning the repertoire that taught us how to get this stuff done. Right now, on this particular track, I want more story from her. I want more of a breath. I want her to really say to me, that "this is my story."

Maria Pia De Vito

"A Costruzione (Construção)" (Core Curacao, Jando, 2017) De Vito, vocals; Huw Warren, piano; Gabriele Mirabassi, clarinet; Roberto Taufic, guitar; Roberto Rossi, percussion; Chico Buarque, composer.

I don't know who this is. [*sings the rhythm*] I'm getting the story. The tonality is there. The emotion is there. Her instrument is really strong. Wherever she's arrived is where she intended to be. It has all the elements and qualities that we associate with jazz. But I don't think it's fair to categorize this as a jazz performance. I would characterize this as an expression of creative thought implemented to express a certain composer.



Carmen Lundy

JANET VAN HAM

Paul Simon

"Some Folks' Lives Roll Easy" (Blue Light, Sony, 2019) Simon, vocals; Sullivan Fortner, piano, celeste; John Patitucci, bass; Jack DeJohnette, drums; Joe Lovano, tenor saxophone.

Lovely piece. Paul's a master storyteller. It's nice to hear his voice away from the guitar, actually. I like Paul. He's honest, and there's some kind of sincerity when he sings. He'll always be who he is, no matter what the music.

I was just telling my musicians how I'm getting bored of hearing tunes with brushes—but I really wish the drummer had played brushes on this. I thought the *ting-ting-ting* of the cymbals was a bit in the way. The pianist was inserting all that classical motif, but it had a delicacy that provided a good contrast to the vocal line. I liked the bass player a lot.

Terri Lyne Carrington & Social Science

"Purple Mountains" (Social Science, Motéma, 2019) Carrington, drums; Kokayi, MC; Aaron Parks, piano, keyboards; Matthew Stevens, guitars; Morgan Guerin, bass; Debo Ray, vocals; Kassa Overall, DJ.

Miles Griffith? No idea. I've done certain tunes that I'm calling out something I see as unfair or unjust, something I'm not happy about in the human condition. That's what I'm hearing in the tone of the rap, the speech. There was one little passage where he sang some really hard intervals. His spoken voice is not as interesting as his singing voice. But he has a wonderful command of the language. I like this track a lot.

Harold Mabern

"Don't Misunderstand" (Afro Blue, Smoke Sessions, 2015) Mabern, piano; Norah Jones, vocal.

Norah Jones. Is that her on piano? She's like the female John Legend [*laughs*]. I don't hear any influence of the great genre of jazz vocalizing. It doesn't mean it's not there; I just don't hear it. When you get validation early in a career, you're less inclined to keep chiseling away at it. You just come out and do what you do. Norah would benefit from continuing to chisel away. I would much prefer to listen to someone sing it with half the voice, just to have a more emotional connection to the song.

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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