

90TH ANNUAL DOWNBEAT READERS POLL

DOWNBEAT

Jazz, Blues & Beyond



Christian McBride & Jeffrey Osborne

*Diggin' deep with our Artist of the Year
and a bona fide R&B legend!*

DECEMBER 2025 U.K. £6.99

\$7.99US \$8.99CAN



12>

0 74851 01493 6

DOWNBEAT.COM

Jack DeJohnette — Hall of Fame
Branford Marsalis Quartet — Album of the Year
Emmet Cohen — Pianist of the Year

Plus:
**119 TOP
ALBUMS**

ORIGIN RECORDS



JOVINO SANTOS NETO

**Mais Que Tudo:
Live at Kerry Hall, 1995**

Hans Teuber / Chuck Deardorf / Mark Ivester



MAJA JAKU

Blessed & Bewitched

Michael Rodriguez / Alan Bartus / Dezron Douglas / Johnathan Blake / Adrian Varady



PAUL MARINARO

Mood Ellington

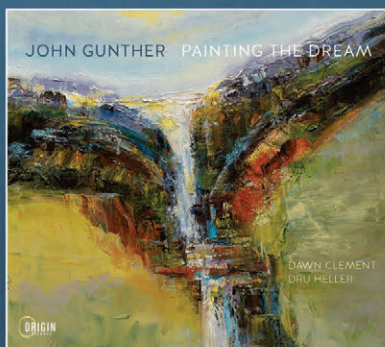
*25 classics, arranged by Alan Broadbent
John Clayton / Ryan Cohan / Bill Cunliffe
Jim Gailloreto / Chuck Israels & more...*



SHAWN PURCELL

Oblivity

*FEATURING Walt Weiskopf / Chris Ziemba
Jeff Reed / Steve Fidyk / Darden Purcell
Ben Patterson*



JOHN GUNTHER

Painting the Dream

Dawn Clement / Dru Heller



KELSEY MINES

Everything Sacred, Nothing Serious

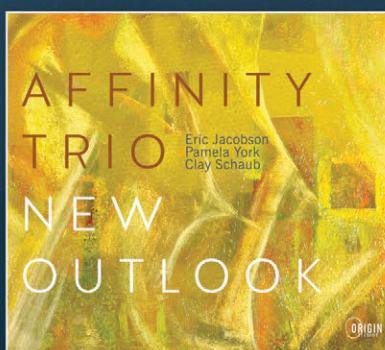
*Beserat Tafesse / John Hansen / Danilo Silva
Machado Mijiga / Jeff Busch*



CARL SCHULTZ

The Road to Trantor

*Tim Wendel
Adam Benjamin
Zack Teran
Alwyn Robinson*



AFFINITY TRIO

New Outlook

Eric Jacobson / Pamela York / Clay Schaub



ANTHONY STANCO

In the Groove: Live at the Alluvion

*Randy Napoleon / Xavier Davis
John Webber / Joe Farnsworth*



WWW.ORIGINARTS.COM

AVAILABLE EVERYWHERE



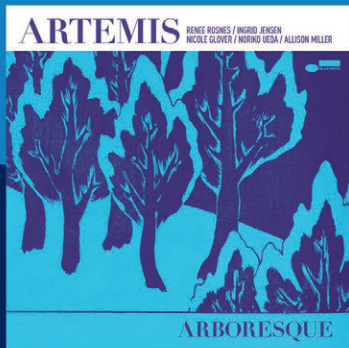
WITH
YOU
EVERY
STEP.

Vandoren[®]
PARIS

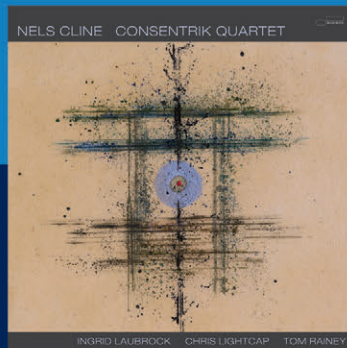
www.vandoren.com



THE YEAR IN JAZZ 2025



ARTEMIS
ARBORESQUE



NELS CLINE
CONSENTRIK QUARTET



BRANFORD MARSALIS QUARTET
BELONGING



GERALD CLAYTON
ONES & TWOS



BRANDON WOODY
FOR THE LOVE OF IT ALL



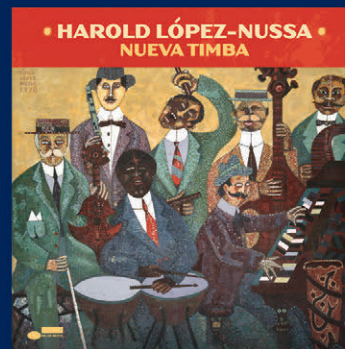
JOSHUA REDMAN
WORDS FALL SHORT



MERCEREAU/JOHNSON/NIÑO
OPENNESS TRIO

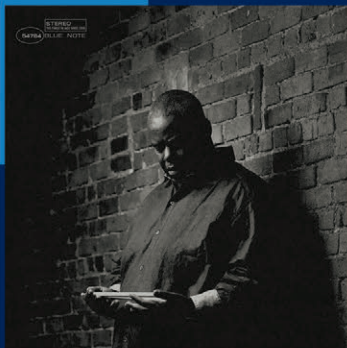


PAUL CORNISH
YOU'RE EXAGGERATING!

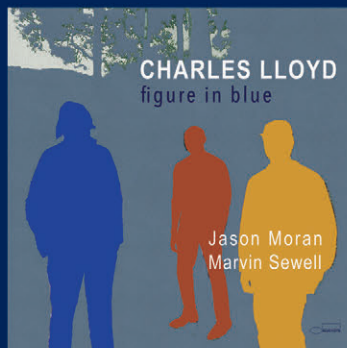


HAROLD LÓPEZ-NUSSA
NUEVA TIMBA

GET OFFICIAL BLUE NOTE MERCHANDISE AND EXCLUSIVE RELEASES AT
STORE.BLUENOTE.COM



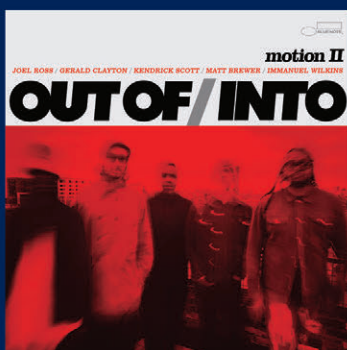
JOHNATHAN BLAKE
MY LIFE MATTERS



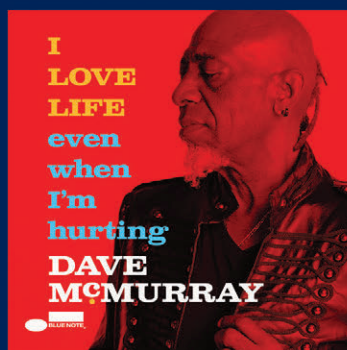
CHARLES LLOYD
FIGURE IN BLUE



AARON PARKS
BY ALL MEANS



OUT OF/INTO
MOTION II



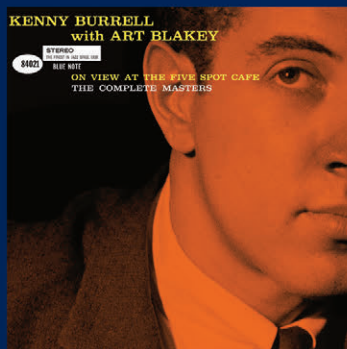
DAVE McMURRAY
I LOVE LIFE even when I'm hurting



MAYA DELILAH
THE LONG WAY ROUND



HORACE SILVER
SILVER IN SEATTLE:
LIVE AT THE PENTHOUSE



KENNY BURRELL
ON VIEW AT THE FIVE SPOT CAFÉ:
THE COMPLETE MASTERS



IKE QUEBEC
THE COMPLETE
BLUE NOTE 45 SESSIONS

THE FINEST IN JAZZ SINCE 1939



LISA HILTON

EXTENDED DAYDREAM

"IMPRESSIVE"
JAZZ WEEKLY

LISA HILTON
PIANO

J.D. ALLEN
SAX

IGMAR THOMAS
TRUMPET

RUDY ROYSTON
DRUMS

LUQUES CURTIS
BASS



OUT NOV. 28TH | LisaHiltonMusic.com

DOWNBEAT

DECEMBER 2025

VOLUME 92 / NUMBER 12

President Kevin Maher
Editor & Publisher Frank Alkyer
Contributing Editor Ed Enright
Reviews Editor Michael J. West
Creative Director Zanita Cuntová
Assistant to the Publisher Sue Mahal
Bookkeeper Evelyn Hawkins

ADVERTISING SALES

Record Companies & Schools
Jennifer Ruban-Gentile
Associate Publisher
630-359-9345
jenr@downbeat.com

Musical Instruments & East Coast Schools
Ritche Deraney
Vice President of Sales
201-445-6260
ritched@downbeat.com

Record Companies & Schools
Cameron Henry
Advertising Sales Associate
630-359-9338
cameron@downbeat.com

OFFICES

188 W. Industrial Dr., Ste. 310, Elmhurst, IL 60126
630-941-2030
<http://downbeat.com>
editor@downbeat.com

CUSTOMER SERVICE

877-904-5299 / service@downbeat.com

CONTRIBUTORS

Senior Contributors:

Aaron Cohen, Howard Mandel, John McDonough

Atlanta: Jon Ross; Boston: Frank-John Hadley, Allen Morrison; Chicago: Alain Drouot, Michael Jackson, Jeff Johnson, Bill Meyer, Paul Natkin, Howard Reich; Ayana Contreras; Indiana: Mark Sheldon; Los Angeles: Gary Fukushima, Josef Woodard, Scott Yanow; Michigan: John Ephland; Minneapolis: Andrea Canter; Montana: Philip Freeman; Nashville: Bob Doerschuk; New Orleans: Cree McCree; New York: Herb Boyd, Bill Douthart, Kira Grunenberg, Stephanie Jones, Ashley Kahn, Matthew Kassel, Jimmy Katz, Suzanne Lorge, Phillip Lutz, Jim Macnie, Ken Micallef, Bill Milkowski, Ivana Ng, Dan Ouellette, Ted Panken, Tom Staudter, Jack Vartoogian; Philadelphia: Shaun Brady; Portland: Alexa Peters; San Francisco: Mars Breslow, Yoshi Kato; Seattle: Paul de Barros; Washington, D.C.: Willard Jenkins, John Murphy, Michael Wilderman; Canada: J.D. Considine, James Hale; France: Jean Szlamowicz; Germany: Peter Margasak, Hyou Vielz; Great Britain: Ammar Kalia, Tina Edwards; Portugal: José Duarte; Romania: Virgil Mihaiu; Russia: Cyril Moshkow. Contributor Emeritus: Fred Bouchard.

Jack Maher, President 1970-2003
John Maher, President 1950-1969

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

DOWNBEAT (ISSN 0012-5768) is published monthly by Maher Publications, 188 W. Industrial Dr., Ste. 310, Elmhurst, IL 60126. Copyright 2025 Maher Publications. All rights reserved. Trademark registered U.S. Patent Office. Great Britain registered trademark No. 719,407. Periodicals postage paid at Elmhurst, IL and at additional mailing offices. Subscription rates: \$34.95 for one year, \$59.95 for two years. Foreign subscription rates: \$56.95 for one year, \$103.95 for two years.

Publisher assumes no responsibility for return of unsolicited manuscripts, photos, or artwork. Nothing may be reprinted in whole or in part without written permission from publisher. MAHER PUBLICATIONS: DOWNBEAT magazine, MUSIC INC. magazine, UpBeat Daily.

POSTMASTER: Send change of address to: DownBeat, P.O. Box 11688, St. Paul, MN 55111-0688. **CABLE ADDRESS:** DownBeat (on sale Nov. 25, 2025) Magazine Publishers Association.

GIVE DOWNBEAT FOR THE HOLIDAYS!



DOWNBEAT.COM

Reginald LEWIS

REGINALD LEWIS ECHOES OF CHERRY STREET



DEBRIK CARDNER | JEREMIAH ST. JOHN | LÉON LEWIS-NICOL | LARRY GRAY | MAXWELL ORAWA

DEDICATED TO
SANDRA TURNER-BARNES &
ROBERT "BOOTSIE" BARNES

STREAM DR. REGINALD LEWIS'S
NEW ALBUM

ECHOES OF CHERRY STREET

AVAILABLE NOW ON:
SPOTIFY, APPLE MUSIC,
AMAZON MUSIC, PANDORA AND ALL
STREAMING SERVICES

CANNONBALL



www.cannonballmusic.com

DECEMBER 2025

Inside

ON THE COVER

Artist of the Year, Bassist of the Year, Arranger of the Year

26 Christian McBride & Jeffrey Osborne

Unbridled, Uncanceled.

BY GARY FUKUSHIMA

Christian McBride, the DownBeat Readers Poll choice for Artist of the Year, and Jeffrey Osborne, simply R&B royalty, sojourned to The Record Parlour, a used vinyl shop and show venue in Los Angeles, where they were photographed thumbing through sides, playing pinball and generally having a blast sharing road stories and jokes.



Speaking of royalty, drummer and composer Jack DeJohnette has been inducted into the DownBeat Hall of Fame.

Cover photo by Alex Frankel

32

90TH ANNUAL DOWNBEAT READERS POLL

32 Jack DeJohnette

Hall of Fame

BY WILLARD JENKINS

36 Branford Marsalis Quintet

Album of the Year

BY PHILLIP LUTZ

38 Emmet Cohen

Pianist of the Year

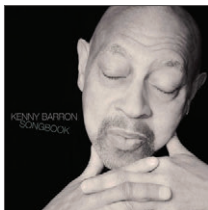
BY ALLEN MORRISON

40 Complete Readers Poll Listings

SPECIAL SECTION

61 Holiday Gift Guide

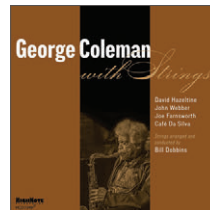
- 62 Bounty of Vinyl
- 66 The Descendants of Mike & Phoebe
- 68 Music to Brighten the Spirit
- 70 A Reader's Delights
- 72 Great Gear Gifts



50 Kenny Barron



55 Eddie Daniels



57 George Coleman



58 Doc Pomus

DEPARTMENTS

15 The Beat

- 15 Rotem Sivan
- 18 Coltrane House Update
- 22 Abstract Logix
- 24 Sullivan Fortner Wins Gilmore Award
- 24 Craig Taborn Named MacArthur Fellow
- 25 Final Bar: Jim McNeely

49 Reviews

74 Master Class

Dr. Rahsaan Barber on Building in the Blues

76 Transcription

Peter Bernstein's Solo on 'Perpetual Pendulum'

78 Toolshed

82 Blindfold Test

Guitarist Dan Wilson
BY TED PANKEN

AP-S200GB



AP-S450GB



AP-750GB



CELVIANO

Redefining Tradition and Innovation



Since 1991, CELVIANO pianos have delivered authentic grand piano sound and feel to players around the world, at a fraction of the space and cost of an acoustic grand piano.

Blending traditional piano elegance with musical innovation, every CELVIANO is designed to delight pianists with the piano sound and touch they've dreamed of, along with smart musical technology that heightens the joy of playing piano.

Our AP-S200, AP-S450, and AP-750 are now available in a handsome Gray Beige finish, beautifying any space with warmth and elegance.

Our flagship AP-750 is also now available in gorgeous Rosewood and brilliant White finishes, completing a stunning spectrum of color options across the entire CELVIANO line.

CASIO

AP-750BN



AP-750WE





NEW

Powerful
Performance

Greater
Resonance

Zero
Limits

Look to the LGX

ROVNER®
PRODUCTS
MADE IN THE USA

www.rovnerproducts.com

First Take > BY FRANK ALKYER



More Hits for the Holidays

OCT. 24, 2025 — THE DECEMBER ISSUE

always brings a bit of confusion for the DownBeat staff. It's the last issue of the year, but we've still got two months until the holidays. Still, we put on our Santa hats early and pull together a great gift list for those of us who love this music. Between the Readers Poll and our Gift Guide, there's a lot to see! Check out Frank-John Hadley's dive into new holiday releases on page 68. But wait, there's more. The holiday spirit keeps on pouring into the offices. So, here are a few more holiday recordings to check out. (But not until after Thanksgiving, please!)

WYCLIFFE GORDON *Holiday Fun!* (Arbors)

The trombonist brings some Southern charm to the holidays with this collection of 13 classics arranged with heart. This gently swinging set includes such great takes as "Baby It's Cold Outside," "Have Yourself A Merry Little Christmas," "Winter Wonderland" and more. "Silent Night" is a treat! arborsrecords.com

HERB ALPERT *Christmas Time Is Here* (Herb Alpert Presents)

Continuing a tradition the trumpeter started back in 1968, Alpert stamps his classic Tijuana Brass sound on a dozen holiday hits. The first single comes out as a bouncy, smile-inducing version of "Jingle Bells." It's fun all the way. herbalpert.com

BÉLA FLECK & THE FLECKTONES *Jingle All The Way* (Thirty Tigers)

The group's Grammy-winning holiday

album has been remastered and is now ready for repeated listenings of sweet, silly, tampering-with-the-classics fun! Compare and contrast The Flecktones' version of "Jingle Bells" with Mr. Alpert's! thirtytigers.com

VARIOUS

Chill Tone Presents A Jazzy Christmas (Chill Tone)

This compilation of holiday classics serves up laid-back charm by a variety of artists you may or may not know, with some tunes seemingly created just for the season. High points include the Luke Marantz Trio's "The Most Wonderful Day" and the Ryder Quartet's "Christmas In New York." chilltonerecords.bandcamp.com

PARLOR GREENS

Auld Lang Syne/Everyday Will Be Like A Holiday (Colemine)

This organ trio drops a holiday 45 that will make you shimmy and shake. Side A features a deep-grooving rendition of "Auld Lang Syne," while Side B offers up a great rendition of William Bell's "Every Day Will Be Like A Holiday." coleminerrecords.com

VARIOUS ARTISTS

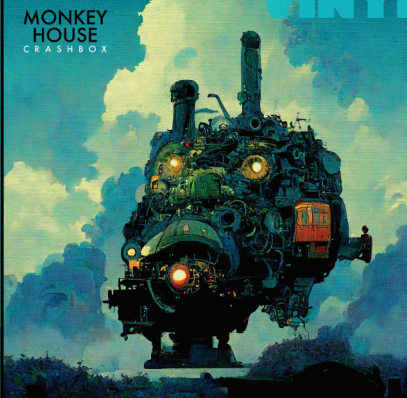
Verve/Remixed Holiday (Verve)

And now for something completely different: holiday tunes reimagined via the tinkering of producer Tourist. The music puts Nina Simone, Ella Fitzgerald, Louis Armstrong, Count Basie, Mel Tormé, Billie Holiday, Dinah Washington and Shirley Horn in an utterly modern context. It's a trip worth taking! ververecords.com

DB

MONKEY HOUSE CRASHBOX
SPECIAL LIMITED COLLECTOR'S EDITION

MONKEY HOUSE CRASHBOX



RECORDED, MIXED + MASTERED IN
ULTRA HI 24-BIT/192kHz RESOLUTION
2-DISC SET • 45 RPM • 180-GRAM
AUDIOPHILE VIRGIN **TURQUOISE VINYL**

The first release in the ALMA Records Special Limited Collector's Edition vinyl series is *Crashbox*, the fourth Monkey House release to debut at #1 on iTunes Jazz. With special guests Michael Leonhart and Drew Zingg.

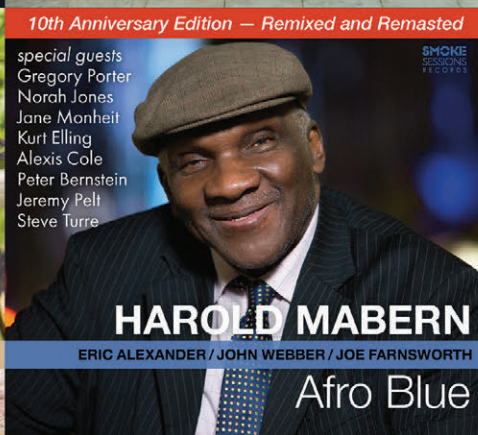
"Thrilling, captivating, artfully produced!"
—Jacek Brun, jazz-fun.de

SHOPALMARECORDS.COM
AND WHEREVER VINYL IS SOLD

ALMA UNIVERSAL inakustik ONTARIO CREATES
MVD Canada FACTOR
entertainment group

THE SOUND OF SMOKE

on limited edition LPs, CDs, and digital platforms



About

Be part of a deep learning experience at Jazzcampus in Basel, Switzerland.

Spend one year in a band of exceptionally skilled musicians, while being mentored by legendary musicians in the field.

No credits required, no age limit—just music and a full scholarship.

Coaches

Django Bates
Johnathan Blake
Kris Davis
Mary Halvorson
Guillermo Klein
Lionel Loueke
Linda May Han Oh
Wolfgang Muthspiel
Miguel Zenón
and many more!

Apply
now



Apply

Artistic Director
Wolfgang Muthspiel

Application
Up to eight outstanding, promising musicians will be selected for this Focusyear.

Applications should be received by
December 31, 2025

The Focusyear auditions will be held
from March 13 to 15, 2026

focusyearbasel.com

Chords & Discords

Remembering Sheila

Kudos to DownBeat for the wonderful tribute for Sheila Jordan [in the November issue], one of Detroit's brightest stars in the jazz galaxy. She was a most creative, determined musical spirit. I encourage all to read her biography *Jazz Child* to better understand Detroit's 1940s jazz scene and life on the road for this remarkable lady.

LARRY PRYCE
VIA EMAIL



Appreciation for Well-Written Reviews

I always appreciate reading a well-written record review and I found two in your November issue. The first was Ted Panken's review of the Miguel Zenon Quartet record *Vanguardia Subterranea*. I bought the CD (prior to the review) from Miguel at the quartet's show at the Jazz Showcase in September. I have "big ears," so I know excellent music when I hear it, but I am unable to technically and musically communicate what I have heard. Panken did an excellent job at clarifying what I heard on the record and at the show. This is now my favorite Miguel Zenon CD with the quartet (eight others). It got a 5-star rating from me.

I have been trying to cull my herd of CDs, but after reading the Ayana Contreras review of the new Harold Lopez-Nussa [in December] I went out and ordered the CD. It was even better than I expected, and it is now my favorite HL-N record of five in my collection. I have seen the quartet live four times and this CD captures the energy and range of the quartet's live show. Excellent solos by all and very tight band playing ballads to burners. I never realized what a great pianist Harold is until this record. When he plays slowly on one song he almost sounds like a classical pianist.

I am hoping next year DownBeat will feature Miguel Zenon on your cover. Ever since I saw him in 2009 with the SFJAZZ Collective and his quartet he has become my favorite alto saxophonist. I have seen Miguel perform live 28 times since 2009. I have thoroughly enjoyed every one of his performances.

MARC NEBOZENKO
EVANSTON IL

Editor's Note: Marc, the collector's bug is a very difficult one to tame. We don't even try!

Journalists, Do Your Homework

Dear Editor, I'm speaking to all jazz journalists. And I'm taking the liberty to speak for creative musical souls. I'm writing to encourage you

jazz journalists to discuss your lack of attention to all "jazz musicians" using all "genres." On the occasion of your 73rd Critics Poll, questions have arisen within me. Honestly, I cultivate no sour grapes but have found the sea change of my creative process from the last five years ignored by this magazine.

The conversation that needs to be had is not "does it tick all

of the boxes" to be acknowledged and reported on, but "how open and prepared are we in hearing and reporting the current questing within the foundation of Black American creative music?"

The fact is that I am often represented in your poll as a leading musician on my instrument, yet my creative and compositional process over the last four albums, which are electronic compositional projects, is not. "Electronic Music" is a catch-all phrase. My electronic music practice comes less from Aphex Twin than from Roscoe Mitchell and then from Drexciya back to everything. SOUND.

The sources of inspiration come from many places. Again, please understand that this truly is not about me, but about you. I'm speaking from the experience of a creative musician and include some others. What I believe you journalists are supposed to do is to produce informed observations and opinions, based on a wide breadth of knowledge. Jazz journalists in this time are simply not prepared or qualified to qualify our creativity and thus our creations. Most certainly not all. But most.

They have a shallow depth of knowledge in this vast world of creative music. And they are often of hobbled, catholic opinion. The observations, conclusions and opinions given are very often inadequate and, sometimes, insulting to us because of the journalist's lack of competence and comprehensive, rigorous study of the history of our practice. We musicians HAVE to do that. If it is not done, the end result is not honorable to the geniuses of our jazz history. It is not enduring. This note is not about, "ACKNOWLEDGE ME." This note is about, "JOURNALISTS, DO YOUR HOMEWORK. CONNECT THE DOTS. EXCUSE YOURSELF FROM IGNORANCE. RECOGNIZE WHAT IS HAPPENING ALL AROUND YOU. MOVE THE MUSIC FORWARD BY DOING YOUR PART: DEEPLY GENUINE REPORTAGE, BASED IN RIGOROUS PREPARATION AND OBJECTIVITY. DO NOT FOLLOW TRENDS. DO NOT LAZILY LABEL."

We creative artists are the engine. You and we are partners. You are not the engine that qualifies our questing.

GERALD CLEAVER
VIA EMAIL

HAVE A CHORD OR DISCORD? EMAIL US AT EDITOR@DOWNBEAT.COM OR FIND US ON FACEBOOK AND "X."



Bad reeds hold students back. Légère keeps them moving forward.

This holiday season, give the gift of **more time playing.**



LégèreTM
REEDS LTD.
FREEDOM *to* PERFORM

8th Annual

Bridges Composition Competition

CALL for SCORES

Deadline January 15, 2026

Fusing Jazz and Classical Music

Emerging composers from around the world are invited to bring fresh perspectives to the intersection of jazz and classical music, crafting new works for string quartet and jazz combo that explores the connections between these genres. Up to three winners are awarded the David Baker Prize, which includes \$2,500, a week of mentorship with our Jazz Program directors, and a premiere performance of their pieces at Ravinia.

June 4 – 10 | Highland Park, IL

& JAZZ Program

Deadline January 15, 2026

Artistic Directors:

SAXOPHONIST
STEVE WILSON



BASSIST
JOHN CLAYTON



PIANIST
BILLY CHILDS



Each of the Steans Institute's programs is devoted to small-group collaboration. The Jazz Program is centered on artistic innovation and the melding of sounds and styles. From day one, fellows dive into rigorous rehearsals, shaping original works in diverse ensembles and honing the flexibility essential to jazz performance.

June 9 - 17, 2026 | Highland Park, IL



Scan for more info or visit
Ravinia.org/Steans

Ravinia Steans Institute also offers programs for composers, classical instrumentalists, and classical singers.



SHERVIN LAINEZ

"Basically, from November, we started seeing something that's not completely right, he had a cold, he was crying more," Sivan said of his baby son's cancer.

Rotem Sivan and His Heart Thieves

Heat Thieves, the new album from guitarist Rotem Sivan, is named well. This lush record, and the moving story behind it, will steal your heart.

Written in 48 hours shortly after Sivan's twins, Eden and Gigi, were born, *Heart Thieves* is a lyrical, hopeful and bittersweet exploration of the experience of new fatherhood. The record also has, at times, a startlingly prescient quality.

Just weeks after *Heart Thieves* was recorded, Sivan and his wife, Lore, were faced with the

unthinkable: Their months-old son, Eden, was diagnosed with ATRT, a rare and aggressive form of brain cancer.

"Basically, from November, we started seeing something that's not completely right, he had a cold, he was crying more," Sivan said. "Eventually we're like, 'Hey, he's not OK. They gave him antibiotics ... and then two days after he stopped eating completely.'"

For the first six months of 2025, Sivan and his wife slept on a mattress in their son's hospi-

tal room as Eden recovered from a risky surgery to remove a golf ball-sized tumor from his brain and then underwent five rounds of in-patient chemotherapy. For much of that time, Sivan hardly touched his guitar, let alone played the music from this new record.

"These rounds of chemo, you basically almost die every time. It's like he almost died five times. It's really bad. So, playing his song feels kind of drastic," Sivan said, referring to a track on the record called "Eden."

Revisiting the music on *Heart Thieves* felt jarring, and painful, because this record is ultimately a love letter to his kids, a motion of hope for their future, and the musical realization of a dream he's long held close: to have a family.

"I mean, musicians work really hard. Artists, it's an unending grind on so many facets: emotionally, financially, time," Sivan said. "I just thought it would be really nice, not to contrast it, but just [to also have] a different reality, this family cell that is existing outside of the world of success."

Since he moved to New York from Israel in 2008 to attend The New School, Sivan has been no stranger to musical success. His 2013 debut record, *Enchanted Sun*, and 2014's *For Emotional Use Only* garnered critical acclaim, and he has gone on to perform and tour widely. As he built his career, Sivan had moments where he didn't think fatherhood would be possible.

"Playing \$75 gigs and barely paying rent in New York, I was like, sounds cool, but I can barely feed myself. So I couldn't see it, you know?" he said.

But then Sivan met and married Lore, a data scientist, in 2022. By late 2023, the couple was pregnant. On June 27, 2024, after a tough pregnancy that forced Lore to be on bedrest for four months, they welcomed fraternal twins Eden and Gigi.

Released on the label Sonder House Music, *Heart Thieves* is titled after the affectionate nickname he gave the twins who've become his world: "little thieves." The music on the record was largely conceived during a single, productive weekend, and then shaped in the studio by producer Ben Wendel in collaboration with Sivan and his standing band with bassist Hamish Smith and drummer Miguel Russell.

Save for a couple striking covers — Soundgarden's "Black Hole Sun" and the Glenn Miller Orchestra hit "In The Mood" — the record is made up of tender and immediate origi-

inals. For *Heart Thieves*, Sivan's compositional process often involved writing piano sketches and then "finding solutions" to them on the neck of the guitar, which is much less linear than a piano keyboard.

"I'm not a piano player. That's why I like writing on piano, because I need to find it a little bit ... I need to imagine it sounding in a more intuitive way," said Sivan.

This piano-to-guitar process lends the songs on *Heart Thieves* a beautiful blend of qualities. The record possesses the expressive, singable melodies and harmonic richness typically asso-

ciated with piano, as well as the dynamic tones and textures the guitar offers.

The combination is palpable from the first track, "The Path," which oscillates between pleasing consonance and uneasy dissonance, nimbly conveyed through an acrobatic chord melody arrangement.

"For us, that was [about] when she was pregnant, the path to having a family. The path is not a straight line to say the least. In our case the path is still complicated," Sivan said.

A similar complexity of emotion and direction is also present on "Eden." Though the song

was written before Eden fell ill, something prompted Sivan to go back and tweak the song for his "sweet boy."

"I wrote the song 'Eden,' and then I added this intro when he was not feeling great, but we didn't know exactly what was going on then," Sivan said. "That darker intro for the song was added later because it was like, 'Hmm, there is something there, you know?'"

At the same time, songs like "Lullabye" and "Will They Fly," sweet, serene tunes Sivan wrote as he imagined his children's future, shine with simplicity and love. "Lullabye," which features saxophonist Oded Tzur, quietly ebbs like an ocean, while the gospel-tinged "Will They Fly," ripe with blue notes and playful turns, resounds like a musical prayer.

Recently, it would seem that prayer was answered. In September, Eden had a pivotal MRI scan and the cancer appeared to be gone. That said, because Eden has the most aggressive subtype of ATRT, called MMIC, it's essential that not even one cancer cell remains. So, Eden, now just over a year old, is about to start an immunotherapy trial in Boston.

"Our doctor and a lot of other doctors would recommend some sort of maintenance treatment because ... it's just very aggressive, so you don't want it to come back," Sivan said.

Still, Sivan says that lately, things are looking up.

"The album is out in the world," Sivan said. "He's feeling better. My wife is working. Gigi's doing great. Everything is good."

So good that Sivan was able to leave for a two-week European tour in promotion of *Heart Thieves*, which kicked off in early October. His tour performances will also include some visual components, including scenes from the documentary *Heart Thieves*, being made director Kevin Jardin, about Eden's cancer battle.

"[Jardin], the guy that's creating the documentary ... is sending me a couple of bits. So, I'm going to project them during the shows, a few segments," said Sivan.

Likewise, a MIDI-to-visual project that Sivan has been working on for three years with some programmers and artists in Europe will also make its debut during the tour. During his shows, a visual representation of the music will appear, triggered and manipulated by what Sivan plays on his guitar.

"It's a little bit more than a gig for me," he said. "There are a few things that are being connected here. It's an exciting moment."

After being unable to listen to his new record throughout his family's ordeal, Eden's positive MRI, the release of the album and the chance to tour again mark a welcome mindset shift for Sivan.

"I'm super excited to go and play," he said. "But, first and foremost, I'm excited to have a healthy baby."

—Alexa Peters

GET OVER 40% OFF THIS AMAZING CRUISE
USE PROMO CODE: EPIC

BOOK NOW AT MCBRIDESWORLDATSEA.COM



BILL EVANS TRIO

Haunted Heart: The Legendary Riverside Studio Recordings

- The complete studio recordings + 26 alternate takes (17 previously unreleased)
- Intro by John Densmore (The Doors) & new notes by Eugene Holley Jr.
- Deluxe 180g 5-LP boxset, 3-CD & Digital



MILES DAVIS

Miles '55

- A new 16-track collection of Miles' 1955 Prestige sessions
- Notes by GRAMMY®-winners Ashley Kahn & Dan Morgenstern
- Deluxe 180g 3-LP boxset, 2-CD & Digital



TERRY CALLIER
The New Folk Sound of Terry Callier



PINK ANDERSON
Carolina Blues Man



ALBERT KING
Live Wire/Blues Power



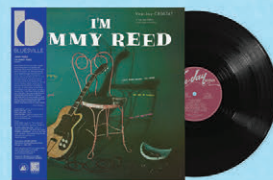
LIGHTNIN' HOPKINS
Last Night Blues



MISSISSIPPI JOHN HURT
Today!



SCRAPPER BLACKWELL
Mr. Scrapper's Blues



JIMMY REED
I'm Jimmy Reed

- 180g Vinyl pressed at QRP
- Housed in a tip-on jacket
- Remastered (AAA) from the original tapes

"WE ARE IN THE MIDST OF A BLUES REVIVAL NOT SEEN IN SOME 65 YEARS, AND CRAFT RECORDINGS' BLUESVILLE SERIES OF REISSUES IS AT THE FOREFRONT." — No Depression

VINCE GUARALDI TRIO

A Charlie Brown Christmas (60th Anniversary)

- First zoetrope edition of the timeless holiday favorite
- Featuring "Christmas Time Is Here" "O Tannenbaum," & "Linus and Lucy"
- Other LP formats also available



Peanuts © Peanuts
Worldwide LLC

ORIGINAL JAZZ CLASSICS SERIES

- Legendary titles, remastered (AAA) from the original tapes
- 180g Vinyl pressed at RTI
- Housed in a tip-on jacket



CRAFTRECORDINGS.COM





John and Alice Coltrane in a casual moment.

Coltrane Home Prepares to Reopen as Immersive Museum

AFTER TWO DECADES, PHASE ONE OF THE historic restoration effort revitalizing The John & Alice Coltrane Home in Dix Hills, New York, is nearing completion. Named a National Treasure in 2018 by the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the landmark property will reopen to the public in 2026 as an interactive museum, recording studio and meditation space, offering an ambitious calendar of events and related programming.

"Through workshops, residencies and performances, we'll bring artists and community together across generations," said Steve Fulgoni, founder and president of the Friends of The Coltrane Home, a nonprofit organization.

Fostering deep connections is part of the Coltranes' legacy, one that played an important role in their shared life at the Dix Hills residence. As young working parents, they moved their family of three from New York City out to Long Island in 1964, seeking an environment that would nourish communal creativity and spiritual development. In a matter of years, the ranch-style house and its 3.4 acres of native greenery would welcome three more children, serve as an incubator for John's 1965 masterwork *A Love Supreme* (Impulse!) and spark Alice's series of era-defining Impulse! releases from the late 1960s through the early 1970s.

"In an age of digital isolation, the Home will

remind us of the power of presence, mentorship and shared human experience," said Fulgoni.

With phase one in its final stages, the Home's stewards look toward inviting the public into this sacred space with the goal of promoting community-driven artistic expansion. "Community service is the essential part of it, especially for young people," said Kathleen Hennessy, vice president of Friends of the Coltrane Home. "There'll be music playing throughout the house ... opportunities for people to learn, play music, explore meditation and self-expression." She added, "It's not supposed to be behind a velvet rope. We're going to let people come in and sit on the furniture and listen to the music."

Poised to soft open in September 2026, to coincide with John's centennial, the museum provides a hybrid experience comprising exact replicas and enhanced updates, as well as an archive — donated, in part, by board member Yasuhiro Fujioka — that the organization is in the process of digitizing. Visitors will have the opportunity to explore all levels of the home, using its restored staircase or its forthcoming system of elevators and lifts. "We are committed to everybody being able to access the parts of the house that are the most important," said Hennessy.

One such space is the modest-sized guest bedroom where John composed *A Love Supreme*.

It overlooks the home's yard and meditation trail, with plenty of light pouring in through the top-floor windows.

The restoration also honors Alice's intention for vibrant colors to energize the Home. The couple's master bedroom features their original carpet, striking in morning glory purple, and a rainbow-paned rose window leans against the wall of Alice's meditation room, awaiting replacement. "She felt very strongly about the power of colors," said Hennessy. "They were used throughout the house and they will be back when the house is restored."

Beyond its myriad immersive and interactive elements, what separates The Coltrane Home from other historic museums is the inclusion of Alice's studio, primarily restored to support young, emerging artists — as well as mid-career and elder artists on a case-by-case basis — and to serve the Home's multidisciplinary artist-in-residence series. Additionally, the space will resume its *Live from Alice Coltrane's Studio* series that began during the pandemic. "That will range from small musical performances to talks about the legacy," said Hennessy, sharing the Home's plans to reach those who may not be able to visit in person.

Reopening Alice's studio as a state-of-the-art space for recording, engineering and performance resonates deeply with harpist and com-



The Revenue Platform for Jazz Clubs

Visit turntabletickets.com/features to learn more.

TURNTABLE™

Parker Jazz Club
photo: @matthewcasby



RSD **BLACK
FRIDAY**

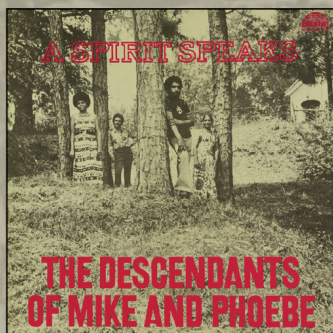
THE DESCENDANTS OF MIKE AND PHOEBE

A Spirit Speaks

Remastered Audio Cut Directly from the
ORIGINAL ANALOG TAPES

Mastered by **Kevin Gray**

Pressed on **180-GRAM VINYL**
at Record Technology Inc.



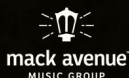
Includes Free Deluxe One-Year
DownBeat Magazine Subscription
(print & digital)

Plus

Newly Commissioned Editorial and Historical
Reprint of Tour Listing from 1974

Visit **RecordStoreDay.com** for more information
and a participating indie retailer near you

Visit **strataeast.mackavenue.com**
for more from Strata-East



mackavenue.com

facebook.com/mackavenue youtube.com/mackavenue
instagram.com/mackavenuerecords

x.com/MackAvenueMusic threads.net/@mackavenuerecords



A rendering of the front garden of the Coltrane Home in Fort Dix, New York. In only a few short years at the Dix Hills residence, John Coltrane conceived and recorded *A Love Supreme* and Alice released her groundbreaking album series on Impulse! Records.

poser Brandee Younger, who serves as a Coltrane Home board member. “Alice didn’t project the image of a business trailblazer, but she absolutely was one,” said Younger, discussing the Coltranes’ plans to build their own studio and launch their own label amid their ongoing frustrations with critics misunderstanding John’s work.

“Although John passed away [in 1967] before they could complete that vision together,” she continued, “Alice carried it forward. She finished the studio and the music, and she ultimately negotiated what I see as a groundbreaking deal with Impulse! Records.” Instead of releasing John’s music on their own label, Alice brokered a record deal with Impulse! that allowed her to record and produce her own music as a leader under her own name.

“Producing one’s own album was something unheard of for Black artists in that era, whether in jazz or any other genre,” said Younger, who herself is a native Long Islander. “As a young Black harp student, Alice Coltrane was one of the few role models I had who showed me that someone who looked like me could play the music I loved and bring the harp into unexpected genres, and the fact that she lived right here made it all the more meaningful.”

The Coltranes’ resistance to racist and discriminatory practices has informed the restoration since its inception. Artistic Director Michelle Sita Coltrane considers the project critical in preserving and advancing the joint legacy of her parents, who overcame “barriers of inequity, systemic racism and more through their higher connection and belief that their music is the language of the heart, transcending all barriers.”

Currently, the project’s most urgent challenges include funding and logistics. A historic restoration is distinct from other types of renovations, requiring complex fundraising strategies, visionary planning and lots of elbow grease. Restoring the outer brick façade, for example, which received funding from two separate grants, required that the original bricks

be removed, each washed and restored, then replaced in the exact style and layout as they’d appeared. “It’s why a lot of times these projects are long and difficult and require substantial funding,” said Hennessy.

Fortunately, plainclothes superheroes abound. Because community is intrinsic to the Coltranes’ legacy, the Home has partnered with area businesses like Huntington Township’s HGLV Architects, plus local and national organizations that have offered critical funding and brick and mortar support, including Half Hollow Hills Community Library, whose new auditorium hosts performances and series workshops.

The African-American Cultural Heritage Action Fund (AACHAF) has been supporting the Dix Hills restoration effort for years, which now runs in tandem with renovations at the Coltranes’ Philadelphia home. The Coltrane Estate recently finalized the latter’s reacquisition with support from NTHP and assistance from AACHAF, which has adopted the site’s restoration as the inaugural project for its new Descendant and Family Stewardship program. “The work that they’re doing is so vital,” said Hennessy, who added, “We want to acknowledge the years of advocacy and efforts in the neighborhood on behalf of the Coltrane House in Philadelphia preceding our stewardship.”

Whether they show up as community partners, music lovers or working artists, it’s the people who empower the effort in the face of financial challenges and logistical dead-ends. The Home’s stewards look forward to introducing a new generation to late-era John Coltrane, inviting young artists to record in Alice’s studio and connecting with visitors in the Dix Hills community and around the world.

“[The restoration is] not just about history,” said Younger. “It’s about making that history live for the next generation, especially for Black children and families in Suffolk County and beyond. This house is a beacon of cultural and historical significance, and it’s so dear to my heart.”

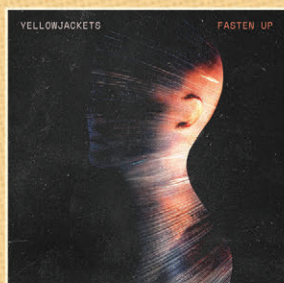
—Stephanie Jones



mack avenue™
MUSIC GROUP

THIS YEAR'S ESSENTIAL ALBUMS

UNFORGETTABLE MUSIC FROM YOUR FAVORITE ARTISTS



YELLOWJACKETS
FASTEN UP
Available on: CD



MUSIC INC.
CHARLES TOLLIVER & STANLEY COWELL
CECIL MCBEE
JIMMY HOPPS
LIVE AT SLUGS, VOLUME I & II
Available on: CD + 180-gram Vinyl



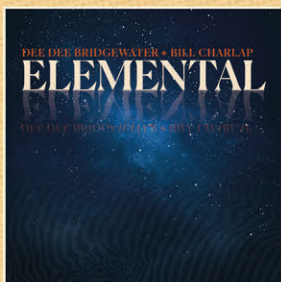
STANLEY COWELL
MUSA: ANCESTRAL STREAMS
Available on: CD + 180-gram Vinyl



CHARLIE ROUSE
TWO IS ONE
Available on: CD + 180-gram Vinyl



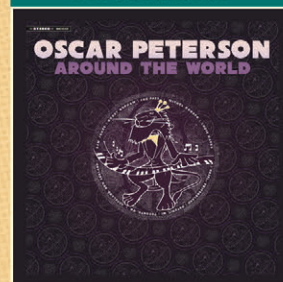
ISAIAH J. THOMPSON
THE BOOK OF ISAIAH:
MODERN JAZZ MINISTRY
Available on: CD + Vinyl



DEE DEE BRIDGEWATER & BILL CHARLAP
ELEMENTAL
Available on: CD + 180-gram Vinyl



CHRISTIAN MCBRIDE
WITHOUT FURTHER ADO, VOL. 1
Available on: CD + Vinyl



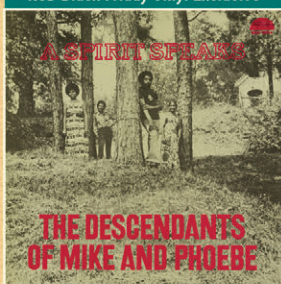
OSCAR PETERSON
AROUND THE WORLD
(Official Centennial Release)
Available on: Vinyl



OUT DECEMBER 12 - JUST IN TIME FOR THE HOLIDAYS



CHARLES TOLLIVER & STANLEY COWELL
MUSIC INC.
Available on: CD + 180-gram Vinyl



THE DESCENDANTS OF
MIKE AND PHOEBE, BILL LEE
A SPIRIT SPEAKS
Available on: CD + 180-gram Vinyl



THE HEATH BROTHERS
MARCHIN' ON!
FEAT. STANLEY COWELL
Available on: CD + 180-gram Vinyl



CECIL MCBEE
MUTIMA
Available on: CD + 180-gram Vinyl

mackavenue.com

facebook.com/mackavenue youtube.com/mackavenue instagram.com/mackavenuerecords
x.com/MackAvenueMusic threads.net/@mackavenuerecords



* all albums are available digitally wherever you listen to music

Abstract Logix Celebrates Fusion-Tinged Independence

GROWING UP IN CALCUTTA, SOUVIK

Dutta had the usual exposure to Indian classical music in his home. “From the time I was two years old, I was hearing Pandit Ravi Shankar, Ustad Vilayat Khan and Ustad Ali Akbar Khan,” the founder and proprietor of Abstract Logix recalled by phone during a recent trip back home to visit his 88-year-old father. By the late ’80s, rock music consumed him. “It was very, very big for me as a teenager,” he said. “I was into the Beatles, the Grateful Dead, Jimi Hendrix and Jeff Beck. I was also the biggest Black Sabbath fan.”

By 1989, Dutta was playing bass in a local rock band that covered Deep Purple tunes, among other pop songs of the day. It was seeing a video at a friend’s house later that year of Joni Mitchell’s *Shadows and Light* tour, with Jaco Pastorius on bass, that provided him with a reality check. “I became the biggest Jaco fan, but my dad said, ‘Maybe you ought to do something else? Because if you’re not as good as this guy, then why do it?’ So that’s when I decided, ‘I’m not gonna try to be a bass player anymore.’”

Still, music was in his heart. By 1991, he convinced his parents to send him abroad to attend Wesleyan College in North Carolina, but he had ulterior motives. “I had to coerce my dad and my mom to take a significant part of their savings and send me to America. And I was a decent student, but I didn’t come here to go to college. I came here to see the music that I loved.”

He ended up taking a year-and-a-half off school after his sophomore year to hit the road with the Grateful Dead (right before Jerry Garcia died) as a kind of Deadhead tech/gofer on their cross-coun-

try tours. After returning to school, receiving his bachelor’s degree from Wesleyan and later his master’s from North Carolina State University in Raleigh, he began working as an IT specialist at IBM while maintaining his love of music through records and by seeing concerts at night.

Dutta’s entrance into the curatorial realm of music happened quite organically. “The first major turning point came in early 2002,” he recalled. “I was a big fan of the bassist Jonas Hellborg, who was in an early ’80s edition of the Mahavishnu Orchestra. Jonas had done a string of trio recordings that I loved with the great guitarist Shawn Lane and the drummer Jeff Sipe, which I think musically is one of the most important trios ever. They were doing a little tour of the Carolinas and the Virginias at the time, and I had this crazy-ass idea of reaching out to Hellborg.”

It paid off.

“So I called Jonas up out of the blue and said, ‘What would it take for you to play a private party for about 30 to 40 friends who love music?’ He gave me the terms and added, ‘Figure out a way to broadcast the show.’ Since we were all techies, me and a couple of friends figured out how to put up a website, then I had to come up with a name for it. So I thought of an album that Jonas and Shawn did in 1995 called *Abstract Logic*. I always loved that name. Abstraction is a really interesting concept in engineering that deals with breaking down the whole idea into smaller ideas. And I turned the ‘c’ in logic into an ‘x,’ because ‘x’ goes with extreme programming, which I used to do at the time. So that was the kind of funky name I came up with that had no real reason behind it.



COURTESY SOUVIK DUTTA

Souvik Dutta calls Abstract Logix his side hustle, one that allows him to work with some of the greatest fusion artists in the world.

And it was really just a one-page website that was only meant to broadcast that show on April 29, 2002, with Shawn, Jonas and Jeff playing in my living room in Raleigh, North Carolina.”

That single event established the presence of Dutta’s website/blog. It wasn’t until 2005 that Abstract Logix morphed into a bona fide record label when he released Project Z’s *Lincoln Project* featuring Aquarium Rescue Unit guitarist Jimmy Herring joined by bassist Ricky Keller, drummer Jeff Sipe and guests Greg Osby on alto sax and Jason Crosby on keyboards. [Full disclosure: I did the liner notes for that very first Abstract Logix release.]

Along the way, Dutta also established a working relationship that developed into a lasting friendship with guitar hero John McLaughlin, beginning with the release of a 2007 instructional video titled *The Gateway to Rhythm* on Abstract Logix. It continued with a succession of McLaughlin releases on Dutta’s label, including Shakti’s latest album, 2025’s *Mind Explosion*, dedicated to the late tabla master Zakir Hussain.

“I never thought I’d make a career in music or have a record label or even go to America,” said Dutta. “Imagine starting out working the merch table on the road with Shakti in 2003 to distributing John’s records through my website to becoming his tour manager, then his manager. It’s beyond my wildest dreams. And John’s become like my second father, truly. He comes to my house in the Carolinas, he comes to our house in India all the time. He’s very close to my father. We are not at all a business relationship. Just a month and a half ago, I went and stayed with him at his home in Monaco. What an amazing guy.”

And while he has remained at IBM for 23 years now, Dutta continues to keep his passion for music alive through Abstract Logix. “The label has always been my side hustle,” he maintains. “I have a lot of financial responsibilities in life. I have to support a lot of people in my life; a lot of poor people in India that were very, very loyal to me and my family. So I had to keep that IBM job, man. There are a lot of mouths I was quietly feeding. And I’m still doing it. But I wouldn’t be able to do it strictly from the music business side of things. And besides, music is fun.” —Bill Milkowski

December 2025

RICK ROE

Wake Up Call

THE MUSIC OF GREGG HILL
Featuring Robert Hurst, Nate Wolf and Marcus Ellis

Roe elevates Hill's pleasingly tart flavored compositions with an exceptionally talented band of Detroiters, drawing the music out, pleasing the ear, and exciting the emotions.

Available on all major music platforms | ColdPlungeRecords.com | GreggHilljazz.com

COLD PLUNGE RECORDS

M Manhattan School of Music

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR WINNERS of *DownBeat's* 90th Annual Readers Poll



GROUP

Artemis

featuring Ingrid Jensen (MSM faculty), trumpet, and Nicole Glover (MSM faculty), saxophone



TRUMPET

Ambrose Akinmusire

(BM '05)



TENOR SAXOPHONE

Chris Potter

(MM '92)



LARGE ENSEMBLE

Maria Schneider Orchestra

featuring Donny McCaslin (MSM faculty), Nadjie Noordhuis (MM '05), Ryan Keberle (BM '01, MSM faculty), Tony Kadleck (BM '89), and Jay Anderson (MSM faculty)



PIANO

Emmet Cohen

(MM '14)



KEYBOARDS

Herbie Hancock

('61, HonDMA '23)



VIBRAPHONE

Stefon Harris

(BM '95, MM '97)



JIM SALTZMAN
DEAN

JAZZ ARTS

it all happens here.

MSMNYC.EDU

NEW YORK, NY
admission@msmnyc.edu



Sullivan Fortner (left), Tyler Bullock and Esteban Castro, winners of inaugural Gilmore Larry J. Bell Jazz Artist Awards.

Sullivan Fortner Wins Inaugural Gilmore Larry J. Bell Jazz Artist Award

MIDWAY THROUGH A TRIO TOUR LAST

March en route to Atlanta for a concert in Spivey Hall, pianist Sullivan Fortner took a phone call from his agent and close friend, Chris Mies, who informed him of a 3 p.m. appointment at his hotel. "Chris told me to get dressed and go past the lobby into a banquet room, and I'd see some stuff that's interesting," Fortner told DownBeat by phone. "When I asked why, Chris said, 'I can't tell you.'"

To Fortner's surprise, the room was filled with a cohort of friends and professional acquaintances. As he greeted them, a stranger grabbed his hand and introduced himself as Larry Bell from the Gilmore Keyboard Foundation, which has sponsored the prestigious Gilmore Piano Award

for classical pianists, which carries a \$300,000 prize, since 1993.

"I thought I was going to have to write something," said Fortner, who'd played several concerts at the Gilmore's annual piano festival after winning the American Pianists Association's Cole Porter Fellowship in 2015. "Then Larry Bell said, 'I'm happy to report that we started the jazz equivalent to the Gilmore Piano Award, and you were selected as the inaugural recipient of the Larry J. Bell Gilmore Award for Jazz.'"

Fortner had been sworn to secrecy until Oct. 8, when the Gilmore held a ceremony at the Jerome L. Greene Space in Manhattan to officially announce the honor, and the attendant \$300,000 gift — \$50,000 in cash; the remain-

ing \$250,000 designated to support artistic projects over the next four years. It is the largest single gift ever dedicated solely to a jazz artist. Also mentioned were the winners of the ancillary Larry J. Bell Young Jazz Artist Award, Tyler Bullock and Esteban Castro, who each received a \$25,000 stipend.

There followed a public acknowledgment of the five members of the heretofore anonymous Artistic Advisory Committee, who had traveled widely over a two-year span, surreptitiously, and often under a pseudonym, to attend multiple shows at which they scrutinized, evaluated and debated internally on the merits of Fortner and the other finals candidates who emerged from a 42-person nominating committee that included top-of-the-pyramid pianists Fred Hersch, Brad Mehldau, Bill Charlap, Renee Rosnes, Aaron Diehl, Helen Sung and Aaron Goldberg, as well as various eminent presenters, managers and journalists.

"Some people on the selection committee were at concerts I'd done in Europe and Japan," Fortner said. "If I'd known, it would make me a little nervous. I didn't even know that they were part of the committee until they announced it last night."

"I told my parents and Cécile [McLorin Salvant, his girlfriend], but my parents didn't know the exact details, or how grand the award is," Fortner said. "\$300,000 is a lot of money for a musician to do all kinds of things with. For the Gilmore Foundation to have this sets a certain standard and tone, because then it raises the bar for piano players to pursue excellence, and pursue it at the highest level they can." —*Ted Panken*

(Read the full feature at downbeat.com.)



Craig Taborn joins such recent MacArthur Fellows as Tomeka Reid (2022), Cécile McLorin Salvant (2020), Mary Halvorson (2019) and Tyshawn Sorey (2017).

Craig Taborn Receives MacArthur Fellowship Award

PIANIST, KEYBOARDIST AND COMPOSER

Craig Taborn has received many accolades over his 30-plus-year career, but none have been quite so lucrative as his latest.

Taborn, 55, is one of the names on the list of 2025 MacArthur Fellows.

Often called a "genius grant," the fellowship is a prestigious award of \$800,000 given annually by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation to scientists, artists and others as an investment in their potential. In the foundation's words, the cash award goes to "extraordinarily talented and creative individuals."

"In performances and recordings as a soloist, bandleader and sideman, Taborn brings a fearless and sophisticated approach to music making," the foundation said in its announcement of Taborn's fellowship. "He draws from musical

traditions as varied as traditional and contemporary jazz, contemporary classical, experimental, electronic, rock, metal and hip-hop. His constant exploration of genre and style informs his own distinct musical intelligence and voice."

Taborn is the only musician among the 22 new fellows announced for 2025. He joins such recent jazz-musician MacArthur Fellows as Tomeka Reid (2022), Cécile McLorin Salvant (2020), Mary Halvorson (2019) and Tyshawn Sorey (2017).

He is currently preparing for a European tour in November. Taborn is also a member (with guitarist Nels Cline and drummer Marcus Gilmore) of Trio of Bloom, whose self-titled album was released in September by Pyroclastic Records. Trio of Bloom is featured in the November issue of DownBeat.

—*Michael J. West*

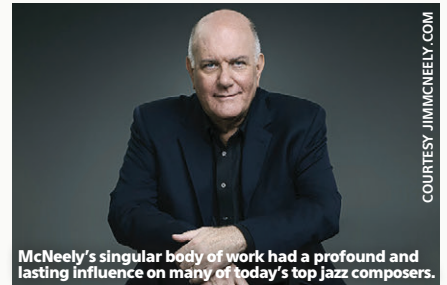
Pianist-Composer Jim McNeely: 1949–2025

PIANIST JIM MCNEELY, ONE OF THE MOST distinguished large ensemble jazz composers of his generation, died Sept. 26 at age 76. He had recently been diagnosed with bile duct cancer.

A disciple of the esteemed jazz composer-arranger Bob Brookmeyer, McNeely made major contributions to the repertoire of the Thad Jones-Mel Lewis Orchestra, later known as the Mel Lewis Orchestra and eventually renamed the Vanguard Jazz Orchestra. McNeely played piano with the iconic big band, which to this day continues its long tradition of Monday night performances at New York's Village Vanguard, from 1978 to 1984 and rejoined the group for a second stint beginning in 1996. His elegantly crafted signature charts, known for their expressive style and intricate content, were featured prominently in the group and contribute to his substantial legacy of original compositions and arrangements. He appeared with the group as pianist and conductor on the album *Monday Night Live At The Village Vanguard* (Planet Arts), which won a Grammy for Best Large Jazz Ensemble Album in 2009.

McNeely's singular body of work had a profound and lasting influence on many of today's top jazz composers in the U.S. and in Europe, where he worked extensively with some of the world's top-performing large ensembles (including WDR Big Band in Germany, UMO Helsinki Jazz Orchestra, The Stockholm Jazz Orchestra, The Metropole Orchestra in the Netherlands, The Danish Radio Big Band, the Swiss Jazz Orchestra and the Frankfurt Radio Big Band).

Born on May 18, 1949, in Chicago, McNeely earned a music degree from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign and in 1975 moved to New York. In addition to working with Jones and Lewis, he played with the Stan Getz Quartet from 1981 to 1985 and was a member of the Phil Woods Quintet from 1990 to 1995. He also led trios and combos of his own, recording more than two dozen albums as a leader. McNeely worked with the Carnegie Hall Jazz Band and numerous student groups, teaching at Manhattan School of Music for 14 years spending 16 years as the music director for the BMI



McNeely's singular body of work had a profound and lasting influence on many of today's top jazz composers.

Jazz Composer's Workshop.

McNeely collaborated with high-level soloists, including pianist Renee Rosnes, saxophonist David Liebman and pianist Richie Beirach, and saxophonist Chris Potter, with whom he recorded the Stravinsky-inspired 2022 album *Rituals* (Double Moon/Challenge Records) featuring the Frankfurt Radio Big Band. This year saw the release of *Primal Colors* (Challenge), which McNeely recorded with the Frankfurt Radio Big Band and the Frankfurt Radio Symphony.

A final McNeely big band album is expected to come out posthumously. —Ed Enright



NEW RELEASE



YUSEF LATEEF GOLDEN FLOWER LIVE IN SWEDEN

RSD BLACK FRIDAY

UNRELEASED LIVE PERFORMANCES FROM STOCKHOLM (1967) & ÅHUS JAZZ FESTIVAL (1972), FEATURING LARS SJÖSTEN, PALLE DANIELSSON, KENNY BARRON, BOB CUNNINGHAM & "TOOTIE" HEATH.

LIMITED 180G 2LP SET – 2,500 COPIES WORLDWIDE. REMASTERED FROM ORIGINAL SWEDISH RADIO TAPES BY MATTHEW LUTTHANS (THE MASTERING LAB).

AVAILABLE NOVEMBER 28TH - RSD BLACK FRIDAY

2CD DELUXE EDITION DECEMBER 5TH

"A historic rediscovery of Yusef Lateef's visionary sound"



Pharoah Sanders
"Love is Here"

TRANSCENDENCE SOUNDS

"Love is Here" The Complete Paris 1975 ORTF Recordings"

A stunning double album capturing Pharoah Sanders in full creative transformation live at Maison de la Radio, Paris, 1975.

With Danny Mixon, Calvin Hill & Greg Bandy, Sanders channels spirit, fire, and grace through originals, Coltrane tributes, and transcendental improvisations

MORE FROM ELEMENTAL MUSIC - BLUES VINYL REISSUES



B.B. King
"Live in Japan (1971)"



Freddie King
"Texas Cannonball"



Roy Buchanan
"Second Album"



@elemental_music_records



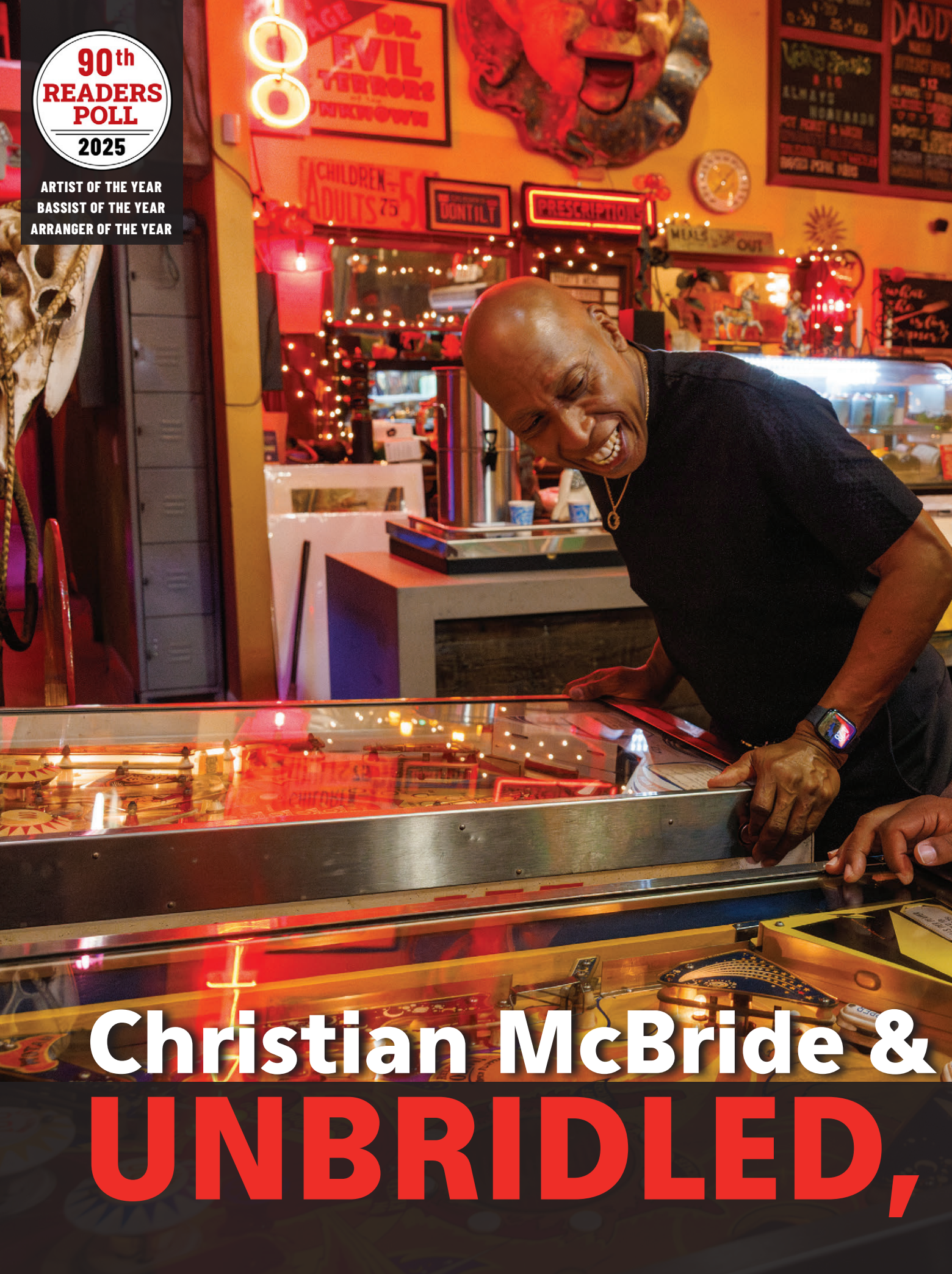
@ElementalMusicRecords



www.elemental-music.com

**90th
READERS
POLL
2025**

ARTIST OF THE YEAR
BASSIST OF THE YEAR
ARRANGER OF THE YEAR



Christian McBride & **UNBRIDLED,**



Jeffrey Osborne

UNCANCELED.

By Gary Fukushima Photos by Alex Frankel



"I'm completely fascinated with jazz and R&B between the late '60s and the late '70s," says Christian McBride.

IT'S LATE SEPTEMBER IN LOS ANGELES. A SCORCHING HEAT WAVE HAS LINGERED BUT WANED SOMEWHAT OVER THE PAST FEW DAYS, THE WEATHER STILL WARM AND SLIGHTLY UNCOMFORTABLE.

The residual simmering reflects the smoldering remnants of a media firestorm that has engulfed Hollywood for a week after Jimmy Kimmel's late-night talk show was yanked off the air amid intense political blowback to comments the host made regarding the assassination of conservative activist Charlie Kirk.

How does that apply to jazz?

Christian McBride was scheduled to appear on *Jimmy Kimmel Live!* the very day this interview took place, but the bassist and bandleader had been in a state of limbo since the show's suspension. At the last minute Kimmel was reinstated and the taping was allowed to proceed as scheduled. So, right before the interview portion of the show, McBride performed his own big band arrangement of "Back In Love Again" from his new album, *Without Further Ado, Vol. 1* (Mack Avenue). The original singer of that 1977 funk chart-topper by the R&B band L.T.D., the legendary songwriter and recording artist Jeffrey Osborne, reprised his vocals on

McBride's album and joined him in this televised appearance.

Afterward, they sojourned a few blocks from Kimmel's studio to The Record Parlour, a used vinyl shop and show venue, where they were photographed thumbing through sides, playing pinball and generally having a blast sharing road stories and jokes. Afterwards, McBride and Osborne sat down for this conversation with *DownBeat*.

Any passersby who know anything about jazz will likely recognize McBride, arguably the best jazz bassist of his generation and one of our most celebrated and most visible living jazz artists.

He is certainly appreciated by the readers of this magazine, who have voted McBride *DownBeat* Artist of the Year, Bassist of the Year and Arranger of the Year. He also ranked third in the Electric Bass category, fifth in the Composer rankings and second in the Producer tallies. His groups and albums are

rated high in their respective categories: His reuniting with Joshua Redman, Brad Mehldau and Brian Blade is in the top 10 for Group of the Year (while his New Jawn Quartet also made it into the top 20), *Trilogy 3* (which features McBride and Blade with the late Chick Corea) ranks fourth in Historical Album of the Year and his big band comes in second place in the Large Ensemble category.

McBride's popularity is but a reflection of his multifaceted career. Since his debut with saxophonist Bobby Watson's and Victor Lewis' Horizon at age 17, McBride has appeared as a sideman on more than 400 albums and recorded 21 of his own. He has amassed nine Grammy Awards with 16 nominations. He was a foundational member of an emerging generation of jazz musicians in the early '90s that included Benny Green, Roy Hargrove, Kenny Garrett, Chris Potter, Peter Bernstein, Russell Malone, Kurt Rosenwinkel, Joey DeFrancesco, Gregory Hutchinson and Geoffery Keezer, as well as Redman, Mehldau and Blade, who as Redman's Moodswing Quartet (along with all the aforementioned) became the knights exemplar, the new crusaders leading jazz into the next millennium.

But McBride, now 53, carved out additional slots in that new world order as he shed his young lion's Simba skin for a Mufasa mane. He is the host of two popular jazz radio shows:

NPR's *Jazz Night in America* and *The Lowdown: Conversations with Christian* on SiriusXM. Yet he has been a spokesperson for jazz since long before that — as early as 1997, when he was invited as a panelist on one of President Bill Clinton's town halls, "Racism in the Performing Arts." Since 2000, McBride has been a creative jazz chair or artistic director for a bevy of organizations: the Jazz at Aspen Snowmass Academy Summer Sessions, The National Jazz Museum in Harlem, the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Jazz House Kids and the TD James Moody Jazz Festival at NJPAC (New Jersey Performing Arts Center). In 2016, he became artistic director of the legendary Newport Jazz Festival, personally chosen by festival founder George Wein to succeed him. (Just days before this interview, McBride announced he was stepping down from his position at NJF, telling DB, "Let's just say we didn't see eye to eye on a few things.")

Such a staggering resume lifts the bassist into rarefied air among the most well-known artists in jazz. But to McBride, the man sitting next to him at the hotel bar with the silky-smooth voice is the famous one. Osborne was one of the most prolific singers of the '80s, with 12 songs on the Billboard Hot 100 pop chart, including the evergreen contemporary ballad "On The Wings Of Love." He sang on "We Are The World." He sang the duet "Love Power" with Dionne Warwick. He has penned the lyrics to a Whitney Houston song. He has sung the national anthem during the World Series and at Staples Center for the NBA Finals. He co-hosts a celebrity golf tournament with his good friend Magic Johnson.

And he is a childhood hero of McBride's. At a hotel bar, Osborne learns that McBride first saw him play in Philadelphia when L.T.D. opened for the Jackson Five.

"You were how old?" asks Osborne.

"Seven," replies McBride.

"Oh, OK, I really feel old now. Wow."

"It's OK. You were only 17." Both men burst out laughing.

"No, I wish," Osborne retorts. "I joined L.T.D. when I was 20. But that tour with the Jacksons was in '79."

"I remember it well, because I was just as much a fan of L.T.D. as I was the Jacksons, you know?"

"It was a good tour. ... [But] Michael was struggling, a lot. So, we had to cancel a lot of shows. I don't even know how we did it. We had 13 shows in a row, 13 nights. And he got to about three or four, and he was like, that's it. We gotta take a break."

"I mean, that's a hard grind, that many shows in a row."

"I can't do two now. That was tough. It didn't phase me back then. Cord was young." Osborne is talking about his vocal cords. "[Now] that cord is crying after one show, like, 'Oh, rest me, rest!'"

"It's like them stories about people doing five, six shows a day for nine, 10 days at the Apollo," McBride suggests.

"Oh, yeah, we did those. Yeah, that was a workhouse, man. Oh, man, they worked you. But that was a fun venue."

This exchange shows how McBride, even when he is supposed to be the subject of this interview, is himself a natural interviewer, engaging his fellow musician, putting him at ease, drawing out long-lost stories and anecdotes. Fortunately, he gets up to go find a coffee, which allows this interviewer to attempt to get the initial interview back on track by asking Osborne about his musical upbringing.

His father, Clarence "Legs" Osborne, was a jazz trumpet player who got to play in the bands of Duke Ellington, Count Basie and Lionel Hampton when those groups made it to Providence, Rhode Island, while on tour.

"My father's biggest problem was he had 12 kids," says Osborne, the youngest of those 12. "He couldn't really go on the road and play in big bands ... a sideman wasn't making enough money to support 12 kids. So, he stayed home, worked three jobs. But he would always go sit in when they came into town." Osborne, who was 13 when his father died, never got to hear his father play with those big bands but heard him at home when he practiced and sometimes from the car where he waited while his



THELONIOUS MONK BREMEN 1965

In 1965 it was with Charlie Rouse, Larry Gales and Ben Riley that **Monk** embarked on his largest tour to date. After two days in Paris, the ensemble performed in **Bremen**, Germany, where they were recorded by Radio Bremen at their theater, Sendesaal / Studio F, on Monday, March 8th.

Bremen 1965 is the first official release of the concert, mastered from the original tapes held in the Radio Bremen vaults under the guidance and blessings of Norddeutscher Rundfunk (NDR), Radio Bremen, and T.S. Monk. The release will be available in a handful of formats, including digitally along with double CD and LP record sets.

AVAILABLE ON DECEMBER 12
(2LP VINYL 180 g / 2CD DIGI / DIGITAL)
sunnysiderecords.com



 **radiobremen**®



Sunnyside



"He was amazing. Every show I do, I acknowledge George Duke, ever since he passed," Jeffrey Osborne says of the legendary keyboardist and producer. "I will not do a show without acknowledging George."

father dropped by local clubs to play a tune or two. "He was incredible," remembers Osborne.

Osborne himself had shown an unusual aptitude for singing as early as age 3. His mother had him sing at her company's functions, and his father coached him. Osborne remembers learning Wes Montgomery guitar solos by ear. "I was able to actually sing his solos ... he played so lyrically. And that's the beauty to me, because you can go ahead and play a million notes ... then B.B. [King] can just play one note." Osborne remembers his father saying, "'Don't sing all those riffs,' he said. 'If you can't touch me with a whole note, your ass can't sing.' ... That's the one thing I never forgot."

Even though Osborne's love for Motown led him to L.T.D. and his career in R&B, he held his fondness for jazz close, eventually recording an album of jazz ballads in 2013. *A Time For Love* (Saguro Road) plays strongly to Osborne's soulful lyricism and immaculate vocal interpretations of standards and covers tastefully arranged by George Duke, who had produced Osborne's first album three decades prior (and his next three albums). For this project Duke assembled a diverse supporting cast of artists ranging from Everette Harp to Chaka Khan to Kamasi Washington, and a jazz bassist whom Duke utilized for many of his projects during that time. His name was Christian McBride.

That bassist, having returned with coffee for himself and Osborne, reminded the sing-

er that they had played together on an earlier George Duke record, a tribute to Duke Ellington that featured a bunch of singers on different tracks. But recording together on Osborne's album fostered a close working relationship that became a friendship, with Duke as the serendipitous connection. "He was the link between a lot of others," says McBride.

"That's right. He was amazing," Osborne affirms. "Every show I do, I acknowledge George Duke, ever since he passed. I will not do a show without acknowledging George."

"The first time I met George," McBride recalls, "he produced my third CD, *A Family Affair*. And for the New York guys, that was like, what? George Duke? You don't do smooth jazz. I was like, 'It's not smooth jazz.'"

He continues, "That's when I realized that a certain generation didn't know who George Duke really was. Because when I first met George, all I wanted to talk to him was about his time with Cannonball Adderley. And I think he was impressed. He was like, 'They know about Zappa, but they never ask me about Cannonball or Gerald Wilson or Jean-Luc Ponty, you know?'"

But McBride is as much into George Clinton as he is into Cannonball, which is why for him a figure like Duke would loom large.

"I feel like there's a period that not a lot of people talk about. ... I'm completely fascinated with jazz and R&B between the late '60s and the late '70s. People kind of get stuck going, like,

Stevie Wonder had a great run, Marvin Gaye had a great run. But there was a whole lot of other stuff going on."

A lot of that other stuff is what lured McBride to Los Angeles to work with Duke and other producers whose expertise flowed into wider channels beyond the svelte streams of modern jazz.

"Once I started doing a lot of sessions out here, particularly with George and Tommy LiPuma and Al Schmidt and Bill Smith and everybody over at Capitol, they made me feel like, 'Hey, we know you don't live out here, but we consider you to be part of the family,'" he says. "I know the East Coasters don't want to hear that, but that's what it was."

McBride's presence in *La La Land* can be traced all the way back to the turn of the century, when he ended up on the radar of another bassist — and one of the biggest music stars on the planet.

"I got a call from Sting's people, saying, 'Sting's making a live album, and he wants you to play bass,'" McBride recounts. "I was like, 'What, really?' So, I went to Italy to record with the understanding that I was gonna make this one record, do this one gig ... then I wound up staying in his band for another year-and-a-half. And we've been working together on and off ever since."

"This is the second album of mine that [Sting's] playing on." *Without Further Ado, Vol. 1* features a bevy of celebrities from the jazz world and beyond: Sting (along with his Police partner Andy Summers), Diane Reeves, José James, Cécile McLoren Salvant, Antoinette Henry and Samara Joy (who at the time of this conversation was also in Los Angeles, making an appearance on *The Jennifer Hudson Show*). And Jeffrey Osborne, featured on the very same L.T.D. song they just performed a few hours ago on the Kimmel show.

McBride elaborates on how the album came together. "Since 2012, I've been artistic advisor for jazz programming at NJPAC in Newark. And my big band is a house band for the annual gala. And I have to arrange big band music every year for the gala. We've had [as guests] Jeffrey, we had Al Jarreau, we've had Diane [Reeves], Cécile McLoren Salvant ... Fantasia, Leslie Odom Jr., Cynthia Erivo. And so, over the course of all these years, I have this stack of big band music that only got played once. And I said it would really be a shame to waste all that time and energy only playing these charts once. So ... that's my next album."

"But there's more to come," McBride adds.

"Oh, really?" asks Osborne.

"Yeah. [Jeffrey's] just now hearing that, but yes."

"Oh, good," says Osborne, his face lighting up. "This is a whole different audience for me. And I'm sure for you, too," he adds, looking

at McBride, undoubtedly thinking about the show they just did. “I feel like my dad. That was his thing, you know?”

McBride, like Duke, has become a link connecting artists of different musical backgrounds, just as his role as a high-profile jazz spokesman has allowed the public to discover and learn more about jazz. Perhaps that is why he ended up with a slot on a late-night talk show that, ironically, is being watched now more than ever before because of the attempt to cancel it in a political power play.

Throughout its existence, jazz has repeatedly intersected with American history. McBride himself was in such a situation before, when on the morning of his debut with Sting on Sept. 11, 2001, the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon cast an incredible pall of grief and uncertainty over the event. Sting decided that the best course of action for him, his fellow musicians and his audience was to perform as scheduled. The footage from the show reveals artists and fans who were frightened and hurting but healing each other through music.

And McBride was in the middle of it, as he has continued to be over the years. “Honestly, I say this all the time because I really mean it, but I don’t really think of myself as anything other than the bass player,” he admits. “But being a

bass player, I got the best seat in the house. It’s like being a catcher in baseball; I get to see the whole field, you know?”

And catchers and bass players understand how to take care of the team.

“I have a service occupation,” he considers. He has been in service to jazz, to other musicians and to the students, fans and others whom he has inspired for years. As a kind of modern day, informal jazz ambassador, does McBride feel an artist’s obligation to those who look up to him to voice his personal concerns and convictions about the world?

“In terms of what the artist’s role in society is,” he offers, “that’s up to the artist. That is purely up to the artist. No one is responsible for doing anything other than what’s in their heart. If you want to speak on social issues, by all means, do it. If you don’t, don’t. If you want to speak about it through your writing, that’s what you should do. There seems to be some sort of unwritten rule that if you are a person of influence, then that’s exactly what you are supposed to do. But, no, I believe that it’s a personal choice. You do what’s in your heart.”

That said, McBride has plenty to say about the specific circumstances surrounding his recent brush with cancel culture.

“Well, I’ll sum up the Kimmel situation by saying I believe we are living in a historically

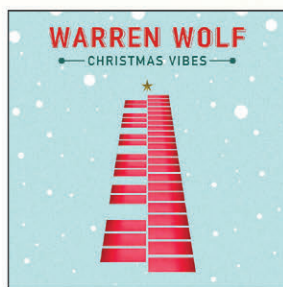
embarrassing moment in America’s history. ... When I was a kid, I would read stories about segregation in the South, how they had white and Black water fountains, white and Black bathrooms. ... It was actually illegal to be together if you weren’t the same race. See, we can’t fathom that. That’s not in our lifetime, so we look at that and judge people on how they reacted to that. I realize the older I get that you can’t take your values and make them retroactive.

“But what’s going on now. ... with the silencing of the press and these sorts of bullying tactics, kids are going to read about this in 40 years and go, ‘Wow, what a step back.’ So, [to those who believe] somebody can be yanked off the air because they offended someone, I would go back and ask them to read up about the 1968 Oscars. Bob Hope made a joke about Martin Luther King’s assassination. On the Oscars! Not a damn thing happened to him. This sort of bullying going on now, this is insanity.”

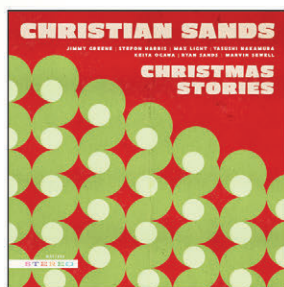
McBride did not have an opportunity to say any of these things to Kimmel, on or off the air. But he and his boyhood idol Jeffrey Osborne spoke volumes as their music blasted across the theater stage, radiating their undeniable talent, their brotherly camaraderie and their rejoicing in the freedom they had to fully express themselves in front of millions of viewers — uncanceled, unbridled.

DB

your holiday season soundtracks



WARREN WOLF
Christmas Vibes



CHRISTIAN SANDS
Christmas Stories



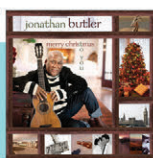
KIRK WHALUM
How Does
Christmas Sound?



JONATHAN BUTLER
Christmas Together



BRIAN BROMBERG
Celebrate Me Home:
The Holiday Sessions



JONATHAN BUTLER
Merry Christmas to You



**It's Christmas
on Mack Avenue**



RAHSAAN PATTERSON
The Ultimate Gift





HALL OF FAME

Jack DeJohnette ENTERS THE DB HALL OF FAME

By Willard Jenkins Photo by Michael Jackson

With Jack DeJohnette entering the DownBeat Hall of Fame — his musical odyssey having begun at the piano and evolved to a drumming career that is one of the hallmarks in the evolution of that essential set of instruments — one hears reverberations of that age-old adage, “A band is only as good as its drummer.” When considering DeJohnette’s vast discography and musical affiliations, one cannot help but consider that maxim as gospel truth.





"I was known as a piano player in Chicago and an up-and-coming drummer," says Jack DeJohnette. "Eddie [Harris] said to me, 'Listen, man, you play nice piano, but you're a natural drummer, so if you make the drums your primary instrument, you'll go far.' Harris was right."

As sideman alone — from the Charles Lloyd Quartet (*Forest Flower* edition) to the bandstands of Jackie McLean, Abbey Lincoln, Betty Carter, Bill Evans, Miles Davis, McCoy Tyner and decades with Keith Jarrett — Jack DeJohnette has been one of the primary reasons those units were among the greatest in the post-1960s evolution of the music. And that's even before taking into account his career as a bandleader. Indeed, during a recent video call from his home in New York's Hudson Valley, DeJohnette began the conversation by pronouncing, "The best gift I have is the ability to listen": a straightforward aphorism that sums up his remarkable career in a nutshell.

At 83, DeJohnette is dealing with the inevitable pause brought on by physical challenges and recovery, "I've had some health challenges that were really serious," he confirmed. As wife Lydia detailed in a subsequent communication, though not touring, the 2020s have seen the Chicago native perform-

ing on occasions in their home community at venues such as the Woodstock Playhouse and the Bardavon/UPAC. Included among those performances were a trio engagement with Dave Holland and Jason Moran, a duet with tap dancer Savion Glover (whom the drummer refers to as "the John Coltrane of tap"), a birthday concert and tribute to Miles Davis with the Santanas (Carlos & Cindy) and providing live percussion to two Sam Shepard plays featuring such noted thespians as nonagenarian Estelle Parsons and David Strathairn — all examples of DeJohnette's tireless quest for creative collaboration.

His Hall of Fame induction along with his 2012 NEA Jazz Masters fellowship elicit a humble "I'm quite surprised, I feel honored but I didn't expect it, definitely not."

Jack DeJohnette first addressed the piano at age 4, the drums arriving by his eighth birthday. So what drove his decision to pursue the drums professionally as his primary instrument? That epiphany arrived early

on. "I worked with Eddie Harris a little bit in Chicago," he said of the saxman who himself occasionally doubled on keyboards, "replacing [drummer] Harold Jones. I was known as a piano player in Chicago and an up-and-coming drummer. Eddie said to me, 'Listen, man, you play nice piano, but you're a natural drummer, so if you make the drums your primary instrument, you'll go far.'" Thus it was on for Jack DeJohnette, drummer.

A further epiphany arrived when he inevitably migrated to New York. "When I came to New York in the mid-'60s, and I was up at Minton's sitting in with Freddie Hubbard. The organist Big John Patton was also there. He said, 'Hey, man, you got a set of drums? If you do, you've got a gig!' So that's when I made the decision to make the drums my main voice." Considering his '70s Japanese record date *Jackeyboard* (Trio), with George Ohtsuka on drums and Mitsuaki Furuno on bass, along with his 1985 *Piano Album* (Landmark), a trio date with bassist Eddie Gomez and that true "drummer's drummer," the late Freddie Waits, plus his 2016 *Return*, a solo piano date for the subscription label Newvelle (currently listed as "sold out"), clearly the pianistic pursuit has never truly exited DeJohnette's muse. "The piano was always there," he confirmed. "It helps me to write ... one feeds the other, the drums feed the piano, the piano feeds the drums — they're both percussive instruments," recalling the Cecil Taylor aphorism that the piano is "88 tuned drums."

DeJohnette was particularly pleased with his boutique Newvelle release. "The great thing about that was I was a big fan of Fazioli pianos. My manager at the time hooked me up with Fazioli and they had a warehouse on 52nd Street, so I struck up a deal with them where they would provide the piano for me at the recording studio. It was like a piano player's dream, all those fantastic pianos at the Fazioli warehouse," the bandleader recounted. "The Fazioli piano is different from other pianos. It's extremely sensitive to the touch. They sent a French technician over to work on the action and be at the recording session to tune it up between tracks."

One of the hallmarks of DeJohnette's career was his 31 years in the Keith Jarrett Trio with Gary Peacock on bass, where the erstwhile drummer reprised a partnership that began as members of the 1960s Charles Lloyd Quartet, a recollection that's certainly personal for this writer. As a green Kent State college freshman, an indelible memory was traveling to Oberlin College for a 1968 performance of that quartet, rounded out by Cecil McBee on bass. Clearly this was a drummer to file away for future record store forays and the inevitable personnel dis-

coveries that drove those early purchases. Suddenly any record with Jack DeJohnette on drums was worth investigating.

Another DeJohnette touchstone arrived in the early '60s. Asked which artist he most productively connected with in his earliest experiences, without hesitation DeJohnette declared: "John Coltrane; it happened the first time I heard his music," citing Trane's

in New York, DeJohnette joined two other drummers, a young Lenny White and Don Alias, as well as a battery of instrumentation for the recorded moment that resulted in the landmark *Bitches Brew* album.

This was also a particularly vibrant period when the legendary Slugs' Saloon operated in a section of the East Village known as Alphabet City, at 242 E. 3rd St. (just past

'The best gift I have is the ability to listen.'

monumental 1961 recording of "My Favorite Things." "That quartet was a big influence on me," he said, recounting the impact of Coltrane, McCoy Tyner (with whom DeJohnette went on to make notable recordings), Elvin Jones and Jimmy Garrison. "I played with Coltrane for a week at the Plugged Nickel in Chicago. At the time, the band was Alice [Coltrane], Pharoah Sanders and another drummer of note — Muhammad Ali," younger brother of late-period Coltrane drummer Rashid Ali. "It was an amazing experience, one of the most challenging gigs I've ever had. Playing with Coltrane, keeping up the stamina, the concentration to play as long as John played," he marveled. "John took long solos but he was always saying something when he spoke on his horn."

The next major figure DeJohnette encountered arrived in 1969 when he joined an evolving Miles Davis unit. "I first worked with Miles when Tony Williams wasn't able to work with the band. We played around the Northeast." Though Williams had established a groundbreaking relationship with the trumpeter, DeJohnette was circumspect about what he brought to Davis' bandstand.

"I didn't think I was trying to fit in [Tony's] shoes. I was trying to come up with a fresh outlook and contribute to the creative ideas I had on the instrument working with Miles." His previous experiences "playing around New York" with Davis' "second great quintet" members Ron Carter and Herbie Hancock served him well.

Certainly Aug. 19–21, 1969, marked a turning point in the Miles Davis voyage. Arriving at Columbia Records' Studio B

Avenue B), DeJohnette spoke enthusiastically about the period that produced the two-disc 2024 archival recording aptly titled *Forces Of Nature Live At Slugs'* (Blue Note), featuring McCoy Tyner, Joe Henderson and Henry Grimes with DeJohnette on drums. The subsequent release was co-produced by the intrepid Zev Feldman, DeJohnette and his wife, Lydia DeJohnette. "Lydia and I and our assistant have amassed this amazing archive of music that I've recorded over the years, and *Forces Of Nature* will take you back and push you forward."

Original credit for the well-received album goes to the relentless jazz club habitué Orville O'Brien, "the guy who recorded Lee Morgan and Freddie Hubbard in Brooklyn for *Night Of The Cookers*. He's the one responsible for Charles Tolliver's Strata-East stuff. He would go around with a recorder and record musicians on spec. That music with Joe Henderson, McCoy Tyner and Henry Grimes would not have seen the light of day if I hadn't asked Orville for a 7½-inch copy of the tape of that session. Because after that, [O'Brien] died and all the masters are nowhere to be found."

That mid-1960s period sparked fond memories for DeJohnette. "Things were opening up, FM radio was expanding its playlist and there was experimentation in the air — lots of groups experimenting with different things," he recalled. "You also had people like Jimi Hendrix, whose music is beyond categorization. One of the things I liked about Jimi was that he left a lot of space for the drums. [Hendrix drummer] Mitch Mitchell's drum parts had very much a jazz foundation.

Unfortunately, I missed any opportunity to play with Hendrix. I wish I had."

Among DeJohnette's myriad touchstone bandstand affiliations were two co-op units — Gateway, with fellow Davis alum Dave Holland on bass and guitarist John Abercrombie, and Trio Beyond with guitarist John Scofield and organist Larry Goldings — and the Jack DeJohnette Quartet with pianist Danilo Perez, bassist John Patitucci and bass guitarist Jerome Harris. One particularly rewarding unit he fondly recalled was a band where he stretched a bit beyond drums to incorporate his keyboard sensibilities, which he refers to as his first band.

"Special Edition was really that," DeJohnette said, recalling his 1979 unit "with [saxophonists] Arthur Blythe and David Murray, two players that were coming into prominence then, and Peter Warren on bass.

"We all sort of came together with the idea of the songs I wrote. At the time I had something called an electro melodica, a sort of keyboard synthesizer you could hold in your hand. So, I wrote music with the idea of taking four pieces and making it sound much bigger. And we explored a lot of things that got to the point real quick."

DeJohnette's melodica also showed up later on his 1984 Special Edition recording *Album Album* (ECM). The cover pictures Jack, Lydia and their two daughters in the Hudson Valley woods.

"I used it later for special occasions because you could really color the music. That instrument had a nine-octave range. ... The sound and the colors, it was nice because Howard Johnson [who contributed tuba and baritone saxophone to the date] wrote a very beautiful version of 'Monk's Mood' and the electro melodica really helped that out a lot. I was able to make it fit right in so you could hardly tell it was an electronic instrument."

DeJohnette's extensive discography and touring experience are hallmarked by so many affiliations. There was the 1990 quartet tour with Herbie Hancock, Pat Metheny and Dave Holland; his distinctive duos with Lester Bowie that resulted in *Tadayuki Naito/Zebra*; his hookup with Gambian kora master Foday Musa Suso, which yielded *Music From The Hearts Of The Masters* for Jack's own Golden Beams imprint; and the concert recording *The Elephant Sleeps But Still Remembers* with guitarist Bill Frisell on Golden Beams, which earned him a Grammy nomination for Best New Age Album.

DeJohnette is the 176th inductee into the august DownBeat Hall of Fame, a tireless explorer who robustly embodies the jazz aesthetic as both kaleidoscopic drummer, pianist, tireless collaborator and marvelously creative and productive bandleader. **DB**



The Quartet, from left, Joey Calderazzo, Eric Reevis, Branford Marsalis and Justin Faulkner.

The Branford Marsalis Quartet DIGGING DEEP INTO THE SOUND

By Phillip Lutz Photo by Zach Smith

One afternoon in mid-September, a touring Branford Marsalis had some time to kill in Oberlin, Ohio. Rather than see the local sights, he picked up his soprano saxophone and stepped into the woodshed, joined by a classical favorite of his, Heitor Villa-Lobos' "Fantasia For Saxophone."

The piece, brimming with notes at the upper and lower ends of the soprano-sax range, places great demands on a player's lips to produce the sound he hears in his mind's ear — and Marsalis was still feeling the workout's effects at his Oberlin College concert that night. But that was the point: no pain, no gain.

"Playing pieces is always harder than playing solos," he said, adding, in reference to the latter: "I don't even consider that practicing."

At age 65, the Soprano Saxophonist of the Year is still ready, if not eager, to endure a lit-

tle soreness to maintain complete control of his sound. Known for its subtle shifts and emotional range, it is, like the fabled misbelief fruit of his native New Orleans, both plummy of texture and sweet of taste — but tempered with enough tang to let you know that he is in on the secret.

And that secret? "You've got to have sonic imagination."

The public discourse, he asserted, has long served up the fiction that mouthpieces create tone. "They really don't," he said. "The mouthpiece is a conduit. You create the tone in your head. You have to listen to tunes and instead of

listening for information, you listen for sound. And that makes a huge difference in how you approach music."

Growing up in the Big Easy, where an unusually sizable cohort of players have always been able to earn a living solely on clarinet, the sound of that instrument was lodged in his ears from birth. Playing the clarinet for seven years as a youth, it became implanted in his brain.

When at high school graduation his grandfather gave him his first soprano saxophone, he made the switch from clarinet with relative ease — in the practice room, on the bandstand,

in duets with brother Wynton, who, on trumpet, took the top part while Branford took the bottom. But the early grounding never left him.

"One of the first things I knew how to do on the soprano was make it sound like a clarinet," he said.

Unlike legions of aspiring soprano players, he was drawn to influences other than John Coltrane. "I was never a fan of that sound," he said. "I gravitated more toward Sidney Bechet's sound and Wayne Shorter's sound."

Marsalis was in his teens when Shorter captured his attention, and in his 20s when he became immersed in the work of fellow New Orleanian Bechet. Hints of Bechet's famous vibrato are present in Marsalis' sound to this day.

But Marsalis' soprano playing draws on a much wider array of influences. Those from the classical side — parallel to Marsalis' jazz tour, he books a classical tour with a separate repertoire — are integral to it. Prominent among those influences, he said, are Paul Dombrecht and Bruce Haynes, specialists in the French oboe, a period instrument.

"You listen to those guys — such a warm, rich sound," he said. "The French oboe sounds like a soprano saxophone, anyway. If you listen enough to this stuff, you absorb the sound. In a way, it becomes part of your sonic palette."

The influences extend to vocalists: jazz chanteuses like Shirley Horn, to be sure, but also those in opera.

"When you listen enough you can hear there are some singers — the color of their voice changes when they're supposed to be angry, sad, melancholy, whatever their emotion is," Marsalis said. "I'm thinking, 'We need to do that. Instead of trying to invent a single tone, we need to give it those shades of colors that change to fit the emotional interpretation of what the music is.' That's one of the things that I do and that we do."

The "we" refers to his longstanding combo with pianist Joey Calderazzo, bassist Eric Revis and drummer Justin Faulkner. Collectively, the group has developed a sound as colorful, and reflective of the leader's philosophy, as that of any working unit in jazz.

"He's always had a personal take on soprano: a personal sound," Calderazzo said of Marsalis. "He plays the right content with that sound." Declaring that "it doesn't sound right" when players who double on soprano don't alter their content, he added: "When Branford doubles, it's like turning a quartet into a quintet because it's so different. It's the sound first, then the content — but the content is informed, or inspired, by the sound."

Over time, Calderazzo said, he has observed that instrument-specific approach take hold in his own soloing.

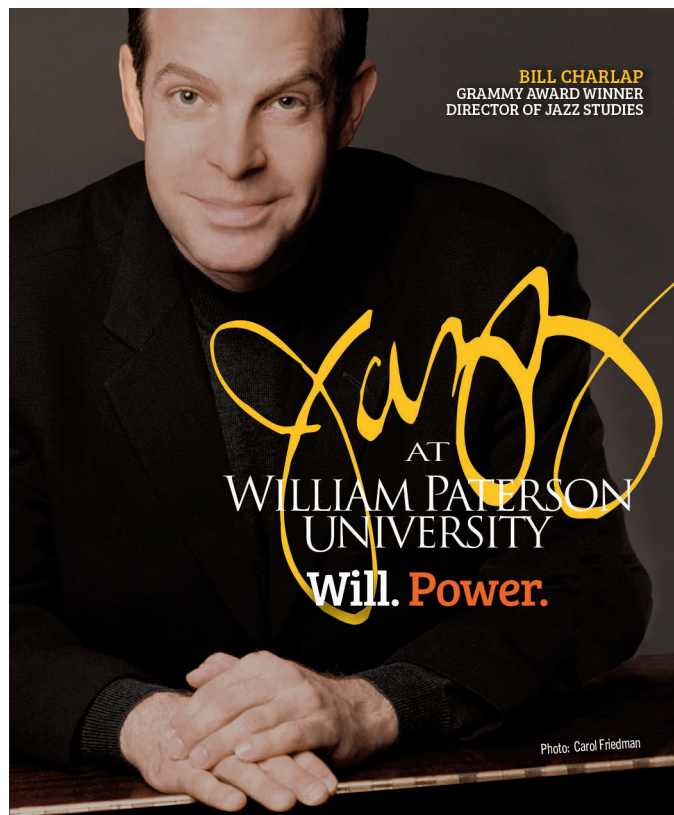
"It's an interesting thing. If I'm playing keyboards and I have a lead sound, I improvise differently because of the sound. My melodic content is different on that than it's going to be on the piano or Fender Rhodes."

The primacy of sound in the Marsalis universe could hardly be clearer than on his quartet's latest album, *Belonging* (Blue Note), which is the Album of the Year in the 90th annual Readers Poll. And in the realm of collective performance, few tunes in Marsalis' recorded oeuvre more powerfully exemplify that primacy than the album's title tune — a passionate but restrained expression of group connection told in one long, sweet swell that crests well before it has a chance to overwhelm the listener in saccharine emotion.

The tune — part of the Branford Marsalis Quartet's full-cover take on the Keith Jarrett European Quartet's 1974 album of the same name — made a deep impression on Marsalis when he first heard it. Over the years, he said, it proved key to the development of a rubato ballad approach that emphasizes the notes less than the means and methods of conveying them.

"I don't have a vocabulary; I steal," Marsalis said, allowing himself a knowing chuckle. "The thing that affects people who buy tickets is the delivery mechanism, not the information itself."

DB



Study with renowned faculty just 20 miles from New York City

Our world-class faculty includes:

***Bill Charlap, program director,**

Bruce Barth, Johnathan Blake, Cecil Bridgewater,

***Mitch Butler, Joe Farnsworth, Vincent Herring,**

Mike LeDonne, Carolyn Leonhart, ***Pete McGuinness,**

Marcus McLaurine, Chico Mendoza, John Mosca,

Steve Myerson, Steve Nelson, Ed Neumeister, ***Tim Newman,**

Jeremy Pelt, Rich Perry, Gary Smulyan, Dave Stryker, David Wong

**Full-time faculty*

SCHOLARSHIPS | ACADEMIC and TALENT FUNDING

**IN-STATE TUITION | AVAILABLE FOR QUALIFIED
OUT-OF-STATE STUDENTS**

DEGREES | BACHELOR'S and MASTER'S

APPLICATION DEADLINE | FEBRUARY 1, 2026

WILLIAM PATERSON UNIVERSITY

WPUNJ.EDU/JAZZ • WAYNE, NJ

973.720.2268 • MUSICADMISSIONS@WPUNJ.EDU



PIANIST OF THE YEAR



"I try to take the time to talk to people, to look them in the eye, to learn their names," says Emmet Cohen. "Especially if they love the music and they come frequently, I want to show my thanks by just being present and a human being."

Emmet Cohen

EMMET'S PLACE AT THE TOP

By Allen Morrison Photo by Kevin Alexander

Emmet Cohen grinned as he recalled a joke the comedian Alonzo Bodden told about him on the recent week-long "Journey of Jazz" cruise carrying passengers and performers from Vancouver to Los Angeles. Bodden is the ship's resident comic.

"Sometimes he'll pick on me and say, 'Emmet Cohen! You walk around this boat like you're campaigning for office. You've got the gig, bro, you can relax!'"

The remark makes him laugh out loud, but it also points to one factor among many in Cohen's steady rise to the top of the jazz world: his outgoing personality and how it has helped him build a strong personal bond with his fans.

"I'm just friendly, I think," Cohen, 35, said recently on a video call from San Diego, where

he was enjoying a rare week off from touring. "I try to take the time to talk to people, to look them in the eye, to learn their names. Especially if they love the music and they come frequently, I want to show my thanks by just being present and a human being. I know a lot of musicians describe themselves as introverts. I consider myself lucky to be an extrovert. I like people and their stories."

A dazzlingly self-assured, inventive pianist in a world where such gifts often go unreward-

ed, Cohen reflected on how he got here. While touring the Midwest and other places in the late 2010s, mostly with longtime trio partners Kyle Poole and Russell Hall, he said, "I began to realize that ... it's really hard to get people to come to your performances. I played for so many empty rooms, just a few people here and there. We would travel all the way to a city and spend the resources, and, so many nights, they weren't really listening or didn't really care. Even if you're playing great, nothing is guaran-

teed. Playing great, being professional, having degrees — it's just the baseline."

Closer to his Harlem apartment, he started a residency doing late nights at Dizzy's, then another one playing B3 at Smoke. Then, in 2020, the pandemic changed everything.

During New York City's lockdown, out of desperation, he started *Live from Emmet's Place*, webcasting concerts from his apartment on an iPhone with quarantine partners Poole and Hall.

"The power of the internet is undeniable. We did the first one on March 20, 2020. It got 40,000 views. It was a wake-up call. I looked in the mirror and asked myself, how far would I have to travel to reach 40,000 people in clubs and other venues? That would take us an entire year or more."

The weekly Monday night *Emmet's Place* shows (after the pandemic they became monthly) became an internet phenomenon, eventually earning tens of millions of views on YouTube, Facebook and Instagram. To date, there have been more than 135 episodes, with guest performers that have included Sheila Jordan, Houston Person, Cyrille Aimee, Paquito D'Rivera, Kurt Rosenwinkel, Samara Joy and dozens of other jazz luminaries.

The program had an impact beyond the online world. Cohen's concerts in far-flung places around the globe began selling out in advance. An online group of admirers of *Emmet's Place* sprang up on Facebook with the moniker "TGIM" (Thank God it's Monday). The group, organized by a fan named Rosemary Dawson, has more than 1,000 members, who not only watch the webcast together but also meet up to support live music at brick-and-mortar venues.

The webcast, especially in the early days of the pandemic, filled a real need for community. "Music is one of the best connectors and unifiers that the world has known. Jazz especially, in its improvisational nature and freedom, and its inclusiveness. It can include many different types of world music. There's something for everyone. It's almost like a religion, in a way. And the bandstand — the living room — became a temple. Everyone had their shoes off."

As popular as *Emmet's Place* became, there is, however, one group of people who were not fans: Cohen's neighbors in his Harlem apartment building. "One of the most frequently asked questions I've had is, 'What do the neighbors think?' And the neighbors do not like the shows. We had a board meeting, and they asked me to 'sunset' the concerts. Fortunately, we've had an offer to continue our livestreams at Power Station," the famed recording studio (formerly Avatar) in midtown Manhattan now operated by Berklee College of Music.

The finale of *Live from Emmet's Place* in Cohen's apartment took place Oct. 6.

"I was pretty upset when I first found out

that we'd have to stop streaming," he acknowledged. "But after some contemplation, I realized that it's just an opportunity to take it to the next place, to evolve it to where it's supposed to be." He expects the new livestreams to be webcast monthly starting in December, when he hopes to have iconic saxophonist George Coleman as a guest.

From the beginning, Cohen's approach has been to honor the elders of jazz. In addition to his three Mack Avenue albums — a fourth is on the way — Cohen in 2016 launched a series of independent releases he calls the Masters Legacy Series. Five volumes highlight his collaborations with Jimmy Cobb, Ron Carter, Benny Golson, Albert "Tootie" Heath, George Coleman and Houston Person.

He plans to use the new livestream to refocus on nurturing the next generation of players. "We had so many fantastic, even legendary musicians playing with us," he reflected. "But, to bring it into the future, I began to realize that it's about the younger generation. We've started to incorporate younger musicians. That has to be an important part of our mission."

"So, I'll say to Spencer [Porter, Cohen's assistant who serves as his operations director], 'Who's the hot young tenor player, or an exciting young trumpet player that people are talking about?'" A recent show featured three seasoned New York scene veterans, vibraphonist Steve Nelson, bassist Peter Washington and drummer Joe Farnsworth. "I thought it would be cool to add a couple of young musicians to that. So, we asked around and there's a young trumpet player, 20 years old, going to Juilliard, named Mejeedi Owusu. We messaged him, asked him to show up. He was excited. He's 20 years old and he'd been watching us since he was 15."

Cohen marvels that *Emmet's Place* has spawned such distinct audiences — for instance, the TGIM group that includes many retirees who have the time to keep tabs on his career; "but also the students who feel like they're getting a taste of New York from our shows and are learning to play based off of the content that we're creating."

Cohen, in his mid-30s, is clearly starting to grapple with the idea that, at least to the next generation, he himself represents the "elders."

"As much as it is a community for jazz fans, it's also an educational place for younger musicians all over the world," he said. "It's expanded — educationally, internationally, in ways that I would never even have imagined."

The new *Emmet's Place* webcast will try to keep as much of the original pandemic-era ethos of creating a community around jazz as possible.

"The concept will be similar, except that it takes place in an actual recording studio. We're gonna try to make it feel as homey as possible. I'll probably take my shoes off."



PRESENTS



Double Moon - DMCHR 71464

LORI WILLIAMS "Here We Are"

Lori Williams (voc), **Bernhard Wiesinger** (ts, ss, fl), **Christian Havel** (g), **Renato Chicco** (p), **Doug Weiss** (b), **Joris Dudli** (d)

"Lori Williams' beautiful voice glides soulfully and effortlessly across a smooth and inviting rhythmic landscape with messages of abundance, joy, and affirmation."

Dianne Reeves



Double Moon - DMCHR 71460

ERIK LEUTHÄUSER "Quality Time in NYC"

Erik Leuthäuser (voc), **9 tracks duo with Alan Broadbent** (p), and **9 tracks trio with Allen Farnham** (p), **Steve LaSpina** (b), **Rich DeRosa** (d), with special guest **Ken Peplowski** (sax, cl)

"My sincere compliments on your singing: pristine intonation and excellent pronunciation of English! You really know how to deliver a ballad."

Rich DeRosa/Composer, Conductor, Arranger and Drummer

www.challengerecords.com
Distributed by Naxos

DB

**90th
READERS
POLL
2025**

COMPLETE RESULTS



EMILY BUTLER PHOTOGRAPHY

Trombone Shorty



BRIENE LERMITTE

Maria Schneider



JOHN ABBOTT

Artemis



John Coltrane's A Love Supreme:
60th Anniversary Edition



JAMES ADAMS

Ambrose Akinmusire



COURTESY KENNY GARRETT

Kenny Garrett

HALL OF FAME

Jack DeJohnette	2,057
Kenny Burrell	1,969
Joey DeFrancesco	1,485
Bobby Hutcherson	1,408
Chuck Mangione.....	1,320
Shirley Horn.....	1,243
Bob Brookmeyer.....	990
Billy Higgins.....	913
Ramsey Lewis.....	858
Dave Holland	825
Ellis Marsalis	792
Maria Schneider	792
Buddy Guy.....	770
Randy Brecker.....	737
Dee Dee Bridgewater.....	737
Bill Frisell	682
Abdullah Ibrahim.....	671
Terence Blanchard.....	594
Kenny Wheeler.....	583
Dianne Reeves.....	561
Billy Cobham.....	550
Kenny Garrett.....	550
Henry Threadgill.....	550

Arturo Sandoval	528
Fred Hersch	484
Jaki Byard	462
Dr. Lonnie Smith.....	462
Dr. John.....	418
Wadada Leo Smith.....	407
Albert "Tootie" Heath.....	385
Roscoe Mitchell.....	385
John Zorn.....	385
ARTIST OF THE YEAR	
Christian McBride	1,958
Emmet Cohen	1,298
Kenny Barron	1,287
Charles Lloyd.....	1,210
Pat Metheny.....	1,012
James Brandon Lewis	957
Samara Joy	913
Wynton Marsalis	814
Brad Mehldau.....	748
Ambrose Akinmusire.....	737
Terri Lyne Carrington	737
Jon Batiste.....	715
Joshua Redman	682

Bill Frisell	671
Mary Halvorson	671
Bill Charlap	649
Branford Marsalis.....	616
Renee Rosnes.....	616
Cécile McLorin Salvant.....	605
Chris Potter.....	528
Anat Cohen	495
Fred Hersch	462
esperanza spalding	451
Brian Blade	429
Terence Blanchard.....	429
Sullivan Fortner	429
Lakecia Benjamin	418
Isaiah Collier	374
Jacob Collier.....	308
Tyshawn Sorey	308
Immanuel Wilkins	308
Snarky Puppy.....	880
Redman, Mehldau, McBride, Blade: A MoodSwing Reunion	748
Mary Halvorson: Amaryllis.....	671
Brad Mehldau Trio	638
Jon Batiste & Stay Human	627
James Brandon Lewis Quartet	594
Pat Metheny Side-Eye.....	583
The Cookers.....	539
Christian McBride's New Jawn.....	528
SFJAZZ Collective.....	528
Bill Frisell Trio	506
Trombone Shorty & Orleans Avenue	495
Béla Fleck, Edmar Castañeda, Antonio Sanchez Trio	473
esperanza spalding	462
Kurt Elling and Charlie Hunter, SuperBlue	451
Fred Hersch Trio	429
Ambrose Akinmusire Quartet	418
Tyshawn Sorey Trio	407

GROUP OF THE YEAR

Artemis	2,376
Emmet Cohen Trio	1,496
Branford Marsalis Quartet	1,441
Charles Lloyd Quartet	1,364
Isaiah Collier and The Chosen Few	396
Kenny Garrett and Sounds From the Ancestors	374

Terence Blanchard & The E-Collective.....	352
Hiromi's Sonicwonder.....	352
Stanley Clarke *N* 4Ever.....	341
Julian Lage Trio.....	341
Vijay Iyer Trio.....	319
The Bad Plus.....	308
Sullivan Fortner Trio.....	308
Joe Lovano Trio Tapestry.....	308

LARGE ENSEMBLE OF THE YEAR

Maria Schneider Orchestra.....3,179

Christian McBride Big Band.....	2,530
Jazz At Lincoln Center Orchestra...	2,112
WDR Big Band Cologne.....	1,540
Sun Ra Arkestra.....	1,430
Count Basie Orchestra.....	1,045
Anat Cohen Tentet.....	1,012
Darcy James Argue's Secret Society.....	891
Mingus Big Band.....	858
Clayton-Hamilton Jazz Orchestra...	847
Arturo O'Farrill and the Latin Jazz Ensemble.....	770
Gordon Goodwin's Big Phat Band.....	704
Chicago Jazz Orchestra.....	638
John Beasley's MONK'estra.....	550
Vanguard Jazz Orchestra.....	539
Metropole Orkest.....	462
DIVA Jazz Orchestra.....	407
Ed Palermo Big Band.....	352
Allison Miller with the One O'Clock Lab Band.....	341
NDR Big Band.....	341
Ulysses Owens Jr. Big Band.....	264
Steven Bernstein's Millennial Territory Orchestra.....	231
Bill Warfield and the Hell's Kitchen Funk Orchestra.....	231
Trondheim Jazz Orchestra.....	220
Ryan Truesdell Gil Evans Project.....	220

ALBUM OF THE YEAR

Branford Marsalis, *Belonging* (BLUE NOTE).....1,375

Jon Batiste, <i>Beethoven Blues</i> (VERVE/INTERSCOPE).....	1,133
Bill Charlap Trio, <i>And Then Again</i> (BLUE NOTE).....	1,045
Emmet Cohen, <i>Vibe Provider</i> (MACK AVENUE).....	825
Jazz At Lincoln Center Orchestra with Wynton Marsalis, <i>Freedom, Justice And Hope</i> (BLUE ENGINE).....	737
Terri Lyne Carrington & Christie Dashiell, <i>We Insist 2025!</i> (CANDID)...	649
Ambrose Akinmusire, <i>honey from a winter stone</i> (NONESUCH).....	550
Patricia Brennan, <i>Breaking Stretch</i> (PYROCLASTIC).....	550
Sullivan Fortner, <i>Southern Nights</i> (ARTWORK).....	495
Peter Bernstein, <i>Better Angels</i> (SMOKE SESSIONS).....	473
Béla Fleck/Edmar Castañeda/ Antonio Sánchez, <i>Beatrio</i> (BELA FLECK PRODUCTIONS/THIRTY TIGERS).....	440

James Brandon Lewis Quartet, <i>Abstraction Is Deliverance</i> (INTAKT).....	440
Joe Lovano, <i>Homage</i> (ECM).....	440
Tyshawn Sorey, <i>The Susceptible Now</i> (PI).....	418
Anouar Brahem, <i>After The Last Sky</i> (ECM).....	407
Renee Rosnes, <i>Crossing Paths</i> (SMOKE SESSIONS).....	396
Isaiah Collier & The Chosen Few, <i>The World Is On Fire</i> (DIVISION 81)...	385
Bill Frisell/Kit Downes/Andrew Cyrille, <i>Breaking The Shell</i> (RED HOOK).....	385
David Murray Quartet, <i>Birdly Serenade</i> (IMPULSE!).....	385
Marshall Allen's Ghost Horizons, <i>Live In Philadelphia</i> (ARS NOVA WORKSHOP/OTHERLY LOVE)...	352
Kris Davis Trio, <i>Run The Gauntlet</i> (PYROCLASTIC).....	352
Immanuel Wilkins, <i>Blues Blood</i> (BLUE NOTE).....	352
Vijay Iyer and Wadada Leo Smith, <i>Defiant Life</i> (ECM).....	341
Christine Jensen, <i>Harbour</i> (NETTWERK/JUSTIN TIME).....	341
Bria Skonberg, <i>What It Means</i> (CELLAR MUSIC).....	319
Monique Chao, <i>Time Chamber</i> (DA VINCI).....	308
Steve Turre, <i>Sanyas</i> (SMOKE SESSIONS).....	308
Aaron Parks, <i>Little Big III</i> (BLUE NOTE).....	297
John Patitucci, <i>Spirit Fall</i> (EDITION)...	286
Orrin Evans and the Captain Black Big Band, <i>Walk A Mile In My Shoe</i> (IMANI).....	275
Sarah Hanahan, <i>Among Giants</i> (BLUE ENGINE).....	275

HISTORICAL ALBUM OF THE YEAR

John Coltrane, *A Love Supreme: 60th Anniversary Edition* (IMPULSE!).....4,158

Miles Davis, <i>Miles In France 1963 & 1964: The Bootleg Series, Vol. 8</i> (LEGACY A&R).....	2,288
McCoy Tyner & Joe Henderson, <i>Forces Of Nature: Live At Slugs'</i> (BLUE NOTE).....	2,079
Chick Corea/Christian McBride/Brian Blade, <i>Trilogy 3</i> (CANDID).....	2,057
Keith Jarrett, <i>The Old Country: More From The Deer Head Inn</i> (ECM).....	1,485
Roy Hargrove's Crisol, <i>Gran-Terre</i> (VERVE).....	1,419
Emily Remler, <i>Cookin' At The Queens: Live In Las Vegas (1984, 1988)</i> (RESONANCE).....	1,034
Oscar Peterson, <i>City Lights: The Oscar Peterson Quartet Live In Munich 1994</i> (MACK AVENUE/TWO LIONS).....	979
Wayne Shorter, <i>Celebration Volume 1</i> (BLUE NOTE).....	979
Charlie Parker, <i>Bird In Kansas City</i> (VERVE).....	781
Chick Corea, <i>Piano Improvisations, Vol. 1</i> (ECM).....	594
The Jazz Crusaders, <i>Freedom Sound</i> (PACIFIC JAZZ/BLUE NOTE).....	539
Pharoah Sanders, <i>Thembi</i> (VERVE)...	473

Jaki Byard, <i>Blues For Smoke</i> (CANDID).....	429
Kurt Rosenwinkel, <i>The Next Step Band Live At Smalls 1996</i> (HEARTCORE).....	418
King Oliver's Creole Jazz Band, <i>Centennial</i> (ARCHEOPHONE).....	374
James Moody Septet, <i>The Moody Story: James Moody Septet 1951-1955</i> (FRESH SOUND).....	341
Charles Tolliver & Music Inc., <i>Live At Slugs' Volume I & II</i> (STRATA-EAST/MACK AVENUE).....	341
B.B. King, <i>In France</i> (DEEP DIGS/ELEMENTAL).....	330
Roland Kirk, <i>Domino: Live At Radio Bremen Studios 1963</i> (MOOSICUS)...	286
Bennie Maupin, <i>Jewel In The Lotus</i> (ECM).....	286
Sun Ra, <i>Inside The Light World: Sun Ra Meets The OVC</i> (STRUT).....	286
James Cotton/Junior Wells/Carey Bell/Billy Branch, <i>Harp Attack!</i> (ALLIGATOR).....	264
Cecil Taylor/Tony Oxley, <i>Flashing Spirits</i> (BURNING AMBULANCE).....	253
Andrew Hill, <i>A Beautiful Day, Revisited</i> (PALMETTO).....	242
Black Arts Group, <i>For Peace And Liberty: In Paris, Dec. 1972</i> (WEWANTSOUNDS).....	220
Stanley Cowell, <i>Musa: Ancestral Streams</i> (STRATA-EAST/MACK AVENUE).....	198
Various Artists, <i>Classic Vanguard Small Group Swing Sessions</i> (MOSAIC).....	154
John Lee Hooker, <i>The Standard School Broadcast Recordings</i> (BMG).....	132

TRUMPET

Ambrose Akinmusire.....2,728

Terence Blanchard.....	2,134
Wynton Marsalis.....	2,024
Randy Brecker.....	1,441
Ingrid Jensen.....	1,265
Tom Harrell.....	935
Wadada Leo Smith.....	880
Sean Jones.....	825
Herb Alpert.....	814
Jeremy Pelt.....	726
Avishai Cohen.....	671
Terrell Stafford.....	638
Benny Benack III.....	616
Nicholas Payton.....	605
Eddie Henderson.....	506
Dave Douglas.....	495
Marquis Hill.....	462
Enrico Rava.....	429
Chief Xian aTunde Adjuah.....	429
Theo Croker.....	396
Adam O'Farrill.....	341
Alex Sipiagin.....	308
Charles Tolliver.....	297
Brian Lynch.....	286
Etienne Charles.....	275
Claudio Roditi.....	264
Yazz Ahmed.....	253
Peter Evans.....	253

Keyon Harrold.....	242
--------------------	-----

TROMBONE

Trombone Shorty.....2,673

Steve Turre.....	2,288
Wycliffe Gordon.....	1,815
Michael Dease.....	1,650
Steve Davis.....	1,452
Delfeayo Marsalis.....	913
Conrad Herwig.....	792
Marshall Gilkes.....	770
Robin Eubanks.....	748
Nils Landgren.....	583
Natalie Cressman.....	528
John Fedchock.....	462
Ryan Keberle.....	440
Jacob Garchik.....	352
Gianluca Petrella.....	352
Steve Swell.....	352
Jennifer Wharton.....	341
Alan Ferber.....	275
Craig Harris.....	275
Jeb Bishop.....	253
Chris Crenshaw.....	253
Nick Finzer.....	253
Curtis Fowlkes.....	253
Aubrey Logan.....	242
George Lewis.....	231
Audrey Ochoa.....	231
Melissa Gardiner.....	220
Sara Jacovino.....	220
Ed Neumeister.....	220

SOPRANO SAXOPHONE

Branford Marsalis.....4,103

Kenny Garrett.....	1,716
Joshua Redman.....	1,551
Jane Ira Bloom.....	1,309
Ravi Coltrane.....	1,254
Chris Potter.....	1,133
Jan Garbarek.....	1,023
Joe Lovano.....	847
Isaiah Collier.....	814
Jane Bunnett.....	770
James Carter.....	759
Steve Wilson.....	660
Alexa Tarantino.....	594
Ingrid Laubrock.....	517
Christine Jensen.....	495
Tia Fuller.....	462
Roscoe Mitchell.....	440
Ted Nash.....	396
Evan Parker.....	385
Wayne Escoffery.....	374
Sam Newsome.....	374
Sharel Cassity.....	319
Walter Smith III.....	286
Yuval Cohen.....	275
Émilie Parisien.....	275
Donny McCaslin.....	264
T.K. Blue.....	231
Greg Osby.....	220
Emma Rawicz.....	220
Marcus Strickland.....	209



D. DARR

Charles Lloyd



MARK SHELDON

Anat Cohen



CHRIS DRUKKER

Regina Carter



DAVE STAPLETON

Chris Potter



PIERRE-YVES SELIQUE

James Carter



DANNY CLINCH

Herbie Hancock

ALTO SAXOPHONE

Kenny Garrett..... 2,618

Immanuel Wilkins	1,705
Lakecia Benjamin	1,287
Chris Potter	1,243
Greg Abate	1,122
Miguel Zenón	1,089
Gary Bartz	880
Bobby Watson	803
Sarah Hanahan	781
Grace Kelly	726
Alexa Tarantino	693
Charles McPherson	671
Marshall Allen	616
Anthony Braxton	517
Donald Harrison	506
John Zorn	484
Steve Coleman	440
Jim Snidero	440
Tim Berne	407
Steve Wilson	407
Tia Fuller	374
Henry Threadgill	374
Ted Nash	363
Christine Jensen	352
Sherman Irby	308
Rudresh Mahanthappa	308
Sharel Cassity	297
Jon Irabagon	264
Steve Lehman	264
Antonio Hart	253

TENOR SAXOPHONE

Chris Potter..... 2,376

Charles Lloyd	1,815
Joshua Redman	1,782
Branford Marsalis	1,474
Joe Lovano	1,419
Melissa Aldana	1,309
James Brandon Lewis	1,232
Eric Alexander	913
Houston Person	814
Kamasi Washington	704
David Murray	616
Isaiah Collier	528
Nubya Garcia	517
James Carter	451
Walter Smith III	451
Jerry Bergonzi	385
Billy Harper	385
Mark Turner	385
Wayne Escoffery	330
Joel Frahm	308
Jeff Coffin	297
Archie Shepp	286
Ingrid Laubrock	275
Donny McCaslin	264
Dave Liebman	253
JD Allen	242
Camille Thurman	231
Jimmy Greene	198
Jon Irabagon	176
David Sánchez	176

Dayna Stephens..... 176

BARITONE SAXOPHONE

James Carter..... 3,399

Gary Smulyan	3,014
Claire Daly (PASSED OCT. 22, 2024)	1,628
John Surman	1,309
Scott Robinson	1,155
Grace Kelly	990
Michael Dease	946
Mats Gustafsson	737
Tim Berne	627
Dave McMurray	539
Ken Vandermark	506
Stephen Doc Kupka	484
Jason Marshall	451
Lo "Lucy" Wood	440
Frank Basile	429
Lauren Sevian	418
Charles Evans	330
Brian Landrus	319
Céline Bonacina	308
Linda Fredriksson	297
Patience Higgins	286
Alex Harding	242
Colin Stetson	242
Karen Sharp	231
Vinny Golia	220
Roger Lewis	154
Charlie Kohlase	143
Dave Rempis	143

Adam Schroeder..... 143

Ted Hogarth..... 132

CLARINET

Anat Cohen..... 7,491

Paquito D'Rivera	2,365
Ken Peplowski	1,496
Don Byron	1,364
Eddie Daniels	1,133
Victor Goines	715
Ben Goldberg	495
Shabaka Hutchings	484
Marty Ehrlich	440
Ted Nash	418
Chris Speed	374
Louis Sclavis	352
Jeff Lederer	319
Dr. Michael White	319
Ken Vandermark	253
Virginia Mayhew	242
Gabriele Mirabassi	242
Michel Portal	198
François Houle	187
Aurora Nealand	187
Evan Christopher	165
Angel Bat Dawid	165
Michael Moore	165
Gianluigi Trovesi	165
Yuma Uesaka	165
Todd Marcus	154
Ab Baars	143

Chris Byers 132
 Chet Dexas 132
 David Krakauer 132

FLUTE

Charles Lloyd 2,618
 Hubert Laws 2,563
 Nicole Mitchell 1,727
 Elena Pinderhughes 1,309
 Lew Tabackin 1,177
 Jane Bunnett 781
 Henry Threadgill 682
 Lakecia Benjamin 627
 Jeff Coffin 627
 Shabaka Hutchings 605
 Ted Nash 605
 Tia Fuller 594
 Dave Liebman 561
 Jamie Baum 517
 Anna Webber 506
 Steve Wilson 440
 André 3000 429
 Isaiah Collier 418
 Nubya Garcia 418
 James Newton 407
 Ali Ryerson 374
 Holly Hofmann 363
 Roscoe Mitchell 319
 T.K. Blue 264
 James Spaulding 253

Jorge Pardo 242
 Marty Ehrlich 209
 Anne Drummond 198
 Elsa Nilsson 198
 Naïssam Jalal 187

PIANO

Emmet Cohen 2,013
 Brad Mehldau 1,925
 Herbie Hancock 1,804
 Kenny Barron 1,793
 Bill Charlap 1,188
 Sullivan Fortner 1,056
 Jon Batiste 935
 Vijay Iyer 924
 Fred Hersch 891
 Monty Alexander 682
 Kris Davis 605
 Jason Moran 572
 Eliane Elias 429
 Robert Glasper 429
 Gerald Clayton 407
 Helen Sung 407
 George Cables 396
 Matthew Shipp 396
 Joey Calderazzo 363
 Chucho Valdés 352
 Benny Green 330
 Orrin Evans 319
 Aaron Parks 308

Christian Sands 308
 Aaron Diehl 297
 Myra Melford 264
 Danilo Pérez 253
 Craig Taborn 253
 Marilyn Crispell 242
 Eric Reed 231

KEYBOARDS

Herbie Hancock 4,752
 Jon Batiste 1,661
 Larry Goldings 1,496
 Hiromi 1,496
 Robert Glasper 1,463
 Craig Taborn 847
 Jacob Collier 781
 Eddie Palmieri (PASSED AUG. 6, 2025) 781
 John Medeski 671
 Cory Henry 660
 John Beasley 484
 Danilo Pérez 484
 Patrice Rushen 484
 Gary Versace 473
 Gary Husband 462
 James Francies 407
 Uri Caine 396
 Nik Bärtsch 363
 Geoffrey Keezer 363
 George Colligan 352
 Marc Cary 297

Brian Charette 297
 Matthew Shipp 297
 Omar Sosa 275
 Kit Downes 264
 Matthew Whitaker 264
 Zaccai Curtis 253
 Leo Genovese 231
 Jim Beard 220
 Jamie Saft 209

ORGAN

Larry Goldings 4,576
 Booker T. Jones 1,969
 Cory Henry 1,441
 Mike LeDonne 1,331
 John Medeski 1,232
 Brian Auger 1,111
 Amina Claudine Myers 913
 Gary Versace 880
 Pat Bianchi 869
 Brian Charette 770
 Akiko Tsuruga (PASSED SEPT. 13, 2025) 704
 Matthew Whitaker 682
 Barbara Dennerlein 605
 Tony Monaco 561
 Craig Taborn 561
 Delvon Lamarr 484
 Kit Downes 385
 Jared Gold 385
 Rachel Eckroth 297



NEW RELEASES



What's on your playlist?

ARBORSRECORDS.COM | DISTRIBUTED BY MVD





Zakir Hussain



Buddy Guy



Jon Batiste

Jamie Saft.....	297
Wayne Horvitz.....	275
Yelena Eckemoff.....	264
Bobby Sparks.....	264
Will Blades.....	209

GUITAR

Pat Metheny.....	2,717
Bill Frisell.....	2,431
Mary Halvorson.....	1,782
Julian Lage.....	1,485
Peter Bernstein.....	1,364
John McLaughlin.....	1,177
John Scofield.....	1,155
Pasquale Grasso.....	913
John Pizzarelli.....	869
Kurt Rosenwinkel.....	781
Dave Stryker.....	594
Bobby Broom.....	572
Kevin Eubanks.....	440
Lionel Loueke.....	429
Charlie Hunter.....	363
Mark Whitfield.....	363
Jeff Parker.....	341
Ben Monder.....	330
Nels Cline.....	308
Paul Bollenbeck.....	297
Ralph Towner.....	297
Camila Meza.....	275
Bruce Forman.....	253
Romero Lubambo.....	242
Susan Alcorn (PASSED JAN. 31, 2025).....	231
Nguyễn Lê.....	220
Marc Ribot.....	220
Gilad Hekselman.....	209
Reg Schwager.....	209
Wolfgang Muthspiel.....	176

BASS

Christian McBride.....	4609
Ron Carter.....	3850
Dave Holland.....	1595
Linda May Han Oh.....	1551
esperanza spalding.....	1221
John Patitucci.....	946
John Clayton.....	759
Stanley Clarke.....	715
William Parker.....	462

Avishai Cohen.....	396
Larry Grenadier.....	396
Buster Williams.....	374
Peter Washington.....	363
Luke Stewart.....	242
Arild Andersen.....	231
Thomas Morgan.....	231
Rufus Reid.....	231
Matt Brewer.....	198
Scott Colley.....	198
Cecil McBee.....	187
Luques Curtis.....	176
Ben Allison.....	165
Essiet Okon Essiet.....	154
Michael Formanek.....	154
David Wong.....	154

ELECTRIC BASS

Marcus Miller.....	2,673
Stanley Clarke.....	2,431
Christian McBride.....	1,914
John Patitucci.....	1,848
Steve Swallow.....	1,826
esperanza spalding.....	1,551
Victor Wooten.....	979
Tony Levin.....	913
Linda May Han Oh.....	814
Meshell Ndegeocello.....	649
Richard Bona.....	627
Brian Bromberg.....	495
Pino Palladino.....	473
Thundercat.....	462
Avishai Cohen.....	451
James Genus.....	418
Jamaaladeen Tacuma.....	396
Tim Lefebvre.....	319
Larry Grenadier.....	286
Derrick Hodge.....	286
Felix Pastorius.....	253
Junius Paul.....	242
Katie Thiroux.....	198
Trevor Dunn.....	176
Ingebriggt Håker Flaten.....	176

VIOLIN

Regina Carter.....	6,314
Jean-Luc Ponty.....	2,321
Jenny Scheinman.....	1,738

Sara Caswell.....	1,309
Mark Feldman.....	737
Zach Brock.....	726
Mark O'Connor.....	726
Jerry Goodman.....	704
Mat Maneri.....	484
Sarah Bernstein.....	407
Tomoko Omura.....	363
Michal Urbaniak.....	341
Miguel Atwood-Ferguson.....	330
Adam Baldych.....	286
Jason Kao Hwang.....	264
Eyvind Kang.....	242
Carla Kihlstedt.....	242
Jessica Pavone.....	242
Theo Ceccaldi.....	231
Melanie Dyer.....	209
Diane Monroe.....	209

DRUMS

Brian Blade.....	2,904
Jack DeJohnette.....	1,562
Terri Lyne Carrington.....	1,408
Joe Farnsworth.....	1,243
Roy Haynes.....	1,199
(PASSED NOV. 12, 2024).....	1,199
Tyshawh Sorey.....	1,089
Johnathan Blake.....	1,012
Steve Gadd.....	913
Al Foster (PASSED MAY 28, 2025).....	715
Jeff Hamilton.....	715
Billy Cobham.....	693
Jeff "Tain" Watts.....	649
Allison Miller.....	561
Billy Hart.....	473
Peter Erskine.....	440
Lewis Nash.....	440
Cindy Blackman Santana.....	374
Matt Wilson.....	352
Bill Stewart.....	319
Makaya McCraven.....	297
Nate Smith.....	297
Hamid Drake.....	275
Eric Harland.....	275
Herlin Riley.....	264
Joey Baron.....	253
Kenny Washington.....	242
Ulysses Owens Jr.....	220

PERCUSSION

Zakir Hussain (PASSED DEC. 15, 2024).....	2,827
Alex Acuña.....	1,892
Poncho Sanchez.....	1,518
Sheila E.....	1,419
Airto Moreira.....	1,122
Bobby Sanabria.....	913
Trilok Gurtu.....	770
Kahil El'Zabar.....	704
Marilyn Mazur.....	660
Cyro Baptista.....	627
Hamid Drake.....	627
Pedrito Martinez.....	627
Dafnis Prieto.....	539
Pete Escovedo.....	517
Bob Moses.....	473
Mino Cinelu.....	407
John Santos.....	407
Giovanni Hidalgo.....	352
Rogério Boccato.....	330
Susie Ibarra.....	297
Ches Smith.....	275
Keita Ogawa.....	264
Han Bennink.....	253
Sammy Figueroa.....	231
Chad Taylor.....	231

VIBRAPHONE

Stefon Harris.....	2,728
Warren Wolf.....	2,651
Joel Ross.....	2,365
Patricia Brennan.....	2,233
Joe Locke.....	1,782
Steve Nelson.....	1,243
Jason Marsalis.....	1,067
Sasha Berliner.....	869
Joe Chambers.....	704
Cecilia Smith.....	495
Chien Chien Lu.....	473
Jason Adasiewicz.....	396
Thaddeus Tukes.....	319
Kenny Wollesen.....	308
Mulatu Astatke.....	275
Behn Gillece.....	253
Mike Dillon.....	242
Jim Hart.....	231

Hendrik Meurkens	231
Matt Moran	220
Taiko Saito	220
Tomas Fujiwara	209
Simon Moullier	209

BEYOND INSTRUMENTALIST OF THE YEAR

Béla Fleck (BANJO).....	2,475
Brande Younger (HARP)	1,606
Jon Batiste (MELODICA/HARMONABOARD).....	1,430
Tomeka Reid (CELLO).....	1,012
Anouar Brahem (OUD).....	957
Marcus Miller (BASS CLARINET).....	913
Chris Potter (BASS CLARINET).....	891
David Murray (BASS CLARINET).....	847
James Carter (BASS SAXOPHONE).....	704
Edmar Castaneda (COLOMBIAN HARP).....	682
Steve Turre (SHELLS).....	682
Susan Alcorn (PEDAL STEEL GUITAR) (PASSED JAN. 31, 2025).....	572
Wycliffe Gordon (TUBA).....	572
Grégoire Maret (HARMONICA).....	528
Gary Versace (ACCORDION).....	528
Howard Levy (HARMONICA).....	517
Scott Robinson (BASS SAXOPHONE).....	484
Chris Thile (MANDOLIN).....	407
Richard Galliano (ACCORDION).....	396
Greg Leisz (PEDAL STEEL GUITAR).....	363

Hendrik Meurkens (HARMONICA).....	330
Theon Cross (TUBA).....	319
Charles Lloyd (TAROGATO).....	308
Peggy Lee (CELLO).....	286
Dino Saluzzi (BANDONEÓN).....	286
Rabih Abou-Khalil (OUD).....	264
Toumani Diabaté (KORA).....	264
Ben Wendel (BASSOON).....	264

FEMALE VOCALIST

Samara Joy	3,619
Cécile McLorin Salvant.....	2,706
Diana Krall	1,177
Dianne Reeves.....	1,100
Dee Dee Bridgewater.....	1,078
Laila Biali	858
Jazzmeia Horn	792
esperanza spalding	726
Cyrille Aimée	704
Veronica Swift.....	671
Sheila Jordan.....	649
Cassandra Wilson.....	594
Catherine Russell	418
Gabrielle Cavassa.....	407
Lizz Wright	407
Karrin Allyson.....	374
Flora Purim	363
Nicole Zuraitis.....	363
Melody Gardot.....	352
Kandace Springs.....	330
Roberta Gambarini	297

Tessa Souter.....	297
Madeleine Peyroux.....	286
Luciana Souza.....	275
Patricia Barber	264
Stacey Kent.....	264
Norma Winstone	231
Dee Alexander	220
Lisa Fischer.....	220
Tierney Sutton	220

MALE VOCALIST

Kurt Elling	5,819
Gregory Porter	3,366
Bobby McFerrin	1,309
Andy Bey (PASSED APRIL 26, 2025).....	1,243
Harry Connick Jr.....	1,001
Benny Benack III.....	836
John Pizzarelli	814
José James	792
Theo Bleckmann	770
Michael Mayo.....	759
Jacob Collier.....	704
James Blood Ulmer.....	539
Tyreek McDole	484
Leslie Odom Jr.	473
Kenny Washington.....	451
Jamie Cullum	429
Bilal.....	308
João Bosco.....	286
Sachal Vasandani.....	275
John Boutté.....	242

Giacomo Gates.....	209
Johnny O'Neal	209

COMPOSER

Maria Schneider	2,134
Terence Blanchard.....	1,804
Benny Golson (PASSED SEPT. 21, 2024).....	1,672
Pat Metheny.....	1,353
Christian McBride.....	704
Ambrose Akinmusire	660
Renee Rosnes.....	660
Wynton Marsalis	594
Mary Halvorson	561
Brad Mehldau	528
Bill Frisell	484
Tom Harrell	473
John Zorn.....	462
Anthony Braxton.....	451
Billy Childs	451
Fred Hersch	451
Robert Glasper.....	440
Tyshawn Sorey	440
Darcy James Argue.....	429
Immanuel Wilkins	429
Vijay Iyer.....	418
Vince Mendoza	363
Kamasi Washington	363
esperanza spalding	330
Henry Threadgill.....	330
Kris Davis.....	319
Christine Jensen.....	308



UNITED STATES AIR FORCE BANDS

IMMEDIATE VACANCIES



RHYTHM
VOCAL
WINDS





Brad Mehldau



Manfred Eicher



Keb' Mo' & Taj Mahal

James Brandon Lewis	308
Jim McNeely (PASSED SEPT. 26, 2025) ...	297
Dave Holland	264
Melissa Aldana	242

ARRANGER

Christian McBride	1,331
Terri Lyne Carrington	1,144
Darcy James Argue	1,012
Wynton Marsalis	913
John Clayton	902
Bob Mintzer	869
John Beasley	682
Robert Glasper	627
Vince Mendoza	605
Alan Broadbent	572
Gordon Goodwin	550
Kamasi Washington	495
Tyshawnsorey	484
esperanza spalding	473
Billy Childs	451
Jim McNeely (PASSED SEPT. 26, 2025) ...	407
Christine Jensen	385
Sullivan Fortner	352
Ed Palermo	286
Lakecia Benjamin	275
Steven Bernstein	275
Helen Sung	275
Ryan Truesdell	275
Miguel Zenón	275
John Hollenbeck	253
Makaya McCraven	242
Ted Nash	242
Miho Hazama	231
Arturo O'Farrill	220
Allison Miller	209

RECORD LABEL

Blue Note	5,808
ECM	2,673
Smoke Sessions	1,133
Mack Avenue	1,045
MoonJune	561
Verve	528
Mosaic	495
Nonesuch	429
Cellar Live Music Group	418

Impulse!	407
ACT	385
Origin	363
Concord	330
Pyroclastic	319
Intakt	297
Pi	297
Posi-Tone	275
Criss Cross Jazz	253
Resonance	253
SmallsLIVE	242
International Anthem	220
Jazz Is Dead	209
Sunnyside	198
Whaling City Sound	198
HighNote	176
ArtistShare	154
Delmark	154
Tzadik	143
Calligram	132
Outside In Music	132
SteepleChase	132
Anzic	121
Columbia Legacy	121
Out of Your Head	121
Ropeadope	121

PRODUCER

Manfred Eicher	2,431
Christian McBride	2,244
Don Was	1,782
Terri Lyne Carrington	1,628
Dave Holland	1,034
Robert Glasper	946
John Zorn	869
Zev Feldman	693
John Beasley	539
Cory Weeds	539
Ambrose Akinmusire	517
Dave Douglas	473
Ryan Truesdell	374
Kris Davis/David Breskin	352
Adrian Younge & Ali Shaheed Muhammad	341
Makaya McCraven	319
Charlie Hunter	308
Miguel Zenón	308

Michael League	286
Larry Klein	275
Bill Laswell	275
Tyshawnsorey	275
Myra Melford	209

BLUES ARTIST OF THE YEAR

Buddy Guy	3,190
Tedeschi Trucks Band	1,474
Taj Mahal	1,199
Christone "Kingfish" Ingram	1,177
Joe Bonamassa	1,133
Keb' Mo'	1,089
Robert Cray	924
Gary Clark Jr.	781
James Blood Ulmer	715
Shemekia Copeland	704
John Mayall (PASSED JULY 24, 2024)	693
Robben Ford	660
Charlie Musselwhite	418
Samantha Fish	341
Eric Bibb	319
Marcia Ball	308
Gov't Mule	297
Ruthie Foster	286
Duke Robillard	264
Sue Foley	253
North Mississippi Allstars	242
Bobby Rush	242
Eric Gales	209

BLUES ALBUM

Taj Mahal and Keb' Mo', Room On The Porch (CONCORD)	3,740
Shemekia Copeland, <i>Blame It On Eve</i> (ALLIGATOR)	1,914
Joe Bonamassa, <i>Live At The Hollywood Bowl</i> (J&R ADVENTURES)	1,804
John Mayall's Bluesbreakers, <i>The Power Of The Blues, Pt. II</i> (MIG-MUSIC)	1,232
Eric Bibb, <i>In The Real World</i> (STONY PLAIN)	572
Duke Robillard, <i>Roll With Me</i> (STONY PLAIN)	550
The Fabulous Thunderbirds, <i>Struck Down</i> (STONY PLAIN)	440

Bobby Rush & Kenny Wayne Shepherd, <i>Young Fashioned Ways</i> (DEEP RUSH)	429
Guy Davis, <i>The Legend Of Sugarbelly</i> (M.C.)	396
Popa Chubby, <i>I Love Freddie King</i> (GULF COAST)	385
Staple Jr. Singers, <i>Searching</i> (LUAKA BOP)	330
Colin James, <i>Chasing The Sun</i> (STONY PLAIN)	319
Tab Benoit, <i>I Hear Thunder</i> (WHISKEY BAYOU)	308
Chris Cain, <i>Good Intentions</i> <i>Gone Bad</i> (ALLIGATOR)	308
Tommy Castro & the Painkillers, <i>Closer To The Bone</i> (ALLIGATOR)	286
Ronnie Baker Brooks, <i>Blues In My DNA</i> (ALLIGATOR)	242
Andy Fairweather Low, <i>The Invisible Bluesman</i> (THE LAST MUSIC COMPANY)	242
Rev. Peyton's Big Damn Band, <i>Honeysuckle</i> (FAMILY OWNED)	220
Bob Corritore & Friends, <i>Doin' The Shout</i> (VIZZTONE)	198
Eric Johanson, <i>Live In Mississippi</i> (RUF)	198
Bloodiest Saxophone featuring Crystal Thomas, <i>Extreme Heat</i> (DIALTONE)	187
Jennifer Lyn & The Groove Revival, <i>Retrograde</i> (J&R COLLECTIVE)	176
Johnny Rawls, <i>Make Them Dance</i> (CATFOOD)	154
Eden Brent, <i>Getaway Blues</i> (YELLOW DOG)	143
ZZ Ward, <i>Liberation</i> (SUN)	143
Frank Bey, <i>Peace</i> (NOLA BLUE)	132
Doug Macleod, <i>Between Somewhere And Goodbye</i> (REFERENCE)	110

BEYOND ARTIST

Jon Batiste	1,408
Rhiannon Giddens	1,023
Jacob Collier	1,001
Tedeschi Trucks Band	869
Béla Fleck	792
Bob Dylan	726
Tower of Power	726

Meshell Ndegeocello	583
Arooj Aftab	572
Robert Glasper	528
Van Morrison.....	506
Milton Nascimento and esperanza spalding	473
Neil Young	473
Ruben Blades.....	462
Laufey.....	440
Björk.....	429
Bonnie Raitt.....	429
Trombone Shorty	418
Hermeto Pascoal (PASSED SEPT. 13, 2025)	396
Kendrick Lamar.....	363
Antonio Sánchez	352
Ralph Towner.....	341
Billie Eilish	286
Ceramic Dog.....	275
The Messthetics.....	275
The Roots.....	275
Edmar Castañeda.....	264
Ivan Lins	264
André 3000.....	242
Beyoncé.....	242
Butcher Brown.....	242
Khruangbin & Vieux Farka Touré.....	242
Rickie Lee Jones.....	231
Lucinda Williams	231
The Baylor Project.....	220
Melody Gardot.....	209

Ani DiFranco, <i>Unprecedented Sh!t</i> (RIGHTEOUS BABE)	220
Andra Day, <i>Cassandra</i> (CHERITH).....	198
Snoop Dogg, <i>Iz It A Crime?</i> (DEATH ROW)	198

Japanese Breakfast, <i>For Melancholy Brunettes</i> (<i>& Sad Women</i>) (DEAD OCEANS).....	187
Nick Lowe, <i>Indoor Safari</i> (YEP ROC)	187
Thumbscrew, <i>Wingbeats</i> (CUNEIFORM)	187
Miley Cyrus, <i>Something Beautiful</i> (COLUMBIA)	187

THE ART OF THE QUARTET

JACK DEJOHNETTE

KENNY WERNER

SCOTT COLLEY

BENJAMIN KOPPEL

VOL. 1 NOW ON VINYL
VOL. 2 COMING SOON

visit COWBELLMUSIC.COM for albums featuring BRIAN BLADE, JOE LOVANO, SCOTT COLLEY, KENNY WERNER, LARRY GOLDINGS, DAVID LIEBMAN & MANY MANY MORE

BEYOND ALBUM

Brad Mehldau, *After Bach* (NONESUCH) 2,035

Milton Nascimento and esperanza spalding, <i>Milton + esperanza</i> (CONCORD)	1,452
MeShell Ngedecello, <i>No More Water: The Gospel Of James Baldwin</i> (BLUE NOTE)	1,232
Kronos Quartet, <i>Outer Spaceways Incorporated: Kronos Quartet & Friends Meet Sun Ra</i> (RED HOT) ..	1,111
Alison Krauss & Union Station, <i>Arcadia</i> (DOWN THE ROAD).....	891
Arooj Aftab, <i>Night Reign</i> (VERVE)	781
Neil Young and Crazy Horse, <i>Fuckin' Up</i> (THE OTHER SHOE/REPRISE)	693
Lake Street Dive, <i>Good Together</i> (FANTASY).....	594
Willie Nelson, <i>Last Leaf On The Tree</i> (LEGACY).....	594
Kendrick Lamar, <i>GNX</i> (PGLANG/INTERSCOPE)	583
Little Feat, <i>Strike Up The Band</i> (HOT TOMATO).....	539
Lady Gaga, <i>Mayhem</i> (STREAMLINE/INTERSCOPE)	528
Elton John and Brandi Carlile, <i>Who Believes In Angels?</i> (INTERSCOPE)	473
Marc Ribot, <i>Map Of A Blue City</i> (NEW WEST).....	462
Lady Gaga, <i>Harlequin</i> (INTERSCOPE)	396
Luciana Souza, <i>Twenty-Four Short Musical Episodes with first lines from poems by Emily Dickinson</i> (SUNNYSIDE)	396
Jason Isbell, <i>Foxes In The Snow</i> (SOUTHEASTERN)	352
Richard Thompson, <i>Ship To Shore</i> (NEW WEST).....	352
Jack White, <i>No Name</i> (THIRD MAN)	330
Steve Wilson, <i>The Overview</i> (FICTION).....	319
Lana Del Rey, <i>Henry, Come On</i> (INTERSCOPE)	308
Billy Strings, <i>Live Vol. 1</i> (REPRISE)	264
Charli XCX, <i>Brat</i> (ATLANTIC).....	264
Billy Strings, <i>Highway Prayers</i> (REPRISE)	242

BOB HOLZ-HONORING LARRY CORYELL

HONORING LARRY CORYELL by BOB HOLZ The blistering new album from legendary drummer BOB HOLZ featuring the late, great LARRY CORYELL on guitar!

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER Rob Stathis

MVDaudio
A DIVISION OF MVD ENTERTAINMENT GROUP

Release date November 7, 2025

Listen on **Spotify**

Available at **amazon**

BobHolzBand.com

CHILL TONE PRESENTS

A Jazzy Christmas

AVAILABLE NOW

SCAN QR CODE

CHILL TONE RECORDS

JAZZ EDUCATION NETWORK

17TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE

JANUARY 7-10, 2026 | NEW ORLEANS, LA

FEATURING APPEARANCES BY:

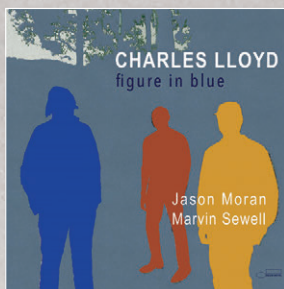


PRESERVATION HALL • BOB MINTZER • JOHN CLAYTON • TED NASH
CHRISTINE & INGRID JENSEN • STEFON HARRIS • PETER ERSKINE
DANNY GOTTLIEB • SARA GAZAREK • CARLOS VEGA • ROXY COSS
DAVE STRYKER • RACHEL THERRIEN • MIKE STEINEL • JOHN STURINO
RYAN DEWEESE • PER DANIELSSON • HARRY WATTERS • ANNIE BOOTH
HAILEY BRINNEL • HANS BACKENROTH • SUSPENDED SEA NONET
AUBREY JOHNSON • JAMIE SHEW • LEIGH PILZER • CLARENCE HINES
HOUSTON LATIN JAZZ ORCH. • US ARMY BLUES "PERSHING'S OWN"
IN MOTION QUARTET • TEMPORAL TAAL COLLECTIVE • SPLIT SCREEN
ADAM BIRNBAUM • RODNEY JORDAN • SURROUND SOUND
ALFINADOS DUO • CELEBRATING MAHAVISHNU & SHAKTI
MATT FALKER • LOYOLA UNIVERSITY NEW ORLEANS • ALEXIS COLE
RICHARD DEROSA • JOHN EDWARD HASSE • NICK FINZER • PETE MADSEN
JUSTIN BINEK • DEAN SORENSON • MONIKA HERZIG • GREG JASPERSE
DAVID ROBINSON • RICK MARGITZA • NATALIE WILSON • BRAD LINDE
LENORA HELM HAMMONDS • NATALIE BOEYINK • STEVE TOROK

REGISTRATION OPEN THRU DEC 10 @ [JAZZEDNET.ORG](https://jazzednet.org)

Reviews

Masterpiece ★★★★★ Excellent ★★★★ Good ★★★ Fair ★★ Poor ★



D. DARR



Charles Lloyd shares *Figure In Blue* with just two other instrumentalists: guitarist Marvin Sewell and pianist Jason Moran.

Charles Lloyd *Figure In Blue*

BLUE NOTE

★★★½

Although, at 87, Charles Lloyd gives no indication of retiring, if his version of the Bernstein/Sondheim standard “Somewhere” were to be the last tune on his last album it wouldn’t be a bad farewell. Some older musicians wrap themselves in other instruments to counteract their aging tone or technique. Lloyd continues to strip away the layers, recording with just two other instrumentalists. Earlier in his career he was sometimes accused of expressing vapid spirituality — Coltrane lite, if you will — as he collaborated with members of the Beach Boys and others. Now, he’s

playing like every note counts.

The opening spiritual, “Abide With Me,” illustrates Lloyd’s command of air and tone. With Sewell and Moran at their most restrained behind him, he takes his time with William Henry Monk’s 165-year-old melody, wringing tremendous feeling from his sub-three-minute performance. The mellow approach extends through two gauzy originals that follow, including a tribute to Duke Ellington that showcases Sewell’s highly expressive touch.

“Black Butterfly,” Ellington’s collaboration with Irving Mills, receives a lightly swinging treatment — solid foundation for Lloyd to show he’s lost little in terms of flexibility — while an ethereal homage to tabla master and frequent Lloyd partner Zakir Hussain floats on placid

waters for nine minutes.

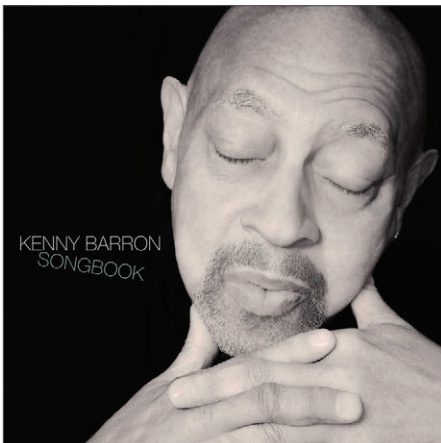
Working with Sewell enables the leader to reflect on his Southern roots, and the Chicago native’s spectral approach to slide guitar is highlighted across the recording’s middle section. The greasy “Chulahoma,” a tribute to land in Mississippi close to where Lloyd’s grandfather farmed, provides the most effective canvas; in contrast, the rambling “Blues For Langston” comes across as filler.

—James Hale

Figure In Blue: Abide With Me; Hinta Hanta (The Way Of Peace); Figure In Blue (Memories Of Duke); Desolation Sound; Ruminations; Chulahoma; Song My Lady Sings; The Ghost Of Lady Day; Blues For Langston; Heaven; Black Butterfly; Ancient Rain; Hymn To The Mother (For Zakir); Somewhere. (97:58)

Personnel: Charles Lloyd, tárogató, tenor saxophone; Marvin Sewell, guitar; Jason Moran, piano.

Ordering info: bluenote.com



Kenny Barron *Songbook*

ARTWORK

★★★★

Kenny Barron's songbook is as prolific as it is largely unfamiliar to most of us. As with most amateur authors, his work has lived in the abstraction of notes without words. This set seeks to turn a small fraction of his tune book into a songbook.

Barron chose 13 of his originals, commissioned lyrics from Janice Jarrett and assembled eight esteemed vocalists to collaborate with his trio. "Sunshower" is practically a standard with

a dozen previous versions by Barron alone starting in 1975. In Cécile McLorin Salvant's coy care, it makes a sudden turn from ballad to brisk cruising speed. "Cook's Bay" was born nearly 30 years ago in a Verve session with Regina Carter. And so on. Only "Beyond The Place," "Song For Abdullah" and "Minor Blues" (with lyrics by Catherine Russell) seem to be newcomers.

Jarrett's journeyman work often reaches for a poetic, art-song façade, and the performances pour a precise interpretative shape over her words. Her lyrics serve their purpose and carry their weight but lack a sense of observation, cleverness or wit. "Calypso" is brushed off with wordless scat lyric. The music comes alive most when Barron takes solo command from the keyboard.

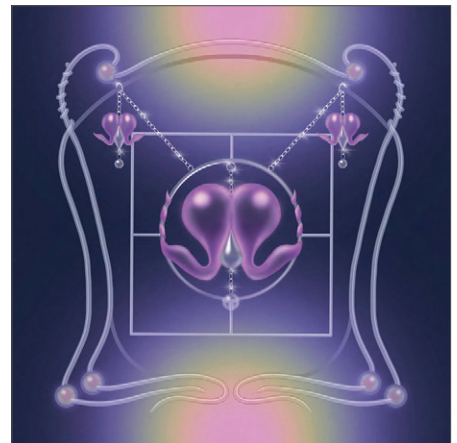
Kurt Elling brings a touch of wryness to Barron's offbeat ode to old age, "In The Slow Lane." Although its quirky simplicity invites a more penetrating lyrical irony, it still stands outside the album's otherwise evenhanded craftsmanship. Johnathan Blake's smart drum work adds a peppery discretion.

—John McDonough

Songbook: Beyond this Place; Until Then; Cook's Bay; Thoughts and Dreams; Illusions; Minor Blues Redux; In the Slow Lane; Sunshower; Calypso; Lullaby; Sonja Braga; Marie Laveau; A Song for Abdullah. (70:27)

Personnel: Kenny Barron, piano; Kiyoshi Kitagawa, bass; Johnathan Blake, drums; Cécile McLorin Salvant (4, 8, 13); Kurt Elling (7); Ann Hampton Callaway (3); Catherine Russell (6); Jean Baylor (1, 2); Tyreek McDole (9, 12); Ekepe Nkwelle (5, 11); Kavita Shah (10), vocals.

Ordering info: artwork.ochre.store



Kalia Vandever *Another View*

NORTHERN SPY

★★★★

This album captivates because of its entrancing, cyclical rhythms and longing melodicism. Kalia Vandever possesses a warm, burgundy tone on trombone with which to animate rueful, languid melodies and measured improvisations. Mary Halvorson lends her customary taffy-like elastic guitar passages to the proceedings. But when she eases back on the idiosyncratic sensibilities and simply adds rhythmic accompaniment alongside Kayvon Gordon's indie-rock style drumming and Kanoa Mendenhall's sinewy bass lines, the music takes on a Spanish-Moor sensibility.

That's most evident in "Staring At The Cracked Window," the album's opening cut. Halvorson's wriggly guitar passages initiate the song before Vandever's unadorned-sounding trombone unleashes a plaintive melodic improvisation that takes on some of the phrasing characteristics of Henry Threadgill's alto saxophone playing from his Very Very Circus period. The rhythm section drives the rhythm in a gear that's between forward momentum and a sedated bounce. It sets the tone for the rest of the album.

Vandever underpins the album with a narrative flow touching on idealization that can lead to defeating depression. For sure, there's a heaviness that comes across inside the compositions, particularly the haunting "Cycle In Mourning," which features poignant arco bass improvisations from Mendenhall, which gives way to a soul-stirring unison melody with Vandever. Then there's the dreamy "What You Already Knew," on which the woozy, spirally rhythm and brooding melodicism hint at mid-'90s trip-hop at its finest.

Even though *Another View* doesn't beg for numerous repeated listenings, when they do occur, the rewards seduce with flickering melancholy.

—John Murph

Another View: Staring At the Cracked Window; Withholding; Cycle In Mourning; Unearth What You Already Knew; In My Dream House. (36:28)

Personnel: Kalia Vandever, trombone; Kayvon Gordon, drums; Mary Halvorson, guitar; Kanoa Mendenhall, bass.

Ordering info: northernspypres.com

Fieldwork *Thereupon*

PI

★★★★

Steve Lehman, Tyshawn Sorey and Vijay Iyer's trio Fieldwork revels in the cacophonous sound of things on the verge of falling apart. Since the release of their 2005 album *Simulated Progress*, the group has honed an intricate and explosively energetic interplay, producing improvisations that are intensely complex while also feeling loud, brash and loose. Their latest record, *Thereupon* — the first they have released in 17 years — is no different, delivering nine tracks of tension, tangents and virtuosity.

Opening track "Propaganda" sets the tone via Sorey's driving, fractal breakbeats that provide an anchoring sense of groove beneath Lehman's bebop-influenced saxophone lines and Iyer's punctuating chord stabs. The energy is undulating and irrepressible, creating a spirited mood that reverberates through the choppy piano and saxophone interplay on "Embracing Difference," the off-kilter melody and textural free-jazz drumming of "Fire City" and the squealing, yearning sax lines of "Domain."

Downtempo numbers like "Astral" and "The Night Before" equally showcase an alternate, softer side to the group. Yet, it's ultimately in the explosions of the record's livelier compo-



sitions that the group truly shines. On the title track, the trio develop from a clattering, down-tempo rhythm between drums and piano to a crescendo of dramatic and sweepingly cinematic proportions, veering between echoing bass notes on the piano, piercing saxophone melody and a rolling storm of tom hits. It's a tempestuous sound and one that promises to invigorate if you can hang on to its twists and turns for long enough.

—Ammar Kalia

Thereupon: Propaganda; Embracing Difference; Evening Rite; Fire City; Domain; Fantôme; Astral; Thereupon; The Night Before. (40:29)

Personnel: Vijay Iyer, piano; Steve Lehman, alto saxophone; Tyshawn Sorey, drums.

Ordering info: fieldworktheband.bandcamp.com

The Hot Box >

Critics	James Hale	John McDonough	Ammar Kalia	John Murph
Charles Lloyd <i>Figure In Blue</i>	★★★½	★★★	★★★★½	★★★★
Kenny Barron <i>Songbook</i>	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★½	N/A
Fieldwork <i>Thereupon</i>	★★★★½	★★★	★★★★	★★★
Kalia Vandever <i>Another View</i>	★★★★	★★★★½	★★★	★★★

Critics' Comments

Charles Lloyd, *Figure In Blue*

And the Bob & Ray Slow Talkers of America Award goes this year to Lloyd, whose placid reveries make us want to finish his sentences. Long, breathy notes linger like clouds of down, ruffled by soft arpeggiated flourishes. Much beauty starved of energy.
—John McDonough

At 87, Lloyd's saxophone tone has taken on a softer edge, gently undulating from the breathy textures of tracks like "Abide With Me" to the yearning lines of "Desolation Sound" on this new collection of downtempo tunes. Jason Moran on piano and Marvin Sewell on guitar provide perfectly subtle accompaniment, peaking on the meditative ambience of Zakir Hussain tribute "Hymn To The Mother, For Zakir."
—Ammar Kalia

The balladic, blues sensibilities throughout and the enormous synergy among the trio makes this yet another unimpeachable marvel from Lloyd.
—John Murph

Kenny Barron, *Songbook*

Could any singer imagine a deeper, more sympatico accompanist than Barron? This well-curated collection of voices delivers a broad range of approaches and tones.
—James Hale

An all-star collection of vocalists give new life to Barron's catalogue on this charming career retrospective. Cécile McLorin Salvant is a standout, providing typically melismatic performances on "Thoughts And Dreams" and "Sunshower," while her "Song For Abdullah" plays as a beautifully soulful homage.
—Ammar Kalia

[John Murph has recused himself from reviewing this album due to a conflict of interest.]

Fieldwork, *Thereupon*

Put three of the smartest musicians together and you might anticipate theory. Instead, you get as many head-snapping rhythms as thought-provoking emotional turns.
—James Hale

Lehman scurries in jagged, moth-like flight patterns, dodging the heavy shrapnel of Sorey's rim fire. Iyer is more anchored in a program that scampers from nervous, jittery mischief to brooding, meditative languor. A brittle experimental rigor served chilled.
—John McDonough

The audacious invigoration of the restive improvisations far outweighs the memorability of the compositions.
—John Murph

Kalia Vandever, *Another View*

Gorgeous, spectral work — with bite — including some of Mary Halvorson's most impressive accompaniment. More, please!
—James Hale

A complex menu of emotions find ambivalent expression here. But Vandever's virtuosity speaks with such a clarity of technique and natural phrasing, one is induced into the music's sometimes oblique logic. Halvorson is a worthy companion.
—John McDonough

Vandever builds an enveloping, often unsettling soundscape across the five tracks of this new quartet record. Guitarist Mary Halvorson's lines are full of tension and bassist Kanoa Mendenhall's phrasing is full of dread, creating a listening experience that can sometimes verge on becoming too atmospheric to fully engage with.
—Ammar Kalia

ACT

in the spirit
of jazz

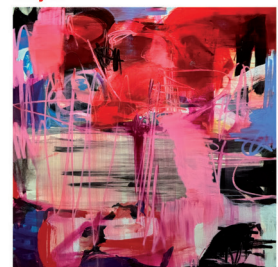
Theo Croker
Sullivan Fortner
PLAY



ACT

A free, boundary-breaking improvisation

Emma Rawicz
Inkyra



ACT

A powerful statement from jazz's
new generation

Bill Laurance
Lumen



ACT

A luminous solo piano introspective

Distributed in the US by:

MVDaudio

A DIVISION OF MVD ENTERTAINMENT GROUP

www.actmusic.com



Shawn Purcell *Oblivity*

ORIGIN

★★★★

Guitarist and composer Shawn Purcell has found an unusual avenue of ascent for jazz professionals. He honed his craft playing in military bands for 15 years, most notably serving as guitarist in the Air Force's premier ensemble, The Airmen of Note, which toured internationally. Amongst civilians, he's played or recorded with Chris Potter, Nicholas Payton, Terrell Stafford, Chip McNeill and many others. *Oblivity* is his third recording as a leader,

though he has more than two dozen appearances as a sideman.

The music is crisp, amiable and engrossing. It's easy to assign some of the detailed precision to Purcell's military background, but it's far more rewarding to see each composition confidently move out of the shadow of his influences, especially giants of his instrument like Pat Martino, Grant Green and, of course, Wes Montgomery.

The recording opens with the title track, a driving, urgently paced tune highlighted by solos from Purcell, saxophonist Walt Weiskopf, pianist Chris Ziemba and drummer Steve Fidyk. The same four soloists elevate another uptempo burner, "Move The Needle." Purcell's wife, Darden Purcell, adds vocals to the elegant and serene "Quiet The Chaos," which also features trombonist Ben Patterson. The vocalists and the saxophonist feature on the gentle "Meu Amor."

Purcell is 54 years old, and this album is reminiscent of the '80s discs he might have grown up with. CDs enabled longer albums, and Purcell's 10 originals span a wide range of music, like those albums of his youth.

—Martin Johnson

Oblivity: Oblivity; Quiet the Chaos; Verdigris; Primaries and Spares; Gentle Giant; Lazy Day Reverie; Meu Amor; Sunday Best; Move the Needle; Flow. (70:24)

Personnel: Shawn Purcell, guitar; Walt Weiskopf, tenor saxophone; Chris Ziemba, piano, keyboards; Jeff Reed, bass; Steve Fidyk, drums, percussion; Darden Purcell, voice (2, 3, 6, 7); Ben Patterson, trombone (2, 6).

Ordering info: originarts.com

Ledisi *For Dinah*

CANDID

★★★★½

Ledisi follows up *Ledisi Sings Nina*, her Grammy-nominated tribute to Nina Simone, with *For Dinah*, a nod to Dinah Washington, another musician that influenced her career path. Like Washington, Ledisi refuses to be boxed into a single genre, as she demonstrates here.

With an impressive cast of musicians, she revisits some of Washington's signature tunes and makes them her own. She opens with "What A Difference A Day Made," the hit that introduced Washington to a wider audience. Ledisi sings it simply, accompanied by a low-key trio — Christian McBride on bass, Michael King on piano and McClenty Hunter on drums — adding an occasional sustained note to her phrasing.

"You've Got What It Takes," Washington's hit duet with Brook Benton, is given a playful reading with the help of Gregory Porter. They chuckle as they exchange lines, with Ledisi adding a wordless melisma to end the arrangement.

The seldom-heard words to Duke Ellington's "Caravan" are belted out with the backing of a 17-piece band. The rhythm shifts between a Latin/Arabic beat and a swinging, jazz club groove. Ledisi finishes with an impressive sustained note.

"You Go To My Head" is an intimate duet



with guitarist Paul Jackson Jr. He strums muted chords to complement the tender vocal. The album closer, "This Bitter Earth," has a classical edge, a string quartet accenting Ledisi's vocal as she celebrates love's ability to provide an antidote to bitterness.

—j. poet

For Dinah: What A Difference A Day Made; If I Never Get To Heaven; Caravan; Let's Do It; You Don't Know What Love Is; You've Got What It Takes; You Go To My Head; This Bitter Earth. (33:19)

Personnel: Ledisi, Gregory Porter, vocals; Christian McBride, bass (5); Paul Jackson Jr., electric guitar; Michael King, keyboard; McClenty Hunter, drums; Xavier Davis, piano; Rodney Jones, guitar; Frank Greene, Freddie Hendrix, Alex Norris, Nabate Isles, trumpet; Todd Bashore, Ron Blake, Carl Maraghi, Dan Pratt, Steve Wilson, saxophones; Doug Purviance, bass trombone; James Burton III, Michael Dease, Steve Davis, trombone; Sarah Hewitt-Roth, cello; Antoine Silverman, Yuko Naito-Gotay, Lisa Matricardi, violin, viola.

Ordering info: candidrecords.shop.musictoday.com



Baltimore Jazz Collective *Baltimore Jazz Collective*

STRICKER STREET

★★★★½

The genesis of the Baltimore Jazz Collective dates to 2019 with the opening of Todd Barkan's Keystone Korner Baltimore. Barkan realized the venue needed stronger roots in the community, so he enlisted the help of another transplanted local, Grammy-winning trumpeter Sean Jones, who put together a stellar list of native and longtime resident musicians to perform at the club and provide original compositions.

The success of BJC is reflected in their self-titled debut record, which serves both as musical showcase and civic homage, weaving threads of Baltimore's history, character and contemporary identity into a rich jazz tapestry. The collective features bass clarinetist Todd Marcus, pianist Alex Brown, bassist Kris Funn, drummer Quincy Phillips and singer/tap-dancer/interdisciplinary artist Brinae Ali and Jones.

Phillips' arrangement of Cyrus Chestnut's "Minor Swing" sets the tone with its bluesy gospel influence. Brown's three-part "Red-Lined" is the spiritual centerpiece, exploring the fraught history of redlining policy and canceled transit in Baltimore with dramatic shifts in urgency, tension and release. Other homages include Marcus' "Link To Lateef," which offers a lyrical nod to jazz forebears, and "Gary Bartz Medley," which honors local lineage. "The Thong Song" is unexpected, but the tune is reimagined through the lens of a jazz arrangement and the lyrics redone to shed light on Baltimore's history of sex trafficking.

Baltimore Jazz Collective is an audacious debut from some of the city's top musicians. Its strengths lie not merely in virtuosic playing, but in its coherent vision: to pay tribute to place, memory and community.

—Veronica Johnson

Baltimore Jazz Collective: Minor Swing; Red Lined Intro; Red Lined; Red Lined Outro; Watermelon; Link to Lateef; Memories of You; Sundays at Eubie's; For Baby; The Thong Song; Fleeting Stillness; Gary Bartz Melody; Intercession; Dance My Pain Away. (79:00)

Personnel: Sean Jones, trumpet; Todd Marcus, bass clarinet; Alex Brown, piano; Kris Funn, bass; Quincy Phillips, drums; Brinae Ali, vocals.

Ordering info: baltimorejazzcollective.bandcamp.com



Theo Bleckmann *Love And Anger*

SUNNYSIDE

★★★★½

Tineke Postma feat. Theo Bleckmann *VOYA*

CLAP YOUR HANDS

★★★★

Vocalist/arranger Theo Bleckmann is burning the candles at both ends in the best way. In the span of a season, he's released his latest self-led album, *Love And Anger*, and also featured on the newly released album by Dutch saxophonist Tineke Postma, titled *VOYA*. Both albums are quite different, yet each clearly reflect his ongoing artistic practice that toggles to and fro between jazz and experimental new music.

Produced by Ulysses Owens Jr., *Love And Anger* finds Bleckmann digging deep for material, reimagining tunes by a seemingly disparate grouping of artists including Labi Siffre, Kate Bush, Lennon & McCartney, Sylvester and Frank Ocean, among others. Opening with two Kate Bush compositions — the lovely, spacey yet percussive title cut and the syncopated lullaby “Bertie” — the album spins like a top. “Solo” dances pretty closely to the original arrangement down to the soft, mournful Hammond

organ in the background, save Bleckmann's slightly crystalline delivery.

The Beatles songbook has been thoroughly pillaged by jazz artists for generations, so Bleckmann's interpretation of “You've Got To Hide Your Love Away” (from their 1965 album *Help!*) is possibly the least surprising inclusion on this album. That's not to say that Theo doesn't test the elasticity of the song's borders out a bit, though, exploring rhythm and pace in exciting ways.

“Mighty Real” is a fairly radical rearrangement, taking Bay Area icon Sylvester's Hi-NRG disco track and creating a Fender Rhodes-laced track that wouldn't be out of place on a classic Michael Franks album. It's one of those reimaginings that help us reconsider the words we (or at least, I) have been lip-syncing on the dance-floor for decades. Theo showcases his unique way with overdubbing on a few tracks, but it's most prominent on “Precious Lord Choir,” which takes Thomas Dorsey's early modern gospel classic and spins it into a Catholic dirge. Throughout, Mike King works his chameleonic magic on keys, while drummer Ulysses Owens Jr. and bassist Matt Penman keep a warm heartbeat.

Meanwhile, on *VOYA*, Bleckmann is primarily used as a non-verbal ensemble member, sometimes even tonally doubling Postma's lines, as on “Unity And Four Reasons Of Hope.”

The album as a whole is full of flavor and ideas, if not straightahead grooves. “Lilies” is a deconstructed bop on which David Dorůžka's guitar work (a delight throughout) is a lingering fragrance on a pillow. Track like “Suchness” and “Mirror Oh Mirror” each use Bleckmann's overdubbing techniques to great effect to create an absolutely cinematic, romantic atmosphere. “Rhetor's Creek,” conversely, is a more energetic romp, equal parts angular Krautrock and soulful free-jazz. The entire album is a testament to Postma's mood-creating mastery, but “For Theo” is nothing short of gravity-defying.

Full of originals, the sole cover on *VOYA* is Wayne Shorter's “Someplace Called ‘Where.’” The tune, featuring Postma's lovely, nearly weightless yet earthy playing style, is a fitting closer to a lucid dream of an album.

—Ayana Contreras

Love And Anger: Love and Anger; Bertie; Solo; You've Got to Hide Your Love Away; The Crossing; Stars; I Feel Real; Mighty Real; Dido's Lament; Teardrop; Precious Lord Choir; Crying, Laughing, Loving, Lying; Precious Lord. (50:00)

Personnel: Theo Bleckmann, vocals; Mike King, piano, organ; Ulysses Owens Jr., drums; Matt Penman, bass; Timo Vollbrecht, saxophone, flute (1, 4, 5, 12); Ben Monder (1, 5, 12), guitar.

Ordering info: sunnysiderecords.com

VOYA: Unity and Four Reasons of Hope; Lilies; Rhetor's Creek; Suchness; Mirror Oh Mirror; Hymn for Iyá Nlá; TP4; For Theo; Walls Turn Sideways Are Bridges; Someplace Called “Where.” (50:25)

Personnel: Tineke Postma, saxophone; Theo Bleckmann, vocals; David Dorůžka, guitar; Robert Landfermann, bass; Tristan Renfrow, drums.

Ordering info: tinekepostma.com

AVAILABLE AT MVDSHOP.COM
+ EVERYWHERE MUSIC IS SOLD



ON CD & VINYL NOV. 7

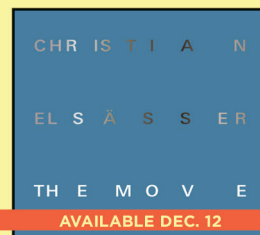
Honoring Larry Coryell

BOB HOLZ

Honoring Larry Coryell

Bob Holz presents this 10th anniversary, live concert of his band, A Vision Forward with special guest guitarist Larry Coryell. From two concerts in November 2015.

MVD AUDIO



AVAILABLE DEC. 12

CHRISTIAN ELSÄSSER QUINTETT

The Move

A composer, arranger and conductor for big bands and orchestras. Now he reveals a particularly intimate, chamber-like side on his new quintet album.

EDITION COLLAGE



AVAILABLE NOV. 7

JAMES NEWTON QUARTET

Live In Willisau Switzerland 1983

James Newton on flute, Geri Allen on piano, Anthony Cox on bass and Andrew Cyrille on drums. An amazing live date from 1983!

RHYTHMNFLOW RECORDS

MVDaudio

A DIVISION OF MVD ENTERTAINMENT GROUP



SUBSCRIBE
877-904-JAZZ



Bands Big at Any Number

If there is one thing that ties together these four archival releases, however disparate they may be via time or sonic template, it's the means by which each of these titles emphasizes the elasticity of the big band idiom regardless of the group's size or volume.

It was 60 years ago this past August when **Horace Silver** did a pair of memorable dates at The Penthouse in Seattle, Washington. They found the piano maestro cooking with a white-hot quintet (trumpeter Woody Shaw, tenor giant Joe Henderson, bassist Teddy Smith and drummer Roger Humphries) lighting up the Jet City nightclub with personality and precision. ***Silver In Seattle: Live At The Penthouse*** (Blue Note; ★★★★★ 53:44), originally recorded for Seattle's KING-FM by radio host and engineer Jim Wilke, is pristine in its sound and clarity as the group runs through such Horace hymns as "Song For My Father," "The Cape Verdean Blues," "Sayonara Blues" and "No Smokin'," plus a 13-minute version of Henderson's "The Kicker" that leads the set. "Listening to this music, well, it's good for the brain," proclaims Humphries — the sole survivor of these sessions — in the liner notes to this all-too-brief set. "All of the tunes from the Penthouse stood out to me. They brought back memories. It really makes me feel like I want to do that again, right now." Maybe a tribute concert is in order.

Ordering info: bluenote.com

The biggest band featured in this column comes via ***Cosmos Nucleus*** (Time Traveler; ★★★★★½ 46:49), the long-lost 1976 LP from Panamanian-American reed great **Carlos Garnett**, whose 26-member lineup brought the sound of swing to street level on this gritty, groovy recording cut at Dimensional Sound in New York. Released on Zev Feldman's newly minted Time Traveler Recordings, it's part of the new label's Muse Master Edition Series, curating from the depths of Joe Fields' '70s imprint Muse Records. "Mark my words," promises Garnett in Alan Goodman's essay on the back cover, "A lot of these guys are going to be heard." And he was right. The lineup includes a young Cecil McBee Jr. on electric bass, future free-jazz superstar Roy Campbell Jr. on trumpet and 20-year-old Kenny Kirkland killing it on the electric piano a good five years before connecting with the Marsalis. This unearthed gem deserves nothing less than the "Rolls Royce" vinyl experience it gets here.

Ordering info: acousticsounds.com

By 1982, **Art Blakey** was riding the crest of a neo-traditionalist revival that saw his long-time mothership **The Jazz Messengers** working with a whole new cast of young lions that briefly included Wynton and Branford Marsalis. What makes ***Strasbourg 82*** (Gearbox;



Golden Silver: Horace Silver in 1965.

★★★★ 88:56) such an exciting discovery is that it captures a freshly reconfigured Messengers emerging from the shadow of the famous brothers. The front line for the new lineup proved to be the next generation of brass: teenage trumpeter Terence Blanchard and alto sax maverick Donald Harrison. They're joined by fellow youngster Johnny O'Neal on piano for one of his first recorded appearances with the group and two established Messengers in bassist Charles Farnbrough and tenor saxophonist Billy Pierce. This April Fools Day performance in France is a revelation in the crispness of its fidelity and the dynamics of the group's performance, with a 62-year-old Blakey defying his age by rumbling through such Messengers classics as "Along Came Betty" and "Moanin'" as well as an interesting run through Miles Davis' "Eighty-One" that really allows the new blood to shine.

Ordering info: gearboxrecords.com

The smallest group featured here belongs to Chicago tenor giant **Von Freeman**, who was 70 when he recorded ***Never Let Me Go*** (SteepleChase; ★★★★★ 49:54), a 1992 LP of beautifully crafted button-down bebop for the Danish SteepleChase imprint. Working in tandem with pianist Jodie Christian, Java-born bassist Eddie de Haas and Wilbur Campbell on drums, this quartet cuts through the hip-hop and metal experimentalism that defined jazz in the early '90s to bring the music back to the elegance of an earlier era. Graceful renditions of post-World War II fare like Gene de Paul's "I'll Remember April," Duke Ellington's "Solitude" and a nearly 10-minute version of the Edward Redding number "The End Of A Love Affair," performed by everyone from Billie Holiday to Chaka Khan. ***Never Let Me Go*** is a master class in the art of conversation by one of Chicago's true tenor icons.

DB

Ordering info: steeplechase.dk



Luigi Grasso and NDR Big Band *La Dimora dell'Altrove*

LP

★★★★½

Multi-reedist and composer Luigi Grasso brings the rich sonic color and density of the NDR Big Band to *La Dimora dell'Altrove* (translated: The Home From Elsewhere). NDR is the big band of German public broadcaster Westdeutscher Rundfunk (WDR). Joining the group in 2019, Grasso's new recording was both commissioned and performed by NDR.

Grasso leans into his budding relationship with classical music on *La Dimora dell'Altrove*. Seven pieces are divided into two suites, each built on its own theme-and-variation with an epilogue closer. The album's themes of "Heimweh" and "Fernweh" — homesickness and wanderlust — can leave different impacts, depending on a person's mindset at the time. Still, the two suites don't feel at odds with one another.

Grasso's soprano saxophone solo breaks up the band's snug harmonies with the theme presenting a similar crescendo at the end. "Primo's" three variations don't stray far; "Variazione III Primo Tema" embraces the most frenetic changes, perhaps signifying the shift from a homebound heart to a traveler's itch. The initial jitteriness of "Variazione I Secondo Tema" feels more aligned with "Variazione III" but the former quickly pulls back to a serene, minimalist arrangement. "Epilogo" provides a tidy resolution, bringing the peace and stability of home together with the whirlwind thrill of exploration in one perfect coexistence.

— Kira Grunenber

La Dimora dell'Altrove: Primo Tema; Variazione I Primo Tema; Secondo Tema; Variazione II Primo Tema; Variazione III Primo Tema; Variazione I Secondo Tema; Epilogo. (37:39)

Personnel: Luigi Grasso, soprano saxophone (1), baritone saxophone (3), bass clarinet (4), alto saxophone (6, 7); Geir Lysne, conductor; Thorsten Benkenstein, Ingolf Burkhardt, Claus Stötter, Percy Pursglove (2), trumpet; Fiets Felsch, flute (3); Peter Bolte, Julius Gawlik (4), clarinet; Frank Delle, tenor saxophone (5); Tini Thompson, saxophones; Dan Gottshall, Klaus Heidenreich (3), Stefan Lottermann, Ingo Lahme, trombone; Sandra Hempel, guitar (5); Ingmar Heller, bass; Florian Weber, piano (6); Fender Rhodes; Jochen Rückert, drums (5); Marcio Doctor, percussion (4).

Ordering info: lp345-records.com

Michael Ragonese *Chasing Calm*

INDEPENDENT RELEASE

★★★★

Staying calm in the center of the storm was a key Stoic ideal, but the jazz world has tended to put higher value on those who prefer to surf the turbulence and take the knocks. For his third album, acclaimed pianist Michael Ragonese has created an album that avoids New Age squish but manages to celebrate the search for peace and order in a world that has, let's face it, gone a bit feral. *Chasing Calm* also seems to have confidently assimilated his different influences, which include classical forms and Italian music as well as pre- and post-bop jazz.

The originals are striking enough, especially the title piece, which confirms Ragonese's insistence that the pursuit of peace is still a pursuit and hardly passive or weak-brained, but it's the group's reworking of that most tired of tired jazz warhorses, "Alone Together," that is most startling. It's a virtual reinvention of a tune that really should have put out to grass years ago. The whole band contributes to the reboot, and throughout the set they manage to sound engaged and alert without sounding effortful or straining to make a point. We don't often preface "calm" with "chasing" — seems an oxymoron — but we often lazily put "deceptive" instead. This is a very deceptive album. Take time with it. It'll pay you back several times over.

—Brian Morton

Chasing Calm: Shadows; Prelude; Chasing Calm; Nocturne For A Memory; Alone Together; Flow; Occupying Space; Portrait For A Mirror. (64:40)

Personnel: Michael Ragonese, piano; Walter Smith III, saxophones; Luca Alemanno, bass; JongKuk Kim, drums.

Ordering info: michaelragonese.com



Eddie Daniels *To Milton With Love*

RESONANCE

★★★★

To Milton With Love is clarinetist Eddie Daniels' third Resonance tribute to Brazilian jazz legends (the previous two being centered on Ivan Lins and Egberto Gismonti). Milton is none other than Milton Nascimento. It's an all-Milton program apart from the closing track, the impromptu duo between pianist/composer Josh Nelson and Daniels, "For Milton."

The album is an all-instrumental affair, featuring new arrangements of Nascimento's 1969 U.S. breakout album *Courage* courtesy of Nelson and orchestral arranger Kuno Schmid, whose work with the Lyris String Quartet gives *To Milton With Love* a sheen that aligns with a kind of classical vibe that's always seemed inherent to Nascimento's music. A jazz musician, Daniels shows that his conversations are not limited to a strictly jazz rep, his wide-ranging choice of horns seemingly tailored to the moods of each song.

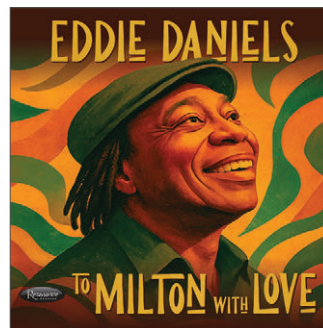
"Travessia," for example, showcases Daniels in a soulful mood, playing tenor amidst a tender string arrangement and Nelson's spritely piano, everything buttressed by an easygoing backbeat. Another string arrangement augments "Vera Cruz," Daniels this time playing a mournful clarinet to echo the song's ode to lost love even as the music ultimately retains a lively bounce.

—John Ephland

To Milton With Love: Travessia; Vera Cruz; Tres Pontas; Outubro; Courage; Rio Vermelho; Gira Girou; Morro Velho; Catavento; Cancao Do Sal; For Milton. (54:00)

Personnel: Eddie Daniels, clarinet, soprano saxophone, flute, tenor saxophone; Josh Nelson, piano; Anthony Wilson, guitar; Kevin Axt, bass; Ray Brinker, drums; Lyris String Quartet.

Ordering info: resonancerecords.org



Revolutionary Snake Ensemble *Serpentine*

CUNEIFORM

★★½

Boston desires New Orleans here, as this long-serving combo apes the street-waddling sound of the Crescent City: four horns forward, drums snapping hungrily and mean bass with head down deep. RSN might prompt visions of Bonerama or the Shuffle Demons, but less extroverted, and with fewer sliding horns. This is inventive party music, but with a tendency to repeatedly hold back, as each swift wobbler is alternated with a gliding slowdown.

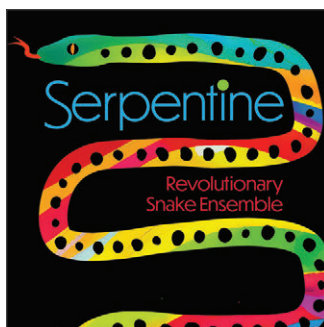
Much of the RSN's power resides in the brawny bass lines of Blake Newman, over which the horns solo liberally and under which the drums snap and crack. Unfortunately, this recording suffers from an oddly distant, muffled mix, as though it was captured at the desk and shorn of most of its venue-aura. On "Berrendo Road," the tuba hunkers it all down further, the swagger returning, and when Frank Zappa's "Son Of Mr. Green Genes" arrives, it's such an invigorating blast that it shows the surrounding tunes in a dimmer light. "Xonk" gets into a dancing stomp that does actually evoke the writhings of a snake, but the RSN never quite succeed in charming the crowd.

—Martin Longley

Serpentine: The Skunk Is D'funk'd; Buck; The Water Is Wide; Berrendo Road; Strange Cults; Planktude; Nezelezhnist; Son Of Mr. Green Genes; Present; Xonk; Never Grow Old. (50:00)

Personnel: Ken Field, alto saxophone, flute; Tom Hall, tenor saxophone; Dave Harris, trombone, tuba; Jerry Sabatini, trumpet; Blake Newman, bass; Phil Neighbors, drums.

Ordering info: cuneiformrecords.bandcamp.com



Kirk Knuffke Trio *Window*

ROYAL POTATO FAMILY

★★★★½

On this trio record, cornetist Kirk Knuffke explores and engages the possibilities of minimalism. Also featuring bassist Stomu Takeishi and drummer Bill Goodwin, *Window* leaves us with much even if the sounds never explode. Their sound partnership is subtle, even as it is a revelation. This is at least one way to explain the sonic force, which is not forceful, and the flare, which is a small flicker and sometimes, a flame. It calls us back to attention. We look out this window and make ourselves aware of a world that was always there.

Window also allows us to make ourselves aware of the ways our human forms are both divine and, potentially, devastatingly so. But something beautiful endures in the wake of our experience with terror. Midway through the album, where the trio explores this tension via the poets William Blake and Carl Sandburg — the latter put to sound with Knuffke's vocals — the music picks up, reaches its peak. While it never becomes dynamite, it is dynamic. Its subject matter can disrupt previous expectations and assumptions by pointing you back to something you overlooked: Human possibility is nothing without our noticing, without our beholding, without our experiencing the world in its fullness. *Window* is a soundtrack for realizing.

—Joshua Myers

Window: Choose; Gong Improv 1; For You Needing; Mr. Bill; Poem; Runs Red; Ballad; Window; Gong Improv 2; Heavy Times; Gong Improv 3; Carey; A Little More So. (46:37)

Personnel: Kirk Knuffke, cornet, vocals; Stomu Takeishi, bass; Bill Goodwin, drums, percussion.

Ordering info: royalpotatofamily.com



Putting the Accent on the 2

Four of these five duo albums feature piano and trumpet; the fifth, piano and voice. Piano and trumpet is not a common jazz format, though it enjoys a prestigious lineage back to the 1928 Louis Armstrong/Earl Hines matchup "Weatherbird." The best trumpet-and-piano duos here, however, range far from tradition.

One is *Angel Falls* (Intakt; ★★★½ 59:17) by Swiss pianist **Sylvie Courvoisier** and trumpeter **Wadada Leo Smith**. The album features eight succinct, vitally engaging pieces that, per the title, often recall the architectural natural beauty Smith explored on his album *America's Natural Parks*. Both players draw from large vocabularies, the trumpeter coursing through clarion calls, stutters, multiphonics, squirts, smudges, chortles and harmon-muted sighs and Courvoisier preparing the keyboard, sometimes sounding like a marimba or tinkling glass, and playing inside and outside the piano box. Silences and space define the music as much as the sounds it encloses. "Olo'Upnea And Lightning" manages both grandeur and delicacy. Minor and blue, "A Line Through Time" hangs in space, and "Vireo Belii" invokes the chattering bird of its namesake.

Ordering info: sylviecourvoisier.bandcamp.com

The other is *Ki* (Libra; ★★★★★ 62:39) by pianist **Satoko Fujii** and trumpeter **Natsuki Tamura**. Listening to this album is like the sonic equivalent of watching butoh dancing: inexorably slow and ceremonial, proceeding by nuanced accretion. As such, it's probably not to everyone's liking, but there's an exquisite payoff if you give in to its sparse, assertive clarity. "Kusunoki" is a standout, as Fujii creates haunting tension with a recurring tritone figure that shimmers into silence again and again, interrupted by a lively piano-trumpet exchange. "Arakashi" evinces a more easily graspable pulse. "Hinoki" evokes both tenderness and austerity. The variety of moods, from triumphant to elegiac, keeps the listener engaged and surprised.

Ordering info: satokofujii.bandcamp.com

Play (ACT; ★★★½ 43:33), by trumpeter **Theo Croker** and pianist **Sullivan Fortner**, mines a music-as-medicine vein, offering short takes of meditation, prayer and hope in this difficult time. During this quiet journey, the sun rises and sets, there is laughter as well as sadness and anxiety, a little dancing, and one tune, "Beneath The Noise," that might be read as a programmatic tale about tuning out the din of social media. Neither player is out to prove anything; while Fortner explodes on "Then We Danced," overall, he is less athletic than usual, appropriately so. Croker's deliberately blurry, whispering middle register is enchanting.

Ordering info: actmusic.com



Sylvie Courvoisier and Wadada Leo Smith explore together on *Angel Falls*.

Shorter Songs (Steeplechase ★★½ 57:22) by trumpeter **Jason Palmer** and pianist **Kevin Harris** lands closer stylistically to swinging jazz precursors, but it lacks vitality and urgency. That may stem from its somewhat academic origin as an exploration of contrafacts written by Palmer over the changes to Wayne Shorter tunes. The recording quality doesn't help; Harris' piano sounds like someone threw a blanket over it. That said, Palmer plays with impeccable flow and a beautiful, full tone, and Harris' stunning, two-handed independence allows him to sustain engaging contrary lines (as well as walking bass). Their most successful venture is a jaunty, 5/4 take on "Infant Eyes" called "It's The Way They Look At You." But something is missing here: The parts don't add up to something greater than the whole.

Ordering info: steeplechase.dk.

The outlier on this list is a stunning duet sequence by pianist **Matt Mitchell** and vocalist **Sara Serpa**, *End Of Something* (Obliquity; ★★★★★ 55:14) that also captures the disturbing mood of the moment, especially "News Cycle," which, like "Beneath The Noise," confronts the racket that surrounds us. But Mitchell and Serpa seems to metaphorically track its very trail, from headline to reaction to analysis to gossip to (albeit temporary) resolution. Brilliant. Serpa is nothing but clear intention here, singing in long, pure, steady tones, occasionally sighing or leaping. Mitchell's twinkling treble and her playful improv on Messiaen's "Les Bergers" exude ominous mystery. Some songs have lyrics, notably the gorgeous "Carry You Like A River," by Sonia Sanchez, and the ghostly requiem, "Dead Spirits," by feminist theorist Luce Irigaray, but the words themselves feel less important than their sounds (lyrics are not included with the CD), as they melt into the music. **DB**

Ordering info: saraserpamattmitchell.bandcamp.com



Joshua Abrams' Natural Information Society *Perseverance Flow*

EREMITE

★★★

It takes perseverance to digest the various signifiers embedded in the single 37-minute track that constitutes Chicago-based Natural Information Society's ninth album, which bandleader Joshua Abrams describes as analogous to "a live extended realization of a Jaylib lost instrumental as remixed by Kevin Shields... or vice versa. I also think it has sympathies to some of the more rhythmically intricate dance musics out of Chicago & Lisbon."

For this reviewer, insufficiently schooled in electronica and dance music semiotics, the analogy didn't open a portal into the opaque sonic stew, even after three uninterrupted, focused listens. A deep dive into NIS's musical production over the past 15 years unveiled the resourcefulness of this tonally unique quartet of virtuosos, as (paraphrasing Eremite's accurate assessment) they "regularly reimagine ideas" culled by Abrams — who authoritatively guides the flow on guimbri — from minimalism, modal jazz, traditional musics, party music, Chicago House and John Coltrane, both on their own and augmented by Evan Parker (Descension), by Ari Brown and Marshall Allen, and by William Parker and Hamid Drake.

Although trance music is not my thing, I'm quite sure that NIS addressed the rhythmic and sonic nuances with equivalent precision and soulfulness on the brief recording session that generated *Perseverance Flow*, before Abrams "pushed post production techniques ... deep into the heart of the music, distorting & reshaping instruments to ... mutate timbre & texture, color & time." The end product seems almost an act of self-sabotage. Surely, NIS connoisseurs will differ. —*Ted Panken*

Perseverance Flow: Perseverance Flow, Jump Rope edit; Perseverance Flow; Perseverance Flow, Rally Guts & Humors mix. (44:28)
Personnel: Joshua Abrams, bass, guimbri; Lisa Alvarado, harmonium; Mikel Patrick Avery, drums; Jason Stein, bass clarinet.

Ordering info: eremiterecords.bandcamp.com

George Coleman *George Coleman With Strings*

HIGHNOTE
★★★★½

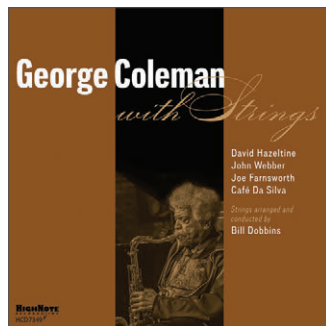
When he recorded these beloved standards two days before Christmas in 2022, revered tenor saxophonist George Coleman was 87 years old. The strings were added a few months later, though you wouldn't know it. The blend seems organic and embracing, like a big hug on the listener.

Coleman is backed by longtime sidemen bassist John Webber and drummer Joe Farnsworth, along with pianist David Hazeltine. Together they provide nuance to classics like "Stella By Starlight" and Thelonious Monk's "Ugly Beauty," both augmented by Bill Dobbins' active arrangements for 13-piece string section. Coleman's playing is heartfelt and brimming with lyricism.

The elder statesman plays with an uncanny depth of feeling on a lush rendition of "Dedicated To You." Coleman's cadenza near the end of this poignant opener conveys both warmth and surprise. Elsewhere, they interpret Johnny Mandel's "A Time For Love" and Henry Mancini's "Moment To Moment" with a Latin tinge, underscored by Café Da Silva's percussion while two extended renditions of "A Time For Love" and "Ugly Beauty" give Dobbins' strings a chance to stretch. A glorious encounter, in the tradition of *Charlie Parker With Strings* and Stan Getz's *Focus*. —Bill Milkowski

George Coleman With Strings: Dedicated to You; Moment to Moment; Stella By Starlight; A Time for Love; Ugly Beauty; A Time for Love (with full orchestra); Ugly Beauty (with full orchestra). (35:56)
Personnel: George Coleman, tenor saxophone; David Hazeltine, piano; John Webber, bass; Joe Farnsworth, drums; Café Da Silva, percussion; Bill Dobbins, orchestral arranger and conductor.

Ordering info: jazzdepot.com



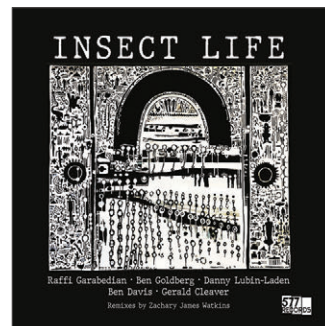
Insect Life *Insect Life* 577 ★★★★

The four core members of Insect Life — tenor saxophonist Raffi Garabedian, clarinetist Ben Goldberg, trombonist Danny Lubin-Laden, and cellist Ben Davis — have honed their collective sound and group identity through weekly sessions at Goldberg's Oakland, California home. Their debut album, recorded in May 2023, brings in two guests: Gerald Cleaver adds percussion throughout, while Zachary James Watkins remixes four tracks with loops, audio processing and synths. They might have been better off documenting what they sounded like as a quartet first, but it's their call to make. *Insect Life* is a collection of brief statements, almost vignettes: Only three of its tracks pass the four-minute mark, and two of those are Watkins' remixes. The ensemble sometimes makes its point in as little as 37 seconds before moving on. Some still stand out: "Scene Four," in which Garabedian solos while Lubin-Laden shadows him and Cleaver bashes out a parade-like beat, recalls Anthony Braxton's Ghost Trance Music, while "Scene Eight" is a looping, grinding remix that sounds like field recordings fed into a garbage disposal, in a good way. But ultimately, this album is likely best heard as a single (and singular) 44-minute experience, a fragmented journey through a unique world of sound. —Phil Freeman

Insect Life: Scene One; Scene Two; Scene Three; Scene Four; Scene Five (ZJW Remix); Scene Six; Scene Seven; Scene Eight (ZJW Remix); Scene Nine; Scene Ten; Scene Eleven; Scene Twelve; Scene Thirteen; Scene Fourteen (ZJW Remix); Scene Fifteen; Scene Sixteen (ZJW Remix). (44:01)

Personnel: Raffi Garabedian, tenor saxophone; Ben Goldberg, clarinet; Danny Lubin-Laden, trombone; Ben Davis, cello; Gerald Cleaver, drums; Zachary James Watkins, loops, processing, synthesis.

Ordering info: 577records.bandcamp.com



Dave Kikoski *Weekend At Smalls* CELLAR LIVE ★★★★

Pianist Dave Kikoski offers a solid selection of a loosely convened band over three nights at Smalls, the Greenwich Village club. Trumpeter Brecker, with whom Kikoski has toured since the late '80s, is prominently featured and fully committed to the date, leaning into his most overtly melodic impulses, intonation sometimes questionable but still squeezing out highs and tricky figures. Drummer Hart, as always, enhances with faultless attentions to dynamics and timbres. Bassist Martin anchors the four nimbly, taking cogent pizz solos.

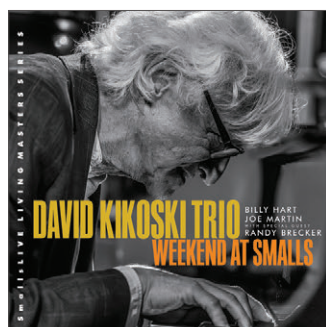
A cheerful, cleverly stop-timed contrafact of "Georgia Brown" starts the album well. Kikoski's nods to Thelonious Monk point to one source for the leader's direction and group's common ground. Another is the mid-'60s Hancock-Hubbard Blue Note vein, as suggested by the ballad "Presage," a narrative sustained by Brecker and Kikoski with subtle Hart-Martin support for the entirety of 10 minutes.

As a pianist, Kikoski seems capable of anything, and maybe too modest. This is a good record, though not perfect. "Straight" is treated tiredly, as just a common blues. "Moontide" is moodier, with Brecker's fieriest solo; "Cecilia" a serious, warm romp with an episode of Kikoski at flow, a fine Billy Hart solo and tight out-chorus, ending up! —Howard Mandel

Weekend At Smalls: Winney's Garden; Shadow; There's a Mingus A Monk Us; Presage; Straight No Chaser; Moontide; Cecilia. (64:50)

Personnel: David Kikoski, piano; Randy Brecker, trumpet; Joe Martin, bass; Billy Hart, drums.

Ordering info: davidkikoskitrio.bandcamp.com



Amir ElSaffar *New Quartet Live At Pierre Boulez Saal* MAQAM ★★★★★

Iraqi American trumpeter ElSaffar was invited in March 2022 to premiere works with a new quartet at the Pierre Boulez Saal in Berlin. His appearance was rescheduled twice, finally occurring in September 2023, at which point ElSaffar decided to compose entirely new music after arriving in Berlin, just days before the concert.

The quartet, featuring ElSaffar, saxophonist Ole Mathisen, drummer Tomas Fujiwara and pianist Tania Giannouli, recorded the new pieces a day after performing them in the Boulez Saal, but in the end it was the live recording of the concert that captured the mystery and emotive momentum compared to the alternate session takes, which on their own are compelling contrasts: a testament to the open-ended nature of ElSaffar's compositions.

The fusing of modern jazz with Maqam (a Middle Eastern musical language with a microtonal tuning system) allows for a recentring of expectations. Giannouli's piano preparations turn the instrument into tuned gongs. The pieces themselves are drone-like, hypnotic vessels that occasionally drift into a groove. This quartet is unified, creating evolving music for an ever-expanding world community. —Gary Fukushima

New Quartet Live at Pierre Boulez Saal: The Third Time; Autumn Comes; Orientation I-V; Le Marteau de la Maitresse; For the Victims of Genocide; Ghazalu; Dignity; 10:23 am; Orientations (Alternate Take); Le Marteau de la Maitresse (Alternate Take); For the Victims of Genocide (Alternate Take). (80:31)

Personnel: Amir ElSaffar, trumpet, voice (6); Ole Mathisen, tenor saxophone; Tania Giannouli, microtonal piano; Tomas Fujiwara, drums.

Ordering info: maqamstudio.com



The Doc Is in the House

Doc Pomus never had a hit under his own name, but the songs he wrote from the 1940s through the '60s became so popular, you know them even if you didn't know he created them.

Pomus and his key collaborator, Mort Shuman, wrote playlets of angst and desire, songs that have become lore: "Save The Last Dance For Me" by the Drifters; "A Teenager In Love" by Dion and the Belmonts; "This Magic Moment" by Jay and the Americans; and a gang of tunes sung by Elvis Presley, including "Viva Las Vegas," "Little Sister" and "Suspicion."

Jerome Solon Felder, alias Doc Pomus, was born in Brooklyn on June 7, 1925, and died of lung cancer on March 4, 1991. His work encompassed pop, rock and the blues, his original inspiration. Early on, Pomus led New York club bands that included the likes of fellow sax player King Curtis and guitarist Mickey Baker. He also performed alongside such legends as Lester Young and Horace Silver. But jazz would never be his métier.

Pomus cut a singular figure as he made his labored way to a club to perform or check out the latest sound. Crippled by polio as a child, he got around on crutches and used them to prop himself up when he belted the blues. Toward the end of the '40s, he began to shift from performing to a more private pursuit; songwriting became full-time for him in 1955, and it is what he is known for.

Pomus wrote for Big Joe Turner, who turned him onto the blues, and for Ray Charles, the great soul singer who made Pomus' remarkable "Lonely Avenue" as stark a classic as "Heartbreak Hotel," Presley's similarly themed breakout. The discipline Pomus ruled was the two- to three-minute single, an AM radio format requiring drama, melody and a captivating rhythm. Pomus and Shuman, like their West Coast counterparts Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller, excelled at that form.

Pomus gets his due and much more on *You Can't Hip A Square: The Doc Pomus Songwriting Demos* (Omnivore; ★★★★★ 370:00), a six-CD, 165-track box arranged in book format. Disc 5 is dedicated to Pomus and Shuman songs that Presley recorded; disc 6 largely features Pomus as vocalist rather than Shuman, who sings and plays piano on most of the rest of this handsome and painstakingly informative collection.

Pomus and his young protégé were quite a pair, Geoffrey Himes suggests in the title essay. He "was rapidly creating his own songwriting duo to rival Leiber and Stoller," Himes writes. "He realized his hard-blues tunes weren't going to fly on pop radio, where the real money was. He needed his



own Mike Stoller, who could integrate catchy melodies, sophisticated chord changes and Latin rhythms into the songs. Doc found him in a classmate of his kid cousin Neysha Ross, a teenage pianist named Mort Shuman."

Listening to these psychologically acute songs brings on a severe case of whataboutism. Why didn't "You Better Believe It," a cautionary tale with a great hook, become a hit? Why didn't "Foxy Little Mama," a Jerry Lee Lewis-styled rocker? Trawl another 100 tracks and you're sure to find more that should have (or could have) been hits. Immersing yourself in this embarrassment of riches sparks the playlist gene.

You Can't Hip A Square: The Doc Pomus Songwriting Demos celebrates the 100th anniversary of Pomus' birth, capturing him and Shuman in the act of creation as they talk a song into being, embellishing riffs, refining descriptions, freeing the emotions they're trying to express. Their collaboration was profound, their chemistry undeniable.

This exceptional box was a labor of love for Sharyn Felder, Pomus' daughter, name-checked on "I Ain't Sharin' Sharon," a track on the first CD. It began when Sharyn, who was organizing Pomus' archives, discovered a closetful of these demos. They present many styles and they're malleable, stylistically neutral enough to be turned into whatever genre the eventual artist prefers. That doesn't mean they're generic and lack personality or substance. It only means they're adaptable.

It's a privilege to hear these songs unfiltered, in their original form. What makes them fascinating is speculating what other ways they might have turned out. What makes them satisfying is their passion. That never dates.

DB

Ordering info: omnivorerecordings.com



Mike Clark Itai Doshin

WIDE HIVE

★★★★★

While Mike Clark, 78 at the time of this recent recording, gained his greatest fame for playing funk and fusion with Herbie Hancock's Headhunters, it has long been an open secret that the drummer loves to play straight-ahead modern jazz. *Itai Doshin* (a Buddhist phrase meaning a state of harmony that is achieved when individuals share a common purpose) features Clark at the head of an all-star quintet.

Mike Clark has had long associations with trumpeter Eddie Henderson, tenor saxophonist Craig Handy, keyboardist Patrice Rushen (mostly heard here on acoustic piano) and bassist Henry Franklin. There is a joyful spirit from the old friends heard throughout this set as the drummer happily drives his sidemen.

The program begins with a high-powered version of Thelonious Monk's "Epistrophy" that in its concise four-minutes includes solos from Handy, Henderson (sounding ageless at 84), and Rushen. A surprising version of "Cherokee" has the standard, usually played at a racehorse tempo, transformed into a medium-slow ballad. Continuing in that vein is a fusionish version of Bob Marley's "I Shot The Sheriff" with Rushen on the Fender Rhodes.

The gears shift completely with the leader taking a solo on "Savant Clark" before it becomes a free form improvisation with Henderson and the rhythm section. Next, the trumpeter is featured on a swinging medium-tempo blues, "Yakini's Dance." Henry Franklin's "Midori" displays a warm melody before the full quintet closes the enjoyable and occasionally surprising program with a second and equally cooking version of "Epistrophy."

—Scott Yanow

Itai Doshin: Epistrophy; Cherokee; M'ganga; Inside Zone; I Shot The Sheriff; Savant Clark; Yakini's Dance; Midori; Epistrophy II. (47:47)

Personnel: Mike Clark, drums; Eddie Henderson, trumpet; Craig Handy, tenor saxophone; Patrice Rushen, piano, Fender Rhodes; Henry Franklin, bass.

Ordering info: widehive.com

Melvin Gibbs *Amasia: Anamibia Sessions 2*

HAUSU MOUNTAIN

★★★★½

Bassist Melvin Gibbs has long been a creative music fulcrum whose sensibilities and abilities quietly connect countless artists and aesthetic choices. This new recording honors the decisions behind the electric music of Miles Davis, released to mark the 50th anniversary of his landmark live album *Agharta*. Yet the project's genesis — a prompt from video artist Arthur Jafa for a group of musicians to play along to *Bitches Brew* — was instigated in 2006, with material from three musicians who've since died: guitarist Pete Cosey, keyboardist Onaje Allen Gumbs and reedist Casey Benjamin. Gibbs returned to those sessions, treating them as building blocks within era-bridging post-production, as if Teo Macero had belatedly discovered the digital workstation.

The music roils over dark, electronic grooves and deep, smoldering bass, updating Davis' collage-oriented sound with searing improvisations from Cosey and Gumbs and new material from trumpeter Chris Williams and drummer Greg Fox. The music elides any specific era, forging a potent amalgam of jazz, funk and rock that wordlessly advances Black American music methodologies while rumbling floorboards.

—Peter Margasak

Amasia—Anamibia Sessions 2: Felonious Monk; Gullah Jack Style; the Very First Flower; 16 Dimensions of Underwater Light; Luigi Takes a Walk; O.G. Dream of Love Lost. (38:32)

Personnel: Pete Cosey, guitar (1, 2, 5); Onaje Allen Gumbs, electric piano (1, 2, 4, 6); Casey Benjamin, EWI (1), flute (3, 6), alto saxophone (5), synthesizer (1, 3–6); Chris Williams, trumpet (1, 4–6); John Medeski, organ, Wuritzer piano (1, 5); Napoleon Maddox, beatboxing (2, 4–6); Alex Harding, bass clarinet (4, 6); deVon Gray, synthesizer (2, 3); Francisco Mora Catlett, drums, percussion (3); J.T. Lewis, drums (4, 5); Greg Fox, drums (5); Melvin Gibbs, bass (1–3).

Ordering info: hausumountain.com



Socrates Garcia *Shadows Of Tomorrow*

SUMMIT

★★★★½

As part of the introduction to *Shadows Of Tomorrow*, composer, arranger and conductor Socrates Garcia expresses a hope that his music provides a searchlight through the darkness and despair that has troubled the Dominican Republic, his homeland.

The music here unfolds like his hopeful compass, one that reveals the road behind and the looming one on the horizon.

Two things stand out in this furious mixture of Afro-Caribbean palos, méringue and familiar jazz riffs: the relentless percussive tempo established by Pablito Pena, Felix “Abuelo” Garcia and Daniel Berroa, as well as the heated pulse on the drum set delivered by Ivanna Cuesta; and the searing, ever-present trumpet wizardry of Brad Goode. When it isn't sizzling with fury from the reed section, the music is keenly modulated by Dana Landry's introspective piano interludes, as succinct as they are nicely tempered.

Shadows Of Tomorrow is a delightful festival of sound, and if you listen carefully between the ends of Goode's solos and the full orchestral panoply, you might be able to sense the words Garcia so elegantly composed in the liner notes.

—Herb Boyd



Shadows Of Tomorrow: AG's Resting Face ... Scary!!!; Sultry Villa Mella Twilights; Brad's Dreamy Samana Night; Illusions, Delusions ... A Glimmer of Hope: I. The Wizard's Wicked Charm; Illusions, Delusions ... A Glimmer of Hope: II. Liars and Fools; Illusions, Delusions ... A Glimmer of Hope: III. The Mold Breaker (Bringer of Joy). (60:05)

Personnel: Socrates Garcia, conductor; Wil Swindler, Don Aliquo, David Bemot, Eduardo Moncada, saxophones; Brad Goode, Miles Roth, Shawn Williams, Jeff Jarvis, trumpet; 14 others.

Ordering info: summitrecords.com

Tomas Fujiwara *Dream Up*

PI

★★★★

One yardstick for measuring a drummer's solo album is whether or not the leader refrains from indulging their chops. Tomas Fujiwara's latest recording takes that notion, snaps it in two and uses the resulting sticks to smack a few more drums. Everyone on *Dream Up* is a percussionist, although Tim Keiper and Kaoru Watanabe double crucially on ngonis (West African harps) and shinobue (Japanese flute), respectively.

While most of Fujiwara's tunes have themes (carried mainly by Patricia Brennan) that could be played by a horn-fronted combo, these arrangements unabashedly celebrate drums, mallets and blocks. In this respect, this quartet operates within the same realm as M'Boom, Max Roach's all-percussion ensemble. But Fujiwara is also tapping into childhood memories of summertime visits to Japan, where he experienced drumming troupes at street festivals. Watanabe plays Japanese drums; Keiper handles African ones. They bring color, depth and intricacy to the swing-based, harmonically rich language.

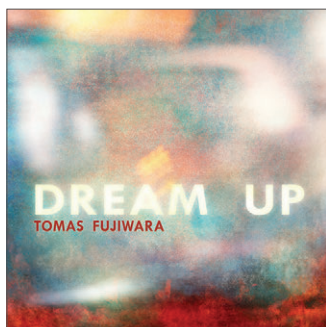
One quality that the quartet shares with M'Boom, but not with the intemperate drummers who gave rise to the sad assumptions referenced at the beginning of this review, is discipline. The playing is as precise as it is exuberant, and no one seeks to overwhelm.

—Bill Meyer

Dream Up: Dream Up; Mobilize; BluePickup; Komorebi; Recollection of a Dance; Ritual Pace; Columns of Leaning Paint; Tapestry; You Don't Have To Try. (48:09)

Personnel: Tomas Fujiwara, drums; Tim Keiper, donso ngoni, kamale ngoni, calabash, temple blocks, timbale, djembe, castanets, balafon, found objects, percussion; Kaoru Watanabe, o-jimeidaiko, uchiwadaiko, shimeidaiko, shinobue; Patricia Brennan, vibraphone.

Ordering info: tomasfujiwara.bandcamp.com



Phil Haynes' Free Country *Liberty Now!*

CORNER STORE JAZZ

★★★★½

Drummer Phil Haynes' nimble string band keeps investigating the aura and impact of American music, and though half of this program is a compilation of previous efforts, *Liberty Now!* offers new revelations while revitalizing the resonance of antique tunes. It comes off as a modern treatise on both creativity and politics.

With 25 years of shared experience, the quartet (including cellist Hank Roberts, bassist Drew Gress and guitarist Jim Yanda, who each contribute tunes) reveals a keen sense of balance. “Higgins” provides each member with elbow room, especially Roberts. Stressing an earthy yet luxuriant tone, he revels in sonics and melody while sharing nuanced interplay with the others.

The album's “song” section is a strong reminder of the ensemble's purposeful sense of frolic. Swinging “The Way the West Was Won” and bringing a barbed beauty to “America the Beautiful,” they wisely re-deliver these older performances as a bulwark against oppression during one of our country's most explosive epochs. Funny how Mr. Key's “Star-Spangled Banner” and Mr. Lennon's “Revolution” make for righteous bookends these days.

—Jim Macnie



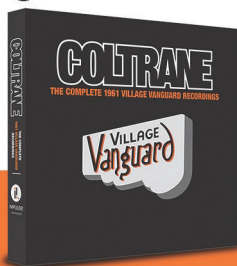
Liberty Now!: Situation Ethics; Past Time; Strands of Liberty; Higgins; Diaphana; Confetti; Corner Store Strut; Joy; Next of Kin; The Wire; Home Road; Down on the Gladys Marrie. DISC 2 The Way The West Was Won; She'll Be Comin' Round the Mountain; Revolution; Dakota Hymn; Johnny Guitar; Joshua Fought the Battle of Jerico; Simple Gifts; Respect; What's Going On; To Ancreon in Heaven; The Defense of Fort Henry; Fanfare for the Common Man; What a Wonderful World. (133:00)

Personnel: Phil Haynes, drums, recitation; Hank Roberts, cello, vocals; Drew Gress, bass; Jim Yanda, guitar.

Ordering info: philhaynesmusic.bandcamp.com

JOHN COLTRANE

The Complete 1961 Village Vanguard Recordings

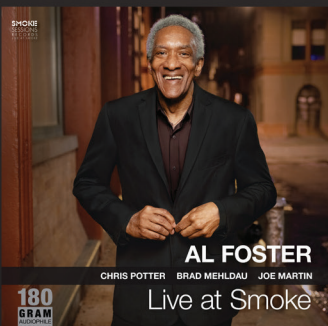


This deluxe 7-LP box set features over four hours of music recorded at a pivotal moment in Coltrane's evolution. Includes a beautiful 20-page booklet with essays, photos and original illustrations.

store.ververecords.com

SMOKE SESSIONS RECORDS

Limited Edition Vinyl Releases



© 2025 Smoke Sessions Records

Holly Tunes

Wayne Wilkinson

With
Andy Burtschi
Scott Barbier
Special Guest
Thomas J. Dawson Jr.

Christmas favorites bring joy, nostalgia, and cheer alongside reimagined sacred carols. Listening feels like a timeless holiday film, where vintage Americana meets sophisticated jazz harmonies—perfect for those who want Christmas wrapped in warmth, elegance, style, and a touch of swing.

Available now for purchase and streaming everywhere.

waynewilkinson.bandcamp.com/album/holly-tunes

DISCOVER THE NEXT EVOLUTION IN JAZZ VINYL COLLECTING.

This monthly subscription is your pass to own some of the most legendary recordings in jazz history, newly reissued with the highest fidelity, along with rare, previously unreleased material you won't find anywhere else.

GIFT CARDS NOW AVAILABLE

store.ververecords.com

Embraceable BRAZIL

Tom Cohen

featuring Chico Pinheiro, Filó Machado, Barbara Mendes, Cidinho Teixeira, John Swana, Café, and Larry McKenna

Drummer Tom Cohen's lifelong love affair with Brazilian music culminates with the release of *Embraceable Brazil*, which features a panoply of creative musicians in various combinations adding up to a stunning array of colors, textures, and interpretations in the bossa/samba mode.

VERSA RECORDS

tomcohenproductions.com

REISSUED SOUNDS NEW RELEASES

Craig Armstrong / 9010974002727

Primal Scream / 9010974002710

Second Records ARTIST RELEASES

Alex Rossi / 9120005655768

Nikolay Kasakov / 9120005655522

Lia Hide / 9120005655744

Makar Novikov / 9120005655720

RareNoiseRecords NEW RELEASES

O.R.K. / 5060197761141

Jamie Saft / 9010974042372

Contact us to get an overview of our different labels.

orders@i-di.com

www.i-di.com

DOWNBEAT 2025

HOLIDAY

GIFT GUIDE»



JUST PLAY!

Trumpeter Theo Croker, left, and pianist Sullivan Fortner deliver a beautiful, impromptu duo record that will bring smiles throughout the season!

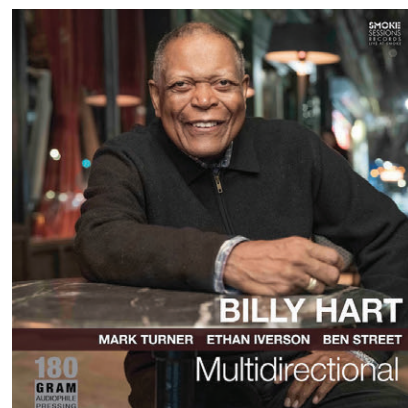
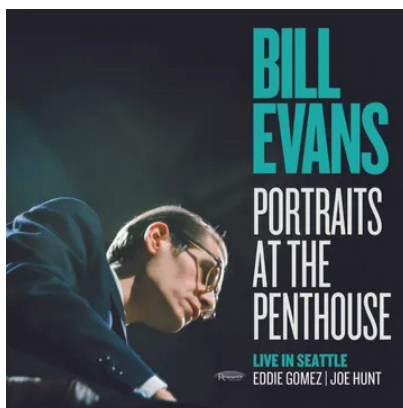
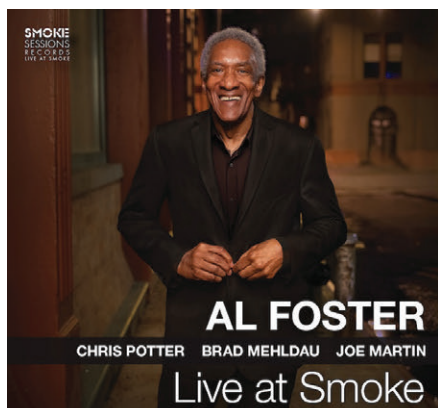
BOXES & VINYL & MORE | 62

THE LEE FAMILY SPEAKS | 66

MUSIC TO BRIGHTEN THE SPIRIT | 68

A READER'S DELIGHT | 70

GREAT GEAR FOR MUSICIANS | 72



BOUNTY OF VINYL

BY FRANK ALKYER

AL FOSTER

Live At Smoke (Smoke Sessions)

Settle in for a good time and hear Al Foster celebrate his 82nd birthday at Smoke Jazz Club just months before he passed with an all-star lineup of Chris Potter on sax, Brad Mehldau on piano and Joe Martin on bass. It will be available in a beautiful two-LP set. (smokesessionrecords.com)

ANTONIO CARLOS JOBIM

The Composer of Desafinado, Plays (Verve/UMe)

Part of Verve Vault, the label's new audio-ophile vinyl series, this taste of Jobim has been remastered from the original tapes by Ryan K. Smith at Sterling Sound and pressed at Optimal in Germany. (store.vervarecords.com)

BEN WEBSTER QUINTET

Soulville (Second Records)

Recorded in 1957, Second Records brings back this Ben Webster classic in a sassy orange marble vinyl. It finds the saxophonist backed by the Oscar Peterson Trio, plus drummer Stan Levey. One catch: It may not be available in all territories, so check it out and see. (second-records.com)

BILL EVANS TRIO

Haunted Heart: The Legendary Riverside Studios Recordings (Craft)

Here's a very cool five-LP (three-CD) boxed set of the classic Bill Evans Trio with Scott LaFaro on bass and drummer Paul Motian. For the first time, the complete Riverside ses-

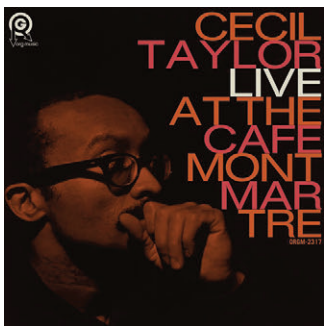
sions have been gathered in one supreme package. The music has been pressed on 180-gram vinyl and features the albums *Portrait In Jazz* (from 1960) and *Explorations* (1961) as well as 26 alternate takes and other outtakes that provide a rare glimpse into the Trio's depth! (craftrecordings.com)

BILL EVANS

Portraits At The Penthouse: Live In Seattle (Resonance)

Resonance brings back another jewel from this classic '60s Washington state jazz club. An RSD Black Friday Exclusive Release, *Portraits* was recored for KING-FM radio. The restored original tapes were mastered by Matthew Lutthans at The Mastering Lab

CLASSIC ARCHIVAL PERFORMANCES BY LEGENDARY ARTISTS



for a limited 4,000-unit pressing on 180-gram vinyl. Produced by Zev Feldman, the package includes deep liner notes and rare photographs. The album was pressed at Le Vinylist in Quebec, Canada. (recordstoreday.com)

BILLY HART

Multidirectional (Smoke Sessions)

Believe it or not, *Multidirectional* is veteran drummer Billy Hart's first live recording and features his longtime quartet with saxophonist Mark Turner, pianist Ethan Iverson and bassist Ben Street. And if you hurry, you might catch the album release party at Smoke Jazz Club on Nov. 21. Buy live music and see the music live! (smokesessionsrecords.com)

CECIL TAYLOR

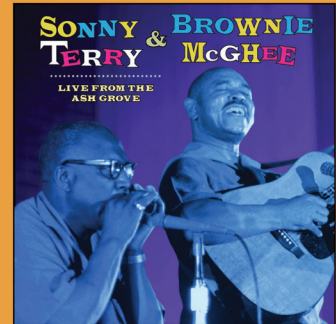
Live At The Cafe Montmartre (Org Music)

This has been called one of the best live recordings in jazz. Here we find Taylor, masterful on piano, with trio mates Sunny Murray on



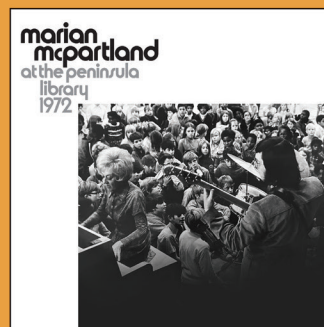
LESTER YOUNG LESTER LEAPS IN LIVE AT BIRDLAND 1951-1952

Symphony Sid radio show recordings captured at the iconic NYC venue. Available on CD, digital and exclusive 180-gram vinyl for RSD Black Friday.



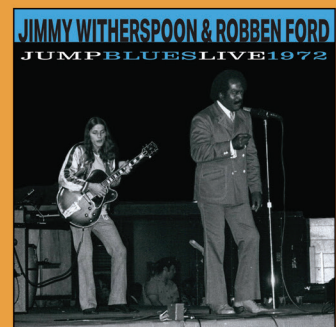
SONNY TERRY & BROWNIE MCGHEE LIVE FROM THE ASH GROVE

Rare 1973 performance from the esteemed folk blues duo with two bonus tracks from 1965. Pressed on purple grape vinyl exclusively for RSD Black Friday.



MARIAN McPARTLAND AT THE PENINSULA LIBRARY 1972

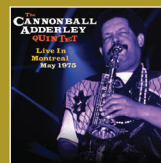
17-track set from the trailblazing pianist recorded at the Peninsula library on Long Island, New York in December 1972. Available on double 180-gram vinyl, CD and digital with extensive liner notes and rare photos.



JIMMY WITHERSPOON & ROBBEN FORD JUMP BLUES LIVE 1972

Powerhouse vocalist teamed up with the 21-year-old guitar slinger in March 1972 at the Troubadour in West Hollywood for this set of nine rhythm & blues classics. Available on CD and digital with a limited-edition cobalt blue vinyl pressing exclusively at select independent record retailers.

OTHER ARCHIVAL PERFORMANCES AVAILABLE



Cannonball Adderley Live In Montreal May 1975



Mose Allison Live 1978

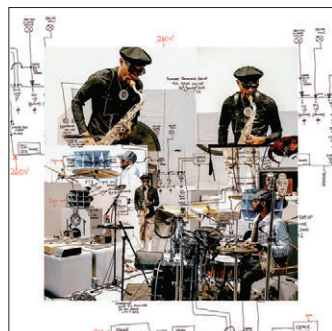
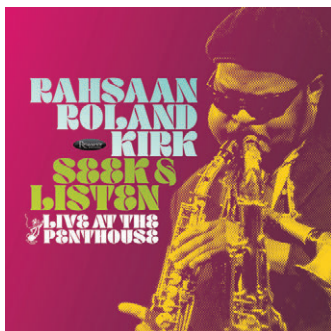
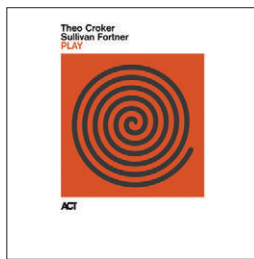


Lightnin' Hopkins Live From The Ash Grove ...Plus!



Charlie Parker The Long Lost Bird Live Afro-Cubop Recordings!





drums and Jimmy Lyons on alto saxophone in Copenhagen on Nov. 23, 1962. The music has been remastered by Dave Gardner as a two-LP set and pressed at Pallas Group in Germany. It's an RSD Black Friday Exclusive. (recordstoreday.com)

**DIZZY GILLESPIE/SONNY STITT/
SONNY ROLLINS**
Sonny Side Up (Verve)

Another from Verve Vault, the label's new audiophile vinyl series, this tasty trio of all-time legends has been remastered from the original tapes by Ryan K. Smith at Sterling Sound and pressed at Optimal in Germany. (store.ververecords.com)

FRANK SINATRA
In The Wee Small Hours (Capitol/Blue Note)

This has been called one of the first concept albums in popular music. Beautiful and heartbreaking, the music drips with late-night emotion. In honor of the recording's 70th anniversary, Blue Note will be reissuing *In The Wee Small Hours* in the label's Tone Poet Vinyl Series. (bluenote.com)

FRANK SINATRA
Giants Of Jazz (UME)

What could possibly be better than one great Sinatra record? Here's a second. We find the Chairman of the Board in the company of a Count and a Duke, as in Count Basie and Duke Ellington. This vinyl reissue is a double-LP beauty that includes the classic albums *It Might As Well Be Swing* with Count Basie and His Orchestra and *Francis A. & Edward K.* with Duke Ellington. The package includes a gatefold jacket featuring rare photos and original album artwork. (shop.udiscovermusic.com)

IKE QUEBEC

The Complete Blue Note 45 Sessions (Blue Note)
Here's another addition to Blue Note's Tone Poet Series, a three-LP or two-CD set of Ike Quebec's music recorded between 1959 and 1962. The accompanying booklet features an in-depth essay by historian Loren Schoenberg and never-seen-before photography by Francis Wolff. (bluenote.com)

ISAIAH COLLIER & TIM REGIS
Live In The Listening Room (The Vinyl Factory)

This is a vinyl-only EP recorded at Devon Turnbull (OJAS') Hi-Fi Listening Room Dream No. 1 at the 180 Studios in London. That's a mouthful, and the music made by Isaiah Collier and Tim Regis is an earful. Inventive, cutting and driving, the duo pumps out music with the energy of a legion. (thevinylfactory.com)

JONI MITCHELL
Joni's Jazz (Rhino)

This eight-LP, four-CD collection demonstrates the singer-songwriter's dedication to and love for jazz, pulling together 61 tracks from five decades of her work. Collaborators include Charles Mingus, Herbie Hancock, Jaco Pastorius, Wayne Shorter and more. (store.rhino.com)

KEITH JARRETT
At The Deer Head Inn: The Complete Recordings (ECM)

This four-LP box set combines two classic Jarrett recordings: *The Old Country* and *At The Deer Head Inn*. Both feature Jarrett in his famed trio with bassist Gary Peacock and drummer Paul Motian. (ecmrecords.com)

KENNY BARRON
Sunset To Dawn (Muse/Time Traveler)

Time Traveler Recordings is the latest imprint of jazz detective Zev Feldman. With this go-round, he's reissuing releases from the Muse Records catalog. The goal is to provide a "Rolls Royce, ultra-deluxe vinyl experience," according to Feldman. Here with pianist Kenny Barron's 1973 classic, only his second as a leader. (recordstoreday.com)

LESTER YOUNG
Lester Leaps In: Live At Birdland 1951-1952 (Liberation Hall)

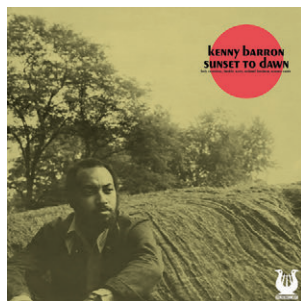
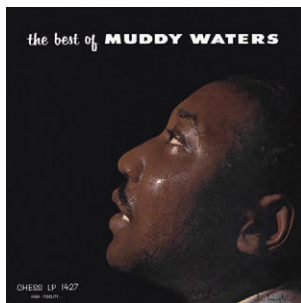
Never-before-released, this set catches the tenorman at New York's Birdland, where he played four dates that were recorded for the *Jumpin' with Symphony Sid* radio show. It's an RSD Black Friday First. (recordstoreday.com)

MUDDY WATERS
The Best Of (Chess)

Celebrating the 75th anniversary of this classic Chicago label, welcome the Chess/Acoustic Sounds Series. *The Best Of Muddy Waters* is but one of many treats coming out in the series. Others include releases featuring the music of Howlin' Wolf, Chuck Berry, Etta James and more! (shop.chessrecords.com)

NINA SIMONE
I Put A Spell On You (Verve)

In celebration of this classic album's 60th anniversary, Verve is reissuing the record as a vinyl collector's edition. First released in 1965, *I Put A Spell On You* includes some of Simone's greatest hits, including the title track and "Feeling Good." It's Nina Simone at her finest. And the splatter vinyl looks cool on your turntable! (shop.ninasimone.com)



RAHSAAN ROLAND KIRK

Seek & Listen: *Live At The Penthouse* (Resonance)

RAHSAAN ROLAND KIRK

Vibrations In The Village: *Live At The Village Gate* (Resonance)

Here's a duo of amazing discs just in time for RSD Black Friday. *Seek & Listen* is another in a growing catalog of live recordings Resonance has culled from The Penthouse jazz club in Seattle. This set from 1967 captures Kirk at the height of his art on a two-LP set. *Vibrations* catches the multi-instrumentalist at a 1963 set in New York City. Both feature killer liner notes and photos, as well as painstaking attention to great sound. (recordstoreday.com)

ROY BROOKS

The Free Slave (Muse/Time Traveler)

Another release reissued on Zev Feldman's Time Traveler label, Brooks here is caught on a live date in Baltimore with trumpeter Woody Shaw, tenor saxophonist George Coleman, pianist Hugh Lawson and bassist Cecil McBee. (recordstoreday.com)

THEO CROKER/SULLIVAN FORTNER

Play (ACT Music)

Sometimes no plan is the best plan. Here trumpeter Croker and pianist Fortner went into the studio with no other plan than to play. It is a rare and wonderful testament to the power of musical conversation. This is one great listen! (actmusic.com)

TOM WAITS

Nighthawks At The Diner (Anti-)

For some, the idea that this cornerstone album of our youth has turned 50 is a headshaker. Even after five decades, *Nighthawks* comes in as funny, sharp, swinging and entertaining as it did back in the 1970s. If you've never heard it, do yourself a favor! (officialtom-waits.store)

YUSEF LATEEF

Golden Flower: Live In Sweden

An RSD Black Friday First, this two-LP set archives two concerts from Swedish television, the first from 1967, the second from 1972. Mastered by Matthew Lutthans at The Mastering Lab, it's a limited pressing of less than 2,000 records with in-depth liner notes and plenty of photos. (recordstoreday.com)



TIME TRAVELER RECORDINGS PRESENTS THE MUSE RECORDS MASTER EDITION SERIES

**AVAILABLE
NOW!**

**ROY BROOKS
THE FREE SLAVE**

**KENNY BARRON
SUNSET TO DAWN**

**CARLOS GARNETT
COSMOS NUCLEUS**

• ALL ANALOG MASTERING BY
MATTHEW LUTTHANS AT
THE MASTERING LAB

• 180G VINYL

• PRESSED AT OPTIMAL

• HIGH-GLOSS STOUGHTON
"OLD STYLE" TIP-ON JACKETS

• NEW LINER NOTES BY
SHANNON J. EFFINGER,
TED PANKEN AND
SYD SCHWARTZ



**AVAILABLE
JANUARY 30TH**

**WOODY SHAW
LOVE DANCE**

**JOE CHAMBERS
DOUBLE EXPOSURE**

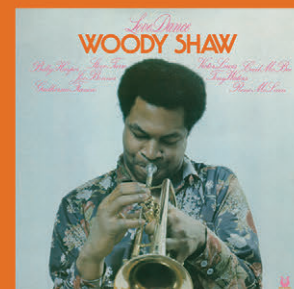
• ALL ANALOG MASTERING BY
MATTHEW LUTTHANS AT
THE MASTERING LAB

• 180G VINYL

• PRESSED AT OPTIMAL

• HIGH-GLOSS STOUGHTON
"OLD STYLE" TIP-ON JACKETS

• NEW LINER NOTES BY
BOB BLUMENTHAL & BILL MILKOWSKI



Acoustic
Sounds^{INC.}

**AVAILABLE AT ACOUSTIC SOUNDS
& OTHER VINYL RETAILERS**



The Lee family, from left, Consuela Lee Moorhead, Bill Lee, Clif Lee and A. Grace Lee Mims.

A FAMILY SPEAKS

The vital history & deeply personal story of the Lee family as told on Strata-East Records

By Michael J. West Photo by Howard A. Mims

“Strata-East isn’t just the music in the catalog,” says Ched Tolliver, a Los Angeles-based multi-instrumentalist, composer and producer who is the CEO of the freshly relaunched Strata-East Records. “It’s also the stories that accompanied them. And in this instance the story of The Descendants of Mike and Phoebe, the Lee family, compels us to remember a vital history.”

Stories — or perhaps “storied” — is certainly an apt word to associate with Strata-East, the seminal independent label cofounded by pianist Stanley Cowell and trumpeter Charles Tolliver, Ched’s father, in 1971. Active throughout the 1970s, Strata-East gained a reputation for releasing jazz of superlative quality but limited availability (each of its albums got an initial run of 500 copies). As such, it became legendary among jazz connoisseurs and collectors — enough so that earlier this year, Ched teamed up with Mack Avenue to begin reissuing all 55 titles in the catalog.

“It’s just a way for us to, number one, honor these great musicians that were a part of the Strata-East family,” Tolliver says. “And number two, show our appreciation for the connoisseurs of this music by giving them the purest audio that we can, in as wonderfully crafted a package as we can, so that this becomes as the definitive reissue series.”

Which brings us to *The Descendants* of Mike and Phoebe. Led by bassist Bill Lee — and featuring his brother, flugelhornist Clif Lee, and sisters, pianist Consuela Lee Morehead and vocalist A. Grace Lee Mims — the band played a unique amalgamation of jazz, folk, pop and classical styles. Their sole studio album, 1974’s *A Spirit Speaks*, spearheaded the second salvo

of Strata-East reissues due out in November and serves as a Record Store Day Black Friday release the day after Thanksgiving.

That’s Bill Lee, as in, the father of great American filmmaker Spike Lee and composer of much of the music for his son’s early films.

Increasingly recognized as a singular playing and writing talent (more so since his death in 2023), in life Lee often struggled in his musical career, at times living on the brink of poverty. He got by as a freelancer and studio musician, but he had a personal musical vision that he refused to give up on.

He saw his chance to document that vision by way of a friend and frequent collaborator, the tenor saxophonist Clifford Jordan. In turn, Jordan was a friend and collaborator of Charles Tolliver; he’d played on Tolliver’s album *Music Inc. & Big Band*, which became the first Strata-East release. The label had been intended solely for Cowell and Tolliver’s own music, but in 1972, a year after its formation, Jordan suggested that it release a handful of albums he’d produced for other artists (as well as his own, *Glass Bead Games*).

These became known as Strata-East’s “Dolphy series,” and they reinvented the label. Other musicians approached Tolliver and Cowell, wanting to do what Jordan had done. Lee was among the first: He’d played bass on *Glass Bead Games* and had watched Jordan carefully as he released the Dolphy series. He, too, was ready to start releasing his own product.

Lee had several projects going at the time, but there was no need to pitch them to Strata-East. “He just said, ‘Hey, man, I got something,’” Charles Tolliver recalls. “I said, ‘OK, bring it

over.’ I knew he could play; I wasn’t worried about what he would do.” The only requirement was that Lee bring in completed masters and cover art for each release. His first delivery was *A Spirit Speaks*, by the jazz-folk family band he’d formed with his similarly talented siblings.

The Lees could trace their family history back to a South Carolina slave couple, Mike and Phoebe, who were separated when Phoebe’s owner moved to the new state of Alabama in 1819. Mike doubled down on his labor so that he could buy his freedom, followed Phoebe and their children to Alabama, and thus began the Lee family — hence the band name.

In connecting themselves to that lineage, Lee and his siblings also drew from a rich and complex lineage of African American musical tradition, bringing all of it to bear on *A Spirit Speaks*. There are strains of the blues (“Well Done, Weldon”), gospel (“Take My Hand, Precious Lord”) and soul (“Two Songs For A Boy Named Mark”) in addition to hard-bop, spiritual jazz and, on “Don’t Be A Stranger” — written by Bill Lee as a showcase for Consuela Lee Morehead — Ellingtonian solo piano. As well, A. Grace Lee Mims was a classically trained soprano vocalist, and her operatic range and technique are readily apparent on “A Spirit Speaks” and “Soliloquy To A Man-Child.”

Strata-East handled manufacturing, distribution and what little marketing it could afford, but, given that the album had only 500 pressings, there was little room for major success. Aficionados and collectors, however, came to know all about *A Spirit Speaks*, and they began to pursue it vigorously. The album was later issued in Japan, then in Europe, becoming a sought-after collector’s item in every instance.

More than 50 years after its original release, Ched Tolliver thought it would be ideal for an early installment in the Mack Avenue/Strata-East reissue campaign. It represents, he says, a crucial aspect of Strata-East’s legacy.

“These recordings, they’re somebody’s history,” he explains. “They’re true cultural documents that need to be protected, shared for future generations to learn from. And so as we were going through our titles, we saw this and we said, ‘Wow, this is really a remarkable story that Bill Lee and his siblings were able to transcribe in a way.’ And so it behooves us to sort of keep that going.”

Yet this is only the start of that story. Bill Lee led two more albums on Strata-East: *Colors*, by his Brass Company big band, and the eponymous album by the New York Bass Violin Choir, an ensemble featuring seven upright basses. He then served as music director on vocalist Muriel Winston’s *A Fresh Perspective* and played bass on Cowell’s 1976 album *Regeneration* — all on Strata-East. As the label puts its catalog back on record store shelves, there’s much more Bill Lee to come.

DB



LP3
45
RECORDS
presents

LUIGI GRASSO

LA DIMORA DELL'ALTROVE

TWO THEMES AND VARIATIONS



Luigi Grasso
LA DIMORA DELL'ALTROVE
NDR BIGBAND

Toret NDR DIGGERS BUFFET Crampon Diaphone Toot Toot

HANNA PAULSBERG CONCEPT
& ELIN ROSSELAND
Himmel over Hav



HANNA PAULSBERG CONCEPT - HIMMEL OVER HAV
& ELIN ROSSELAND

OUT NOW ON CD & DIGITALLY



GRAPPA

DV JC JODY CUSTOM Alto Saxophone Mouthpiece

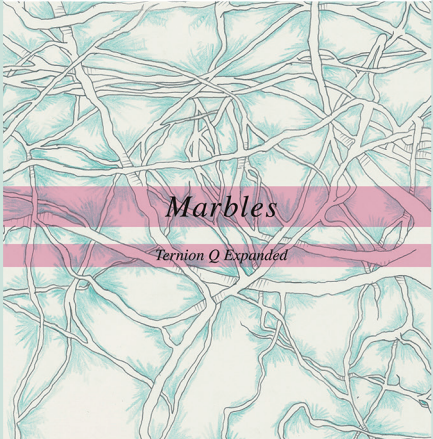
An exciting new addition to the acclaimed DV Series based upon JodyJazz Founder & President Jody Espina's personal, custom-modified DV mouthpiece. Over years of performance across diverse musical genres, Espina refined his own DV to meet a wide variety of musical demands. This special design offers a unique balance of warmth, power, and versatility and is now available to all players for the first time.



JodyJazz.com



Anne Mette Iversen &
Brooklyn Jazz Underground Records
present new project:



Marbles
Ternion Q Expanded

Seven top tier musicians from across Europe
Featuring:
Silke Eberhard (alto sax)
Percy Pursglove (tp, flgh)
Julius Gawlik (tenor sax, cl, alto cl)
Morris Kliphuis (french horn)
Geoffroy De Masure (tbn)
Anne Mette Iversen (comp & b)
Roland Schneider (dr)

bjurecords
brooklyn jazz underground

TODAY'S BRIGHTEST VOICES IN PERFECT SWING!



SWINGING IN THE
Holidays

ALBUM RELEASE
& BRUNCH
DECEMBER 21
54 BELOW, NYC



SCAN TO BUY
CONCERT TICKETS &
OUR ALBUM



CHAMPIAN FULTON OLIVIA CHINDAMO
KEN PEPOWSKI WYATT MICHAEL

PRESENTED BY: SONGBOOK ink AND Jb jazz hallroom
www.jazzattheballroom.com



MUSIC TO BRIGHTEN THE SPIRIT

BY FRANK-JOHN HADLEY

Time for reflection. The great strength of holiday music, whether the secular or religious type, is the performer's summoning of a special mood for listeners to bask in, one built of joy, gratitude, hope, generosity, a sense of community. The new or reissued holiday-themed albums in this year's roundup may well brighten one's spirit; they also monitor the patchy border between real and put-on sincerity, artifice and artistry.

CINCINNATI CONTEMPORARY JAZZ ORCHESTRA

The Nutcracker Remix (Independent Release)

At Yuletide in recent years, this 17-piece outfit led by trumpeter Eric Lechlitter has treated Midwesterners to concerts of their take on Tchaikovsky's *The Nutcracker Suite* as interpreted by Duke Ellington. Now CCJO introduces a studio-recorded *Nutcracker* album of considerable appeal due to, among other attributes, the creative arrangements by Lechlitter or Dominic Marino, the instrumental talents of bandmembers such as pianist Matt Harris and baritone saxophonist Phil Hilger, and the orchestra's ability to make the nine goofily named pieces (the whimsy began with Duke) sound like brand-new discoveries. Enjoy, to

single out one, "General Tso's Gumbo," their Bourbon Street transformation of Peter Ilich's "Chinese Dance" and Ellington's "Chinoiserie." cincinnati jazz.org

VINCE GUARALDI TRIO

A Charlie Brown Christmas: 60th Anniversary (Craft)

The 1965 TV show starring Charles M. Schulz's loveable *Peanuts* comic book characters and its soundtrack by pianist Vince Guaraldi's trio are so big in popular Christmas culture that the latest reissue of the music may strike cynics as a record company just peddling the same old catalog product. Yet the lightly swinging, easy-listening West Coast jazz of, say, "O Tannenbaum" and Guaraldi's "Christmas Time Is Here," retains its charm and allure. The 60th anniversary offerings include a choice between two vinyl LPs: a visually striking zoetrope version (with flickering animation) and one featuring a holographic foil jacket. craftrecordings.com

ELLA FITZGERALD

Ella Fitzgerald's Christmas (Blue Note/Capitol)

Ella Fitzgerald's two holiday records continue to dazzle as objects of wonderment.

Count *Ella Wishes You A Swinging Christmas* (1960) among the best of all jazz Noel releases, and be appreciative of the vinyl-only return of the less famous *Ella Fitzgerald's Christmas*, a pop-gospel Yule jewel from the late 1960s. The singer, yes indeed, stamps her authority and conviction on 13 songs of religious joy. Still, all's not perfect in the pews. Ralph "Father of Contemporary Christian Music" Carmichael, his choir and orchestra in tow, sometimes pushes production and arrangements too far into sentimentalism. bluenote.com

JUDY WHITMORE

Christmas (Arden House Music)

A best-selling novelist and a vocalist based in the Los Angeles area, Judy Whitmore ties her carefully controlled, attractive voice to her ardor for the Great American Songbook on her classy holiday album. She varies her tone and inflection adeptly enough to freshen up time-honored songs by Irving Berlin ("Snow"), Sammy Cahn and Julie Styne ("The Christmas Waltz") and others. The track evidencing the most jazz inspiration is the swinging big band romp "The Man With The Bag," a hit for Kay Starr in the early 1950s. judywhitmore.com

NILS LANDGREN

Christmas With My Friends Vol. IX (ACT)

Certain as cold winds sweeping through a North Pole night is the appearance every two years of a style-crossing Noel album from Swedish trombonist Nils Landgren and his small group of loyal singers and instrumentalists. The ninth entry in the European hit series, which began about 20 years ago, finds the Friends showing no sign of diminishment in the strong, quiet passion they harbor for peace and love at Christmas as they perform attractive originals and tunes composed by the likes of modern pop hitmakers David Foster and Linda Thompson, English classical composer Benjamin Britto and 1940s jazzman-carol writer Alfred Burt. actmusic.com

MUSIC FROM THE MOTION PICTURE IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE

(Real Gone)

Pantheon composer-conductor Dimitri Tiomkins, inspired by Beethoven and other classical giants, realized a sublimity of orchestral expression with his score for the tremendously popular 1946 Frank Capra film about a small-town everyman losing and regaining his faith in humanity at Christmastime. The soundtrack (with unused cues bunched on Side Two) makes its debut in the LP format. realgonemusic.com

WAYNE WILKINSON TRIO

Holly Tunes (Independent Release)

Colorado Springs-based Wayne Wilkinson, a talented Joe Pass-influenced guitarist, puts his keen melodic sense to work constructing lines out of very familiar carols. There's a lot of confidence in his playing. Bassist Andy Burtschi, who solos quite a lot, shares Wilkinson's fondness of Xmas melodies. Along with drummer Scott Barbier, they are particularly effective ushering in lively moods. One piece of coal in the stocking: "Silent Night," ruined by synthesizer. waynewilkinson.bandcamp.com

VARIOUS ARTISTS

Swinging In The Holidays (Songbook Ink)

In collaboration with the concert series nonprofit Jazz at The Ballroom, the new Songbook Ink label offers this Yuletide pro-Great American Songbook album. The celebrants present have the integrity and instincts to insure their sophisticated, low-heat swinging of well-known ("Winter Wonderland") or obscure (Depression-era "Button Up Your Overcoat") numbers don't fall into triteness. Processing good cheer in their singing voices are Champion Fulton, Olivia Chindamo, Benny Benack III, Wyatt Michael and a few more. songbook-ink.com

VARIOUS ARTISTS

Classic Holiday Singles Box Set (UMe)

Santa recently raided the holiday music section in the vaults of Verve, Decca, Capitol, more too. Reach into his big bag and pull out a candy-cane-decorated box. Open it and find 14 colorful 45s (each sporting an attractively designed sleeve) by as many Pop Idols of Christmas Past. It's a nostalgic's dream: 28 best-selling tunes in all, two apiece by Frank Sinatra, Ella Fitzgerald, Chuck Berry, Brenda Lee, the Beach Boys, John Lennon with Yoko Ono, etc. umgcatalog.com

JAKE SHIMABUKURO

'Tis The Season (JS Records)

Ukulele virtuoso Jake Shimabukuro delivers the gift of an assortment of Christmas favorites with assistance from, among others, singer Justin Kwika Young, cellist Yo-Yo Ma, his Hawaiian high school trio Pure Heart and the late pop star Jimmy Buffet (the Hawaiian holiday song "Mele Kalikimaka"). For sure, there's a lot of fun, joyous music, but it's the feeling of hope Shimabukuro brings to his excellent playing on the carol "What Child Is This?" and a few more understated classics that most recommends *Tis The Season*. jakeshimabukuro.com

A Non-Profit
Jazz Label
with a Mission



2017, 2018 & 2021!
Record Label
of the Year
Jazz Journalists
Association

WWW.RESONANCERECORDS.ORG



CELEBRATING RSD BLACK FRIDAY WITH
EXCLUSIVE LIMITED-EDITION 180G VINYL

LP
11/28
CD &
DOWNLOAD
12/5



BILL EVANS

Portraits at the Penthouse: Live in Seattle

First official release of Bill Evans live at the Penthouse in Seattle on May 12 & 19, 1966 with Eddie Gomez & Joe Hunt. The limited-edition 180g LP & deluxe CD includes liner notes by Marc Myers and interviews with Gomez, Hunt & piano legend Bob James. Mastered & cut by Matthew Lutthans and pressed at Le Vinylist.

RAHSAAN ROLAND KIRK



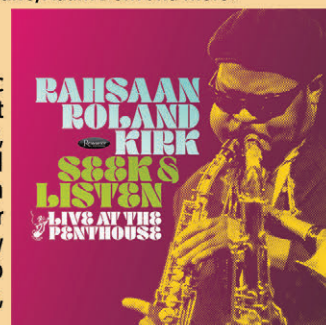
Vibrations in the Village: Live at the Village Gate

Rare live recording of the woodwinds master at the Village Gate, NYC in '63 with Horace Parlan, Melvin Rhyne & Jane Getz (piano), Henry Grimes (bass) & Sonny Brown (drums). The limited-edition 180g 2-LP and deluxe 2-CD set includes essays by authors John Kruth & May Cobb; interviews with Getz, James Carter, Chico Freeman, Steve Turre, Adam Dorn and more!

SEEK & LISTEN:

Live at the Penthouse

Unissued recording of the virtuosic multi-instrumentalist recorded live at the Penthouse on August 12 & 19, 1967 with Rahn Burton, Steve Novosel & Jimmy Hopps. The limited-edition 180g 2LP and deluxe CD includes liner notes by authors John Kruth and May Cobb, interviews James Carter, Chico Freeman, Steve Turre, Dorthaan Kirk, Adam Dorn and more!



◆◆◆◆ NEW BRAZILIAN JAZZ RELEASES ◆◆◆◆
AVAILABLE NOW!



CHARLIE ROUSE

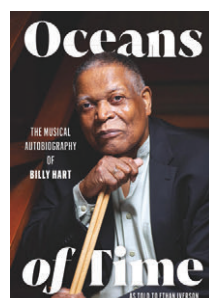
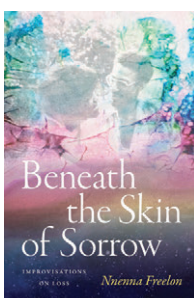
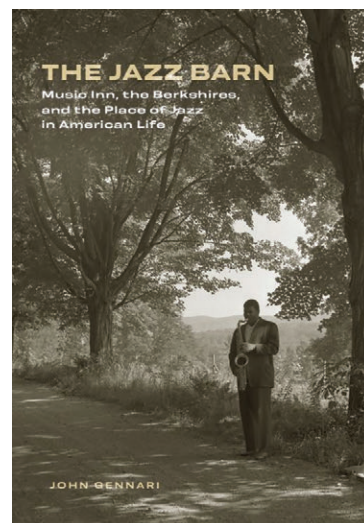
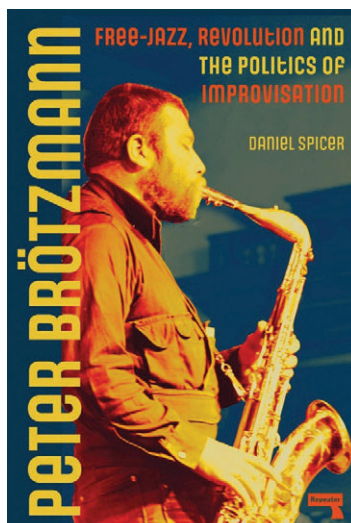
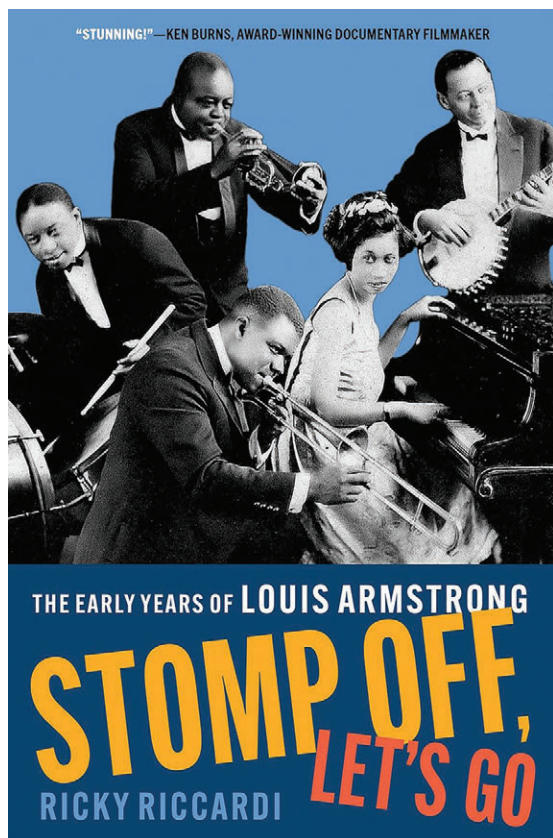
Cinnamon Flower: The Expanded Edition

Reissue of the legendary saxophonist Charlie Rouse's 1977 album. Contains nearly 30 mins of previously unissued versions of songs from the original release captured by Resonance founder and engineer, George Klabin, plus a track that's never been issued. Features Dom Salvador, Ron Carter, Bernard Purdie, Claudio Roditi & others.

EDDIE DANIELS

The woodwind master's tribute to the legendary Brazilian musician/composer Milton Nascimento. Features Anthony Wilson, Josh Nelson, Kevin Axt & Ray Brinker, plus the Lyris String Quartet. *To Milton* is a recreation of Nascimento's second studio album, Courage (1969, CTI). Booklet includes liner notes by author James Gavin. Produced by Resonance founder George Klabin.





A READER'S DELIGHT: 6 BOOKS FOR MUSIC LOVERS

THE JAZZ BARN: MUSIC INN, THE BERKSHIRES, AND THE PLACE OF JAZZ IN AMERICAN LIFE

(By John Gennari, Brandeis University Press)

So, how did a small town in New England become a jazz hub? Gennari's lovely book tells the story of the Berkshire Hills of Massachusetts in the 1950s, where two New Yorkers bought an estate, then converted the barn and several other buildings into music venues — and became an unlikely host to the likes of Billie Holiday, Dave Brubeck, Duke Ellington and more. press.uchicago.edu

OCEANS OF TIME: THE MUSICAL AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF BILLY HART

(By Billy Hart with Ethan Iverson)

Reviewed in DownBeat's October 2025 issue, this autobiography serves as an essential, first-person account of the jazz world the famed drummer has occupied since the 1960s. Working with everyone from Shirley Horn, Jimmy Smith and Wes Montgomery to Pharoah Sanders, Herbie Hancock and Stan Getz, Hart has appeared as a sideman on more than 600 recordings in addition to his own substantial work as a leader. And, oh, the stories he can and does tell! cymbalpress.com

PETER BRÖTZMANN: FREE-JAZZ, REVOLUTION AND THE POLITICS OF IMPROVISATION

(By Daniel Spicer, Repeater Books)

Here's a biography of the great German saxophonist that came out shortly after last year's holiday season. With dozens of interviews with Brötzman and his musical associates, the book documents the travels, trials and travails of one of the most interesting figures to come out of the European jazz scene. repeaterbooks.com

BENEATH THE SKIN OF SORROW: IMPROVISATIONS ON LOSS

(By Nnenna Freelon, Duke University Press)

As detailed in DownBeat's November 2025 issue, vocalist Nnenna Freelon pours her heart out in this touching memoir of losing her husband, sister and even the family dog in short order, then somehow fighting through grief and finding a way to pick up the pieces. dukeupress.edu

STOMP OFF, LET'S GO: THE EARLY YEARS OF LOUIS ARMSTRONG

(By Ricky Riccardi, Oxford University Press)

There are few people in the world who know as much about the life and times of the great Louis Armstrong (or any other jazz artist, for that matter) than author/historian Ricky Riccardi. With *Stomp Off*, Riccardi paints a vivid picture of those early days and Armstrong's rocket launch into popular culture. The storytelling is crisp and spellbinding. The detail delivers new insights for even the most dedicated Armstrong fan. This one's a keeper. corp.oup.com

MY LIFE UNDER DEADLINE: FRONTLINE DISPATCHES FROM A TRAILBLAZING WOMAN MUSIC WRITER

(By Cree McCree, Rare Bird)

A frequent contributor to this magazine, veteran music journalist Cree McCree publishes her first book, culled from the archives of her decades-long career. She writes of punks and bluesmen, genre-bending women and jazz icons. Oh, and don't forget New Orleans: McCree is plugged into the music scene of her hometown in a way that few writers can match. rarebirdlit.com

**BILL EVANS
FRANK GAMBALE
MICHAEL LEAGUE
HADRIEN FERAUD
DENNIS CHAMBERS**



**Usein Bekirov
FREE WAY
DELUXE**

Jazz Foundation, Chiaroscuro Records
and 32 Bar Blues Present:

ALL BLUES

*Makes a
Great Gift
for the
Holidays!*



15 classic instrumental blues tracks from
artists including: Clark Terry, Junior Mance,
Mary Lou Williams, Earl Hines and more.
100% of proceeds benefit the Jazz Foundation's
Musicians' Emergency Fund.

AVAILABLE NOW: jazzfoundation.org

**BLUE NOTE
TONE POET
SERIES**



**FRANK SINATRA
IN THE WEE SMALL HOURS**

AAA 180g Tone Poet Vinyl Edition
of legendary vocalist's seminal
1955 Capitol Records album
produced by Joe Harley, mastered by
Kevin Gray & pressed at RTI.

AVAILABLE AT
STORE.BLUENOTE.COM



Jazz **MORE AMOR**
A Tribute to Wes Montgomery

MORE AMOR
A Tribute to Wes Montgomery



CHICAGO JAZZ ORCHESTRA
Featuring Bobby Broom
Jeff Lindberg | Artistic Director

AVAILABLE ON VINYL, CD, AND STREAMING

FOR MORE INFO, VISIT: WWW.CJOMUSIC.ORG



GREAT GEAR GIFTS



Jeff Beck Model

The Jeff Beck 1954 Oxblood Les Paul from Epiphone, an Inspired by Gibson Custom, is a recreation of the iconic guitarist's famous Oxblood, a heavily modified 1954 Les Paul. The new model features a mahogany body with a maple cap and a one-piece mahogany neck with a long neck tenon and Jeff Beck Custom Large C profile. It sports a rosewood fretboard, 22 medium jumbo frets, aged mother-of-pearl trapezoid inlays and the classic Gibson "open book" style headstock with aged Epiphone logo. It's equipped with Gibson Custombucker humbuckers and 1950s style wiring. epiphone.com



Clip-On Tuner Precision

Snark has introduced a trio of high-precision clip-on tuners: the Snark ST-1X HPT, ST-2 HPT and ST-8 HPT, which feature all-new software with ultra-tight "in tune" windows for pinpoint accuracy with a broad range of instruments. Snark has added a patented anechoic sound shield on the back of each tuner, which helps block room noise. snarktuners.com

Tranquil Tones

Roland's Mood Pan is an electronic hand percussion instrument that encourages anyone to discover the restorative power of music. Inspired by acoustic handpans, Mood Pan features tranquil tones and a simple design requiring no previous musical skills. Along with providing immersive audio for the onboard sounds, its built-in 2.1 speaker system can also play soothing background music and stream Bluetooth audio from mobile devices. roland.com



Versatile Digitals

Korg's B2+ and B2+SP digital pianos are designed to deliver the rich, expressive sound and responsive touch of an acoustic piano. The B2+ series combines authentic performance with enhanced modern features. The B2+ (pictured) is a compact, standalone digital piano with built-in speakers designed for flexibility and portability. The B2+SP version includes a matching stand and a three-pedal unit, providing a more traditional piano setup for the home or studio. korg.com



Networked Monitor Station

Universal Audio's Apollo e2m is an ideal companion to the Apollo x16D interface. This networked personal monitor station lets users easily connect headphones, IEMs, powered monitors or wedges, as well as external outboard gear, analog mic preamps, synthesizers, drum machines and playback devices anywhere they are needed. uaudio.com

Practice Companion

Musicians can use the Zoom H1essential to record every rehearsal and improve their playing. Features like overdubbing and playback-speed-adjustment are great for writing and practicing. The onboard X/Y microphones capture clean audio up to 120 dB SPL. The H1essential has advanced features such as overdubbing, pre-record, auto record, and playback speed adjustment. Use the built-in speaker to listen to your recordings for quick reference. zoomcorp.com



Vintage Tube Tone

Warm Audio's WA-CX24 is a large-diaphragm stereo tube condenser microphone engineered as a faithful recreation of one of the audio industry's most sought after stereo mics. The WA-CX24 is built upon premium components, including two all-brass CK12-style capsules and TAB-Funkenwerk USA output transformers to deliver the sound profile of the original. It offers independent dual capsule polar pattern control, 180-degree capsule rotation and expansive stereo imaging possibilities. warmaudio.com



FOR THE HOLIDAYS

Premium Student Licorice Stick

Built on the same line by the same craftsmen as P. Mauriat's PCL-521S intermediate clarinet, the new PCL-321N is a premium student instrument with a very even scale and dark sound. This instrument is designed to withstand the rigors of the band-and-orchestra environment. It features leather pads, a 65mm barrel and an adjustable thumb rest, and comes with a P. Mauriat-branded premium ABS case. pmauriatmusic.com



Bold Designs

Levy's Leathers' Sunbird Leather Series straps highlight layered artwork and rich textures made possible through their Crazy Horse leather construction. Each strap is laser-cut to reveal bold, dimensional designs, including hummingbirds, flowers and celestial motifs. Available in black or dark-brown variants, the series offers a mix of visual artistry and long-wearing comfort. levysleathers.com



Sweet Production Suite

IK Multimedia's Total Studio 5 MAX v2 is a comprehensive music production suite. This all-in-one bundle includes over 145 award-winning titles with 72 plug-ins for every stage of the creative process, offering more than 11,600 authentic-sounding instruments and over 2,000 studio and creative effects. New to this version is Pianoverse, featuring nine meticulously captured pianos that combine lifelike acoustic detail with advanced sound-shaping tools. ikmultimedia.com

Key Oil & Valve Lube

Trusted by repair techs, musicians and educators, Superslick's AlphaSynth features a long-lasting formula that's safe for classroom use and easy to apply and clean. Composed of premium base oils and U.S.-made components, every bottle delivers consistent, pro-level performance. These bottles are available in repair shop sizes with a new smaller, case-friendly size now available. americanwaymktg.com/brand/superslick



Long-Life Strings

XS Nickel Plated Steel electric guitar strings provide the longest life of any D'Addario electric guitar string. Featuring D'Addario's proprietary XS coating, these premium electric strings attain maximum life and a smooth, fast feel without dampening their outstanding tone. Constructed with an NY Steel core, reformulated nickel-plated steel wrap wire and Fusion Twist technology, XS Nickel strings boast superior strength and tuning stability, plus richer harmonics, greater clarity and remarkable definition. daddario.com



High-Performance Headphones

Beyerdynamic's DT 990 PRO X is the next evolution in the brand's DT 990 PRO headphones, now with a detachable cable, extra comfort, a STELLAR.45 driver system and a lower impedance rating that allows for better performance across a wide range of pro audio and playback devices. Designed for critical listening and editing, the DT 990 PRO X's superior soundstage makes it the ideal complement to studio monitors, offering precision and clarity that help studio professionals scrutinize even the finest sonic details in their mixes. north-america.beyerdynamic.com



Bass Drum Alternative

Developed with both performance and practicality in mind, the Gon Bops Cajon Pedal transforms a traditional cajon into a dynamic bass drum alternative. It includes a full foot pedal, chain-driven drive shaft, soft beater and velcro cajon mount for secure attachment. This pedal offers responsive, quiet operation, which is ideal for acoustic or hybrid percussion setups. gonbops.com



Dr. Rahsaan Barber advises us to sustain our musical progress with an ear towards understanding the blues on a deeply artistic level.

Building in the Blues

Developing an Artistic Understanding of the Blues via Melody, Harmony & Form

‘Wait now, Robert James, you know you can’t bring those boys in here! You know you can’t do that!’

At the comically problematic age of 16, I had just followed my father into a blues “establishment” in downtown Memphis. My saxophone was in my hands, my twin brother was at my side, and it was well after sunset. Immediately upon seeing two kids who were clearly underage, the manager of the club (and friend of my father) ran over to send us away. The manager wasn’t aware that my brother and I had started to discuss what being a musician might look like with my father. For a man of historically few words, my father surprisingly had a quick response:

“If you’re going to be a musician, then you’ve got to know the blues.”

And so, he had taken us to the best source he knew: Beale Street. And it became clear that he intended for his sons to not only “get” the blues on the level of emotional connection with others through sound and story as listeners, but that we also “get” the blues on a spiritual and intellectual level of understanding as practicing, performing musicians. We needed to witness and perform this music that was both a training ground

and a treasure trove of creativity and expression, inarguably imbued with the powers of a music which recognizes and speaks to the emotional experiences, needs and values of community and humanity. My dad had a quick response to the club manager’s protests of our presence, and it, too, was aimed my way:

“Go on up there and play. Let me talk to him.”

Having grown up with a grandmother who played organ and piano in the church (and performing and playing in that setting myself), I recall that going up on the stage to jam with the blues band and seeing the welcoming approval of their smiles and nodding heads felt familiar. But that’s not where the familiarities stopped. Rarely having a horn section on a weeknight, the band asked us what we wanted to play. It struck me in that moment that I hadn’t actually learned any “blues tunes.” (Or so I thought.)

When we responded with a suggestion of Bobby Timmons’ “Moanin’,” the bandleader was impressed. He gave a quick eyebrows-up stare at my father, who returned the glare with a bit of added interest, in the form of a smiling reminder of a previous conversation they had shared, unbeknownst to me:

“I told you they could play.”

By the end of the set, we’d played all manner of tunes I’d never thought of as “blues tunes” (whatever that might’ve meant) based on the limited settings in which I’d heard or played them before that night. Looking back on it 30 years later, I’m thankful for what was clearly a transformational moment in my musical development. In these modern days of Instagram and iReal, I often observe jazz musicians treating “the blues” with such a casual regard that it reminds me of my apathetic stance on the inclusion of raisins in recipes for bread pudding. There’s only one problem with jazz musicians treating the blues this way. The blues ain’t the raisins. It’s the bread. And, as such, we should sustain our musical progress with an ear towards understanding “the blues” on a deeply artistic level, and take pride in engaging with this spirited tradition of music-making that so deeply resonates throughout the history of modern music.

Melody can rightfully be appreciated as an emblem of unity: combining the elements of rhythm and pitch, and often carrying in tow the “luggage” of tonality and harmony. In addition, many of our greatest melodies are paired with lyrics that often suggest (or, require, as I hear it) the performer achieve an emotional musicality.

The first major hurdle to establishing success melodically in the blues is a conceptual one: One must cement the understanding that “blues melodies” are “jazz melodies” and that these melodies have always been a defining trait of the music widely known as jazz. Cultivating a deep and imaginative vocabulary of blues-based melodies goes hand-in-hand with every other type of practicing we do as jazz musicians. Unfortunately, as many (in and out of academia) are still suffering from the incorrect notions of these melodies as “simple,” we often see students fixated on developing “complex” ii-V language around the circle well before they spend time learning blues melodies (if they ever actually do).

Focus on learning tunes that use blues-based melodicism, on internalizing aurally and on expressing outwardly the melodies within them. Develop an artistic comfort with the execution of effective and clear melodies within each of the three common tonalities. (Yes, three.) One critically important feature to note during melodic study is how extended harmonies are used often as both a metaphorical and literal (aural) frame for the subject matter of a blues melody, likely realized as a chord tone or a member of the appropriate pentatonic tonality.

As an example, the back half of Stanley Turrentine’s hit “Sugar” comes to mind, where (heading into the 10th bar) the root of the key center is harmonized as the #11 on a tritone-subbed dominant chord. Often, young-

er students will try to throw an (always) random-sounding lydian-dominant or “altered” lick in over that bar (to “make the change”) before (finally) succumbing to the good taste of what their ears are telling them over what their minds’ eyes are “seeing.” (Just because their eyes are closed doesn’t mean they aren’t “reading” the changes.)

This is a musical instance where harmony is most certainly a frame for the subject melody, and the melody is clearly blues-based and

three performances of Gershwin’s Summertime might include Al Grey’s first two choruses (on the album *Live At Rick’s*), Charlie Parker’s first two choruses (on *Charlie Parker With Strings*) or Ella Fitzgerald’s live 1968 performance in Berlin. All three provide great examples of blues-based melodic performances which provide a wealth of insight to infusing the sound of the blues into performance settings.

Harmony, as we discussed earlier, can often be a red herring when it comes to the

sure packages. The blues transcends formulaic constraints. Operating with a contrary ideology may send your music-making into a sadly uber-consonant, emotionally static abyss devoid of connection with much of the genre’s repertoire and audience. That said, too often, I feel that discussions of form (particularly around blues-based compositions) are often limited to harmonic considerations, when the richness of the blues language is often better revealed in a thematic approach to form.

Don’t paint the frame! Or, as I say it, ‘Put the ink on the canvas.’

minor pentatonic in conception. Don’t paint the frame! Or, as I say it, “Put the ink on the canvas.” While it is true that social media circles will likely reward you for ripping into that diminished-whole-tone lick you’ve been shedding, your audience (in the room) may wonder what the heck it actually had to do with the vibe you’d created during the melody.

Regularly, I’ll spend at least one full semester with a private student working on building an improvisational melodic vocabulary that employs the blues sound to great effect, tasking them to develop improvisational language that is successful over tunes that (to my ears) require this language. These tunes often run the gamut with respect to tempo, form, meter, style and chronological era — and that diversity is one of the chief takeaways of the semester. “Mood Indigo,” “Sister Sadie,” “Summertime,” “The Jody Grind,” “Sugar,” “One For Daddy-O” and “Angel Eyes” are placed right alongside “Used Ta Could” and “Hargrove,” so that students draw the proper conclusions about the endless reservoir of inspiration and connection that blues-based melodies continue to offer.

I’ll add one more log to the fire regarding the pursuit of melodic progress within the blues. It is a false assumption that a scale is equivalent to or as valuable as a melodic idea. The blues scale (if you believe it to be a separate “thing,” more so than a rebranded minor pentatonic scale with the pesky insertion of a chromatic passing tone) is certainly not a starting point for a solo, in my humble opinion. And yet, sadly, it is often the starting point for so many young soloists who somehow seem to always linger too long on that pesky passing tone, seduced by the fleeting appeal of ungoverned, heavy-handed dissonance.

Transcription can also play quite a role in developing melodic success with “getting the blues,” and in my opinion too few students transcribe statements of melodies. Transcribing sections of melodic material on the same tune can be extremely effective. For instance, a study of

trappings (pun intended) of a solely academic approach to music. I’m reminded of a quote that’s attributed to the great saxophonist Coleman Hawkins which spoke of a shift amongst musicians from harmonizing melodies towards melodizing harmonies. One must surely wield a certain proficiency with regards to harmonic understanding, but it should be combined with a melodic imagination that isn’t bound by that proficiency.

In addressing this balance of melody with harmony on an artistic level, I believe composition is a necessary developmental practice. It forces a sort of slow-motion, intentional phrasing paired (hopefully) with an awareness of groove and harmonic color. Cultivating harmonic awareness is an essential part of making progress on blues tunes, and my general feeling is any tune that I can’t arpeggiate at tempo comfortably is a tune I won’t say that I know. By “comfortably,” I mean by ear, without the type of “thinking” that the great Sonny Rollins famously (and, of course, correctly) asserted that “there’s no time to do.”

Critical in this pursuit is the development of an aural awareness of a number of progressions. Blues-based compositions offer countless examples of common progressions that are prime candidates for aural internalization. And yet, these tunes remain some of the most frequently incorrectly played. I used to be able to instruct students to learn the chords to tunes “like a piano player.” What I meant by this instruction was that students should be able to recognize the sound of any of the progressions found within a tune by ear after “learning” that tune. This promotes a quicker and more effective learning of tunes through listening and requires a deep internalization of harmony that often includes vocalization of roots and arpeggios.

Form is quite an interesting concept when applied to the blues, and right out of the gate, we should inform our thinking (via listening) strongly enough to come to the conclusion that the blues doesn’t only come in 12-measure

packages. For instance, if we compare Ellington’s “C Jam Blues” to Sonny Rollins’ “Sonnymoon For Two,” one may be tempted to consider them both “A-A-A” tunes, a thematic description which divides the form into four-bar sections where the initial four-bars of the melody are repeated twice in the full statement of the melody. However, upon attentive listening to the latter, we should note that Rollins’ 12-bar work is constructed in two-bar sections, not four-bar sections. (The first two bars are a call, and the second two bars are a response.) Thus, I’d label “Sonnymoon For Two” an A-B-A-B-A-B (or “A-B times 3”) tune, as completely stating and understanding the melodic form is much more central to the desired pace of the performance than merely recognizing the harmonic form.

Might this affect the performance of the tune? The proof in the (delicious, scrumptious bread) pudding is found in Rollins’ daftly constructed solo choruses, which continue the two-bar unit of phrasing across the timelessly hip stop-time accompaniment. As I continue to learn and write music, it helps to consider three facets equally with regards to a composition’s form: melodic/thematic form, harmonic form (which often offers opportunity for counterpoint and functions as a developmental tool in the repetition of melody) and rhythmic form.

In so many ways, we can observe the blues as an architectural and foundational resource for so much expression in the jazz tradition. Hopefully, this article illuminates the perspectives and practices that have led me towards an artist’s understanding of this tradition of music-making.

I’d encourage any musician to explore how embracing the blues on a deeper level in listening, practice, performance and pedagogy can add effective and impactful flavors to your artistic “menu,” so to speak. And, yes, you can still add in some raisins. Just keep one thing in mind: Nobody’s lining up at the dessert table for a second helping of raisin pudding. **DB**

Since August 2020, saxophonist and composer Rahsaan Barber has served as Assistant Professor of Saxophone and Jazz Studies at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. His most recent recording as a bandleader is *Six Words*, released in September 2024. The album’s original compositions for jazz sextet were hailed by critic Howard Mandel in *DownBeat* as “bearing witness to social inequities and avowing hope for a more just, humane world.”



Peter Bernstein's Guitar Solo on 'Perpetual Pendulum'

Anyone a fan of motivic development? Assuming you answered “yes,” you’re going to dig Peter Bernstein’s guitar solo on his composition “Perpetual Pendulum” from his recent album *Better Angels* (Smoke Sessions).

Motivic development is taking a musical idea (or motif) and developing it over time. There are ideas that Bernstein uses throughout this solo. One example is the descending fifth. The first appearance of this is the first two notes. We hear it again with the next two notes. That’s twice and this is still the pickup (we haven’t even gotten to the solo form proper yet). Then in the next bar we get the same A $\flat$ to D $\flat$ to end the phrase. So, three times in the first lick. Maybe he’s setting us up for something?

Check out how often Bernstein ends

phrases with a descending fifth: measures 2, 4, 6, 8 (more like the beginning of the phrase); 10, 20 (connecting phrases); 21 (though that’s more the middle of a phrase); 28 starts a phrase with a descending fifth, as does 33 (kind of); and in the middle of a phrase again in 34, and ending phrases again in 47 and 49. Did I miss any?

Assuming I didn’t, Bernstein has already done some developing of this small motif by playing it on different pitches, varying what part of the chord it’s on and where it fits rhythmically and at what point in the phrase. But there are other developments as well.

For instance, what’s a fifth upside-down (the inversion)? A fourth. You’ll notice that Bernstein incorporates these as well, but not right away. (Then it wouldn’t be “development,” would it?)

The first instance I notice is at the end of bar 19. But Bernstein doesn’t just start this phrase with a fourth; he plays fourths up until the final note (the minor third from G $\flat$ to E $\flat$). In measure 22 he ends this phrase with a descending fourth. In measure 30 he ends another phrase with a descending fourth and in the very next bar commences a phrase with the same descending fourth. He waited until almost halfway through this solo to introduce this variation, and now we’re getting more of it.

Motives don’t have to consist of notes. There is a strong rhythmic motif that Bernstein employs: triplets leading to a strong beat. Its simplest form can be seen at the end of bar 12 landing on the downbeat of 13, but notice all the variations he creates. There’s the same rhythm but lacking the downbeat

on the triplet. This one happens a number of times: bars 4 and 5, 16, 19–20, and not again until 33 and 44–46. A bit earlier (bars 37–38) he'd anticipated the first note to create another variation.

There are subtler variations, such as doubling the rhythm to quarter-note triplets, as in measures 3, 11, 29 and 48. There are actually quarter-note triplets across the barline in measures 1–2 and 24–25 (but my Sibelius software doesn't allow notating these). Also notice that the first instances have an extra eighth note in them, so we've got a number of variations on these.

Some of you may be thinking, "Hey, there's more to a motif than just an interval or a rhythm." To which I would respond, "You're absolutely right!"

Notice when the triplets ascend and then drop to the long tone, at least in bars 4–5, 9 (displaced an eighth-note triplet), 13 (with the first part of the triplet missing), 17 and 30 (both also displaced eighth-note triplets). But the point of motivic development is not to play it the same way all the time — Bernstein has already presented some variations in the above examples — so he concocts other patterns.

Check out measure 37: the same ascending triplet, but this time it ascends into the long note (a dotted quarter) and then the drop (kind of sweet how the line is bookended by the 13th and flat ninth of the chord). Or bar 22, where Bernstein descends through a triplet, but the third note becomes the beginning of the ascent, so the drop shows up a triplet eighth note early.

His very first lick is an elaborate variation: Instead of ascending up the triplet, he starts with a perfect fifth drop, but then ascends scalewise, but only two notes before dropping another fifth (bringing us to the octave of the first note) and then a longer scalar ascent (with an over-the-barline quarter-note triplet) before another perfect fifth down.

Some of you may be wondering where these motifs come from, and I have somewhat of an answer: the song's melody. We can't present the lead sheet here, but if you listen to the melody you'll hear a lot of triplet figures, many of which are scalar, and with the first part of the triplet omitted. (So, maybe the full triplet is the variation, and the partial triplet figures are the original motif.) Also curious: A lot of them are descending, indicating that Bernstein didn't want to take pieces of the melody verbatim, but preferred to reference it so that his solo is related to the tune, without plagiarizing it.

There are also a lot of fifths and fourths. Not as many as in his solo, but that's sort of the idea: pulling an idea from the melody and developing it within the improvisation.

Another way he does this is in the section over the A^b pedal (measures 18–25 and 42–49). Bernstein limits himself to the E^b minor pentatonic scale. This is the same scale that appears in the melody over the A^b pedal section. So, he may not be playing the same lines,

but he's using the same scale material to further relate his improvisation to the melody. **DB**

Jimi Durso is a guitarist and bassist based in the New York area. He can often be witnessed performing/rehearsing/teaching/pontificating online at twitch.tv/CoincidenceMachine. Find out more about Durso's music at jimidurso.bandcamp.com.

Samson MediaOne MX5BT Compact Studio Monitors

Compact Form, Clean Sound, Complete Connectivity

Since its founding in 1980, Samson has grown to be a leader in professional audio solutions. Initially making its mark with wireless microphone systems, the company has continually expanded and currently offers a range of mics, amps, mixers and PA systems for the professional and home studio markets.

Samson recently unveiled the MediaOne MX5BT powered studio monitor, offering clear studio-grade sound reproduction and Bluetooth connectivity. The MediaOne line follows the company's Resolve monitors, and the MX5BT, along with its smaller brother, the MX3BT, are the latest additions to Samson's MediaOne series.

The new MX5BT appears to be a significant improvement over the previous M50BT monitor. Although they both use 5-inch woofers and ¾-inch dome tweeters with 40 watts per channel, the MX5BT appears to have an upgraded woofer made of polypropylene rather than carbon fiber. In addition, the MX5BT is now bi-amped via two class D amplifiers. EQ controls are also added for individually dialing-in of bass and treble frequencies.

At first glance, the MX5BT speakers are impressively light and compact. At a mere 7.1 inches deep by 8.24 inches wide and 10.75 inches tall, they can easily fit into any workspace. Expanded connectivity options are a notable feature of the monitors. In addition to wireless connectivity through Bluetooth, Samson also offers you ¼-inch TRS, RCA and ⅜-inch

stereo inputs — plenty of options for connecting to any audio setup, including direct RCA connection to a turntable. I took advantage of the wired TRS option to connect to my Mac Studio running Logic Pro. The rear panel adds a two-band EQ feature, with rotary knobs for tweaking your high or bass frequencies.

Cranking up the speakers, I was very impressed with the overall clarity of the sound. The reproduction is accurate and there is nice separation of instrument tracks. Using the "High" and "Low" adjustment knobs, I was able to tailor the sound to my personal preferences. There is also a master volume control and a headphone output on the front panel. The MX5BT features a rear bass port to enhance bottom-end clarity.

The port also means that the speakers will be impacted by proximity to walls behind them, so placement can be used to your benefit. They are intended to be used as nearfield monitors. Naturally, being a compact 5-inch speaker, you will not get the booming bass of a larger monitor. However, the Samson does produce a nice, tight, distortion-free bass tone. The silk dome tweeters reproduce the highs nicely, and even more importantly, the trebles are smooth, so you can listen to these for extended intervals without suffering from ear fatigue.

MediaOne MX5BT monitors are available for \$179 and are certainly a solid option for a wide variety of users.

—Keith Baumann



samsontech.com

Samson FM1 Instrument Microphone

Distortion-Free, Close-Up Miking for Amps & Drums

Samson's microphone line now includes the FM1 Instrument Microphone, the company's first side-address offering. Featuring a flat form factor and dynamic capsule capable of handling loud sound sources, it's a great choice for miking speaker cabinets and drums. Although Samson already features a robust variety of microphones, it has never previously offered one specifically designed for close-up miking of amp cabinets and drums. Now the new FM1 fills that void.

With its sleek, flat profile and sturdy zinc body, the FM1 is the perfect design for close placement to a speaker cabinet or over a drum surface. The supercardioid capsule is even internally shockmounted to help it deal with aggressive sound and vibration. The mic is capable of handling a whopping 130dB SPL without distorting. It has a frequency response of 50Hz to 15kHz, which is the same as the legendary Shure SM58. The side-address design allows for closer placement on sound sources, and its off-axis sound rejection helps in eliminating background noise and feedback.

Putting the FM1 through its paces on a few guitar amps, it performed well, handling the volume without distorting and providing that natural compression to help fatten the tone as a dynamic mic tends to do.

I really liked the ability to just hang it over my amp face without needing a mic stand or mount. Also, the wider capsule picks up a bigger area of the speaker as compared to a top-address mic like the 58 when placed close. At only \$99, it's a great option to have in any player's gear bag or a mighty handy addition to any sound tech's toolkit.

—Keith Baumann



samsontech.com



DOWNBEAT 49TH ANNUAL
STUDENT
MUSIC AWARDS

STARTING NOVEMBER 1

WHO'S NEXT?

**Apply Online to the 49th
Annual Student Music Awards**

*For details and how to apply, visit downbeat.com/sma
or contact Sue Mahal at (630) 941-2030
or sma@downbeat.com*

Steven Hardy, Eastman School of Music (Photo by Steve Edwards)

DB Music Shop >

For Rates: call (630) 941-2030. All ads are prepaid, no agency commission. Check, money order, and all major credit cards are accepted. **Deadline:** Ad copy and full payment must arrive 2 months prior to DB cover date. **Send your advertisement by MAIL:** DownBeat Classifieds, 188 W. Industrial Drive, Ste. 310, Elmhurst, Illinois, 60126, **EMAIL:** cameron@downbeat.com.

WE BUY OLD RECORDS!
WE MAKE HOUSE CALLS ANYWHERE IN THE USA
CALL US TOLL FREE
888-993-4673

 **LP's, 45s, 78 & 12"**
No Collection is too Large!

 **www.pmwoodwind.com**
847-869-7049

Chicago's Best Store for Saxophones
& all other Woodwinds. Great Selection. Expert Repair.

ONLINE JAZZ LESSONS.

Study all styles & aspects
of jazz improvisation and
saxophone with

Jeff Harrington,
Berklee Professor, MIT
Affiliated Artist, Harvard
University MLSP Instructor.

www.jeffharrington.com
Email: lessons@jeffharrington.com.
617-332-0176.

JAMEY AEBERSOLD JAZZ

World famous play-a-longs, books,
CDs, and DVDs for every improvising
musician from novice to pro.

jazzbooks.com

OVER 2,000 PRACTICE TRACKS
STREAMING.JAZZBOOKS.COM

JAZZ DVD'S / VIDEO

Concerts, documentaries, movies, TV,
DVDs, Videotapes, Laserdiscs

We take requests at:
service@jazzwestdvd.com

JAZZWEST,
BOX 842 (DB), Ashland, OR 97520
(541) 482-5529 www.jazzwestdvd.com

STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, AND CIRCULATION AS REQUIRED BY 39 USC 3685. 1. PUBLICATION TITLE: DOWNBEAT 2. PUBLICATION NUMBER: 0470-770 3. FILING DATE: 10/01/25 4. ISSUE FREQUENCY: MONTHLY 5. NUMBER OF ISSUES PUBLISHED ANNUALLY: 12 6. ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION PRICE: \$31.99 7. COMPLETE MAILING ADDRESS OF KNOWN OFFICE OF PUBLICATION: 188 W. INDUSTRIAL DR., SUITE 310, DUPAGE COUNTY, ELMHURST, IL 60126-1611 8. COMPLETE MAILING ADDRESS OF HEADQUARTERS OR GENERAL BUSINESS OFFICE OF PUBLISHER: SAME AS ABOVE 9. FULL NAMES AND COMPLETE MAILING ADDRESSES OF PUBLISHER, EDITOR AND ASSOCIATE EDITOR: PUBLISHER- FRANK ALKYER, ADDRESS SAME AS ABOVE; EDITOR- FRANK ALKYER, ADDRESS SAME AS ABOVE; 10. OWNER: KEVIN MAHER, 188 W. INDUSTRIAL DR., SUITE 310, DUPAGE COUNTY, ELMHURST, IL 60126-1611 11. KNOWN BONDHOLDERS: NONE 12. TAX STATUS HAS NOT CHANGED DURING PREVIOUS 12 MONTHS 13. PUBLICATION TITLE: DOWNBEAT 14. ISSUE DATE FOR CIRCULATION DATA BELOW: OCTOBER 2025 15. EXTENT AND NATURE OF CIRCULATION: CONSUMER MUSIC MAGAZINE (JAZZ) 15A. TOTAL NUMBER OF COPIES: AVERAGE NO. OF COPIES EACH ISSUE DURING PRECEDING 12 MONTHS (12 MO. AVG.) 21,547 ACTUAL NO. COPIES OF SINGLE ISSUE PUBLISHED NEAREST TO THE FILING DATE (ACTUAL) 24,282 15B. PAID CIRCULATION 15B(1). MAILED OUTSIDE-COUNTY PAID SUBSCRIPTIONS STATED ON FORM 3541: TOTAL NUMBER OF COPIES: 12 MO. AVG.- 9,050; ACTUAL- 9,208 15B(2). MAILED IN-COUNTY PAID SUBSCRIPTIONS STATED ON FORM 3541: TOTAL NUMBER OF COPIES: 12 MO. AVG.- 0; ACTUAL- 0 15B(3). PAID DISTRIBUTION OUTSIDE THE MAILED INCLUDING SALES THROUGH DEALERS AND CARRIERS, STREET VENDORS, COUNTER SALES AND OTHER PAID DISTRIBUTION OUTSIDE USPS: TOTAL NUMBER OF COPIES: 12 MO. AVG.- 4,248; ACTUAL - 4,231 15B(4). PAID DISTRIBUTION BY OTHER CLASSES OF MAIL THROUGH THE USPS: TOTAL NUMBER OF COPIES: 12 MO. AVG.- 1,221; ACTUAL- 1,314 15C. TOTAL PAID DISTRIBUTION: 12 MO. AVG.- 14,520; ACTUAL- 14,753 15D. FREE OR NOMINAL RATE DISTRIBUTION 15D(1). FREE OR NOMINAL RATE OUTSIDE COUNTY INCLUDED ON FORM 3541: TOTAL NUMBER OF COPIES: 12 MO. AVG.- 0; ACTUAL- 0 15D(2). FREE OR NOMINAL RATE IN-COUNTY COPIES INCLUDED ON FORM 3541: TOTAL NUMBER OF COPIES: 12 MO. AVG.- 0; ACTUAL- 0 15D(3). FREE OR NOMINAL RATE COPIES MAILED AT OTHER CLASSES THROUGH USPS TOTAL NUMBER OF COPIES: 12 MO. AVG.- 0; ACTUAL- 0 15D(4). FREE OR NOMINAL RATE DISTRIBUTION OUTSIDE OF MAIL 12 MO. AVG.- 6,468; ACTUAL- 9,089 15E. TOTAL FREE OR NOMINAL RATE DISTRIBUTION OUTSIDE THE MAIL: 12 MO. AVG.- 6,468; ACTUAL- 9,089 15F. TOTAL DISTRIBUTION: TOTAL NUMBER OF COPIES: 12 MO. AVG.- 20,991; ACTUAL- 23,842 15G. COPIES NOT DISTRIBUTED: 12 MO. AVG.- 555; ACTUAL - 440 15H. TOTAL NUMBER OF COPIES: 12 MO. AVG.- 21,545; ACTUAL- 24,282 15I. PERCENT PAID: 12 MO. AVG.- 69%; ACTUAL- 62% 16A. PAID ELECTRONIC COPIES: 12 MO. AVG.- 987; ACTUAL- 1015 16B. AVERAGE TOTAL PAID PRINT COPIES (LINE 15C + 16A): 15,507; ACTUAL- 15,768 16C. AVERAGE TOTAL PRINT DISTRIB. (LINE 15F + 16A): 21,978; ACTUAL- 24,857 16D. AVERAGE PERCENTAGE PAID (BOTH PRINT & ELECTRONIC COPIES (16B DIV. BY 16C x 100): 70%; ACTUAL- 63% 17. PUBLICATION OF STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP: PUBLICATION REQUIRED. WILL BE PRINTED IN THE DECEMBER 2025 ISSUE OF THIS PUBLICATION.

DB Buyers Guide >

32 Bar Blues 71 32barblues.com	FocusYear Basel 12 focusyearbasel.com	Rovner MC LLC 10 rovnerproducts.com
ACT Music 51 actmusic.com	FX Music Group / Usein	Ruby Slippers
Alma Records 10 almarecords.com	Bekirov 71 orcd.co/free_way_deluxe	Productions 6 lisahiltonmusic.com
Arbors Records 43 arborsrecords.com	GRAPPA 67 grappa.no	Second Records 60 second-records.com
Blue Note Records 4-5, 71 bluenote.com	Jazz at the Ballroom 67 jazzattheballroom.com	Signature Cruise
Bob Holz Band 47 bobholzband.com	JEN – Jazz Education	Experiences 16 scecruises.com
Brooklyn Jazz	Network 48 jazzednet.org	Smoke Sessions 11, 60 smokesessionsrecords.com
Underground Records 67 bjurecords.com	JodyJazz 67, 84 jodyjazz.com	Sunnyside
Cannonball Music 7 cannonballmusic.com	Légère 13 legere.com	Records 29 sunnysiderecords.com
Casio 9 casio.com	Liberation Hall 63 liberationhall.com	Time Traveler
Chicago Jazz Orchestra	LP345 Records 67 lp345-records.com	Records 65 instagram.com/ timetravelerrecordings
Association 71 cjomusic.org	Mack Avenue 20, 21, 31 mackavenue.com	Tom Cohen
Chill Tone Records 47 chilltone.com	Manhattan School of	Productions 60 tomcohenproductions.com
Cold Plunge Records 22 coldplungerecords.com	Music 23 msmnyc.edu	TurnTable Tickets 19 turntabletickets.com
Cowbell Music 47 cowbellmusic.dk	MVD Entertainment	USAF Bands 45 music.af.mil/bands
Craft Recordings 17 craftrecordings.com	Group 53 mvdshop.com	Vandoren 3 dansr.com
DownBeat 6, 79 downbeat.com	Origin Records 2 originarts.com	Verve Label
Edition Doublemoon 39 edition-doublemoon.de	P. Mauriat 83 pmauriatmusic.com	Group 60 ververecords.com
Elemental Records 25 elemental-music.com	Ravinia 14 ravinia.org	Wayne Wilkinson 60 waynewilkinson.com
	Resonance Records 69 resonancerecords.org	William Paterson
		University 37 wpunj.edu/jazz



SUBSCRIBE

877-904-JAZZ

Dan Wilson

The first-ever live DownBeat Blindfold Test at September's Pittsburgh International Jazz Festival was also the maiden-voyage Blindfold Test for its artist in residence, guitarist Dan Wilson. Based in nearby Akron, Ohio, Wilson's fourth leader album was the recently issued *Things Eternal* (Mack Avenue/Brother Mister), following consequential sideperson experience during the 2010s with Christian McBride and Joey DeFrancesco. Wilson, 41, addressed 10 selections — all by guitarists from Western Pennsylvania and Northern Ohio.

George Benson

"Naima" (*Guitar Man*, Concord, 2011) Benson, guitar; David Garfield, piano; Ben Williams, bass; Harvey Mason, drums.

George Benson playing seven-string guitar tuned to D with his thumb. I've never heard him play "Naima." [afterwards] I remember when this came out. His technical ability with the pick is so great, I think sometimes he played with his thumb just to challenge himself. He can sing all those intricate lines he plays. He literally sings through his instrument, which separates him from a lot of other guitarists.

Ahmad Jamal/Ray Crawford/Israel Crosby

"New Rhumba" (*Chamber Music Of The New Jazz*, Argo, 1955) Jamal, piano; Crawford, guitar; Crosby, bass.

No mistaking Ahmad Jamal. But I cannot remember the the guitar player's name. [afterwards] The conga beat he played on the guitar body stood out. He did that on Ahmad Jamal's arrangement of "Billy Boy," which Miles Davis liked so much that on *Milestones* he gave it to Red Garland, Philly Joe Jones and Paul Chambers as a trio feature. My dear friend Russell Malone did that, and I always loved it. Joey DeFrancesco couldn't stand it. I'd say, "Man, what's wrong with you?"

Joe Negri

"It's A Beautiful Day In The Neighborhood" (*Uptown Elegance*, MCG, 2004) Negri, guitar; Marty Ashby, acoustic guitar; Dwayne Dolphin, bass; Roger Humphries, drums; Jay Ashby, percussion; Fred Rogers, composer.

Joe Diorio? [Are you thinking of another Joe?] I meant Joe Negri. That's interesting, to hear the *Mister Rogers* theme song on a samba. He was the Handyman! He's a Pittsburgh legend. I've never heard Roger play a samba. He sounded great. The vocabulary is authentic. Joe Negri had the stuff you want to hear vocabulary-wise, the beautiful lines, but what really strikes me is his super warm tone. You can tell he's playing a big jazz box, but the sound he gets just from his hands is really inviting.

Paul Bollenback

"Cat's Eye" (*Double Gemini*, Challenge, 1997) Bollenback, guitar; Joey DeFrancesco, Hammond B-3; Jeff "Tain" Watts, drums.

I'm stumped. [afterwards] Wow. I know all those guys well. Paul has a particular attack and comping style that Joey loved. He actually taught me how to comp behind Joey, because I was lost in the sauce. [You were with Joey DeFrancesco from 2015 to 2020.] It was a great run. I got a serious butt-kicking. The song sounded like a standard. It was beautiful.

James Emery

"Lotus Blossom" (*Inside Outlier*, Independent Release, 2024) Emery, acoustic guitar.

"Lotus Blossom." When it started, I thought it might be an oud. I'm not sure who it is. I loved it, especially the punchy sound of the low notes, and the rubato timing, which is tough to master — when you play out of time, you still have to think about where your phrases land.



"That silky tone, the tonal clarity. It's like hearing a relative's voice; you know it immediately," Wilson said of Kenny Burrell.

Sheryl Bailey

"East To Wes" (*A New Promise*, MCG, 2009) Bailey, guitar; Jay Ashby, trombone solo; MCG Orchestra.

At first, the octave playing made me think of Jimmy Ponder. But that soli was very aligned with the horn. To double a horn like that and get all the articulations is really difficult, and they nailed it. Great balance with the horns. I don't know the tune. [afterwards] We played a duo at Stanford. We have the same picking technique, so we really connected.

Jimmy Ponder

"Mr. Magic" (*James Street*, High Note, 1997) Ponder, overdubbed guitar; Dwayne Dolphin, bass.

"Mr. Magic." I played so many bad versions of this song on those 'hood gigs I used to do, it's tough for me to listen to it. This version was cool. I don't know if I wanted to hear it on two guitars. [afterwards] Jimmy Ponder? No way! I love them both.

Bern Nix Trio

"Just Friends" (*Alarms And Excursions*, New World, Counter-Currents, 1993) Nix, guitar; Fred Hopkins, bass; Newman Taylor Baker, drums.

Not my favorite. He has a tendency to rush, a little on top of the beat. I like the phrases more settled. My favorite players — Grant Green, Wes Montgomery — sit in the middle. [afterwards] I don't know Bern Nix.

Jim Hall/Pat Metheny

"Django" (*By Arrangement*, Telarc, 1998) Hall, Metheny, acoustic guitars; Scott Colley, bass; Terry Clarke, drums.

I love "Django." Two guitarists. I hear scatting, singing the lines in the background. I like that type of eighth-note feel, in the middle of the beat. It makes it swing a little harder. I can tell the guitarist favors downstrokes from how they hold the pick; the attack is very percussive. The arrangement was excellent, with everything you want, all the sections done sensitively, good comping from the second guitarist. I'm not sure who it is. [afterwards] No way! I've got some listening to do.

Kenny Burrell/Stanley Turrentine

"Chitlins Con Carne" (*Midnight Blue*, Blue Note, 1963) Burrell, guitar; Turrentine, tenor saxophone; Major Holley, bass; Bill English, drums; Ray Barretto, conga.

Kenny Burrell. He seems to favor downstrokes, too. That silky tone, the tonal clarity. It's like hearing a relative's voice; you know it immediately. I was so locked into Kenny, I didn't focus on the tenor saxophone. Ah, Stanley Turrentine. [laughs] The same thing. A couple of notes, and you know it's him.

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.

ROXY COSS

PLAYS THE SYSTEM-76TULF

Grammy Award-Winning Musician, Composer, Bandleader, Recording Artist, Educator and Activist Roxy Coss is the Founder and President of Women in Jazz Organization (WIJO), Director of Jazz Studies at Stony Brook University and is the Co-Artistic Director of the Brubeck Jazz Summit.

Roxy's new EP **Never Meet Your Heroes** is available wherever you access your music.



www.roxycoss.com



Pmauriat

Go for the Sound

www.pmauriat.com

A Special Custom Edition That's Now Available to Everyone

The New DV JC JODY CUSTOM

"Big, fat and warm with enough power for the variety of jobs I do, but sweet and dark enough to play beautiful ballads. It feels even less like a metal piece than the other DVs." – Jody Espina



DV JC JODY CUSTOM
Alto

