

61st Annual Critics Poll

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Jazz
ARTIST

Jazz
ALBUM

Without A Net

Jazz
GROUP

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Quartet

Soprano
SAX

Hall of Fame

Charlie Haden
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Tia Fuller

91 Top Albums

AUGUST 2013

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AUGUST 2013

Inside



Charlie Haden

MICHAEL PIAZZA

Cover photo of Wayne Shorter by Adam McCullough

ON THE COVER

61st Annual Critics Poll

20 Wayne Shorter

Jazz Artist, Jazz Album, Jazz Group & Soprano Saxophone

WITH ESSAYS BY JOSEF WOODARD, JOE LOVANO AND JON IRABAGON

The saxophonist lands a quadruple-crown of victories.

28 Top Jazz Albums

30 Charlie Haden

Hall of Fame

BY ED ENRIGHT

36 Robert Johnson
Veterans Committee

Hall of Fame

BY FRANK-JOHN HADLEY

38 Top Historical Albums

40 Christian McBride

Bass

BY TED PANKEN

42 Wadada Leo Smith

Composer

BY AARON COHEN

44 Tia Fuller

Rising Star Alto Saxophone & Rising Star Flute

BY ALLEN MORRISON

46 Gregory Porter

Rising Star Jazz Artist & Rising Star Male Vocalist

BY SHAUN BRADY

48 Gerald Clayton

Rising Star Piano

BY JOE TANGARI

50 Jason Marsalis

Rising Star Vibes

BY PHILLIP LUTZ

52 Derrick Hodge

Rising Star Electric Bass

BY HILARY BROWN

54 Complete Critics Poll Results

30



72 Tommy Emmanuel/Martin Taylor



78 Gregory Tardy



79 Keith Jarrett/Gary Peacock/Jack DeJohnette



84 Wallace Roney

DEPARTMENTS

8 First Take

10 Chords & Discords

13 The Beat

69 Reviews

94 Master Class
By Gabriel Alegria

96 Transcription

98 Toolshed

102 Jazz On Campus

106 Blindfold Test
Javon Jackson

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TEENAGERS ARE IMPRESSIONABLE. SEEING A GREAT MUSICIAN when you're a youngster can alter your life's path.

Javon Jackson was 13 when he met Dexter Gordon in Denver and said to himself, "I want to do just what he does." Jackson looked up to Gordon—both figuratively and literally—as he vividly explains in this month's Blindfold Test, which also includes his anecdote about seeing Sonny Stitt in concert. When Wayne Shorter was 15 years old, he saw Lester Young perform in Newark, N.J. Charlie Haden was 18 when he grabbed a seat on the front row to see Paul Chambers share the bandstand with Miles Davis, John Coltrane and Philly Joe Jones in Los Angeles.

In hindsight, the artists see these as formative experiences. Today Jackson is an acclaimed saxophonist with a discography of more than a dozen leader projects, and last year he released the CD *Celebrating John Coltrane*.

And what ever happened to those kids crazy kids named Wayne and Charlie? Well, Shorter takes home *four* awards in this year's Critics Poll, and Haden has just been elected as the 134th member of the DownBeat Hall of Fame.

As he approaches his 80th birthday, Shorter remains one of the most revered musicians on the planet. He stands eternally youthful and vital, garnering wins for Jazz Artist, Jazz Album (for *Without A Net*), Jazz Group (for the Wayne Shorter Quartet) and Soprano Saxophone in this year's poll. A decade after he was elected into the DownBeat Hall of Fame, Shorter—whose bandmates in the quartet are pianist Danilo Pérez, bassist John Patitucci and drummer Brian Blade—continues to make some of the most exciting music of his career.

For this issue, we recruited a couple of saxophonists (who are both poll winners) to write about Shorter's unique artistry. Both of them have admired Shorter's work since the days when they were young, aspiring musicians. Joe Lovano, this year's winner in the Tenor Saxophone category, offers a loving, poetic, exuberant tribute to Shorter. Jon Irabagon, our winner for Rising Star—Tenor Saxophone, describes some of his favorite musical moments in Shorter's oeuvre.

Haden, the ultra-melodic bassist, has been an integral contributor to the music of dozens of Hall of Famers. And now, he rightfully joins Ornette Coleman, Keith Jarrett and so many more of his collaborators. We welcome Mr. Haden to the Hall of Fame. Our feature (starting on page 30) illustrates his deep love for the music and for his colleagues. Haden has been appearing in (and reading) DownBeat for a half-century.

Each year, our Critics Poll provides a thorough picture of what's happening in the world of jazz, blues and improvised music. With 165 critics voting, and more than 1,000 artists listed, these results provide an invaluable database for anyone who wants to explore the noteworthy singers and instrumentalists who are making waves in 2013. This issue is your invitation to the greatest virtual concert imaginable. Dig in. **DB**



Wayne Shorter

ADAM MCCULLOUGH

LP CONGRATULATES ITS ARTISTS FOR THEIR RECOGNITION IN THE 61ST ANNUAL DOWNBEAT CRITICS POLL

JAZZ ALBUM

Yosvany Terry, *Today's Opinion* (Criss Cross)

HISTORICAL ALBUM

Tito Puente, *Quatro: The Definitive Collection* (Sony Music Latin)

BIG BAND

Arturo O'Farrill & the Afro-Latin Jazz Orchestra

DRUMS

Antonio Sanchez • Cindy Blackman-Santana

PERCUSSION

Cyro Baptista (winner)

Bobby Sanabria • Zakir Hussain • Airto Moreira
Giovanni Hidalgo • Pedrito Martínez • John Santos

BEYOND ARTIST OR GROUP

Alabama Shakes

BEYOND ALBUM

Alabama Shakes, *Boys & Girls* (ATO)
David Byrne & St. Vincent, *Love This Giant* (4AD)

RIISING STAR BIG BAND

Bobby Sanabria Big Band • Tommy Igoe's Birdland Big Band
Maraca & His Latin Jazz All Stars

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Snark Attack

As a DownBeat reader since 1961, I have a comment regarding one of your Hot Box critics. The time has come to tell Paul de Barros to please cut back on the snark. In the May issue, he dropped a musical deuce on Aaron Diehl with a 2½-star review of the pianist's *The Bespoke Man's Narrative* and never took the time to mention the incredible musicality of Rodney Green's drumming on that CD. Then, in the July issue, his 2-star comments offered nothing constructive in criticizing saxophonist Joshua Redman's album *Walking Shadows*. To call the work "dull" really provides no content upon which to judge. Looking over the majority of his reviews, I can only assume that most of the music de Barros enjoys is the kind that brings spontaneous rectal bleeding to the listener. Paul de Barros is not a person to be taken seriously any longer. His personality gets too much in the way.

THE REV. JEFFREY WALKER
JHWEHW@MAC.COM



From left:
Drummer Rodney Green, pianist Aaron Diehl, vibraphonist Warren Wolf and bassist David Wong

Standing Tall

Paquito D'Rivera's tribute to the late pianist Bebo Valdés ("The Big Horse Rides Away," July) endeared me to your magazine differently than any another time I've been moved during the 40-plus years that I've subscribed to DownBeat. I hope my reaction makes you stand even a little taller by your invaluable publication.

NED CORMAN
ROCHESTER, N.Y.

Sayer a Video Star

I enjoyed the article on banjoist Cynthia Sayer a great deal (Players, June). Before reading that profile, I had never heard of the plectrum banjo (I played the five-string as a teen 40 years ago). I watched videos of her playing on YouTube and was floored. As a consequence, I'm going to order a plectrum banjo next month and take the plunge! Sayer displays great diversity in her approach to the plectrum banjo, while at the same time staying true to the traditions of the instrument.

ERIC PAUL
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Too Foul?

I am writing in regard to the Blindfold Test with David Weiss in your May issue. In his comments about the Peter Evans Quintet, Mr. Weiss' description includes the "f-word," saying, "It's pretty random for him to f@*# with his sound like that" Please keep in mind that your educational subscriptions reach younger audiences, and as an educator, I am disappointed that this kind of language would be acceptable.

DownBeat is a great way to get students interested in jazz. They can read articles about artists like Tia Fuller and Terence Blanchard, as well as masters of jazz like Dave Brubeck. My students look forward to the Woodshed section to obtain information about how artists think via the transcriptions. I do not condone this type of language in my classroom. DownBeat and its contributors should put more consideration into who the magazine's audience is.

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Corrections

- In the Reviews section of the July issue, the Ordering Info was incorrect for two albums. The website for *Finas Misturas (Fine Mixtures)* by Antonio Adolfo is aammusic.com. The website for *A Quiet Thing* by Madeline Eastman & Randy Porter is madelineeastman.com.
- In the July issue, the article "The Art of the Archtop" contained a misspelling of the name of Adam Aronson, Sales V.P. at D'Angelico Guitars.
- In the June issue, there was a misspelling in the Student Music Awards section. In the category Classical Soloist, the junior high school winner is viola player Eugenea Raychaudhuri.
- In the June issue, a Toolshed article on Peter Ponzol saxophone mouthpieces incorrectly stated the tip-opening size of two tenor mouthpieces sent to DownBeat for review, the TM2 SL 100 and TM2 PLUS SL 100. The correct size is 110 (.110 inches).

DOWNBEAT REGRETS THE ERRORS.

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Inside

- 14 / French Quarter Festival
- 15 / Brad Mehldau at SFJAZZ
- 16 / Nicole Mitchell Q&A
- 18 / Mulgrew Miller

Beat

Lickety Split Signifies Robert Randolph Revival

On “Get Ready,” a track from pedal-steel man-of-steel Robert Randolph’s Blue Note debut, *Lickety Split*, the leader and his trusty sidekick never let up. For just about the entirety of the song’s five minutes and nine seconds, Randolph makes his axe speak, simmer, shred and scream. It jumps for joy. It teeters on the edge of hysteria. Over the steady, pushing drums, thick, soulful bass and fat, ecstatic organ of his longtime crew, the Family Band, it sings. It testifies.

But “Get Ready” isn’t special, really; Randolph conjures this sort of playing in many places on *Lickety Split*. His steel skills aren’t kept in the cupboard for special occasions; they’re always out front, making a joyful noise.

A native New Jerseyan, Randolph has covered a lot of ground since moving from church services to the secular realm in 2000. He’s collaborated with Eric Clapton and the Dirty Dozen Brass Band, recorded for a major label and scored a spot on the David Fricke-assembled list of “100 Greatest Guitarists” published by Rolling Stone in 2003. But, frustrated with the business side of things, he fell into a creative rut prior to signing with Blue Note. *Lickety Split* signals something of a rebirth.

“Well, [the slump is] over, because we recorded so much music and that’s the fun part about it,” explains Randolph. “I mean, there’ll be B-sides and everything to come. And deluxe sets. And 18 months from now, another record [will] come out. We’re in that mode where we’re now dealing with a label that allows us to be creative as often as we want to.”

On *Lickety Split*, that creativity includes bringing outside musicians into the fold. Trombone Shorty gets down on the exuberant “Take The Party.” Veteran guitarist Carlos Santana turns the heat up on the disco jam “Brand New Wayo.”

“For years, I’ve been talking to Carlos. He said, ‘Man, we got to get together. Me and you, we gotta get in the studio and go at it and do this and do that,’” says Randolph. “It was great to get in with him because he’s like, ‘I got this idea. Man, I can see everybody at all of the festivals. I can see you playing and everybody going, ‘Hey! It’s a brand new wayo.’ He’s like, ‘Let’s just get in. Forget about the bridges and the choruses. Let’s create a vibe. And let’s create something that people wanna dance to. And all the girls wanna dance to.’ That’s just Carlos. He’s one of those kind of guys.”

There was a heavy-hitter behind the scenes, too. Eddie Kramer, an engineer whose resume includes Led Zeppelin and Jimi Hendrix, sat at the boards for *Lickety Split*.

“The thing with Robert is that his sound is so dialed-in in his head,” says



Kramer. “He knows what he wants to hear. And I’m the vehicle. I help transfer it into the real world.”

Kramer also engineered *Robert Randolph Presents: The Slide Brothers*, released in February on Concord Records. Though Randolph appears on a few tracks from the album, the Slide Brothers are steel players Calvin Cooke, Aubrey Ghent, Chuck Campbell and Darick Campbell; Randolph’s role here is that of producer and instigator. On the record, most tunes pair two or three of the Slide Brothers at a time with a rhythm section (some match just one). The various groupings run through traditional pieces (“Motherless Children,” “Wade In The Water”), pop songs (George Harrison’s “My Sweet Lord,” the Allman Brothers’ “Don’t Keep Me Wonderin’”) and blues classics (“The Sky Is Crying,” “It Hurts Me Too”). For Randolph, one point of the project is to show that he is hardly the only steel player out there, and hardly the first to do it.

“What happened was, everybody thought I was just some guy from New Jersey, some strange kid who just started one day to want to play pedal steel. And it’s like, no, this is kind of like the Buena Vista Social Club story, man,” says Randolph. “This has been going on in our church organization for 80-plus years.”

—Brad Farberman



Dianne Reeves

Viva Barcelona: Organizers of the 45th annual Voll-Damn Festival International de Jazz de Barcelona have announced this year's lineup of artists, who will play in venues throughout Barcelona between Oct. 19 and Dec. 1. Featured performances will include vocalist Dianne Reeves, pianist Chucho Valdés and the Afro-Cuban Messengers, the Jack DeJohnette Group with saxophonist Don Byron and a special saxophone summit at the Teatre-Auditori Sant Cugat.

Dorough Duets: Bob Dorough, who will turn 90 on Dec. 12, has released an album of duets as a fundraising project for the Celebration of the Arts (COTA) Jazz Festival in Delaware Water Gap, Pa. *Duets* pairs Dorough with artist such as New York Voices, Nellie McKay, JD Walter, Heather Masse and Grace Kelly, and it features Phil Woods and Dave Liebman on saxophones. The recording also supports COTA's annual jazz camp.

Summertime Koz: Saxophonist David Koz has assembled a group that includes Gerald Albright, Richard Elliot and Minda Abair to revisit the horn sections of the 1960s and '70s on *Dave Koz And Friends: Summer Horns*, a June 11 Concord release. The four saxophonists cover bands such as Chicago and Earth Wind & Fire. The group will showcase the album on a summer tour that includes stops at the Boston Common (July 14) and the Hollywood Bowl (Aug. 18).

Songbook Show: The New Jersey Performing Arts Center (NJPAC) has partnered with New Jersey public television network NJTV on the production of a new music television series, "American Songbook At NJPAC." The show will feature performances by Bill Charlap, Tom Wopat, Valerie Simpson and Rebecca Luker and will be taped before a live audience at NJPAC. It will air on NJTV and WNET this fall.

Regional Talent, Easy Access Boost French Quarter Festival

AT THE THREE-DECADE MARK, THE FRENCH Quarter Festival thrives in the shadow of another big springtime music gathering, the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival. Some might view the French Quarter Festival in terms of what it's not: The fest offers some of the same regional acts as that more-celebrated event, but none of the big national rock and pop acts, no admission fees and no daily commutes from the hotels to the concerts. But the easy access is a major plus. Out-of-towners staying in the Quarter are just steps away from the music, and any festgoer needing a respite from the April sun—or showers—can easily pop in to nearby restaurants, bars and shops.

For its 30th anniversary edition—held April 11–14 on 20 stages spread across the Vieux Carre, stretching from venues along the Mississippi River down to locations near the French Market—the French Quarter Festival drew a locals-heavy crowd of approximately 562,000 to hear artists reflecting nearly every flavor of New Orleans and Louisiana musical culture. More than 300,000 people attended on April 13, setting a one-day record for the event.

The Louisiana State Museum at the Old U.S. Mint on leafy Esplanade Avenue also played host to one of the fest's highlights, a closing concert by the durable Astral Project. Assembled five years before the French Quarter Festival's inaugural run, the band remains an ensemble of top-shelf improvisers and stylists whose invigorating, forward-leaning jazz incorporates a panoply of New Orleans textures and grooves.

The quartet began its 90-minute set with guitarist Steve Masakowski's "Voodoo Bop," a fan favorite that boasted a blend of hometown funk and swirling bop, followed by a modified blues tune that had the band trading eights with drummer Johnny Vidacovich. A bright reading of Billy Strayhorn's "Chelsea Bridge" had saxophonist Tony Dagradi starting alone on tenor and closing with a solo cadenza; in between, Masakowski offered a long, probing solo and bassist James Singleton turned in some creative arco work.

Masakowski's "North Ridge," which opened with flickering guitar, bowed bass and shimmering cymbals, shifted from tenor-led balladry to soaring guitar over heavily interactive bass and drums. The bluesy, octave-jumping tenor melody of "Cowboy Bill" later gave way to a guitar power trio section, reggae-tinted grooves and open space for Singleton to play a rangy solo over his own looped slaps and pops. As always, the musicians of Astral Project put together disparate elements in a manner that came off as entirely organic.

Singleton was on stage for another of the

fest's highlights, a Saturday performance by pianist Tom McDermott and His Jazz Hellions. McDermott, a locally revered keys man, a day earlier paid tribute to Professor Longhair, James Booker and Jelly Roll Morton as part of a "Piano Professors" salute with Joe Crown and Ronald Markham Jr. at a packed-out Irvin Mayfield's Jazz Playhouse on Bourbon Street. For the Jazz Hellions show, McDermott and Singleton were joined by clarinetist Evan Christopher and singer/soprano saxophonist Aurora Nealand for a standing-room-only performance at the Palm Court Cafe, a traditional jazz haven. The decidedly retro fare—"Saint Louis Blues," "Miss The Mississippi And You," "Darkness On The Delta," "Trouble In Mind," "Just A Little While To Stay Here"—was topped with Christopher's warm,



Steve Masakowski (left) and Tony Dagradi of Astral Project

PHILIP BOOTH

full-bodied tone and bracing improvisations.

As in previous years, the festival featured a sampler of regional delights, from Crescent City sounds to the zydeco and Cajun music of south Louisiana. Masakowski, joined by a band including his son Martin on bass, pianist Victor Atkins and saxophonist Rex Gregory, played music by Ellis Marsalis, Harold Batiste and James Black at the Jazz Playhouse. Saxophonist Donald Harrison Jr. thrilled a huge, attentive crowd at Woldenberg Riverfront Park with jazz-funk that leaned smooth, while Meschiya Lake, a regular singer at the landmark Windsor Court luxury hotel, brought an authentic '20s/'30s vibe to the French Market Traditional Jazz Stage.

Also heard: exhilarating sets by New Orleans soul queen Irma Thomas; Bill Summers & Jazalsa, sporting a mix of jazz, Latin and funk; the trad-minded New Orleans Jazz Vipers; tuba player Matt Perrine's Sunflower City; the blues-rock Colin Lake Trio; and the rave-up gospel and blues of the Mercy Brothers, from Lafayette, La. Festgoers went away satisfied with huge helpings of the region's music and food, but still wanting more. Mission accomplished. —Philip Booth

Mehldau Plays by Numbers at SFJAZZ



CHUCK GEE

Brad Mehldau (left), Larry Grenadier and Jeff Ballard

DURING BRAD MEHLDAU'S FOUR-NIGHT "1, 2, 2, 3" RESIDENCY AT SFJAZZ THIS APRIL, THE pianist played solo, duo and trio performances, with assistance from fellow pianist Kevin Hays, inventive drummer Mark Guiliana and Mehldau's own working trio. The opening night of his residency was also the first solo piano recital to be held at the new SFJAZZ Center, and both artist and audience were curious as to how the hall would resonate. The sound was crystalline, and Mehldau was comically startled to see audience members seated above and behind the stage, like the chorus stalls of a classical venue.

Throughout a 90-minute solo set, Mehldau disseminated many of his hallmarks—uncanny harmonic choices, melodic abstraction and left- and right-handed independence—that would be a constant throughout all four shows. In addition to playing originals such as "29 Palms," he interpreted selections from classic singer/songwriters (a gorgeous reading of Bob Dylan's "Don't Think Twice, It's Alright"; a deconstruction of Joni Mitchell's "Marcie"; a deliberately paced reading of Tom Waits' "Martha") as well as contemporary ones, including the late Elliot Smith ("Independence Day").

Mehldau and Hays performed as a duo on the second night. In 2010, the pair recorded *Modern Music* (Nonesuch), an album of original compositions and arrangements by their peer Patrick Zimmerli, and the assumption was they'd draw heavily from it. Pieces they performed from *Modern Music* included the title track, "Generatrix," "Crazy Quilt" and Zimmerli's two-piano arrangement of Mehldau's "Unrequited." A newly penned Hays waltz was introduced, as was Rodriguez's "Sugarman," which Hays first brought to Mehldau's attention via the Oscar-winning *Searching For Sugarman* documentary.

Whereas Mehldau was entirely self-contained the previous night, it was fascinating to hear and see how he and Hays interacted. Mehldau would solo with just his right hand while Hays provided full support, or Hays would play left-handed arpeggios under his partner's elegant two-handed exposition.

Teaming with Guiliana as "Mehliana," Mehldau offered a second night of duet music that was at once retro-futuristic and open-ended. He faced Guiliana with a Fender Rhodes and Prophet 08 in front of him and a Moog Little Phatty synthesizer to his left. His partner used a traditional drum kit and occasionally manipulated samples on a laptop.

The duo dug into new pieces that will be recorded for an upcoming release, with a space-age variation on "My Favorite Things" the only non-original. Guiliana began by focusing on sections of his kit—starting with the snare and rim before moving on to the bass drum and hi-hat—in a style somewhat reminiscent of percussionist Airo Moreira on trap drums. Later, he'd pound with the intensity of a flowing drum 'n' bass groove.

Mehliana's compositions were explorative and still evolving. Mehldau would often utilize two different keyboards at once, with his left hand laying down bass lines on the Moog and his right hand dropping in chords on the Rhodes or fat string pads on the Prophet. Further into the set, Guiliana would layer in indecipherable bits of sampled dialog or speeches.

The residency closed with a performance by Mehldau's regular trio, which proved to be a perfect capstone. The group's bassist, Larry Grenadier, played in the first festival produced by SFJAZZ (née Jazz in the City), and drummer Jeff Ballard has been a member of the SFJAZZ Collective since 2012. Given the trio format, there was ample soloing to be enjoyed. From Ballard's distinguished toms-and-snare run on Charlie Parker's "Dexterity," to Mehldau's flowing unaccompanied interlude on his own "Ten Tune," to Grenadier's nimble-fingered and deeply felt elegance on "Since I Fell For You," all three players quietly dazzled within the bandleader's most familiar format.

—Yoshi Kato

"1, 2, 2, 3" by the Numbers

Song performed twice:

"What Is This Thing Called Love"
(Mehldau–Hays duo; trio)

Songwriters represented twice:

Gillian Welch ("Scarlet Town," solo; "Dark Turn of Mind," trio) and Paul McCartney ("Blackbird," solo; "And I Love Her," trio)

Requests granted: One (for Sufjan Stevens' "Holland," solo)



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Nicole Mitchell Heads West



Nicole Mitchell has been creating modern, thought-provoking music since she first came to Chicago from Oberlin College back in 1990. Mitchell, who has topped the Flute category in the DownBeat Critics Poll for four consecutive years, has become the premier jazz flutist of her generation, receiving accolades for superior proficiency, unparalleled creativity and her innovative style, which incorporates her voice with the instrument. She has also composed suites of music for several musical formats.

Mitchell's groups include the Indigo Trio with drummer Hamid Drake and bassist Harrison Bankhead. Her avant-garde quartet Sonic Projections features continuous musical dialog and blurs distinctions between charted and improvised music. Her acoustic chamber group, the Black String Ensemble, is a percussion-less group utilizing flutes, viola, violin, cello and bass. Her Black Earth Ensemble, dedicated to celebrating the artistry of the African American musical contribution, is an octet that features Mitchell's flute with trumpet, saxophone, cello, piano, bass, percussion and drums (she sometimes adds voices). The expansive nature of her musical interests speaks of her tireless drive and her unquenchable thirst for creativity and individuality.

Like many other artists, Mitchell has found the economics of the creative music business to be challenging to sustain. When a full-time assistant professorship was offered to her by the University of California in Irvine, she decided to leave her longtime home of Chicago and make the move back to California, where she grew up. We caught up with Mitchell and talked about her current activities and she how she has settled into her new surroundings.

Do you miss Chicago, where you were such an important part of the city's creative music scene?

I know my move to California has been right, and I'm learning so much out here. There's a really vital scene here as well, and I've been able to put a lot more focus on composing. On the other hand, Chicago will always be home to me and I really miss its inspiring and supportive arts community. I still feel connected because I continue to do projects with my groups Black Earth Ensemble, Black Earth Strings and Ice Crystal, which are based there. And I'm still playing with Rob Mazurek's Exploding Star

Orchestra and the David Boykin Expanse.

Los Angeles has a strong West Coast/Central Avenue jazz tradition of its own. How does this compare to the Chicago school of influence?

From the outside, I perceived L.A. as a home for smooth jazz and a really fierce old-school traditional style, but now that I'm here I see there's so much more going on. There's a wealth of amazing musicians here doing a diversity of styles, and I'm thrilled to get deeper into the action. For example, there's a club called the Blue Whale that features avant-garde/creative music, and there's a venue called

the World Stage in Leimert Park that was co-founded by Billy Higgins. It has a vibe so connected to Fred Anderson's legendary Velvet Lounge [in Chicago]. Looking at the L.A. legacy, I think of Mingus and Dolphy, who had their start here, and how Ornette developed his concepts here.

How has your stay in California influenced your music?

I recently did a premiere at the Roulette [in Brooklyn, N.Y.] with Anthony Braxton's Tri-Centric Orchestra called "When Life's Door Opens" for chamber orchestra, improvisers and three vocalists. I surprised myself by incorporating my own electronics and video in the piece for the first time, as it was not my original intention. As faculty in UC Irvine's ICIT program—Integrating Composition, Improvisation and Technology—I think I've been inspired by the expansive projects a lot of my students are doing, and it's had a direct impact on my work. I also do a lot more composing. Seems like the more I do it, the more involved it becomes.

Now that you are teaching full time, do you find working with young and developing musicians a challenge or an inspiration?

Teaching at UC Irvine has been extremely fulfilling because I have a great group of colleagues to work with, including Michael Dessen, Kei Akagi, Chris Dobrian and Kojiro Umezaki. I've always believed in mentorship, because it's such an important aspect of the arts. James Newton, George Lewis, Ed Wilkerson, Jimmy Cheatham, Avreeayl Ra, Donald Byrd and Fred Anderson, to name a few, were generous in mentoring me, and it's a real privilege to work with these talented students, both undergrad and grad, who have so much creativity and vision.

Does being a full-time educator inhibit you from spending the time you need to be creative?

On paper it looks like I just started teaching full time, but when I was in Chicago I always had between two to five teaching jobs, so it actually is less stressful now to have one job. Somehow I've always managed to make time to work on my music, usually getting up at 4 or 5 in the morning to work stuff out.

You have been prolific in writing for expanded ensembles. What made you want to expand your musical breadth beyond the flute?

I always heard other instruments in my dreams, and I always imagined the flute in context with other instruments. Although the flute is the main sound that I relate to as an individual, when I hear music in my head, I hear an ensemble. Sometimes that ensemble in my ear may not even include flute. Also, I had the desire to create new environments to improvise in as a flutist. I wanted to expand the context in which the flute is heard as well as expand the improvising language of the instrument.

Which of your contemporaries on flute do you find most interesting?

My favorite flutist hands-down is still James Newton. His technique, sound and approach are so amazing. I also think Maraca [Orlando Valle] is scary incredible—fast as lightning and really soulful. I really like the direction Jamie Baum is going—her writing with her new project, as well as her work with the octave divider. In terms of

straightahead playing, Bill McBernie is really great, and Hubert Laws is still killing.

You have been the most honored flutist of your generation, expanding the palette of the instrument by your use of voice. What more can be done with the flute?

I think my attraction to using my voice was to “leave evidence” that a woman was here, and it grew to become part of my signature sound. There’s still so much to discover with it—new intervals between the two sounds, new rhythmic approaches with the hocketing [a rhythmic linear technique using the alteration of notes or pitches] between my voice and the flute. I’m just getting started.

What are some of the projects you’ll be doing with West Coast musicians?

I’m excited about a new group I’m developing in California called Sun Dial. This group brings together the trailblazing bassist Mark Dresser and trombonist Michael Dessen, with my first mentor, Najite Agindotan [who is] a Nigerian master drummer and West Coast Afrobeat bandleader, and vocalist Dwight Tribble, who sings free as a bird, and if you closed your eyes, you would swear he came

out of Chicago’s AACM. We’re going to play the Angel City Jazz Festival in October.

What other projects can we expect to see from you in the near future?

I’m doing an exhibit of my mother’s artwork in September at Studio 914 in Chicago, which will also be a premiere of music with Black Earth Strings inspired by some of her paintings and incorporating some of her poetry. This fall, Indigo Trio will be playing the Guelph Jazz Festival and Ice Crystal will do a West Coast tour. I’m also planning with Renee Baker and her Chicago Modern Orchestra Project to do a Chicago premiere of my evening-length piece *When Life’s Door Opens* for orchestra, improvisers and three vocalists this fall. Black Earth Ensemble will do a premiere of this piece at the Manzoni Theater in Milan in December. At UC Irvine, I’ll be premiering a collaborative interdisciplinary work called *Mandorla Awakening* featuring original music by myself, choreography by Lisa Naugle and video by Ulysses Jenkins. Two new recordings are set to be released: *Intergalactic Beings (Xenogenesis II)* with Black Earth Ensemble on FPE Records and *The Secret Escapades Of Velvet Anderson* with Sonic Projections (Craig Taborn, David Boykin and Chad Taylor) on the Rogue Art label. —*Ralph A. Miriello*

Newport Jazz Festival Debuts 1st Wein-Produced Recording

NEARLY SIX DECADES after he introduced jazz to the festival stage in Newport, R.I., George Wein is turning his attention to the virtual stage—producing and promoting a new CD with ArtistShare, the crowd-financing platform.

The Newport Jazz Festival Gala Recording 2012, a live document of the fundraising concert held the night after the close of last year’s festival, is a debut of sorts for Wein. For all the Newport-related records made over the years, this is the first he has produced—a move, he said, that is less a strategic change in career than a tactical response to the digitization of music delivery.

“It doesn’t mean I’m going into the record business,” he said.

Wein joined with ArtistShare at the urging of bandleader Maria Schneider, who has released her recent albums through the service. ArtistShare founder Brian Camelio met with Wein in May of last year, and by July they had reached an agreement.

The CD and accompanying perks have been made available at the ArtistShare website, a sign-up point for fans and a repository of information about the project, which benefits the nonprofit Newport Festivals Foundation. A share of the proceeds also goes to ArtistShare.

The recording process was “harrowing,” accord-

ing to Camelio. It needed to capture the show as it unfolded under a tent before 200 people at Newport’s Marble House residence. There were no rehearsals, and most of the nine tracks involved a different duo or trio who had never played together.

“I asked them to play something different” from what they had played at the festival in the preceding days, Wein said. “They jumped.”

The performances proved a mixed bag. Among them were a heartfelt “I’m In Love Again,” featuring vocalist Dianne Reeves and pianist Peter Martin; a contrapuntal conversation with clarinetist Anat Cohen, trumpeter Ingrid Jensen and pianist Jason Moran; and a solo turn on electronically enhanced alto sax, courtesy of Rudresh Mahanthappa.

“The musicians were playing very personal stuff,” Wein said. “It had nothing to do with show biz, per se.”

Show business seems far from Wein’s mind these days. At age 87, he is focusing on raising the profile of younger players with original voices and helping to ensure that jazz remains widely heard outside of clubs. He said that plans for his next ArtistShare CD might include Amir ElSaffar, a trumpeter in his 30s who draws on the maqam tonal system. “If the general public doesn’t get to recognize these players the way they recognized Miles and Monk,” he said, “the music will cease to be festival or concert music.” —*Phillip Lutz*



George Duke has gathered a myriad of funk, jazz, gospel and R&B talents on *DreamWeaver*. Guests include Christian McBride, Rachelle Ferrell, Lalah Hathaway, Jeffrey Osborne, BeBe Winans, and Perri’s Lori Perry, among others. “Ball & Chain,” features a duet with Duke accompanying the late R&B singer Teena Maria – one of the last tracks she recorded.



In a recording career of over three decades, master guitarist Earl Klugh has been lauded as a prodigy and a groundbreaker of contemporary jazz. Klugh’s highly-anticipated Concord debut, *Hand Picked*, is a self-produced solo album with guest guitarists Bill Frisell, Vince Gill, Jake Shimabukuro, and others.

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Mulgrew Miller

DOWNBEAT ARCHIVES

Pianist Mulgrew Miller Dies of Stroke at Age 57

Pianist Mulgrew Miller, a major figure of the post-bop era and dedicated jazz educator, died on May 29 in Allentown, Pa., from a stroke. He was 57.

Miller's one-of-a-kind technique helped establish him as an in-demand sideman and heavily documented pianist. His playing can be heard on hundreds of albums by artists such as Joe Lovano, Kenny Garrett and Kenny Barron. His most recent projects included the live album *San Sebastian* (In + Out) with bassist Ron Carter's Golden Striker Trio.

Miller could swing hard but maintained grace and precision with a touch and facility that influenced generations of musicians. Though he was a force to be reckoned with on the bandstand, both in stature and talent, his gentle nature and ability to mold students became major factors in his role at William Paterson University, where he served as director of jazz studies since 2005.

Miller was born in Greenwood, Miss., on Aug. 13, 1955. By age 6, he was picking out melodies by ear on the piano, and at 8 began lessons. His musical experience was limited initially to soul cover bands and the church organ. But when Miller heard Oscar Peterson—which Miller described as “life-changing”—he shifted his focus toward mastering jazz.

Miller further developed as a jazz musician while attending Memphis State University, where he befriended fellow pianists James Williams and Donald Brown. Williams and Brown introduced him to a repertoire of greats, including Bud Powell, Wynton Kelly and McCoy Tyner. He also became intrigued by Eastern spiritual practices, which he absorbed through Ray Charles sideman Rudolph Johnson. These combined influences, along with the philosophies of the civil rights movement, were instrumental in shaping Miller's trademark technique—cautious and attentive, yet soulful and rhythmic.

It was a sound that would later surface in more than 400 recordings and within several all-star groups. At age 20, Miller joined the Mercer Ellington Orchestra and eventually played with Art Blakey's

Jazz Messengers, Betty Carter and the Woody Shaw Quintet. He was also one of the founding members of Tony Williams' acclaimed quintet, with which he played from the mid-1980s until the drummer's death in 1997. That same year, Miller also toured with the 10-pianist group 100 Golden Fingers, featuring Barron, Tommy Flanagan and Ray Bryant, and later joined the Contemporary Piano Ensemble.

As adept a sideman as he was a frontman, Miller released his first recording as a leader in 1985 on producer Orrin Keepnews' now-defunct label, Landmark Records. He performed predominantly in trio and quintet configurations, as well as his own Wingspan sextet, and released a string of leader recordings for RCA/Novus.

Miller's innate desire to see young musicians succeed was a fundamental part of his character. Along with mentoring student musicians at William Paterson University, he made an impact on the emerging wave of twenty- and thirty-something musicians today, such as drummer Karriem Riggins and bassist Derrick Hodge, who joined Miller's most recent groups.

Keyboardist Robert Glasper paid homage to Miller in his ballad “One For 'Grew,” and pianist Geoffrey Keezer claimed that “seeing Mulgrew play solo piano in Greenwich Village in the late 1980s, when I was in my teens, is what made me decide to be a professional musician.”

William Paterson University Coordinator of Jazz Studies David Demsey offered a statement on Miller's passing:

“Although Mulgrew is so widely respected as a player and is recognized worldwide as one of the most influential pianists on the scene, most people might not realize what a dedicated, passionate teacher he was. There was a real ‘love affair’ between him and our students, and their musicianship shows that. Each of the times I had the opportunity to perform with Mulgrew were life-changing, but I also learned a great deal from watching him as a teacher and mentor to our students.”
—Hilary Brown



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Wayne Shorter

The Eternal Process

By Josef Woodard ∞ Photography by Adam McCullough

WAYNE SHORTER HAS CHARTED THE trajectory of an elusive giant. Through his work with Art Blakey, the classic '60s Miles Davis Quintet, the massively popular Weather Report and his own solo work, Shorter has exerted a huge influence as composer, soloist and musical thinker. Yet he has also slinked on the sidelines, going years without an album and assiduously avoiding an obvious “commercial” path.

Suddenly, this year, ramping up to his 80th birthday on Aug. 25, Shorter is living large in cultural news, releasing *Without A Net*, his first Blue Note album in more than 40 years and, by many accounts, the finest recording by his long-standing quartet with pianist Danilo Pérez, bassist John Patitucci and drummer Brian Blade. Shorter has also been making bold steps into the jazz-classical side of his musical being lately. It makes perfect sense, then, that he has landed a quadruple-crown of wins in this year's DownBeat Critics Poll, topping the categories for Jazz Artist, Jazz Album, Jazz Group and Soprano Saxophone.



Wayne Shorter
at the New
Orleans Jazz
& Heritage
Festival on
May 5

Speaking on the phone from his home in Los Angeles, Shorter was typically humble about the accolades, which added to a healthy pile of other laurels, including the UNESCO Medal he was awarded at the "International Jazz Day" event in Istanbul on April 30. "I think that's nice," he said of the poll wins, "especially if it sparks the curiosity of young people, boys and girls, as to why that is, and go beyond why that kind of award exists and then explore the context in which that has been put. It's great if they can say, 'Let me listen to that stuff.'"

Said stuff—as heard on *Without A Net*—is structurally unpredictable. Yet the music can be vivid and ear-grabbing even to those who don't grasp the complexities beneath the shifting surfaces of the music. Shorter has his own poetic way of conceiving of what he does as a musician, with this group and beyond: "What we play can be not only storytelling, but a metaphor. Metaphorically, it's a chronicle of how segments of life have been perceived and how the perception changes, and what visionary means. You break out of the chains of safety zones and boxes and pyramids and circles, and get into the unknown."

This has been a busy and itinerant year for Shorter, both geographically and contextually. In January, he was the headliner of the 10th annual Panama Jazz Festival, an idealistic and education-oriented endeavor led by Pérez. Then in February, Shorter dove seriously into the "serious" music realm: Within little more than a week, he performed with the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra at Carnegie Hall—recording the next day, for a possible release later this year—and then flew home to Los Angeles, where he premiered an ambitious new work, *Gaia*, in the grand, postmodern ambience of Walt Disney Concert Hall. *Gaia* was a masterful stroke of hybrid aesthetics involving his quartet, the Los Angeles Philharmonic (conducted by Vince Mendoza) and some bedazzling, gymnastic vocal parts sung by Esperanza Spalding.

Without any braggadocio, Shorter tells the story of his *Gaia* triumph at Disney Hall and how he had a brief conversation afterward with esteemed architect Frank Gehry, whose sculptural design for that concert hall is legendary: "He was backstage. We shook hands. Then he said, 'It will never be the same.' That's all he said."

April brought Shorter to Istanbul and the "International Jazz Day" happenings, another case of jazz-fueled idealism, this one built around efforts of his longtime friend, ally and partner in Buddhist practice, Herbie

Hancock. Shorter received his medal from UNESCO Director-General Irina Bokova early in the morning, in a setting in the ancient Galatasary High School, before performing his standard "Footprints" with the young band from the Thelonious Monk Institute, which Shorter has helped to mentor back at UCLA. That night, he was part of the all-star grand concert event in the vast Hagia Eirene, on a tune featuring his past collaborator, Brazilian legend Milton Nascimento, with Hancock on piano and Spalding on bass.

Reflecting on Istanbul, Shorter remembers a short rehearsal before the big show: "We did a one-take rehearsal and said, 'Is that it?' Milton turned around and said, 'Of course.' He doesn't make a great big thing out of perfection. That's what I like. The group that I'm working with—Danilo, Brian and John—is not based on any kind of formula, but we have the notion that there's no such thing as a coincidence or a mistake and that reaching for something called perfection, to perfect what you're doing—like rehearsing until you get something *down*—is almost like immersing what you're doing in liquid hydrogen. It becomes frozen, or statuesque.

"There is no such thing as excuses, either, but is there such a thing as the imperfect transcending perfection? Miles said, 'If you write something, put a window in there so we can get out of it,'" he laughs.

Among the other points of activity and attention in Shorter's life is a documentary titled *Zero Gravity*, currently in the midst of production and grassroots fundraising. From the historical archives, Shorter is a powerful presence on soprano and tenor sax on the Miles Davis Quintet's *Live In Europe 1969: The Bootleg Series Vol. 2*, a crackling, vibrant four-disc set of live recordings from the officially "unrecorded" band with Chick Corea, Jack DeJohnette and Dave Holland. *Vol. 2* was voted the top Historical Album in this year's Critics Poll (see page 38).

Meanwhile, in the here and now, the touring season of summer festivals and concerts was awaiting at the time of our interview. I ask Shorter if, on his travels with his quartet, the group will heed the improvisational, moment-chasing spirit rather than, in conventional post-album touring terms, be content to "play" *Without A Net*. "Yeah," he laughs. "We're going to see if we can jump off the *Without A Net* diving board with these four different sounds and transcend the notion of [in a pinched, whiny voice] saxophone, piano, bass and drums. I saw Lily Tomlin's face when I did that

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From left: Danilo Pérez, Wayne Shorter, John Patitucci and Brian Blade in New Orleans on May 5

[with my voice], with the telephone to her ear.”

What Shorter’s quartet does follows no smooth or easily sellable route, but he stops short of shrugging off the business interests of the music business altogether: “I look at the resistance of the corporate world, the resistance to what they say is difficult to market, and the accessibility is not there, which presents resistance to the creative process, the unbridled creative process. I look at that resistance as the same as the resistance that is needed for an airplane to take off. A plane cannot take off without resistance to give it lift. Now, I’m thinking, ‘What is the real function of resistance?’

“I want to include what is known as resistant elements to what comes after you say, ‘Once upon a time ...’ It has to be in the music. Creative music, or creative *anything*, cannot divorce itself and sit in some ivory tower, or segregate from what is thought of as cold, resistant, corporate thinking, the executive mind.

“Someone asked Sonny Rollins, ‘Why are you guys doing all this creative stuff, with your horns and bebop?’ Sonny Rollins said, ‘We’re not doing this stuff to become famous. We’re doing this stuff to be human.’ I feel like the eternal process is to become more of who we are.

“There’s a phrase we have in Buddhism: ‘doing human revolution.’ It’s about peeling off all of the b.s.—but the b.s. is like fertilizer, needed to help things grow. You want to eternally reveal more and more of your true self, and your true self is eternal, eternally being revealed. And that is the grand, ultimate adventure.”

DB

Critics Poll Winner Tenor Saxophone

Visionary Artist

By Joe Lovano

The All Seeing Eye of Wayne Shorter’s continued vision as an improviser, instrumentalist, composer and spontaneous ensemble orchestrator is awe-inspiring. He is a true virtuoso on his instrument, in the most free-flowing way, in the execution of his ideas as a composer and soloist.

I’ve been inspired along with countless others with his sound, music and passion. His natural gifts have always taken new shapes in surprisingly new directions.

Each and every encounter I’ve had listening to his amazing documented output—as well as knowing him and sharing the space with him on occasion—has been a life-changing experience for me.

As a sideman with Art Blakey, Lee Morgan, Freddie Hubbard, Donald Byrd, McCoy Tyner, Gil Evans, Herbie Hancock, Joni Mitchell, Milton Nascimento, Miles Davis and others, Wayne Shorter has given us a vision of how we could develop our own voices in other people’s music and still be ourselves.

Wayne never ceases to create music *within* the music at hand. He has arrived into each moment of his career with an inspired approach. He truly lives it. A Jazz Messenger traveling with “Miles In The Sky.” He “Speaks No Evil” and is full of the “Juju” magic. “In A Silent Way” he’s a weatherman moving into today’s explorations “Without A Net.”

His recordings as a leader through the years have given us an insight into who he is and how he’s feeling each step of the way. They are all precious gems.

Wayne has developed a beautiful singular voice in such a natural way. What fuels his ideas is his wild imagination; life, music, art, dance, cinema, his fascination with fantasy and his own cosmic reality, the “unknowables” and all of the people in his life. That’s what it’s all about. Life itself.

His current quartet paints an ongoing story of inspired music from within the world according to Wayne. Danilo Pérez, John Patitucci, Brian Blade and Wayne play together with a total expressive feeling as one. Without a net ... Orbiting ... With zero gravity ... Each concert I’ve attended by the quartet has been full of joy, love and expression.

Wayne’s improvisations in duet with Herbie Hancock, his compositions and the orchestrations for his quartet with the Imani Winds (or for full orchestra) over the last few years have put him in a class of his own beyond category.

In today’s musical universe, Wayne Shorter is the brightest star in the sky.

We celebrate you, Mr. Shorter, in your 80th year and congratulate you on your four current DownBeat Critics Poll Awards. Thank you for your ongoing love, passion and quest for discovery. You have opened the door for all of us who strive to be ourselves in this blessed world of music we live in. Let the celebration continue for many, many, many years to come with lots more music. Salute!

DB



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- George Harris, *Jazz Weekly*

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Searching for the Unknown

By Jon Irabagon



PASCAL MEROUICHE

"YOU," HE SAID TO ME, pointing an index finger mere inches from my face, "you have to go your own way." He then pivoted 45 degrees and high-stepped out of the room, not looking back.

Wayne Shorter challenged me with his characteristically puzzle-like speech at the 2009 Thelonious Monk International Saxophone Competition, and I've been pondering that riddle ever since. While I'm still searching for my own way, over years of listening to and watching Wayne, I've become familiar with his own blend of balanced variety.

After lending a well-versed voice to the hard-bop bands of Maynard Ferguson and Art Blakey, Wayne wrote many compositions for Miles Davis' second great quintet and provided the flowing, searching foil to Davis' oblique trumpet. For me, the pinnacle of his approach from this period—slicing through chord changes, running arpeggios up and down the horn and altering scales—is his solo on the title track to the 1965 album *E.S.P.*

Simultaneously, though, Shorter was taking a noticeably different path on his own albums for the Blue Note label: records that are now essential for all jazz students. On these, Wayne develops his trademark ability to pit the simple against the complex in harmonious coexistence. On albums like *Speak No Evil* and *Juju*, Wayne balances out chromatic and difficult chord progressions with a simpler, pentatonic-based improvisational approach. For modern jazz students, these improvisations have become as integral to the song as the chord changes themselves.

This synchronization continued with his contributions to Weather Report, the famed fusion group Wayne co-led with Joe Zawinul, as well as his '80s Columbia records. In the former, Wayne's sparse, held-note solos balance out against busier keyboard and bass offerings; in the latter, labyrinthine compositions are offset by short bursts of improvisational nuclei—just enough to remind you that within these complex structures, there's "an adventure of life," as Wayne likes to say, breathing underneath and bubbling to the surface.

His mastery over these musical elements (and combining them with a logic that satisfies both musicians and non-musicians) is enough to ensure Wayne's place among the legends of our art. But for me, he stands for much more. He pushes himself beyond the parameters and restrictions that improvisers normally set for themselves. There's an element of risk-taking and of searching for the unknown that Wayne emphasizes on stage.

One of my favorite examples of this is from a concert by the Miles Davis Quintet in 1967 in Karlsruhe, Germany. Wayne's solo on "Walkin'" builds the band into such a frenzy that they stop and let him continue alone. He combines intervallic fragments with rapid-fire arpeggios, pixilated melodic lines and even chirps. Then, as he turns to walk off the stage, Wayne pulls the horn out of his mouth and continues his solo with just his fingers clicking on the keys for several phrases before Herbie Hancock takes over. It is completely uninhibited, in the moment and without the standard jazz limitations on what improvising means.

More recently, during a show with his long-standing quartet, Wayne played soprano for several songs in a row. Before the next one, he took a step back, sighed as he stared at his tenor, and apologetically bowed to it before picking it up. He then pummeled one single note over and over again, stirring in furious rhythms and held cries. Afterward he yanked the horn from his mouth and spasmodically faced the crowd, his wide eyes asking us if we had just taken that journey with him.

These examples of Wayne's creativity and playfulness are just as influential on my development as the dozens of transcriptions I've done of his music. It's that level of creativity—a complete vision of what *can be*, what's possible both within and outside the normal, accepted parameters of what improvisation is—and having the courage to see it through that makes Wayne so unique and inspiring. Not only has he figured out a personal way to write and improvise, but he's also dropping hints of extra-musical ideas that dare us to seek what's possible: to find our own ways.

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61st ANNUAL CRITICS POLL

Jazz Album of the Year



1

Wayne Shorter Quartet, *Without A Net* (BLUE NOTE) 146 votes

The veteran saxophonist and composer's triumphant return to Blue Note Records after 43 years yielded this year's critical favorite. (See page 20.)

2



Wadada Leo Smith, *Ten Freedom Summers* (CUNEIFORM) 88

The septuagenarian trumpeter integrates his work in the jazz and classical spheres in this 19-part, four-disc suite. He takes his long-standing practice of using music to reflect upon influential historical figures to its logical conclusion by representing key figures, moments and issues from the civil rights struggle—the defining social conflict of his lifetime.

3



Sam Rivers/Dave Holland/Barry Altschul, *Reunion: Live In New York* (PI) 68

This reunion concert of one of the best New York free-jazz ensembles of the '70s took place at the end of a weeklong celebration of Rivers' music at Columbia University. The participants jump right in, guided only by the freedom to play in the moment.

4



Joe Lovano Us Five, *Cross Culture* (BLUE NOTE) 66

A tone of authority trumps Lovano's vibe as a perpetual seeker. He's still on the hunt here, but his craft is so deep at this point, he invariably sounds like he knows exactly where he's going.

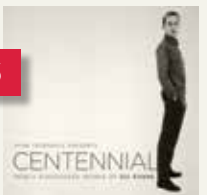
5



Charles Lloyd/Jason Moran, *Hagar's Song* (ECM) 63

Stripped to the essentials and riddled with 20th century jazz and pop standards—plus an emotionally charged suite written in homage to one of Lloyd's ancestors—this duet recording has an exploratory spirit that unfolds in an organic way.

6



Ryan Truesdell, *Centennial: Newly Discovered Works Of Gil Evans* (ARTISTSHARE) 51

A dozen scores written by legendary composer Evans—but rarely (or never) performed or recorded—have been refurbished by Truesdell, who assembled 20 jazz and classical musicians for this technically challenging treasure trove of melody and blend.

7



Branford Marsalis Quartet, *Four MFs Playin' Tunes* (MARSALIS) 45

This warm, approachable, often playful album lets the music breathe. It's a welcome change for saxophonist Marsalis, who in the past has had a tendency to privilege concept over song.

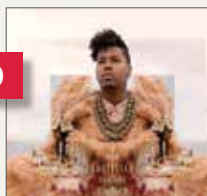
8



Kurt Rosenwinkel, *Star Of Jupiter* (WOMMUSIC) 41

Inspired by a dream, this album revels in the sort of peaceful atmospheric escapism that normally accompanies gazing at galaxies through a high-powered telescope. Nothing is hurried, no rhythm ventures far from the main theme and repetition rules.

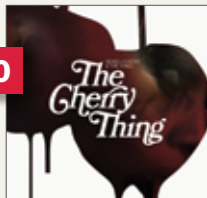
9



Christian Scott, *Christian aTunde Adjuah* (CONCORD) 40

It's great to hear trumpeter Scott stretch out on this project, which signals his transformation to a new name embracing his heritage as a Mardis Gras Indian and fearlessly takes on social issues.

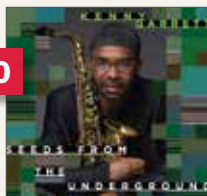
10



Neneh Cherry/The Thing, *The Cherry Thing* (SMALLTOWN SUPERSOUND) 39

The Scandinavian trio The Thing teams up with pop singer Cherry on a wildly diverse program of art-rock and free-jazz covers, as well as a pair of originals. Both parties have broad aesthetic sensibilities, so when each bends to accommodate the other, it's neither a stretch nor a compromise.

10



Kenny Garrett, *Seeds From The Underground* (MACK AVENUE) 39

His first studio and acoustic recording in six years, and possibly the most melodic outing of his career, *Seeds* is an inspired creation steeped in the saxophonist's wide-ranging historical pathways.

- 11 Anat Cohen, *Ciaroscuro* (ANZIC) 38
- 12 Ravi Coltrane, *Spirit Fiction* (BLUE NOTE) 34
- 13 Fred Hersch Trio, *Alive At The Vanguard* (PALMETTO) 31
- 14 Pat Metheny, *Unity Band* (NONESUCH) 30
- 15 Mostly Other People Do The Killing, *Slippery Rock* (HOT CUP) 26
- 16 Orrin Evans, *Flip The Script* (POSI-TONE) 25
- 17 Aaron Diehl, *The Bespoke Man's Narrative* (MACK AVENUE) 24
- Dave Douglas Quintet, *Be Still* (GREENLEAF) 24
- Rudresh Mahanthappa, *Gamak* (ACT) 24
- 18 Lee Konitz/Bill Frisell/Gary Peacock/Joey Baron, *Enfants Terribles* (HALF NOTE) 23
- 19 The Bad Plus, *Made Possible* (EONE) 21
- Chick Corea/Gary Burton, *Hot House* (CONCORD) 21
- Mary Halvorson Quintet, *Bending Bridges* (FIREHOUSE 12) 21
- Chris Potter, *The Sirens* (ECM) 21
- 20 John Abercrombie Quartet, *Within A Song* (ECM) 20
- The Cookers, *Believe* (MOTEMA) 20
- Return To Forever, *The Mothership Returns* (EAGLE ROCK) 20
- 21 Theo Bleckmann, *Hello Earth! (The Music Of Kate Bush)* (WINTER & WINTER) 19
- Yosvany Terry, *Today's Opinion* (CRISS CROSS) 19

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61st

ANNUAL
CRITICS POLL

Hall of Fame

Charlie Haden

Making the World a Better Place

By Ed Enright *Photo by Jos L. Knaepen*

CHARLIE HADEN HAS A NEW HOME, of sorts, and it's filled with friends. The bassist is the newest resident of the DownBeat Hall of Fame, where he takes his rightful place alongside the greatest musicians of all time, many of whom have been his collaborators and friends.

In May, DownBeat caught up with Haden, 75, for a wide-ranging phone interview from his house in Agora Hills, Calif., where he lives with his wife, the vocalist Ruth Cameron.

Haden
onstage in
Marciac,
France,
Aug. 5, 2004

The conversation touched upon a long list of his fellow Hall of Fame inductees, including Jimmy Blanton (inducted in 2008), Milt Hinton (2001), Duke Ellington (1956), Ray Brown (2003), Billie Holiday (1961), Ella Fitzgerald (1979), Paul Chambers (2011), Charles Mingus (1971), Ornette Coleman (1969), Jaco Pastorius (1988), Ron Carter (2012), Oscar Pettiford (2009), Bill Evans (1981), Paul Motian (2012), Keith Jarrett (2008), Charlie Parker (1955), Hank Jones (2009), Ed Blackwell (1993), Joe Henderson (2001), Michael Brecker (2007) and John Coltrane (1965).

Haden was in great spirits. Even as he battles

post-polio syndrome—an ailment that has sapped his strength, left him unable to swallow and kept him from performing in public for the past two years—the composer/bandleader/educator focuses on his recovery and looks forward to playing concerts and recording sessions again. He'll tell you about his recent health struggles, which stem from a bout of bulbar polio he suffered at age 15, but he seldom dwells on the negative.

He'd rather remember the most rewarding moments of his long musical career, recall the loving relationships he's shared with legendary musicians over the years, share his deep insights on jazz

with his students at California Institute of the Arts and prepare for what he hopes will be a glorious return to musical form, beginning with an early June appearance at the Healdsburg Jazz Festival, where he performed with his Liberation Music Orchestra (in collaboration with Carl Bley), Quartet West and members of his own musical family.

Recent accolades have provided some much-needed encouragement to Haden, whose influence on jazz and modern music has been profound. He was named an NEA Jazz Master in 2012 and received a Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award earlier this year—honors that helped him regain a sense of just how much he has accomplished in his career of more than 50 years, a genre-spanning odyssey that has included everything from country music, straight-ahead jazz and the avant-garde to world music, classical, pop and beyond. (For a thorough career retrospective, check out the online bio at charliehadenmusic.com.) With the news of his induction into the DownBeat Hall of Fame, Haden was uplifted even higher, his feelings of joy tempered by his ever-present air of modesty. He's come a long way since being named DownBeat's New Star Bassist in the 1961 Critics Poll.

"It makes me feel really proud that I worked so hard trying to bring beautiful music to as many people as I can," he said. "When the people from the Jazz Masters called me two years ago, that knocked me out, and then last year they called me for the Lifetime Achievement Award and *that* knocked me out. And then when I saw the list of people who have gotten that Lifetime Achievement Award ... the first guy to win was Bing Crosby in 1952, Sinatra, Leonard Bernstein—it was pretty heavy company."

From a jazz perspective, Haden is in even heavier company among the members of the DownBeat Hall of Fame. He was eager to talk about all of the jazz titans whose names came up during the interview, as he's had personal connections to many of them. Our conversation began with the bassists, starting with Jimmy Blanton.

"Whoa, man—he's from St. Louis, and there's a lot of great musicians from the Louie," said Haden, who spent part of his childhood in Missouri. "Milt Hinton told me the story about how Blanton got into Duke Ellington's band in 1939 from the jam session that they took Duke to. Duke hired him right there on the spot when he heard him play, and they left town with two bass players."

How about Ray Brown? "He's the guy with the big sound," Haden said. "I have a picture of him with Billie Holiday, Illinois Jacquet and Ella Fitzgerald. They have kind of formal attire on, so it might have been right after Ray married Ella, and they were all in this restaurant in New York. I like things like that, to think about places I couldn't be before my time, and that's why on some of my Quartet West albums I bring in music from 1948, when I couldn't be there. But what a beautiful man. I've had long talks with him."

On Paul Chambers: "Paul was a really good friend. Paul was an amazing bass player who's never gotten the credit he deserves: his creativity and his facility on the instrument, some of the things that he played, all that stuff on *Kind Of Blue*, which is phenomenal. When I was about 18 years old in Los Angeles, Miles [Davis] was in town and I went to hear him with [John] Coltrane and Philly Joe [Jones]

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and Paul, and I sat in the front row. And all the pictures I'd seen of Paul, he always looks like he had tears in his eyes. He came off the bandstand when they changed the set and he said, 'Why are you staring at me?' I said, 'I'm sorry; I don't mean to be. It's a good thing because you always look like you have tears in your eyes in all your photographs.' He said, 'I do, man, I do. Let's have some coffee.' We sat down and talked a long time."

On Charles Mingus: "We were close friends, too. I was playing with Ornette Coleman at the University of Miami [in 1973], and Mingus [who was also performing on campus] was staying at the same hotel. He called me and said, 'Can I borrow your bass?' I said, 'Man, you can *have* my bass.' He said, 'I don't want your bass, but could you lend it to me?' So I said, 'Man, don't worry, it would be my pleasure to hear you play it.' Jaco Pastorius was playing with Ira Sullivan at the Fontainebleau [in Miami Beach], and we went there afterwards. Jaco came up to me and said, 'I really love your playing, Charlie, could I hang out with you?' And I said, 'Sure.' We went up to my hotel and he wanted to play my bass, and I said, 'Do you play acoustic?' And he said, 'Well, a little bit,' and he proceeded to tear it up. He was so phenomenal, he could do just about anything. This was when Jaco was healthy and young and vibrant."

On Ron Carter and Oscar Pettiford: "Those are two good ones there. [Coleman's group] opened at the Five Spot in November of '59, and the band that was opposite us was the Art Farmer-Benny Golson group, and Ron was playing with them. What a great bass player, man. And Pettiford, the sound that he got ... That was another thing that Paul Chambers invented: Both of them had this really beautiful acoustic sound, I think because they played gut strings like I do."

"Who else?" Haden inquired. "Man, that's quite a lineup so far. I have this old DownBeat from Oct. 11, 1962, and inside is an article called 'The Development of Modern Bass' by Harvey Pekar. There's a picture of Jimmy Blanton and Ray Brown on one page, and then on the next page it's Paul Chambers, Wilbur Ware, Scotty LaFaro and me. I'll read you some of it:

"Thus far the most important new bassists of the '60s seem to be the late Scott LaFaro, and Charlie Haden. Not surprisingly, both worked with Ornette Coleman. Playing with Coleman presents a challenge to a bassist, for his music often doesn't follow preset chord progressions. To anticipate and react accordingly to Coleman's ideas are considerable accomplishments. The bassist in a Coleman combo has an unprecedented influence on the soloist because of the great freedom he is given."

"Theoretically, it would seem that Coleman believes the bass to have almost as important a melodic function in his group as the trumpet or alto saxophone. He has spoken of "our concept of free group improvisation" and called Haden a "melodically independent" bassist. Spontaneous counterpoint sometimes arises between the horns and the bass in his group. Despite the fact that Haden and LaFaro had widely different backgrounds and, in some respects, playing styles, each met the challenge of Coleman's music admirably."

Haden calls LaFaro his "closest friend in life." "He was taken away too soon," Haden said of LaFaro, who died in a car crash in 1961. "I'm glad we got to be together as much as we could, sharing an apartment. Scotty was such a great bass player. He practiced constantly. I used to come home and he'd have his head in his hands. He'd be sitting on the bed and looking really sad, and he said, 'I'll never be able to play what I want.' I said, 'Scott, man, you play *anything* you want, more than anybody I've ever known. Come on, don't worry.'

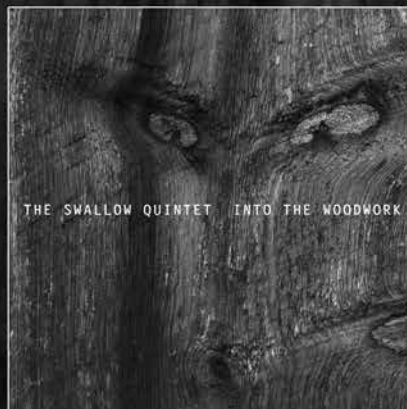
"He was really instrumental in the sound of that Bill Evans trio, and so was Paul Motian. Motian was

a revolutionary, innovative drummer—magic came out of his drums. The whole time that we were with Keith Jarrett's trio and quartet, those were beautiful times for me because of musicians like Paul. When I heard that Scotty was killed, I just couldn't believe it. It devastated me. I wasn't myself for at least a few months. I just couldn't understand how somebody so beautiful could be taken away from this life."

Haden has shared a long musical association with Coleman. "I talk to him almost every week," he said. "They gave him a Lifetime Achievement Award at the Grammys in 2007, and I presented it to him. He always surprises you. There's never anything that

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In the recording studio, early '60s

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Plucking a note out of thin air

STEVEN FERILLOUX



Onstage in 1975

JACK VARTOGIAN/FRONTROWPHOTOS



Haden (left) performing with Ornette Coleman in Philadelphia on June 16, 1968

DOWNBEAT ARCHIVES/BOB FUENTES

Constant Discovery

Charlie Haden has been spending a lot of time at home lately. Since being diagnosed two years ago with post-polio syndrome, he has performed on stage only a few times. One brief appearance was with keyboardist Larry Goldings at a February fundraiser for MUSE/IQUE in Pasadena, Calif.

Los Angeles-based Goldings has been a semi-frequent visitor to Haden's Agora Hills home during the past couple of years. Sometimes they play tunes together, with Goldings on the small Baldwin grand in Haden's living room. Other times, they'll talk and listen to music on Haden's ultra-high-end stereo system. Pat Metheny and Alan Broadbent, longtime friends of Haden, have also stopped by to visit and jam whenever they pass through town.

"Charlie obviously wants to get back in shape as much as he is able right now," said Goldings, who performed occasionally with Haden in the past. "Stamina is an issue, obviously. But he's sounding just like Charlie Haden, and it's always exciting to play with him.

"Charlie is really interested in tunes, and he tends to come back to a lot of the same ones. He loves 'Blue In Green,' 'How Deep Is The Ocean,' 'I'm Old Fashioned'—things that he's been playing with his group for many years. Someone like Charlie can do that and continue to get enjoyment out of it because he's always finding something new—there's that sense of constant discovery. He's so grounded in the tradition of melodicism, and that's evident in the way he solos: He seems to be always searching for the perfect way to get from point A to point B. It's both wonderful and challenging to play with him in a duo situation because he loves space and has a very strong internal clock."

Haden once called Goldings to substitute for Broadbent in Quartet West for some concerts in Australia. "One of the best bass solos I've ever experienced when on stage was at one of those gigs," Goldings said. "It was on a 'Rhythm' changes tune, and even though he stayed on the form, his approach came off as so free and devoid of bebop clichés. The way he plays with time and the way he 'breathes' is so unique, and in the end he transcends the instrument."

Whether listening to tunes or jamming with Haden, Goldings has observed that one element common to everything the Hall of Fame bassist enjoys is his love of melody. "No matter what situation he's in, he approaches music with a profound sense of melody and simplicity," Goldings said. "Even when he plays something within the bebop language, it ends up sounding like folk music." —Ed Enright

you can predict; his music is predictably unpredictable, and lovely, gentle, beautiful, pretty. That's what Charlie Parker used to say: 'Look for the pretty notes.' And Ornette has a million of them."

Hank Jones (1918–2010) and Haden played together on two duo albums, 1995's *Steal Away* (Verve) and 2012's *Come Sunday* (Emarcy). Both recordings drew from a repertoire of American spirituals and hymns. "Hank was really something," Haden said. "He's very religious, and he was worried about improvisation on these songs. We were recording, and he said, 'Now, Charles, we've got to be careful here. This isn't barrelhouse and this isn't the avant-garde. We don't want to disrespect the man upstairs.' And I said, 'Oh, my goodness, no, man.' So at one point he stops playing and he looks up and says, 'Forgive me, Lord, for that flat 13.' He was a real jokester, too. He had something humorous in the way he spoke about everything. He was so positive and so upbeat, and I just loved him. I'm so glad I got to make that last record with him."

On Ed Blackwell: "Blackwell and I were also like brothers. One time when Billy Higgins had to do something else, Ornette called Blackwell and he came, and we hit it off right away. And then in the band Old And New Dreams, what a band that was with Blackwell, Dewey Redman, Don Cherry [and myself]. I couldn't think of a more consistently creative band than that. Blackwell and I used to have these long talks. He was a special guy, very original, very inventive, very New Orleans. He had that stuff down. He told me once, 'Charlie, the secret is

it's not 1-2-3-4, 1-2-3-4; it's 4-1-2-3, 4-1-2-3, starting with 4.' Man, oh man."

The conversation then turned to Hall of Fame saxophonists Joe Henderson, Michael Brecker and John Coltrane.

"Joe was one-in-a-million musically and spiritually, and he should have had his own talk show," Haden said. "He had these little things that he would say out of the blue. One night we were playing at Catalina's in L.A., and I was taking a bass solo and Joe said, 'Charlie, yeah man.' And after the show I said, 'Thanks for listening to me.' And he said, 'No, man, I was just thinking that you must be making some big bucks.' I said, 'What? What are you talking about?' He said, 'You're working overtime.'"

"Michael Brecker was a beautiful guy and a great, great musician. I remember I was a judge at the Notre Dame Intercollegiate Jazz Festival one year, and I voted Michael Brecker the best musician in the whole thing.

"Coltrane used to come into the Five Spot every night and sit at the first table. He'd listen to every note. And then he called me and said, 'I want you to make a record with me.' I went into the studio; me and Blackwell and Cherry recorded with him. And then there was a fire at Atlantic Records, and it burned the tapes. We did several tunes that were destroyed. But the ones that weren't destroyed were really beautiful. I used to go down to the studio and sit and talk with him, but most of the time he was off with Ornette, firing one question after another to Ornette because he was really wanting to know where all the music was coming from and why. I was really happy I got to play with him, and then later on with [Coltrane's wife] Alice, who told me some great stories about John. She told me about when he kind of proposed to her. They were playing at Birdland, and when they left the dressing room to go toward the bandstand he was walking behind her with his tenor, and he started playing 'I'll Be Loving You Always.' Very romantic."

Having shared so many memories of his time spent with some of jazz's most celebrated legends, Haden's conversational tone turned from nostalgic to philosophical. Prompted on the subject of improvisation, he echoed comments made during his recent Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award acceptance speech. "When you improvise, there's no yesterday and there's no tomorrow," he mused. "There's just the moment that you're in, and in that moment you learn the reality that you wouldn't ordinarily be able to learn. You can't really find out about your full importance and your full significance until you experience your insignificance and your unimportance. And when you experience that, then you're able to start fathoming your significance to the rest of the universe. Because it's not about us, it's not even about music. It's about spiritual stuff that you can't even find words to describe. It's 'Where are we?' 'Why are we here?' and 'Where are we going?' I'm able to put it together in a way where I lend myself to making the world a better place and realize that the music doesn't belong to me, it belongs to wherever we're from.

"I tell my students at Cal Arts to never stop thinking about all these things, because they're very important to making you a better person and allowing you to give of yourself to other people. Because it's not about you, it's about giving to someone else.

I feel very lucky to be able to create a melody that I'm hearing from someone else's chord changes and then go beyond that.

"With Ornette we went beyond that to the inspiration of the chord structure and actually created a new chord structure. And in creating a new chord structure, that's where the fun comes in, and that's what we used to do every day. I'm happy that I was able to do that, and I can't wait until the next time I'm able to do it."

Haden clearly has his mind and heart set on returning to the stage and studio. One of the first projects he has planned is a new album with the

Liberation Music Orchestra based around an environmental theme and featuring Bley's arrangements. He hopes he'll be healthy enough to start recording it late this year or in early 2014.

"I know I'm gonna get better, and I know I'm gonna play. It's funny, I'm finding out about all these people who love my music. You don't really stop and think about how many people are affected by your music because you're too busy trying to make a living. I'm so lucky that I have people who love my music, and I'm looking forward to that more and more."

Charlie Haden. What a beautiful guy.

DB

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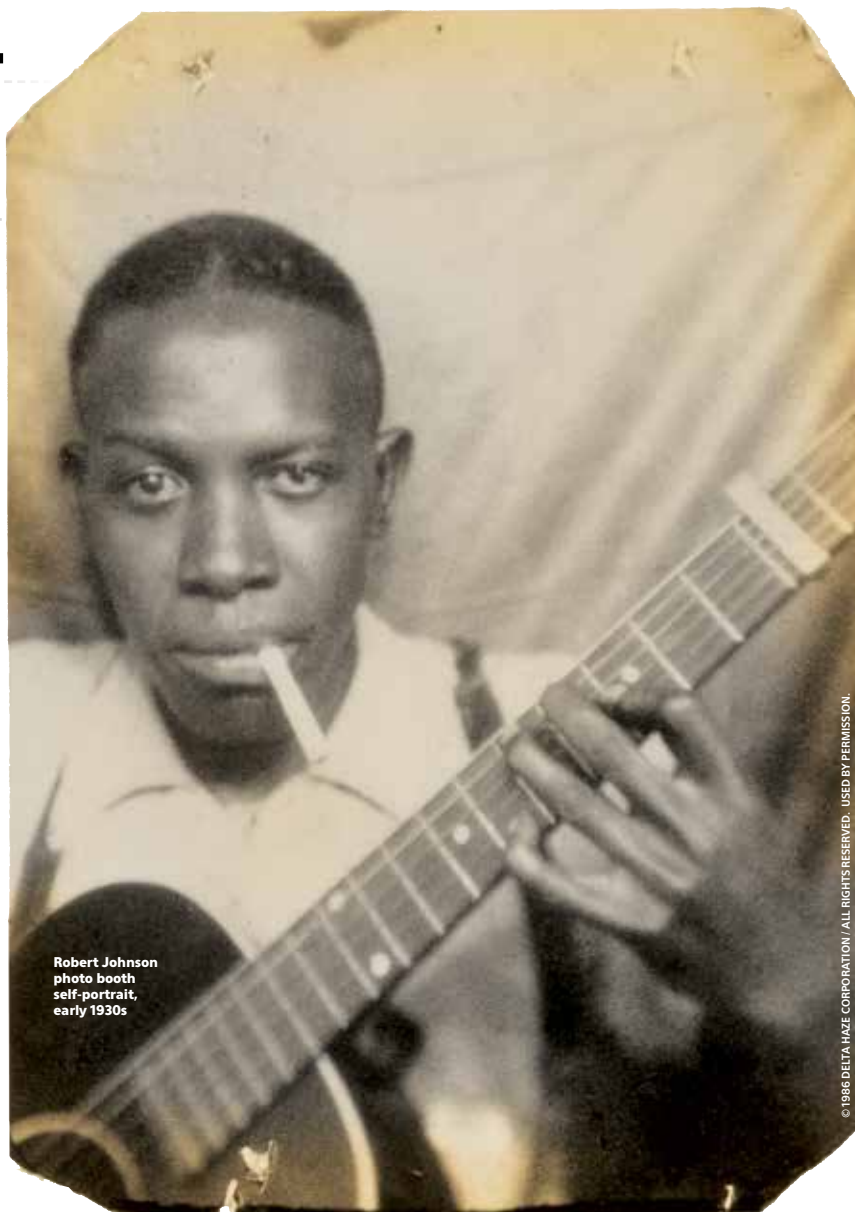
Robert Johnson

Imperishable Fame

By Frank-John Hadley

The DownBeat Hall of Fame Welcomes Guitarist Robert Johnson, the Legendary Delta Bluesman Who Played It Like He Felt It

ONCE IN A GREAT WHILE, a blues musician happens along who operates on remarkable levels of skill, intelligence, feeling and lyric beauty. Robert Johnson, who performed primarily in the Delta sections of Mississippi and Arkansas during the 1930s, was just such a man. Forty-two recordings cut in a Texas hotel or warehouse from 1936 and '37—a milestone in American music including “Sweet Home Chicago,” “Hell Hound On My Trail” and “Come On In My Kitchen”—at long last gain him entry into the DownBeat Hall of Fame.



Robert Johnson
photo booth
self-portrait,
early 1930s

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When Johnson, a mysterious and mythic figure, was murdered in 1938 at age 27, he was becoming a favorite of African-American record buyers in the South; his 78 “Terraplane Blues” sold quite well. But after his mortal exit, those listeners quickly forgot him and it was left to whites up North—folklorist Alan Lomax, Columbia Records’ John Hammond, various jazz critics and record collectors—to keep his name alive. Hammond, in fact, had Johnson on the integrated bill of his first Carnegie Hall gala, “From Spirituals To Swing,” only to learn Johnson was deceased.

The early 1960s folk-blues boom, instigated by white college students, saw interest in Johnson rise dramatically when Columbia issued the 16-song LP compilation *Robert Johnson: The King Of The Delta Blues Singers*. By 1970, genuflecting rock stars Eric Clapton (with Cream) and the

Rolling Stones spread word far and wide about Johnson’s uncanny talent. In the decades since, Clapton has stayed a supporter, naming his annual guitar summit “Crossroads” after a Johnson classic and making an uneven tribute CD, *Me And Mr. Johnson*.

In 1990 the music world’s axis tilted when the Robert Johnson box set, *The Complete Recordings*, issued by Columbia, sold more than a million copies. It wouldn’t be the last Johnson recycling project by the label. In 2011, double-disc *The Centennial Edition* appeared on the occasion of Johnson’s 100th birthday and so did the “special limited edition” mega-box *The Complete Original Masters*—12 phonograph records, two CDs, one DVD.

Endowed with an imperishable fame, Johnson is a pop-cultural emblem who fits the image of a scrappy, free-spirited

country bluesman roaming the Depression-era Deep South. He's been the subject of a middling Hollywood film, *Crossroads* (1986), and several documentaries of varying value. In 1994, Johnson was pictured on a U.S. postage stamp. For the centennial, Dogfish Head Brewery introduced "Hell Hound" beer, and just recently, Alan Greenberg's outstanding novella-like screenplay *Love In Vain* (named for a 1937 Johnson song) has been republished by University of Minnesota Press. There's even a Robert Johnson: Life & Legacy Tour offered by the Greenwood, Miss., Convention & Visitors Bureau.

Johnson's music, not postmortem celebrity, is his crystalline achievement. Sporting a lonesome, clear-toned tenor voice that travels higher and lower with equal effectiveness, he sang verses teeming with poetic imagery—sexual, demonic, etc.—in compact, well-crafted songs that shone for their narrative sophistication. His acutely expressed emotionalism bespoke an inner anguish formed from the loss, betrayal and injustices that African-Americans experienced in the harsh, unforgiving Delta.

Johnson was a virtuoso slide guitarist, using a knife's sharp edge or a glass bottle neck on strings to make his instrument speak volumes. Synthesizing the influences of jazz-inclined Lonnie Johnson and Delta blues paterfamilias Son House, among others, he combined lead and rhythm lines like a magician. His walking boogie-bass line, based on a typical 12-bar pattern, was so exceptional it was taken upriver by Muddy Waters to catalyze Chicago blues and later rock 'n' roll.

Guy Davis is one of the few middle-aged acoustic bluesmen working today who gives voice to a personal freedom of expression when remodeling a Johnson song. Since the 1970s, he's personalized at least five Johnson classics in the studio, and his concert repertoire usually includes Johnson tunes, notably "Walkin' Blues." "Robert played it how he felt it," said Davis in a deliberately slow cadence, dramatizing each word with emphasis. The New York-based singer-guitarist, in a normal speech pattern, continued, "Robert played a chord in a way you never heard it before. He would play one note and hang on to it, saying more with that one note than I could say with 10 because he had that gift."

The life story of Johnson is indivisible from legend. Fortunately, Tom Graves's book, *Crossroads* (Devault-Graves Agency), collects the few facts known about him from endless investigations of researchers and interviews with Johnson's colleagues such as Johnny Shines. Graves also recounts the legends surrounding Johnson, none more famous than the Faustian pact the bluesman was said to have made with the devil at a back-country crossroads in which he traded his soul for superior guitar technique. (House told *DownBeat* writer Pete Welding the meeting really happened.)

Johnson, originally called Robert Spencer, was born out of wedlock in 1911 or 1912. As a youth, he learned to play the one-string diddley bow and harmonica. In his teen years, he changed his surname from that of his step-father to that of his biological father and married a woman who would die

giving birth to a stillborn. Adverse to plantation labor, Johnson rode the rails as a hobo for a few years, during which time he somehow, through devilry or not, became a proficient guitarist—he may have been given lessons by the obscure musician Ike Zimmerman.

Slightly built and a sharp dresser, Johnson performed the blues, popular radio tunes, ragtime, polkas, Appalachian folk and Hollywood cowboy music in juke joints, at lumber camps and on street corners. By all accounts, he was a serious whiskey drinker and womanizer. It's thought his

death came about when a cuckolded husband gave him bad moonshine. No one is really sure where he's buried. Researchers wrangle over how many photos of Johnson exist, two for certain and likely a third.

Does Johnson's music have staying power in the digital age? "I like to think his music will continue indefinitely," said Davis. "The way it stays alive is not just in playing Robert's recordings but having people interpret them as they feel them. Blues lives by interpretation, not just by historical artifact." **DB**

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Historical Album of the Year

1 Miles Davis Quintet, *Live In Europe 1969: The Bootleg Series, Vol. 2* (COLUMBIA/LEGACY) 229 votes

The second edition in Columbia/Legacy's Miles Davis Bootleg Series, this new set presents the "third great quintet" of Davis, Wayne Shorter, Chick Corea, Dave Holland and Jack DeJohnette at its creative peak.



2 Charles Mingus, *The Jazz Workshop Concerts 1964-1965* (MOSAIC) 136

These seven discs present five concerts that the bass-

ist and his ensembles recorded between April 1964 and September 1965. In these two years, he wrote and performed some of his epic compositions with his best working groups.



3 Charles Mingus, *The Complete Columbia & RCA Album Collection* (COLUMBIA/LEGACY) 107

Examining a fertile period from the late 1950s to the early 1970s, this

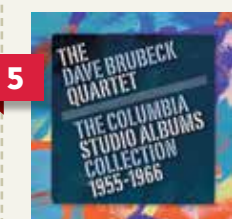
10-CD set includes such masterpieces as *Tijuana Moods* (1957), *Mingus Ah Um* (1959), *Mingus Dynasty* (1959), *Alternate Takes* (1959), *Let My Children Hear Music* (1971) and *Charles Mingus And Friends In Concert* (1972). The addition of the epic *Epitaph* (1989), which captures an all-star ensemble led by Gunther Schuller, rounds out this portrait of the bassist, composer and bandleader.



4 Bill Evans, *Live At Art D'Lugoff's Top Of The Gate* (RESONANCE) 94

Two previously unreleased live trio sets—made by Resonance Records' George Klabin

and held in safe keeping since he recorded them with uncommon care in 1968—shed new light on the intimacy and intelligence of Evans' music at an important time in the pianist's history, as he was quietly becoming a major force in contemporary music using essentially counter-revolutionary materials.



5 Dave Brubeck Quartet, *The Columbia Studio Albums Collection: 1955-1966* (COLUMBIA/LEGACY) 84

Containing about 12 hours of music, this box set covers all 19

studio albums that Brubeck recorded for Columbia, with bonus tracks scattered throughout.



6 Clifford Brown & Max Roach, *The Clifford Brown & Max Roach EmArcy Albums* (MOSAIC) 81

Four seminal albums recorded between

1954-1956 by one of the pioneering hard-bop combos have had an enduring influence on generations of jazz musicians. Remastered here, these recordings reveal a strikingly fresh sound that resulted from the remarkable empathy that existed within this band of master instrumentalists.



7 Keith Jarrett, *Sleeper* (ECM) 74

Recorded live in Tokyo in 1979 and released here as a two-CD set, this music documents the pianist's

European Quartet—with bassist Palle Danielsson, saxophonist Jan Garbarek and drummer Jon Christensen—in full power, sensitively executing original material with subtle interaction.



8 The Quintet, *Jazz At Massey Hall* (ORIGINAL JAZZ CLASSICS) 66

Virtuosity and personality rule on this latest remastered recording of

a historic 1953 all-star performance in Toronto featuring Charlie Parker, Dizzy Gillespie, Bud Powell, Charles Mingus and Max Roach.



9 Coleman Hawkins, *Classic Coleman Hawkins Sessions 1922-1947* (MOSAIC) 51

Some 15 dozen tracks culled from Sony's massive vaults and public-domain recordings reveal the arc of the master tenor saxophonist's grand career. The listener meets Hawkins slap-tonguing behind blues queen Mamie Smith and leaves him a quarter-century later, standing toe to toe with young beboppers Fats Navarro and Max Roach.

10 Louis Armstrong and The All Stars, *Satchmo At Symphony Hall* (HIP-O SELECT) 48



Recorded in 1947, this two-CD set captures the primal vigor of Armstrong's new "concert group" three months after

it became a working unit. Loose, strutting and full of crackle, Pops couldn't have hoped for a greater front-line partner than trombonist Jack Teagarden or a more responsive drummer than Sid Catlett.

11 Terje Rypdal, *In The Studio & In Concert* (ECM) 32

12 Dexter Gordon, *Night Ballads: Montreal 1977* (UPTOWN) 31

13 Miles Davis, *Live At Montreux 1991* (DVD) (EAGLE ROCK) 29

14 Duane Allman, *Skydog: The Duane Allman Retrospective* (ROUNDER) 28

15 Clifford Brown, *The EmArcy Master Takes, Vol. 2* (HIP-O SELECT) 27

16 Michael Brecker, *The Very Best Of Michael Brecker* (VERVE REISSUES) 26

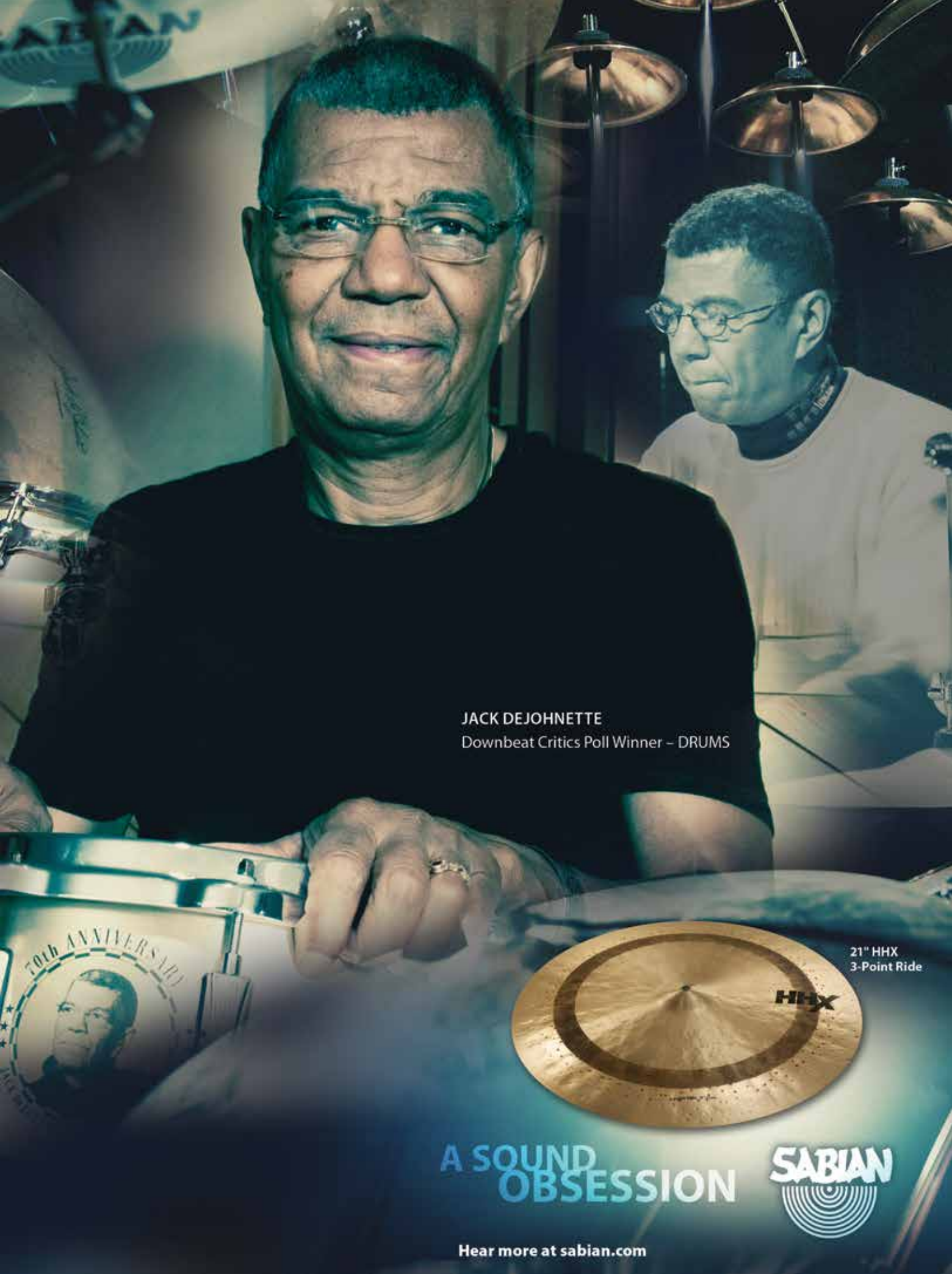
17 Tito Puente, *Quatro: The Definitive Collection* (SONY MUSIC LATIN) 24

18 Albert King, *I'll Play The Blues For You* (STAX) 21

Albert Mangelsdorff, *Live At Audimax Freiburg, June 22, 1964* (JAZZHAUS) 21

19 Jimi Hendrix, *People, Hell And Angels* (LEGACY) 20

Muddy Waters, *You Shook Me: The Chess Masters, Vol. 3, 1958 To 1963* (HIP-O SELECT) 20



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Christian McBride

Full Flying Altitude

By Ted Panken *✎* Photo by Chi Modu

EARLY IN MAY, ABOUT AN HOUR AFTER SUPERVISING A recording session by trumpeter Sean Jones, Christian McBride was unwinding with a house special at a cigar club near Carnegie Hall.

Recently off the road from several months playing bass and music-directing for the Monterey All-Stars, McBride would fly to London in two days for a duo concert with Joshua Redman. A month later, at the Vision Festival, he would join his uncle, Howard Cooper, and his father, Lee Smith, in a three-bass encounter with outcat alto saxophone icon Marshall Allen. But at this moment, McBride was considering how to respond to his fifth Bassist of the Year designation in the DownBeat Critics Poll.

"Sometimes I'm made to feel like I made a deal with the devil," McBride remarked with a rueful chuckle. "Come on, McBride, what's your secret? What did you do?" What I did was work my ass off studying albums and transcribing solos."

He added, "It always feels good to be acknowledged by the critics or readers, but the biggest thrill is to be acknowledged by your peers and get calls for gigs."

McBride, 41, has been intimate with that feeling almost from the moment he moved to New York from Philadelphia in 1989. Whether playing with his mentor, Ray Brown, in Super Bass, or in Redman's quartets with Pat Metheny and Billy Higgins or Brad Mehldau and Brian Blade, or with New York's finest pianists at Bradley's, he impressed elders and peers with just-so bass lines bedrocked by keen harmonic acumen, spot-on intonation, a set-your-clock-to-it time feel, and a tone that retained its low-end *thwonk* at any tempo—attributes that he applied when conjuring solos of horn-like agility, deep swing and abundant soulfulness.

After signing with Verve in 1994, McBride also displayed those attributes on *Gettin' To It* and *Number Two Express*, presenting different angles on "the values of traditional jazz" while also introducing a compositional voice that extracted strong melodic hooks from sophisticated harmonic raw materials.

During the aughts, McBride investigated "a more all-encompassing view of jazz" with a quartet comprising Ron Blake, Geoffrey Keezer and Terreon Gully. On *Sci-Fi*, *Vertical Vision* (Warner) and *Live At Tonic* (Rope-A-Dope), he plugged in, referencing the open-ended spirit of experimental funk and fusion. Simultaneously, he accepted offers to play with Herbie Hancock, Sting, David Sanborn and Chick Corea. As McBride's Q-rating ascended, he assumed a broad slate of administrative obligations: creative chair for Jazz at the Los Angeles Philharmonic, where, from 2005 until 2009, he booked 12 concerts a year; artistic director of the Monterey and Detroit Jazz Festivals and Jazz Aspen Snowmass; co-director of the National Jazz Museum in Harlem, where he's presided at numerous public events; and radio host for the SiriusXM show *Conversations With Christian* (which yielded a 2011 Mack Avenue CD of the same title) featuring his interviews and musical dialogs with such diverse guests as Hank Jones, Bill Charlap, Angélique Kidjo and Quincy Jones.

For these reasons, McBride acknowledges, "My career as a solo artist wasn't able to reach full flying altitude. When it came time to put together my own band, it was always patchwork and hurried. I was never able to thoroughly think anything through."

In 2009, he spoke of his determination "to sink my teeth into my own music and see what I can finally develop on my own." Four years and five Mack Avenue albums later, McBride has exceeded his recorded output of the previous decade. *People Music*, which dropped in May, is the second document of his Inside Straight quintet; *Out Here*, an Aug. 6 release, debuts his young trio, with Christian Sands on piano and Ulysses Owens on drums. On both sessions, McBride resumes the "all-acoustic, meat-and-potatoes swinging" context that stamped his tonal personality during phase one of his career.

With alto/soprano saxophonist Steve Wilson and vibraphone virtuoso Warren Wolf on the front line, Inside Straight mirrors the intense Woody Shaw meets the Jazz Messengers template of the late pianist Mulgrew Miller's similarly configured ensemble, *Wingspan*. On *Out Here*, the trio focuses on "basic food group repertoire—the blues, ballads, standards," finding virgin pockets in terrain previously cleared and developed not only by the Ray Brown edition of the Oscar Peterson Trio, but also by McBride himself in Benny Green's '90s trios with either Carl Allen or Russell Malone as the third member, and by Brown's own trios.

"The last thing I wanted to do was lead an acoustic trio, because Ray had done it," said McBride, who owns one of Brown's basses. "I loved Ray. But even on records that aesthetically had nothing to do with him, it's always, 'Yeah, there's the Ray Brown influence.' No it's not! At this point in my career, I would be much more comfortable just being called 'Christian McBride.' But my own personal discomfort with the comparisons takes a backseat to what this trio needs to do.

"When I started Inside Straight, I was missing something I wanted to return to. I felt these younger guys were missing that same thing, and I should give them some hard-core swinging that I'm pretty sure they wouldn't get elsewhere. And then, when they do their other thing, it will be even fresher—and vice-versa."

McBride intends to revisit speculative realms on a forthcoming recording by "A Christian McBride Situation" with turntablists DJ Logic and Jahi Sundance, keyboardist Patrice Rushen and vocalist Alyson Williams. He also plans to document *The Movement, Revisited*, a suite for big band, narrators and 30-piece choir whose subjects are civil rights-era icons such as Rosa Parks, Dr. Martin Luther King and Malcolm X.

But more than anything else, McBride will hone in on the quotidian challenge of keeping his chops in order. "However busy you get doing different things, you can't leave the woman you came to the dance with," he says. "Playing bass made all this happen. Everything else revolves around that."

DB



Wadada Leo Smith

Embracing Challenges

By Aaron Cohen

Photo by Michael Jackson

FOR MORE THAN 40 YEARS, TRUMPETER WADADA

Leo Smith's compositional ideas were so advanced that even colleges where he taught could not accurately describe his concepts in their course guides. Now the times may have caught up to him.

This year, for the first time, Smith topped the Composer category in the DownBeat Critics Poll. The honor follows another recent accolade: In April, he was named a finalist for the 2013 Pulitzer Prize in music for *Ten Freedom Summers* (Cuneiform). The 2012 four-disc set presents his interpretation of key moments in the civil rights movement. The epic album brings together the Southwest Chamber Music ensemble and Smith's Golden Quartet/Quintet, as well as his own imaginative musical language and historical research.

While the subject matter of *Ten Freedom Summers* is intertwined with Smith's own story, the resulting praise is a vindication of his communal ideals.

"I remember early on that even though some of my colleagues talked about making money, I had expressed an idea that money's fine, but that's just another personal thing," Smith said. "Awards like these can do much more for the community than an individual making a lot of money. That's like what's happening here with me and all these people, like [trombonist] George Lewis. Every time one of us is celebrated, the rest of us are also celebrated, even though we may not always know that."

Smith regularly refers to the legacy of the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians (AACM), which Lewis chronicled in his book *A Power Stronger Than Itself*. This organization, which Smith joined in 1967, also reflects the civil rights-era consciousness that he presents in *Ten Freedom Summers*.

"The AACM has a long history with a beautiful philosophy," Smith said. "It has motivated and generated a wide range of audiences, and it almost seems like a dream, or impossibility. Roscoe Mitchell, Joseph Jarman, Henry Threadgill—all of those saxophonists who come out of the AACM don't sound like each other. When you look at the way they composed, it's the same thing. Trumpet players, same thing. It's very rare for a single organization to influence such a wide range."

Throughout Smith's career, he has developed a musical system sometimes called Ankhration, which he started working on alongside AACM colleagues such as Anthony Braxton and Leroy Jenkins. Smith used this system for part of *Ten Freedom Summers*, but he did not want to limit himself to concepts of his own making for this ambitious project.

"When you write a large piece like that, you have to use a large array of musical forms for it to be interesting," Smith said. "For 'Martin Luther King,



Jr.: Memphis, The Prophecy,' I use blues connotations to reflect his speaking voice. Another one, 'The Freedom Riders Ride,' represents a lot of changing instrumentation and changing structure to indicate the journey on the bus wasn't always straight out. Complicated episodes happened. All the musical forms in there come from a philosophical base, or a psychological base, and I had to figure out some mobility for those musical forms."

Smith offers a summation of his compositional approach in an essay he includes in his new two-disc *Occupy The World* (Tumo). He writes that rather than rely on standard metric designs for melodic construction, his focus is on building from the sense of geometry within the musical lines themselves. Also, he does not rework the keys of individual instruments to fit within a singular tonal spectrum. If this seems highbrow, Smith actually has a lot of fun with it. He writes about "Crossing On A Southern Road": "We only used one tuba, but it could have been three to five."

The assemblage of musicians on the set provided Smith with a huge variety of instrumental possibilities. He recorded *Occupy The World* with the large and unorthodox Finnish orchestra TUMO. Smith conducts this 21-member ensemble, weaving together strings and brass with Veli Kujala's accordion and three drummers. Smith's 33-minute "Occupy The World For Life, Liberty And Justice" is based on fragments he'd been working on for several years. He was moved to put these portions together after witnessing the mass movement targeting economic inequality in the fall of 2011.

"That was a great re-imagining of the possibilities of our society and possibility for radical change of our society," Smith said. "It has not achieved it as such, but nevertheless, the idea is still there and not going away."

Even though Smith's recent distinctions have come from creating large-scale works, he's just as excited about an upcoming solo tour.

"You have to make sense; that's the first thing," he said. "The second thing is allowing the whole program to be put together while you're performing. It's very challenging, but challenges lead to rewards."

DB



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Tia Fuller

From Bebop to Beyoncé & Back

By Allen Morrison  Photo by Joke Schot

IF YOU HAPPENED TO BE HAVING dinner at Sullivan's Steakhouse in Denver on a Thursday night circa 1995, along with your filet mignon you would have had a chance to hear three young jazz stars of the future, all in the same extended family.

At that time, the regular Thursday night jazz band, Fuller Sound, was starting to feature the 18-year-old Tia Fuller on alto, her sister Shamie on piano and Shamie's future husband, Rudy Royston, on drums, in addition to father Fred on bass and mother Elthopia on vocals.

But nothing in their mainstream repertoire of jazz standards would have prepared you for Tia Fuller's mature style, as heard on her latest album, *Angelic Warrior* (Mack Avenue): aggressive, hard-charging, but melodic. Her fast-paced, hard-bop compositions often explore tricky rhythms yet convey an unmistakably soulful groove.

It's a long way from that Denver steakhouse to touring the world as a member of Beyoncé's band, and to becoming a jazz headliner in her own right. But, at 37, Fuller has arrived, due to a combination of sheer talent, hard work and a positive attitude.

In an upstairs office at New York's Apollo Theater, following a rehearsal for an all-star concert celebrating the great female jazz artists who have played at the Harlem landmark, Fuller recalled those Thursday night gigs in Denver. "That was where I really expanded my repertoire," she explains. "My dad was always out booking gigs for his girls. He loved playing with his family. I was playing nothing but standards: 'My Romance,' 'I'm Confessin',' 'Cherokee,' 'Night And Day.'" Fuller also sat in regularly at Denver jazz clubs whenever she was not attending classes at Spelman College in Atlanta

(where she earned a bachelor's degree in music) or at the University of Colorado at Boulder (master's in jazz pedagogy and performance).

All that woodshedding in Denver and a decade of dues paying in New York City have paid off. This is proving to be a breakout year for Fuller, and *Angelic Warrior* is her breakthrough album. She has also broken through with the critics, winning DownBeat Rising Star awards for her alto and flute work.

Angelic Warrior showcases her own searching, post-bop compositions and forward-leaning interpretations of three standards. The album features her new family band—the two Roystons on piano and drums and Mimi Jones on bass. Guests John Patitucci on electric and piccolo bass, Terri Lyne Carrington on drums and singer Dianne Reeves make strong contributions. Patitucci plays the guitar-like piccolo bass as a front-line instrument, in virtuosic counterpoint to Fuller's alto lines; Reeves intones a solemn, regal "Body And Soul" over a funky, re-harmonized landscape; and Carrington adds a wildly inventive arrangement of a Cole Porter medley.

Carrington has become something of a mentor to Fuller in recent years. Fuller is featured on her recent leader project, *Money Jungle: Provocative In Blue* (Concord Jazz), and often performs with her band. When not touring with Carrington or her own band, Fuller serves as assistant musical director of Esperanza Spalding's Radio Music Society touring band. Carrington and Fuller co-arranged a version of "Cherokee" for *Angelic Warrior*.

"When I was young, Jack DeJohnette told me that if I wanted to make it, I had to put myself in an environment where the competition is greatest," Carrington says. "Tia definitely did that. She went to

New York City not knowing a lot of people, and over the course of 10 years she really developed her playing and made a name for herself. She developed her own vision as a leader with her quartet."

Scuffling for gigs in New York, Fuller landed a chair in the Duke Ellington Band's regular Monday night gigs at Birdland, eventually getting what she describes as her big break playing with the Jon Faddis Jazz Orchestra. Major gigs followed with Sean Jones, Jimmy Heath and Nancy Wilson.

If the advanced concepts of her playing and composing seem a far cry from her steakhouse days, they are also far removed stylistically from Beyoncé's all-female touring band, in which Fuller played sax for five years. Maintaining a grueling schedule with the pop superstar was rewarding in many ways, she says, but it presented a challenge to her jazz ambitions. "I tried to keep my foot in the jazz door, because I knew that 'out of sight, out of mind,'" she says. "People automatically assume that if you're on tour with an A-list artist, one, you don't need any more money, and two, you're not interested in playing many gigs because you're touring all the time. But anytime I came home, I reached out to people like T.S. Monk and Ralph Peterson to let them know, 'Hey, I'm looking for work!'"

Playing with Beyoncé in giant arenas gave Fuller a new perspective on the importance of presentation. "Sometimes the audience can feel disconnected," she says. "That's why in my shows, I try to reach out to the audience and incorporate them, even if it's just call and response, or clapping on 2 and 4—it's showmanship. I also learned a lot from Beyoncé from a business standpoint. She has my utmost respect as an artist, businesswoman and leader."

Still, being a member of the Beyoncé tour, where



Tia Fuller at
LantarenVenster
in Rotterdam,
The Netherlands,
April 27, 2011

every note was choreographed to the split second, was limiting to Fuller musically. “There’s more room for creativity in jazz,” she says. The rigorous work required a month of 12-hour band rehearsals, followed by weeks of 8-hour production rehearsals and more than 100 concert dates a year. “There is only so much room for your individual voice to come out,” she says. Fuller is nonetheless proud she suggested that Beyoncé add “How High The Moon” to her stage show, in the style of Ella and Bird, giving the pop diva a chance to show off her jazz chops.

Fuller’s sister Shamie—whose leader CD, *Portraits*, has received critical praise—credits their parents with inspiring their careers. “When we first started,” she says, “Dad would call tunes we didn’t know, and he’d say, ‘You guys gotta know these standards!’ That’s where Tia and I, and Rudy, too, really got our foundation from: learning standards and playing them on gigs night after night.” Now when Fred and Elthopia Fuller come to their children’s gigs, Fred occasionally sits in, usually on a standard. “He always goes to the mic,” Shamie says, “whether Tia or I want him to or not, to say how proud he is of us.”

Gregory Porter

Real Good Hands

By Shaun Brady *∞* Photo by Shawn Peters

THE JAZZ WORLD EAGERLY AWAITS GREGORY PORTER'S third album, *Liquid Spirit*, to be released Sept. 17. The singer-songwriter has revealed that the CD, his third overall but his first for Blue Note, will contain a version of pianist Ramsey Lewis' 1965 hit "The 'In' Crowd," a title that Porter finds particularly appropriate for this stage of his career.

"I always loved that song," Porter said from his hotel room in Krakow, Poland. "It falls into that in-between space where I am. It's jazz, it's soul, it has a gospel feel; it's people music. And there's a whole bunch of ways to look at that lyric: a snobbish way, a cultural way. Are you saying that you're better than anybody else? Hell no, I wouldn't say that. But I love jazz, this sometimes-esoteric music, so yeah, that puts me in the 'in' crowd. And I'm on Blue Note Records now, so maybe that puts me in the 'in' crowd, I don't know. I consider myself all-inclusive, so maybe *everybody's* included in the 'in' crowd."

Whatever your criteria for the figurative "in" crowd, it's clear that Porter belongs as one of its guests of honor. He was named both Rising Star–Jazz Artist and Rising Star–Male Vocalist in this year's DownBeat Critics Poll, based on his electrifying concert performances and his acclaimed sophomore release, *Be Good* (Motéma), which strongly and soulfully delivered on the promise of his 2010 debut, *Water* (Motéma).

"It's significant and extraordinary," Porter said of the awards. "It's a great honor. I'm excited about what it says about who I am and where I'm going. I was voted 'Rising Star,' not one falling down, so I like the sound of that."

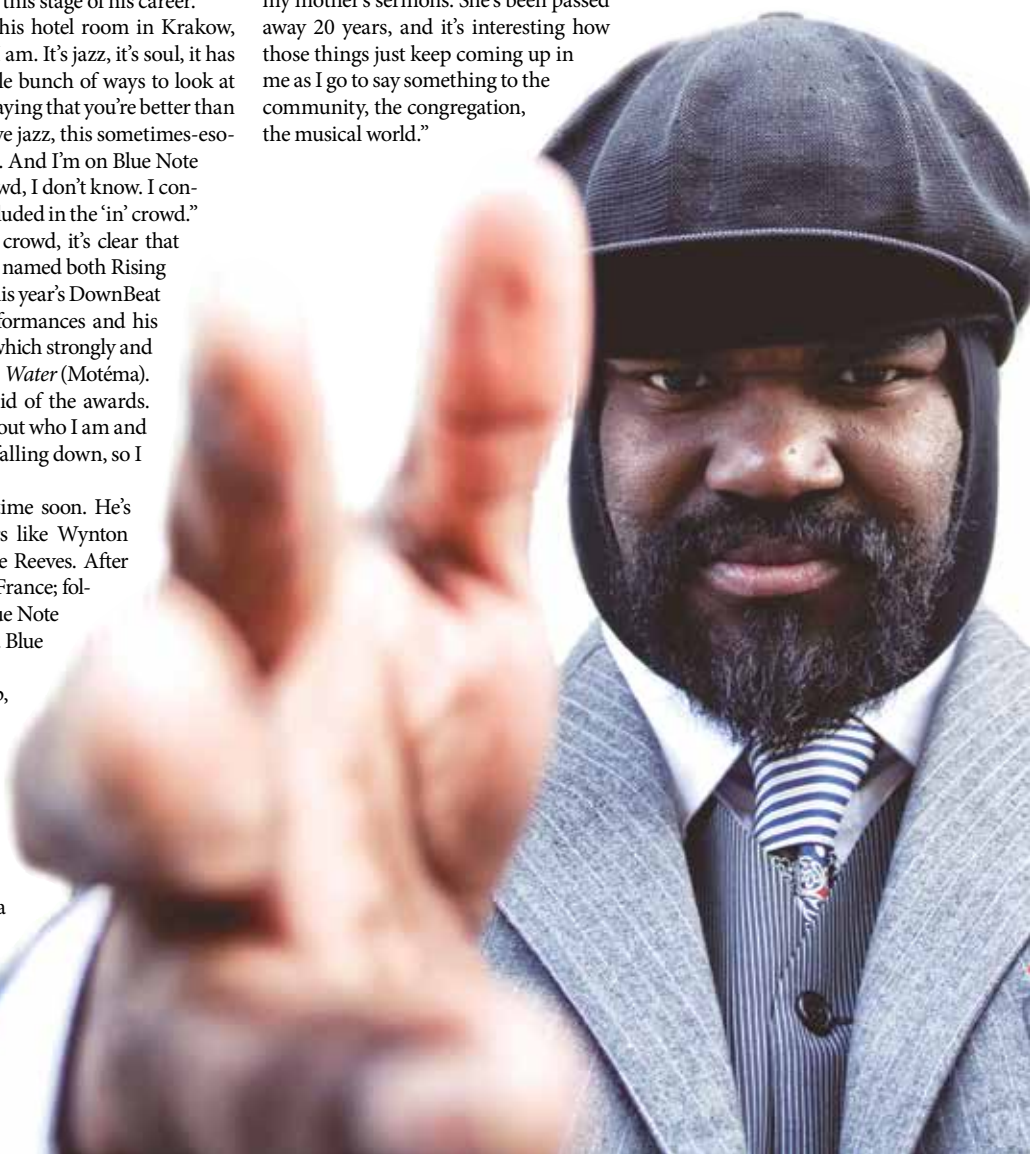
There's little risk of a descent for Porter anytime soon. He's recently had opportunities to work with A-listers like Wynton Marsalis, David Murray, Hubert Laws and Dianne Reeves. After two releases on Motéma, he signed with Universal France; following the Universal Music Group's takeover of Blue Note parent company EMI, he suddenly found himself a Blue Note artist.

"The legacy of that music is extraordinary, deep, and it can be very heavy," he said. "But interestingly, I didn't feel any weight or any pressure in terms of recording. I didn't feel like I had to swing like Hank Mobley; if anything, being on Blue Note just let me know, 'Keep doing what you're doing.'"

Liquid Spirit also will include a rendition of Abbey Lincoln's "Lonesome Lover" alongside a new batch of his own original songs. The protest vibe of "1960 What?" (from *Water*) returns on "Musical Genocide," while the title track harkens back even further, Porter said, to his moth-

er, who was a minister in Bakersfield, Calif.

"The more writing that I do, the more I find out about myself," he said. "The theme of water comes up again several times, and the themes of regeneration and renewal, of water as spirit and as love, were oftentimes the theme of my mother's sermons. She's been passed away 20 years, and it's interesting how those things just keep coming up in me as I go to say something to the community, the congregation, the musical world."



Along with recurring themes, Porter finds recurring characters appearing from one album to the next. The narrator of "Illusion," the opening track of *Water*, updates his story on *Liquid Spirit*. "I call it a character," he conceded, "but it's one of the people inside of me."

Porter is no stranger to portraying characters. He's worked in musical theater both on and off Broadway, including the Tony- and Drama Desk Award-nominated revue *It Ain't Nothin' But the Blues*. He also wrote and starred in the autobiographical musical *Nat King Cole & Me: A Musical Healing* in 2004. "I look at Abbey Lincoln when she did some acting work," Porter said, "and it seemed so natural for her to climb into a character. I think vocalists inhabit a character when we take on a song. You become that lonely person that you speak about, you become that person who has a simmering rage based on some unequal treatment, like Nina Simone as she sings about the South. The lyric content of jazz is so varied and can be so deep that sometimes it requires you to almost do character research before you climb into a piece."

Perhaps that theatrical experience contributes to his cultivation of a distinct image—namely, his ever-present, instantly recognizable combination of a hat and a balaclava. Asked about the look, he simply says, "This is how I've been rocking it," but he's well aware of the strong impression that it makes. "I was onstage [recently] with Jon Hendricks," he said. "He had on his captain hat, and they took profile pictures of us together. His silhouette is so recognizable—not that I'm trying to create that, but this is my thing. This is my Gregory Porter jazz hat."

Despite the all-star attention he's been receiving, Porter is sticking with his longtime working band for *Liquid Spirit*. Pianist Chip Crawford, bassist Aaron James, saxophonist Yosuke Sato and drummer Emanuel Harrold all return, as do producers Brian Bacchus and Kamau Kenyatta. "It's important to me to work with people who make a unique and interesting musical statement, and I feel like my core group does that," he explained.

That doesn't mean that you won't see Porter sharing the stage or the studio with jazz's heavy hitters in the future. He shrugs off any attempt to narrow down his long-term plans, but rattles off countless wish-list projects, from recording with Herbie Hancock to paying homage to some of his idols. "A lot of times people hear my voice and are like, 'Where have you been?'" he laughed. "They want a catalog of music all at once. I'm not that calculating or clever in terms of what I'm trying to achieve. I let the music happen, and it dictates what it's going to be. I have a healthy belief that I'll be able to do this for a while and maybe there's a record of ballads for me, or a Nat 'King' Cole tribute, or a project on soul men and how that would feel from a jazz perspective. A career develops and unfolds—I'm not rushing myself." **DB**

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Gerald Clayton

Cliff Jumping

By Joe Tangari *Photo by Bill Douthart*

THE MUSIC FLOATS AROUND FOR A while, circling, as though it's looking for something small dropped in the grass. Then, all three musicians—pianist Gerald Clayton, bassist Joe Sanders and drummer Rodney Green—seem to find it at once, and Clayton drops a couple of big, stuttering chords that instantly tighten the reins on the song for the final push to the end.

"Sometimes the music tells you where that should happen," says Clayton while waiting for his food between sets at the Dirty Dog Jazz Café in Grosse Pointe Farms, Mich. "There's a natural place in the song that asks for a groove, and all that floaty stuff might be leading up to it. We're searching for the arc of the song."

It could be said that Clayton's whole career to this point has been one long process of learning to listen, a process that began in his childhood when he studied classical piano with Linda Buck for 10 years.

Nowadays, he has a great appreciation for all that training. "Besides the technical element of playing an instrument that classical music is so good for teaching," he says, "it's also great for general musicality and sensitivity to what the music is asking you to do. You might slow down a bit at the end of the phrase even if it's not on the page, because that's what the music wants to do."

The pianist listens closely every time he plays out with his trio, a constantly evolving entity that Clayton shares with many other musicians as they're available. The changing membership lends natural variety to the musical conversations that happen onstage, which is fine with the young bandleader.

"I enjoy that element of it, because I get to make music with some really great guys," says Clayton.

"It's always a party. With guys that you have trust in musically, you can throw anything out there and see what happens."

That open-ended approach—Clayton describes it as "jumping off a cliff"—stands in contrast to his other regular gig, playing in the Clayton Brothers, a band co-led by his bassist father, John, and saxophonist uncle, Jeff. "They leave a lot of room for each musician to breathe his own life into it, but they do have a particular sound they're going for, and there's a mentality you bring to that as a sideman. There's freedom, but there's also clarity in terms of the direction of the music.

"With my trio, I try to think of it as three leaders and be as open as possible to letting the music go where it needs to go and be in the moment." This sentiment comes through in the way the band plays together. At the Dirty Dog, Clayton, Sanders and Green take on Clayton originals, a contrafact on an old Billy Strayhorn tune, standards and Horace Silver tunes, stretching each one into a winding journey that feels like it could change direction at any time and at anyone's behest.

Some of Clayton's talent for listening stems from his time with the bands of Roy Hargrove, with whom he spent three years, touring almost constantly. "Playing with Roy was a really good experience," says Clayton. "There are no charts, and he doesn't write anything down, so it was a constant lesson. Music was a 24-hour process. He would sit down at a piano at a hotel and play through a new tune of his or someone else, and that was a time to really open your ears and check it out, because he might call that tune the next night on the bandstand. If he showed it to you once, as far as he was concerned you should have it."

Sharing the bandstand with Hargrove also

developed Clayton's innate eclecticism. He played in the trumpeter's big band, combo and funk group and had to meet the demands of each one from night to night. The varied arrangements and hints of r&b that tinge his most recent album as a leader, this year's *Life Forum* (Concord), fit with Clayton's twin assertions that making music is an open process and there aren't any real boundaries between genres.

"When we play, we try to consider everything that's being put out there," he says. "You don't let anything pass by, and you don't do anything without a reason. It's a challenge. We don't get it right every time, but the goal is to be honest in everything we play—and that what we play is relevant, that it has something to do with what somebody else put out there."

Describing the Strayhorn-derived tune from the Dirty Dog gig, Clayton says that interpreting music for the trio, be it his originals or something else, is collaborative: "I heard the Strayhorn tune as a bebop line that horns would be playing. We learn it as a trio, without the horn players, and use it as a platform. There are hits in the melody we might use as a landing point, but we're masking the tune up to that point. That's the process until we get bored of that and try something else that's not obvious to us."

It's often the case that when the musicians enjoy making the music, the audience enjoys hearing it, and Clayton's freewheeling but responsive approach to leading a band creates the kind of night-to-night variety that lets musicians experience the joy of creating something new each time out. Asked how he came to approach leading a band with such openness and democratic spirit, Clayton offers an answer fit for a musician with wide-open ears: "That's what I enjoy as a listener, so that's what I search to create."



61st ANNUAL
CRITICS POLL
RISING STAR Vibes

Jason Marsalis

New Chapter

By Phillip Lutz
Photo by Braden Piper

JASON MARSALIS KNOWS THE PERILS OF POLLS, PRIZES AND the sundry accolades that come with belonging to the most famous family in jazz. In 2011, when he was named an NEA Jazz Master—along with his father, Ellis, and older brothers Wynton, Branford and Delfeayo—a small but vocal group of dissenters contended that, at age 33, he was too young to have earned the award.

Little wonder, then, that when he was asked to comment on his victory in the 2013 DownBeat Critics Poll in the category Rising Star-Vibes, he offered a decidedly measured response.

"I'm honored," he said, "but I keep it in perspective and understand that there's still a lot more music for me to work on."

Hard work is, after all, what this intense scion of New Orleans musical royalty is all about, whether he is leading the Jason Marsalis Vibes Quartet—whose new album *In A World Of Mallets* (Basin Street) signals his arrival as a practitioner of distinction on the vibraphone—or playing drums in the Marcus Roberts Trio, an association that stretches back nearly 20 years.

Whatever the musical context, his bandmates deeply appreciate his contributions. Backstage before a recent concert in New London, Conn., banjoist Béla Fleck, who recorded 2012's *Across The Imaginary Divide* (Rounder) with the Roberts trio, praised Marsalis for "brilliant ideas that sound as if he's played them his whole life, but are really coming off the top of his head."

The concert that night bore him out. As the band moved through a varied mix of material from the album, Marsalis—a hard-swinging swirl of brushes, sticks and mallets—offered a steady stream of fresh insights, informing but not overwhelming the other band members.

As a leader, Marsalis has proven to be similarly attuned to the needs of the group, explained Dave Potter, the vibes quartet's drummer of seven years. "He's open to our input," Potter said, referring to himself and bandmates Austin Johnson on piano and Will Goble on bass. "He's free to let the music go where it goes."

That sense of freedom was evident during the recording of the new album. While Marsalis said the basic order of tunes was set before the recording session began, the final product took shape as the session unfolded—from the opener, "Discipline Discovers A World Of Mallets," through to its bookend, "Discipline Gets Lost In A World Of Mallets," which was cooked up after Marsalis serendipitously stumbled on a striking rhythmic figure while editing another tune from the album, "Blues Can Be Abstract, Too."

"I said, 'Man, we *have* to use that,'" he recalled.

Marsalis is not afraid of the comparisons that reinterpretation can invite: Three tunes from the new CD—"Ballet Class," "Characters" and "Blues For The 29ers"—appeared in less fluid form in 2009 on his first vibes album, *Music Update*



(ELM). Nor is he afraid of ceding album real estate to colleagues: "Louisiana Gold" was written by Johnson; "Big Earl's Last Ride," by Goble; and "Ill Bill," by Potter, who said he had rescued the Monk-like effort from his college notebooks.

Marsalis also reached back to some personal favorites from the 1960s and '70s, including Hermeto Pascoal's haunting "Nem Um Talvez," which his father once recorded on solo piano, and Bobby Hutcherson's "My Joy," the new album's most explicit nod to another vibraphonist. The debt to Hutcherson is clear in Marsalis' straightforward reading.

Hutcherson is one of the few vibes players Marsalis names as an influence. His influences tend to be drummers and horn players, including his three brothers. For all the weight of expectation his family members' achievements might have saddled him with, Marsalis seems very comfortable with the way his career has evolved. "It's been great," he said, "because I've had access to a lot of information about music."

Marsalis credits his successful move from drums to vibraphone in part to the grounding he gained from early violin study. And he attributes the motivation to make the move in no small measure to an early appreciation of the vibes' place in the musical landscape, where he feels the instrument has been underrepresented.

"One of the reasons I wanted to play the vibes," he said, "was that there was a lot more that could be said on the instrument."

The switch has not been easy, he acknowledged. It has taken him a dozen years of public performance to adjust his mallet technique. His writing, likewise, has required a reorientation, veering sharply from the front-line dominance of horns that characterized many of his previous works. But, he said, he has finally found a vibes voice—and, with the new CD, produced a document that reflects it.

"The record is the beginning of a new chapter," he said.

DB



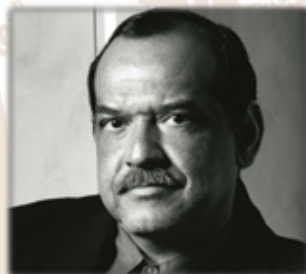
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61st ANNUAL
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RISING STAR Electric Bass

Derrick Hodge

Between the Lines

By Hilary Brown

Photo by Chris Baldwin

DERRICK HODGE IS A VISUAL THINKER.

While the bassist was composing the dozen originals on his leader debut, *Live Today* (Blue Note), he didn't ruminant over notation and rhythm. He said his goal was to "paint a portrait of how I felt on that given day."

Some of the tracks are autobiographical illustrations of momentous life encounters. Others were inspired by everyday occurrences or fond childhood memories. But whether Hodge is reminiscing about impromptu breakfast-time jam sessions ("Table Jawn"), recreating the spirit of his days on the high school drum line ("Boro March") or waxing existential about life and death, he is as personal as he is instrumentally sound.

"I've already been documented playing for other artists," Hodge said. "Let me give people something that shows how *I'm* feeling, singer-songwriter style. This album is purely expressive. It's my attempt to best serve the music by giving the audience what is truly a snapshot of my journey."

Here's a snapshot for those unfamiliar with this year's Critics Poll winner in the Rising Star-Bass category: As a longtime collaborator with Robert Glasper and a founding member of the keyboardist's Experiment project, Hodge is part of a wave of young artists—including Glasper, Chris Dave, Keyon Harrold and Karriem Riggins—who are taking the jazz world by storm with their transcendent brand of genre-blending sounds. Hodge is also an established composer who has written for the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and the Sundance Composers Lab. And as a session player, he's just as in-demand for hip-hop artists such as Kanye West and Common—who appears on the title track of *Live Today*—as he is for jazz trumpeters Terence Blanchard and Terrell Stafford.

"He's probably the only cat around who has performed with both Floetry and Clark Terry, and yet, when you hear him in any setting, his iconic

sound is immediately identifiable," said Blue Note President Don Was. "He swings like crazy."

Was discovered Hodge at the Monterey Jazz Festival and was awestruck by the New Jersey native's signature style and the expansive musical education that informs his artistry.

"Derrick has forged a unique and mind-blowing voice on the instrument," Was continued. "This is partially due to the incredible breadth of his training, which spans classical, gospel, jazz and hip-hop music. His extensive background in composition and arranging also plays a large role in his impeccable choice of notes and use of space."

Hodge said that setting the defining moments of his life to music was not as challenging as he thought it would be, but the challenge of describing himself as an artist leaves him tongue-tied.

"I'm kind of a weirdo," he joked. "I tend to think of songs early in the morning that may have nothing to do with music I played the night before. Because I'm a composer and a producer as well, on some days, I'll channel that."

Hodge is an amalgam of musical influences, ranging from his childhood in Philadelphia's hotbed of r&b talent, to performing with hip-hop and soul artists such as Q-Tip and Jill Scott, to serving as artistic director for Maxwell's touring band. Hodge developed his jazz chops at Temple University (where he played in ensembles led by Stafford) and gained experience under mentors such as the late pianist Mulgrew Miller.

"Jazz is one of the highest art forms in the world," Hodge said. "It develops your ear, your way of musical description and being able to analyze and document things a lot quicker. I don't try to balance jazz with hip-hop; now, I use it to go between the lines."

When Miller took Hodge under his wing, it was a pivotal moment for the young bassist. "Mulgrew fascinated me," Hodge said. "I saw his

high level of playing, but also his spirit. It's uncompromised, and people supported it. But what amazed me most was the level of humility he had."

Lessons learned from Miller influenced Hodge's selection of personnel for *Live Today* (out Aug. 6). He wanted to support his counterparts but also grant them a level of individual freedom. He cherry-picked a cast of players from his previous projects—keyboardists Aaron Parks and James Poyser, saxophonist Marcus Strickland and drummer Mark Colenburg—due to their diverse musical backgrounds and what he calls their "producer mentalities." Hodge also recruited his Experiment bandmates Glasper, Dave and Casey Benjamin, who plays saxophone and vocoder.

The end product is the result of a community of like-minded artists who align with Hodge's uninhibited creative philosophy and his feelings of reciprocity. "Each musician on this record understands the scope of songs, delivery and how to relate to people," Hodge explained. "It's a combination of guys who have studied music in the classroom and some who have learned by ear and never read music. Put them all together, and they're chronicling each side of myself."

Hodge's humility permeates his group outings, making him as coveted a colleague as he is a leader, revered for his open-mindedness and the trust he invests in fellow musicians.

"Derrick is one of my favorite musicians of all time, hands down, period," Glasper said. "He's selfless. Like water, he takes the shape of any musical situation and makes it his own."

That respect is mutual. "Robert and I have similar ideologies," Hodge said. "The Experiment allowed us to bring our individuality into the mix [and not be influenced] by what other people think playing music should be. With *Live Today*, I never felt that pressure. Give them how we feel and let them accept it, for better or for worse." **DB**

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Wadada Leo Smith
Composer

Gary Smulyan
Baritone Saxophone

61st ANNUAL CRITICS POLL

Complete Results

We are proud to present the results of the 61st Annual DownBeat International Critics Poll, which includes Jazz Album of the Year (page 28) and Historical Album of the Year (page 38). Results for Established Talent are on pages 54–59, and the Rising Stars categories are on pages 60–65.



Maria Schneider

DEONNA CARUSO PHOTOGRAPHY

Hall Of Fame

Charlie Haden ..81

Don Cherry	67
Anthony Braxton.....	64
Lee Konitz.....	62
Marian McPartland ...	61
Fred Anderson	58
Sam Rivers	56
Jack DeJohnette.....	47
Von Freeman.....	45
Randy Weston	45
Hank Mobley.....	44
Bob Brookmeyer.....	42
Benny Golson.....	40
B.B. King.....	39
Oliver Nelson.....	39
George Russell	39
Jimmy Heath.....	38
Billy Higgins.....	38
Kenny Burrell	37
Jaki Byard	37
Charles Lloyd.....	37

Veterans Committee Hall Of Fame

Robert Johnson 70%

Note: Artists must receive at least 66% of the Veterans Committee votes to gain entry.

Other artists receiving more than 50% of the vote:

Eubie Blake.....	61%
Bing Crosby	61%
Red Norvo	57%
Scott LaFaro.....	52%
Muddy Waters	52%

Jazz Artist

Wayne Shorter124

Vijay Iyer.....	93
Wadada Leo Smith... 84	
Jason Moran.....	77
Robert Glasper	73
Joe Lovano.....	60
Jack DeJohnette.....	59
Charles Lloyd.....	59
Anat Cohen	58
Terri Lyne Carrington	46
Bill Frisell	43
Dave Douglas.....	37
Hiromi	37
Wynton Marsalis	37
Tim Berne.....	35
Rudresh Mahanthappa.....	35
Sonny Rollins.....	35
Esperanza Spalding ..	35
Kenny Barron	34
Christian McBride.....	34

Jazz Album

Wayne Shorter Quartet, Without A Net (BLUE NOTE) 146

Wadada Leo Smith, Ten Freedom Summers (CUNEIFORM)	88
Sam Rivers/Dave Holland/Barry Altschul, Reunion: Live In New York (PI)	68
Joe Lovano Us Five, Cross Culture (BLUE NOTE)	66

Charles Lloyd/ Jason Moran, Hagar's Song (ECM).....	63
Ryan Truesdell, Centennial: Newly Discovered Works Of Gil Evans (ARTISTSHARE)	51
Branford Marsalis Quartet, Four MFs Playin' Tunes (MARSALIS)	45
Kurt Rosenwinkel, Star Of Jupiter (WOMMUSIC)	41
Christian Scott, Christian aTunde Adjuah (CONCORD).....	40
Neneh Cherry/The Thing, The Cherry Thing (SMALLTOWN SUPERSOUND).....	39
Kenny Garrett, Seeds From The Underground (MACK AVENUE)	39
Anat Cohen, Ciaroscuro (ANZIC)	38
Ravi Coltrane, Spirit Fiction (BLUE NOTE).....	34
Fred Hersch Trio, Alive At The Vanguard (PALMETTO).....	31
Pat Metheny, Unity Band (NONESUCH).....	30
Mostly Other People Do The Killing, Slippery Rock (HOT CUP)	26
Orrin Evans, Flip The Script (POSI-TONE).....	25
Aaron Diehl, The Bespoke Man's Narrative (MACK AVENUE)	24
Dave Douglas Quintet, Be Still (GREENLEAF)	24

Rudresh Mahanthappa, Gamak (ACT)	24
Lee Konitz/Bill Frisell/ Gary Peacock/Joey Baron, Enfants Terribles (HALF NOTE)	23
The Bad Plus, Made Possible (EONE) .	21
Chick Corea/Gary Burton, Hot House (CONCORD)	21
Mary Halvorson Quintet, Bending Bridges (FIREHOUSE).....	21
Chris Potter, The Sirens (ECM)	21
John Abercrombie Quartet, Within A Song (ECM)	20
The Cookers, Believe (MOTEMA).....	20
Return To Forever, The Mothership Returns (EAGLE ROCK)	20
Theo Bleckmann, Hello Earth! (The Music Of Kate Bush) (WINTER & WINTER).....	19
Yosvany Terry, Today's Opinion (CRISS CROSS)	19

Historical Album

Miles Davis Quintet, Live In Europe 1969: The Bootleg Series Vol. 2 (COLUMBIA/LEGACY) 229

Charles Mingus, The Jazz Workshop Concerts 1964-1965 (MOSAIC).....	136
Charles Mingus, The Complete Columbia & RCA Album Collection (COLUMBIA/LEGACY).....	107
Bill Evans, Live At Art D'Lugoff's Top Of The Gate (RESONANCE)	94
Dave Brubeck Quartet, The Columbia Studio Albums Collection: 1955-1966 (COLUMBIA/LEGACY).....	84
Clifford Brown & Max Roach, The Clifford Brown & Max Roach EmArcy Albums (MOSAIC).....	81
Keith Jarrett, Sleeper (ECM)	74
Charlie Parker, The Quintet: Jazz At Massey Hall (ORIGINAL JAZZ CLASSICS)	66
Coleman Hawkins, Classic Coleman Hawkins Sessions 1922-1947 (MOSAIC).....	51
Louis Armstrong and The All Stars, Satchmo At Symphony Hall (HIP-O SELECT).....	48
Terje Rypdal, In The Studio & In Concert (ECM)	32
Dexter Gordon, Night Ballads: Montreal 1977 (UPTOWN)	31



Wycliffe Gordon



Dave Douglas



Rudresh Mahanthappa

BASSMINT PHOTOGRAPHY

JIMMY KATZ

Miles Davis, *Live At Montreux 1991 (DVD)* (EAGLE ROCK) 29

Duane Allman, *Skydog: The Duane Allman Retrospective* (ROUNDER)..... 28

Clifford Brown, *The EmArcy Master Takes, Vol. 2* (HIP-O SELECT)..... 27

Michael Brecker, *The Very Best Of Michael Brecker* (VERVE REISSUES) 26

Tito Puente, *Quatro: The Definitive Collection* (SONY MUSIC LATIN)..... 24

Albert King, *I'll Play The Blues For You* (STAX) ... 21

Albert Mangelsdorff, *Live At Audimax Freiburg, June 22, 1964* (JAZZHAUS) 21

Jimi Hendrix, *People, Hell And Angels* (LEGACY)..... 20

Muddy Waters, *You Shook Me: The Chess Masters, Vol. 3, 1958 to 1963* (HIP-O SELECT)..... 20

Jazz Group

Wayne Shorter Quartet.....130

Joe Lovano Us Five81

Vijay Iyer Trio..... 78

Terri Lyne Carrington "The Mosaic Project" ... 63

Charles Lloyd Quartet 63

Mostly Other People Do The Killing 61

The Bad Plus..... 55

Robert Glasper Experiment 55

Wadada Leo Smith Golden Quintet..... 44

Pat Metheny Unity Band..... 42

Jason Moran Trio 39

Henry Threadgill Zooid 38

Fred Hersch Trio 37

Branford Marsalis Quartet 36

Brian Blade Fellowship 32

Terence Blanchard Quintet 32

Dave Douglas Quintet 32

Matt Wilson Arts & Crafts 31

Roy Haynes Fountain Of Youth 27

Clayton Brothers 26

Big Band

Darcy James Argue's Secret Society (TIE).....145

Maria Schneider Orchestra (TIE)...145

John Hollenbeck Large Ensemble 87

Mingus Big Band..... 74

Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra..... 72

Peter Brötzmann Tentet 66

Clayton-Hamilton Jazz Orchestra..... 64

ICP Orchestra 54

Dave Holland Big Band..... 53

SFJAZZ Collective..... 53

Christian McBride Big Band..... 52

Steven Bernstein Millennial Territory Orchestra 51

Village Vanguard Orchestra 50

Arturo O'Farrill & the Afro-Latin Jazz Orchestra 39

Rob Mazurek Exploding Star Orchestra 38

Either/Orchestra 36

Bob Mintzer Big Band..... 36

WDR Big Band 36

Jimmy Heath Big Band..... 35

Count Basie Big Band..... 34

Roy Hargrove Big Band..... 34

Trumpet

Dave Douglas 140

Wadada Leo Smith... 116

Ambrose Akinmusire..... 115

Terence Blanchard... 97

Wynton Marsalis 85

Tom Harrell 84

Tomasz Stanko 74

Jeremy Pelt..... 69

Christian Scott (Christian Scott aTunde Adjuah)..... 67

Terrell Stafford 60

Steven Bernstein 52

Roy Hargrove 52

Randy Brecker..... 40

Jon Faddis..... 40

Brian Lynch..... 40

Ron Miles..... 40

Nicholas Payton..... 38

Enrico Rava..... 35

Rob Mazurek..... 33

Avishai Cohen 32

Trombone

Wycliffe Gordon195

Steve Turre 130

Trombone Shorty..... 94

Robin Eubanks..... 88

Curtis Fuller 85

Conrad Herwig..... 85

Ray Anderson..... 67

Roswell Rudd 64

Clifton Anderson 54

Jeb Bishop 50

Steve Davis 47

Curtis Fowlkes..... 38

Luis Bonilla..... 36

Delfeayo Marsalis..... 34

Michael Dease..... 33

Wayne Wallace 31

Frank Lacy..... 30

Joe Fiedler..... 28

Steve Swell..... 26

Vincent Gardner 25

Gianluca Petrella 25

Wolter Wierbos 25

Soprano Saxophone

Wayne Shorter208

Dave Liebman 163

Branford Marsalis... 129

Sam Newsome 112

Jane Ira Bloom 103

Anat Cohen 80

Evan Parker 72

Ravi Coltrane..... 67

James Carter 55

Joe Lovano..... 55

Joshua Redman 50

Kenny Garrett..... 49

Chris Potter..... 49

Jane Bunnett 46

Steve Wilson..... 43

Donny McCaslin 24

Bob Wilber 24

Roscoe Mitchell..... 23

Marcus Strickland 22

Ted Nash 19

Alto Saxophone

Rudresh Mahanthappa .. 176

Ornette Coleman..... 123

Tim Berne..... 98

Miguel Zenón 98

Jon Irabagon..... 81

Kenny Garrett..... 80

Lee Konitz..... 80

Phil Woods..... 67

Donald Harrison 51

Steve Coleman..... 47

Steve Wilson..... 46

Gary Bartz 43

Henry Threadgill..... 39

Anthony Braxton..... 38

Greg Osby 38

Bobby Watson 36

Paquito D'Rivera 35

Ted Nash 35

Darius Jones..... 33

Sherman Irby 29

61st ANNUAL CRITICS POLL



Gary Smulyan



Anat Cohen



Jason Moran

Tenor Saxophone

Joe Lovano 163

- Sonny Rollins..... 120
- Chris Potter.....115
- Wayne Shorter..... 107
- Charles Lloyd.....106
- Branford Marsalis..... 70
- James Carter 58
- Eric Alexander..... 53
- Houston Person..... 53
- Von Freeman..... 45
- Jimmy Heath..... 43
- Peter Brötzmann 41
- Donny McCaslin 41
- David Murray 40
- JD Allen 35
- Harry Allen.....29
- Pharoah Sanders.....29
- David S. Ware.....29
- Kidd Jordan 27
- Tony Malaby 27
- Joshua Redman 27

Baritone Saxophone

Gary Smulyan.. 209

- James Carter 165
- Ronnie Cuber115
- Mats Gustafsson.....110
- Claire Daly.....106
- Hamiet Bluiett.....93
- Scott Robinson.....86
- Joe Temperley 77
- John Surman..... 57
- Ken Vandermark 51
- Vinny Golia 40
- Tim Berne..... 38
- Howard Johnson 30
- Fred Ho.....29
- Brian Landrus.....26
- Ben Ellman.....24

- Patience Higgins 23
- Carlo Actis Dato16
- Roger Lewis 15
- Charlie Kohlhase 13
- Jon Raskin.....13

Clarinet

Anat Cohen .. 308

- Don Byron..... 180
- Ken Peplowski.....117
- Paquito D’Rivera 116
- Evan Christopher.....91
- Ben Goldberg 74
- Eddie Daniels 65
- Marty Ehrlich 44
- Victor Goines 40
- Ab Baars 37
- Buddy DeFranco..... 32
- Chris Speed..... 32
- Andy Statman..... 31
- James Falzone 30
- Ken Vandermark 30
- Michael White 28
- Louis Sclavis..... 27
- Gianluigi Trovesi.....20
- Ned Rothenberg.....17
- Charlie Gabriel 14
- Michael Moore 14

Flute

Nicole Mitchell..... 210

- Charles Lloyd131
- Henry Threadgill.....123
- Jane Bunnett 92
- Frank Wess 86
- Hubert Laws 80
- Lew Tabackin 76
- Jamie Baum 70
- Dave Liebman.....64
- James Newton 59
- Ali Ryerson 55

- Roscoe Mitchell..... 45
- Holly Hofmann 34
- Ted Nash 33
- Dave Valentin 32
- Marty Ehrlich 30
- Anne Drummond 24
- Kent Jordan..... 24
- Sam Most 24
- James Spaulding 23

Piano

Jason Moran...122

- Vijay Iyer.....117
- Brad Mehldau 108
- Kenny Barron 83
- Fred Hersch 77
- Keith Jarrett..... 71
- Geri Allen.....67
- Robert Glasper 65
- Chick Corea 58
- Herbie Hancock 46
- Ahmad Jamal.....46
- Dave Brubeck..... 37
- Benny Green 36
- Frank Kimbrough 35
- Hiromi 32
- Gerald Clayton 31
- Bill Charlap 30
- Ethan Iverson 29
- Monty Alexander 28
- Cyrus Chestnut..... 25

Keyboard

Robert Glasper..... 181

- Chick Corea 136
- Herbie Hancock 123
- Craig Taborn 85
- Larry Goldings..... 82
- John Medeski.....80
- Gary Versace 70
- Hiromi 67

- Uri Caine.....60
- Marc Cary.....48
- Jason Lindner.....46
- Geoffrey Keezer 45
- Bernie Worrell 45
- Wayne Horvitz 42
- George Duke 37
- Matthew Shipp..... 37
- Marco Benevento..... 33
- Henry Butler 32
- Jamie Saft 29
- Sam Yahel 23

Organ

Joey DeFrancesco ... 274

- Dr. Lonnie Smith..... 190
- Larry Goldings.....175
- John Medeski.....134
- Gary Versace 118
- Booker T. Jones.....108
- Mike LeDonne..... 78
- Sam Yahel 50
- Tony Monaco 42
- Amina Claudine Myers 32
- Jamie Saft 31
- Brian Auger 27
- Barbara Dennerlein ..26
- Craig Taborn 25
- Carla Bley..... 22
- Chris Foreman.....20
- Chester Thompson ... 20
- Reuben Wilson..... 20
- Jared Gold.....19
- Wayne Horvitz 13
- Rhoda Scott..... 13

Guitar

Bill Frisell..... 202

- Pat Metheny..... 120
- Mary Halvorson 95

- Marc Ribot 95
- Russell Malone.....90
- Lionel Loueke 85
- Nels Cline 84
- Jim Hall..... 71
- John Scofield.....70
- Kurt Rosenwinkel 64
- John McLaughlin 57
- John Abercrombie46
- Pat Martino..... 43
- Howard Alden 41
- Peter Bernstein 41
- Dave Stryker..... 39
- Bobby Broom 37
- Charlie Hunter 36
- Julian Lage 36
- Dave Fiuczynski 34

Bass

Christian McBride..... 226

- Dave Holland151
- Ron Carter.....128
- Charlie Haden 93
- Esperanza Spalding 64
- Stanley Clarke 54
- Larry Grenadier..... 54
- William Parker..... 53
- Michael Formanek 47
- Ben Allison..... 43
- John Patitucci 39
- Ben Williams..... 33
- Linda Oh.....30
- John Clayton..... 29
- Greg Cohen 29
- Eric Revis 29
- Avishai Cohen 27
- Omer Avital.....26
- John Hébert.....26
- Reggie Workman 26



Stanley Clarke

STEVEN PARKER

Meshell Ndegeocello 78
 Derrick Hodge 54
 Jack Bruce 52
 Tim Lefebvre 52
 Bob Cranshaw 51
 John Patitucci 51
 Richard Bona 43
 James Genus 36
 Pino Palladino 35
 Carles Benavent 31
 Matthew Garrison 30
 Skuli Sverrisson 30
 Stomu Takeishi 28
 Jamaaladeen Tacuma 26

Violin

Regina Carter 306
 Jenny Scheinman 259
 Mark Feldman 112
 Jean-Luc Ponty 89
 Jason Kao Hwang 73
 Mark O'Connor 61
 John Blake 56
 Christian Howes 55
 Mat Maneri 55

Jeff Gauthier 42
 Charles Burnham 39
 Carla Kihlstedt 34
 Zach Brock 33
 Michal Urbaniak 22
 Didier Lockwood 19
 Svend Asmussen 18
 Miri Ben-Ari 18
 Jerry Goodman 16
 Mary Oliver 16
 Andy Stein 16

Drums

Jack DeJohnette .. 202
 Brian Blade 137
 Eric Harland 97
 Matt Wilson 87
 Roy Haynes 75
 Han Bennink 64
 Billy Hart 62
 Joey Baron 59
 Lewis Nash 56
 Gerald Cleaver 46
 Antonio Sanchez 42
 Jeff "Tain" Watts 42
 Nasheet Waits 41
 Hamid Drake 38

Herlin Riley 37
 Marcus Gilmore 36
 Andrew Cyrille 34
 Cindy Blackman Santana 33
 Jim Black 32
 Ralph Peterson 31

Vibes

Stefon Harris 253
 Gary Burton 236
 Bobby Hutcherson 218
 Joe Locke 175
 Jason Adasiewicz 129
 Steve Nelson 80
 Warren Wolf 71
 Jason Marsalis 37
 Mike Mainieri 28
 Khan Jamal 20
 Matt Moran 20
 Warren Smith 17
 Chris Dingman 16
 Gunter Hampel 16
 Peter Appleyard 15
 Terry Gibbs 15
 James Westfall 15
 Kenny Wollesen 15

Joe Chambers 13
 John Herndon 12
 Hendrik Meurkens 12

Percussion

Cyro Baptista 113
 Bobby Sanabria 109
 Hamid Drake 94
 Zakir Hussain 87
 Poncho Sanchez 85
 Kahil El'Zabar 65
 Airtto Moreira 64
 Sheila E 63
 Adam Rudolph 53
 Giovanni Hidalgo 52
 Mino Cinelu 49
 Han Bennink 46
 Susie Ibarra 41
 Pedrito Martinez 41
 Pete Escovedo 40
 Jerry Gonzalez 37
 Trilok Gurtu 36
 John Santos 35
 Marilyn Mazur 33
 Alex Cline 32
 Dan Weiss 32

Electric Bass

Stanley Clarke 169
 Marcus Miller 142
 Christian McBride 104
 Steve Swallow 101
 Esperanza Spalding 81
 Victor Wooten 79

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José James

LINDSAY BEYERSTEIN



Dr. John

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Miscellaneous Instrument

Béla Fleck (BANJO)154

- Grégoire Maret (HARMONICA)109
- David Murray (BASS CLARINET).....80
- Scott Robinson (BASS SAXOPHONE).....75
- Richard Galliano (ACCORDION)73
- Erik Friedlander (CELLO).....72
- Toots Thielemans (HARMONICA)66
- Edmar Castaneda (COLOMBIAN HARP)64
- Rabih Abou-Khalil (OUD)53
- Joe Lovano (AULOCHROME).....52
- James Carter (BASS SAXOPHONE).....49
- Gary Versace (ACCORDION)47
- Howard Johnson (TUBA)44
- Steve Turre (SHELLS)39
- Fred Lonberg-Holm (CELLO).....38
- Chris Thile (MANDOLIN)38
- Anouar Brahem (OUD)35
- Hendrik Meurkens (HARMONICA)28
- Guy Klucevsek (ACCORDION)23
- Rudi Mahall (BASS CLARINET).....22
- Ernst Reijseger (CELLO).....22

- Ken Vandermark (BASS CLARINET)..... 22

Male Vocalist

Kurt Elling 264

- Gregory Porter213
- Theo Bleckmann131
- Bobby McFerrin105
- Tony Bennett101
- Giacomo Gates.....84
- José James79
- Mose Allison73
- Kevin Mahogany61
- Freddy Cole46
- Kenny Washington...43
- John Boutté.....39
- Andy Bey.....35
- Mark Murphy31
- Jon Hendricks27
- John Pizzarelli27
- Bob Dorough.....26
- Ian Shaw26
- Ernie Andrews.....25
- Jimmy Scott.....25

Female Vocalist

Cassandra Wilson.....152

- Luciana Souza106
- Dianne Reeves96
- Dee Dee Bridgewater.....93
- Esperanza Spalding..76
- Sheila Jordan74
- Karrin Allyson67
- Roberta Gambarini ...67
- Diana Krall66
- Tierney Sutton59
- Gretchen Parlato58

- René Marie50
- Kate McGarry45
- Patricia Barber44
- Madeline Peyroux44
- Melody Gardot.....41
- Carmen Lundy37
- Dee Alexander36
- Mary Stallings28
- Sidsel Endresen27

Composer

Wadada Leo Smith136

- Maria Schneider132
- Wayne Shorter.....102
- Terence Blanchard...68
- Darcy James Argue..54
- Robert Glasper.....52
- Henry Threadgill.....47
- Dave Douglas.....42
- John Hollenbeck.....41
- Ben Allison38
- Chick Corea38
- Vijay Iyer.....38
- Benny Golson.....36
- Randy Weston36
- Pat Metheny.....35
- Tom Harrell34
- Jason Moran.....33
- Carla Bley32
- Muhai Richard Abrams31
- Ornette Coleman.....31
- Gerald Wilson31

Arranger

- Darcy James Argue 101
- Maria Schneider93

- Terri Lyne Carrington69
- Steven Bernstein67
- Gil Goldstein62
- Allen Toussaint61
- John Hollenbeck.....57
- Bill Holman54
- Wynton Marsalis53
- Carla Bley50
- Dave Holland47
- Billy Childs45
- Butch Morris.....44
- John Clayton41
- Bob Mintzer.....37
- Laurence Hobgood...35
- Guillermo Klein35
- Christian McBride.....34
- Bob Belden33
- Vince Mendoza32
- John Zorn.....32

Record Label

ECM212

- Blue Note125
- Pi110
- HighNote.....84
- Sunnyside80
- Clean Feed78
- Concord.....68
- Mack Avenue63
- Motéma62
- Mosaic.....54
- ACT44
- Cuneiform.....41
- Columbia Legacy.....38
- Nonesuch.....32
- Delmark.....31
- Tzadik.....28
- ArtistShare27
- Cross Cross Jazz27

- Marsalis Music 25
- Arbors24
- AUM Fidelity23
- Palmetto.....22
- Basin Street21
- Resonance18
- SmallsLIVE.....15
- Verve.....15

Producer

Manfred Eicher 205

- Michael Cuscuna.....172
- John Zorn77
- Joe Fields.....67
- Branford Marsalis.....60
- Bob Belden59
- David Binney.....48
- Greg Osby44
- Todd Barkan.....43
- Mat Donner39
- Orrin Keepnews39
- Lee Townsend.....39
- Gerry Teekens35
- Larry Klein33
- Don Was33
- Craig Street.....32
- George Avakian31
- Matt Balitsaris29
- Gil Goldstein27
- Bob Koester27

Blues Artist or Group

Dr. John.....125

- Carolina Chocolate Drops.....104
- Buddy Guy103
- B.B. King88

Otis Taylor.....	77
Tedeschi Trucks Band.....	73
The Black Keys.....	70
James Blood Ulmer.....	70
Bettye LaVette.....	64
Gary Clark Jr.....	62
Taj Mahal.....	57
Charlie Musselwhite.....	54
Duke Robillard.....	40
Eric Clapton.....	39
Shemekia Copeland.....	39
Robert Cray.....	35
Joe Louis Walker.....	28
Steve Cropper.....	24
Marcia Ball.....	23
Keb Mo.....	23

Blues Album

Dr. John, *Locked Down* (NONESUCH)..... 184

Tedeschi Trucks Band, <i>Live: Everybody's Talkin'</i> (SONY MASTERWORKS) ..	86
Ben Harper with Charlie Musselwhite, <i>Get Up!</i> (STAX)	82
Buddy Guy, <i>Live At Legends</i> (RCA)	78

Gary Clark Jr., <i>Blak And Blu</i> (WARNER BROS.)	76
Otis Taylor, <i>My World Is Gone</i> (TELARC).....	72
Shemekia Copeland, <i>33 1/3</i> (TELARC).....	54
Etta James, <i>Etta James Live At Montreux 1993</i> (DVD) (EAGLE EYE)	51
Bonnie Raitt, <i>Slipstream</i> (REDWING)	46
Robert Cray, <i>Nothin' But Love</i> (MASCOT).....	38
Slide Brothers, <i>Robert Randolph Presents: The Slide Brothers</i> (CONCORD) ...	37
Billy Boy Arnold, <i>Billy Boy Arnold Sings Big Bill Broonzy</i> (ELECTRO-FI)....	31
Boz Scaggs, <i>Memphis</i> (429).....	27
ZZ Top, <i>La Futura</i> (UNIVERSAL REPUBLIC) ...	27
Jon Cleary, <i>Occapella</i> (FHQ)	24
Jack White, <i>Blunderbuss</i> (THIRD MAN/COLUMBIA) ..	24
Joe Bonamassa, <i>Driving Towards The Daylight</i> (J&R ADVENTURES).....	19

The Reverend Peyton's Big Damn Band, <i>Between The Ditches</i> (SIDE ONE DUMMY)	19
Various Artists, <i>First Came Memphis Minnie</i> (STONY PLAIN)	19
Anders Osborne, <i>Black Eye Galaxy</i> (ALLIGATOR)	13

Beyond Artist or Group

Robert Glasper *Experiment.....* 111

Dr. John.....	59
Erykah Badu.....	56
Medeski Martin + Wood.....	50
Flying Lotus.....	48
Carolina Chocolate Drops.....	45
The Black Keys.....	44
Leonard Cohen.....	43
Tedeschi Trucks Band.....	40
Bob Dylan.....	37
Jeff Beck.....	36
Norah Jones.....	33
Meshell Ndegeocello ..	32

Frank Ocean.....	32
The Roots.....	32
Fiona Apple.....	31
Tom Waits.....	30
Alabama Shakes.....	28
Sharon Jones & The Dap Kings.....	26
Jack White.....	26

Beyond Album

José James, *No Beginning No End* (BLUE NOTE) 100 |

Donald Fagen, <i>Sunken Condos</i> (REPRISE).....	74
Bob Dylan, <i>Tempest</i> (COLUMBIA) ..	70
Fiona Apple, <i>The Idler Wheel..</i> (EPIC).....	55
Norah Jones, <i>Little Broken Hearts</i> (BLUE NOTE)	54
Melody Gardot, <i>The Absence</i> (VERVE)..	53
Flying Lotus, <i>Until The Quiet Comes</i> (WARP) ..	52
Frank Ocean, <i>Channel Orange</i> (DEF JAM).....	46
Alabama Shakes, <i>Boys & Girls</i> (ATO)	43
David Byrne & St. Vincent, <i>Love This Giant</i> (4AD).....	40
Jack White, <i>Blunderbuss</i> (THIRD MAN/COLUMBIA) ...	40
Fatoumata Diawara, <i>Fatou</i> (WORLD CIRCUIT/ NONESUCH).....	37
Patti Smith, <i>Banga</i> (COLUMBIA)	35
Bobby Womack, <i>The Bravest Man In The Universe</i> (XL)	28
David Bowie, <i>The Next Day</i> (COLUMBIA)	27
Neil Young & Crazy Horse, <i>Psychedelic Pill</i> (REPRISE).....	26
Kendrick Lamar, <i>Good Kid, m.A.A.d City</i> (INTERSCOPE)	25
Billy Bragg/Wilco, <i>Mermaid Avenue: The Complete Sessions</i> (NONESUCH)	21
Kelly Hogan, <i>I Like To Keep Myself In Pain</i> (ANTI-).....	21
Mumford & Sons, <i>Babel</i> (GLASSNOTE/SONY RED)	20

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61st ANNUAL CRITICS POLL *RISING STARS*

Orrin Evans' Captain Black Big Band



RISING STAR Jazz Artist

Gregory Porter 91

- Jon Irabagon.....85
- Gerald Clayton.....83
- Mary Halvorson.....70
- José James.....59
- Christian Scott (Christian Scott aTunde Adjuah).....54
- Darcy James Argue.....51
- Ryan Truesdell.....48
- Orrin Evans.....46
- Craig Taborn.....45
- Jason Adasiewicz.....42
- JD Allen.....42
- Jenny Scheinman.....36
- Tia Fuller.....35
- Omer Avital.....34
- Eric Harland.....33
- John Hollenbeck.....33
- Trombone Shorty.....33
- Avishai Cohen (TRUMPETER).....32
- Hiromi.....31
- Jeremy Pelt.....31
- Scott Robinson.....31

RISING STAR Jazz Group

Ambrose Akinmusire Quintet.....93

- Robert Glasper Trio.....75
- Mary Halvorson Trio...71

Mostly Other People

- Do The Killing.....53
- Gerald Clayton Trio.....50
- 3 Cohens.....49
- Neneh Cherry and The Cherry Thing.....43
- Rudresh Mahanthappa's Samdhi.....42
- JD Allen Trio.....41
- Ryan Truesdell's Gil Evans Centennial Project.....41
- The Cookers.....39
- Julian Lage Group.....36
- Tierney Sutton Band.....36
- Trombone Shorty & Orleans Avenue.....33
- Darius Jones Trio.....31
- Donny McCaslin Group.....30
- Christian Scott (Christian Scott aTunde Adjuah) Quintet.....30
- Jeremy Pelt Quintet...27
- Kendrick Scott Oracle.....27
- Deep Blue Organ Trio.....25

RISING STAR Big Band

Orrin Evans' Captain Black Big Band..... 129

- Bobby Sanabria Big Band..... 94

- Jason Lindner Big Band..... 84
- Vince Giordano's Nighthawks.....75
- Nicholas Payton Big Band.....69
- Satoko Fujii Orchestra.....66
- Marcus Shelby Jazz Orchestra.....60
- Christine Jensen Jazz Orchestra.....53
- Joel Harrison Large Ensemble.....51
- Pete Christlieb & Linda Small Eleven Piece Band.....45
- Karl Berger Creative Music Workshop Orchestra.....44
- Howard Wiley and the Angola Project.....28
- Ghost Train Orchestra.....27
- Cecilia Coleman Big Band.....26
- Tommy Igoe's Birdland Big Band.....26
- Maraca & His Latin Jazz All Stars.....26
- The Dorf.....23
- Chuck Israels Jazz Orchestra.....23
- Nicholas Payton Television Studio Orchestra.....21
- Mr. Ho's Orchestrotica.....20

RISING STAR Trumpet

Christian Scott (Christian Scott aTunde Adjuah) 163

- Sean Jones.....130
- Peter Evans.....119
- Taylor Ho Bynum.....94
- Amir ElSafar.....67
- Russell Gunn.....67
- Corey Wilkes.....61
- Nate Wooley.....60
- Philip Dizack.....50
- Jonathan Finlayson..44
- Freddie Hendrix.....44
- Joshua Berman.....41
- Kirk Knuffke.....40
- Bria Skonberg.....40
- Shane Endsley.....34
- Michael Rodriguez.....30
- Maurice Brown.....25
- Mathias Eick.....23
- Shamar Allen.....20
- Carol Morgan.....20

RISING STAR Trombone

Trombone Shorty.....228

- Vincent Gardner.....115
- Marshall Gilkes.....113
- Ryan Keberle.....101
- Jacob Garchik.....100
- Michael Dease.....90
- Samuel Blaser.....65

- Alan Ferber.....50
- Nils Wogram.....43
- Ron Westray.....42
- Jeff Albert.....39
- Sarah Morrow.....27
- Glen David Andrews..25
- Ben Gerstein.....23
- Joel Yennior.....22
- Chris Crenshaw.....20
- Joe Fiedler.....20
- Jeff Cressman.....15
- David Gibson.....15
- Charlie Halloran.....11

RISING STAR Soprano Saxophone

Anat Cohen ... 261

- Donny McCaslin.....111
- Ted Nash.....107
- Jimmy Greene.....105
- Tineke Postma.....88
- Ingrid Laubrock.....84
- Yuval Cohen.....65
- Christine Jensen.....55
- Michael Blake.....47
- John Surman.....47
- Jason Robinson.....44
- Marcus Strickland.....22
- Aurora Nealand.....20
- Sam Newsome.....19
- Javier Girotto.....16
- Jürg Wickihalder.....11
- Bryan Beninghove.....10
- Hailey Niswanger.....10



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61st ANNUAL CRITICS POLL *RISING STARS*

RISING STAR Alto Saxophone

Tia Fuller 200

Jaleel Shaw.....	120
Steve Lehman.....	115
Grace Kelly.....	92
Darius Jones.....	90
Matana Roberts.....	66
Greg Abate.....	64
Sharel Cassity.....	47
Tim Green.....	46
Tineke Postma.....	45
Greg Ward.....	37
Casey Benjamin.....	35
Andrew D'Angelo.....	33
Mike DiRubbo.....	32
Hailey Niswanger.....	29
Francesco Cafiso.....	28
Jessica Lurie.....	25
Dave Rempis.....	22
Todd Bashore.....	21
Patrick Cornelius.....	20

RISING STAR Tenor Saxophone

Jon Irabagon 159

David Sánchez.....	145
Walter Smith III.....	129
Marcus Strickland.....	120
Noah Preminger.....	76
John Ellis.....	72
Ellery Eskelin.....	67
Bill McHenry.....	58
Mats Gustafsson.....	55
Ingrid Laubrock.....	48
Grant Stewart.....	44
Ben Wendel.....	42
Kenneth Whalum III.....	36
Jeff Coffin.....	33
Skerik.....	31
Abraham Burton.....	21
Bill Saxton.....	20
Myron Waldon.....	20

Howard Wiley.....	19
Rahsaan Barber.....	16

RISING STAR Baritone Saxophone

Vinny Golia.....93

Colin Stetson.....	85
Brian Landrus.....	78
Chris Cheek.....	65
Alex Harding.....	58
Dave Rempis.....	48
Jason Marshall.....	46
Lisa Parrott.....	44
Glenn Wilson.....	43
Roger Rosenberg.....	42
Carlo Actis Dato.....	39
Gebhard Ullmann.....	38
Michael Attias.....	35
Charles Evans.....	34
Lauren Sevian.....	34
Ben Ellman.....	30

Ted Hogarth.....	25
Josh Sinton.....	22
Andy Stein.....	22
Herwig Gradischnig.....	21

RISING STAR Clarinet

Ben Goldberg121

Chris Speed.....	85
Louis Slavis.....	66
Oscar Noriega.....	59
David Krakauer.....	53
James Falzone.....	51
Michael Moore.....	50
Dan Block.....	45
Mort Weiss.....	44
Matana Roberts.....	43
Todd Marcus.....	35
François Houle.....	31
Beth Custer.....	30
Tim Laughlin.....	30

Gabriele Mirabassi.....	28
Ned Rothenberg.....	28
Joachim Badenhorst.....	24
Chris Byars.....	24
Aurora Nealand.....	23
Evan Ziporyn.....	21

RISING STAR Flute

Tia Fuller203

Anat Cohen.....	165
Holly Hofmann.....	70
T.K. Blue.....	58
Kent Jordan.....	56
Douglas Ewart.....	50
Bart Platteau.....	46
Mark Weinstein.....	43
Sam Most.....	42
Magic Malik.....	38
Kali Z. Fasteau.....	35
Orlando "Maraca" Valle.....	35

HOT

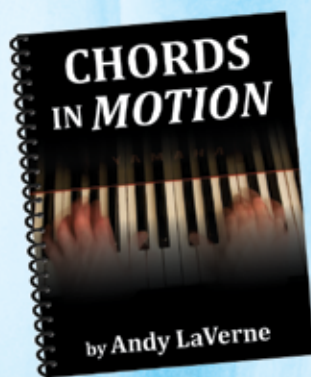
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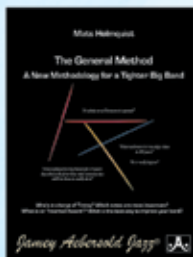
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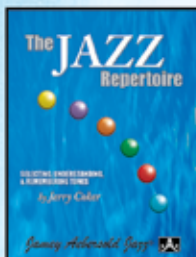


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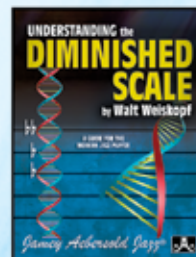


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Frank Gratkowski33
 Jorge Pardo23
 Wolfgang
 Puschnig23
 Steve Adams20
 Sylvain Leroux.....20
 Erica von Kleist.....19
 Itai Kriss 11
 Jean Derome.....10
 Gareth Lockrane.....10

George Colligan.....45
 Kris Davis.....43
 Orrin Evans42
 Kris Bowers 40
 John di Martino 40
 Fabian Almazan.....37
 Aaron Goldberg35
 Stefano Bollani34
 Helen Sung.....34
 Zaccai Curtis29
 Eldar Djangirov.....28
 Matt Mitchell.....28

George Colligan.....70
 Patrice Rushen.....59
 Jamie Saft.....50
 Gary Husband.....48
 Adam Benjamin.....37
 Mamiko
 Watanabe28
 Bugge
 Wesseltoft.....28
 Kit Downes.....24
 Austin Peralta.....23
 Jim Beard21
 Zaccai Curtis21
 Lawrence Fields20
 Rob Mazurek20
 Brian Coogan 19

Wil Blades 60
 Amina Claudine
 Myers 60
 Jamie Saft 49
 Dan Wall.....49
 Kit Downes.....45
 Rhoda Scott.....45
 Reuben Wilson.....44
 Erik Deutsch37
 Alexander
 Hawkins.....35
 Greg Lewis34
 Akiko Tsuruga30
 Gerald Gibbs.....29
 Joe Bagg28
 Bill Heid22
 Dan Fogel.....20
 Atsuko Hashimoto20

Gilad Hekselman 86
 Ben Monder.....71
 Joel Harrison54
 Sheryl Bailey.....51
 Lage Lund51
 Adam Rogers.....51
 Roni Ben-Hur.....47
 Mike Moreno.....46
 Graham Dechter.....45
 Jonathan
 Kriesberg 40
 Nguyễn Lê.....40
 Jeff Parker.....36
 Liberty Ellman35
 Doug Wamble.....34
 Paul Bollenback.....32
 Brandon Seabrook.....23
 Joe Cohn21
 Raoul
 Björkenheim.....20
 James Chirillo.....20
 Yotam Silberstein20

**RISING STAR
 Piano**

**Gerald
 Clayton150**

David Virelles70
 Jonathan Batiste 66
 Aaron Diehl..... 64
 Hiromi 60
 Dan Tepfer54
 Taylor Eigsti52
 Nik Bärtsch51
 Frank Kimbrough51

**RISING STAR
 Keyboard**

**Jason
 Lindner 137**

Sam Yahel 121
 Marco
 Benevento 91
 Nik Bärtsch 90
 Marc Cary.....71
 Wayne Horvitz71

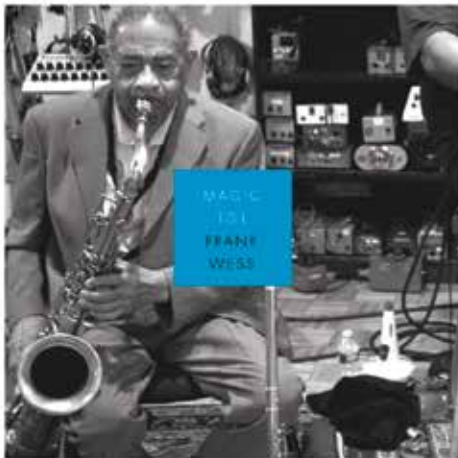
**RISING STAR
 Organ**

Jared Gold109

Brian Charette.....105
 Matthew Shipp.....96
 Pat Bianchi.....91

**RISING STAR
 Guitar**

Rez Abbasi.....131
 Peter Bernstein 88



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 Magic 101
 featuring
 Kenny
 Barron,
 Kenny
 Davis
 and
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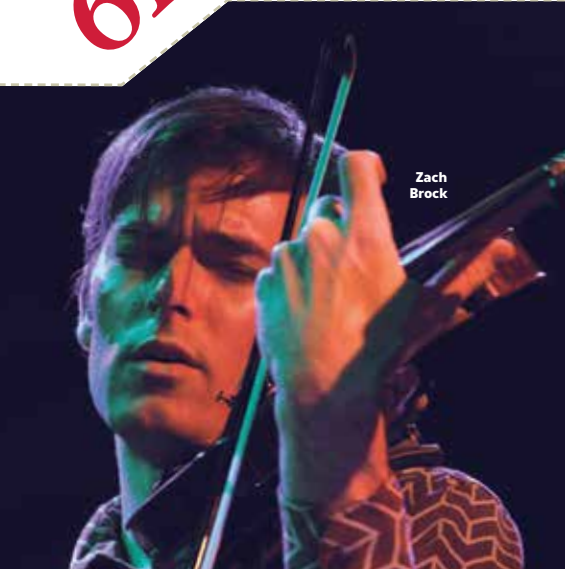


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Zach Brock



Karrin Allyson



Toumani Diabaté

ID ALCOCK

RISING STAR Bass

Ben Williams..... 90

- Larry Grenadier.....83
- Avishai Cohen..... 81
- Derrick Hodge.....63
- Ingebrigt Håker Flaten..... 52
- Todd Sicksafoose..... 52
- Linda Oh..... 49
- Luques Curtis.....47
- Robert Hurst.....47
- Eric Revis.....47
- Drew Gress.....42
- Gregg August..... 40
- James Genus..... 40
- Mark Dresser..... 35
- François Moutin.....34
- Martin Wind.....33
- Greg Cohen.....31
- Lisa Mezzacappa.....31
- David Wong.....31
- Thomas Morgan.....25

RISING STAR Electric Bass

Derrick Hodge..... 122

- Avishai Cohen..... 89
- Skuli Sverrisson.....79
- James Genus..... 66
- Felix Pastorius.....59
- Pino Palladino..... 57
- Tim Lefebvre.....56

- Stomu Takeishi.....51
- Tarus Mateen.....50
- Stephen "Thundercat" Bruner..... 49
- Tal Wilkenfeld.....43
- Mimi Jones..... 41
- Melvin Gibbs..... 40
- Drew Gress.....37
- Bob Cranshaw.....35
- Nate McBride.....29
- Tom Kennedy.....24
- John Lee.....23
- James Cammack.....22
- Chris Tarry.....20

RISING STAR Violin

Zach Brock 134

- Eyvind Kang..... 129
- Jeff Gauthier.....87
- Mads Tolling.....85
- Carla Kihlstedt.....77
- Sarah Caswell.....68
- Didier Lockwood.....62
- Ben Powell..... 60
- Aaron Weinstein.....51
- Mary Oliver..... 42
- Susie Hansen.....36
- Jesse Zubot.....27
- Florin Niculescu.....25
- Szilárd Mezei..... 22
- Karen Briggs.....20
- Nils Økland.....20
- Rob Thomas.....20
- Elektra Kurtis..... 14
- Marcus Moore..... 14

- Scott Tixier.....13

RISING STAR Drums

Gerald Cleaver93

- Allison Miller.....63
- Rudy Royston..... 61
- Tyshawn Sorey.....59
- Jonathan Blake.....51
- Kendrick Scott.....51
- Jamire Williams.....51
- Justin Brown..... 48
- Dafnis Prieto..... 44
- Mark Guiliana.....43
- Willie Jones III.....43
- Antonio Sanchez.....42
- Adam Cruz.....38
- Dave King.....37
- Clarence Penn.....36
- Jason Marsalis.....35
- Scott Amendola.....33
- Jeff Ballard..... 32
- Ulysses Owens Jr.....32
- Alex Cline.....30
- Stanton Moore.....30

RISING STAR Vibes

Jason Marsalis..... 159

- Matt Moran.....104
- Bryan Carrott.....78
- Mulatu Astatke..... 60
- Peter Dinklage.....59

- Joe Chambers.....59
- Mike Dillon.....56
- Gunter Hampel..... 48
- Khan Jamal.....42
- Jason Adasiewicz..... 41
- Warren Smith..... 41
- Mark Sherman..... 40
- Warren Wolf.....37
- Kevin Norton.....36
- Jim Hart.....29
- Chris Dingman.....28
- James Westfall.....26
- Christian Tamburr.....25
- Christopher Dell.....23
- Tyler Blanton.....17
- Smith Dobson.....17

RISING STAR Percussion

Dan Weiss..... 82

- Giovanni Hidalgo..... 64
- Pedrito Martinez..... 64
- Ches Smith.....55
- Naná Vasconcelos.....53
- Manolo Badrena.....51
- Peter Apfelbaum.....50
- Harris Eisenstadt.....47
- Sammy Figuero.....47
- Badal Roy.....46
- Satoshi Takeishi.....43
- Sunny Jain.....42
- Warren Smith.....39
- Guilherme Franco.....37
- Daniel Sadownick.....31
- Jon Wikan.....27
- Steve Kroon.....25

- Arto Tunçboyacıyan.....25
- Michael Zerang.....23
- Lukas Ligeti.....22

RISING STAR Miscellaneous Instrument

Toumani Diabaté (KORA) 88

- Colin Stetson (BASS SAXOPHONE).....83
- Wycliffe Gordon (TUBA).....79
- Rabih Abou-Khalil (OUD)..... 60
- Anouar Brahem (OUD)..... 48
- Akua Dixon (CELLO)..... 48
- Hank Roberts (CELLO)..... 46
- Dana Leong (CELLO)..... 44
- Omer Avital (OUD).....42
- Vincent Chancey (FRENCH HORN).....37
- Scott Robinson (THEREMIN).....37
- Marcus Rojas (TUBA).....36
- Peggy Lee (CELLO)..... 35
- Ben Goldberg (CONTRA ALTO CLARINET).....32
- Matt Perrine (SOUSAPHONE).....31

Brandon Seabrook
(BANJO).....30
Helen Gillet
(CELLO).....27
Casey Benjamin
(VOCODER).....25
Todd Marcus
(BASS CLARINET).....24
Min Xiao-Fen (PIPA).....24

Rick Braun.....15
John Proulx14
Mansur Scott.....13
Sachal
Vasandani.....13
Jeremy Davenport.....12
Jamie Davis12
Giacomo Gates.....12

Amy Cervini27
Jackie Ryan.....27
Iva Bittová.....25
Champion Fulton25
Tessa Souter23
Becca Stevens.....22
Susie Arioli21

Hafez Modirzadeh.....25
Claire Daly.....23
Satoko Fujii23
John Ellis20
Ben Goldberg19

Asuka Kakitani10

**RISING STAR
Male
Vocalist**

**Gregory
Porter282**

John Boutté.....94
Curtis Stigers.....68
Ed Reed63
Allan Harris60
Milton Suggs.....50
Ian Shaw48
Dean Bowman47
José James47
Bill Henderson.....46
Alan Hampton34
João Bosco.....33
Saalik Ahmad Ziyad...18
Vincent Gardner17

**RISING STAR
Female
Vocalist**

**Karrin
Allyson80**

Cécile McLorin
Salvant.....76
Melody Gardot.....74
Kate McGarry65
Kat Edmonson.....47
Rebecca Martin.....40
Denise Donatelli.....39
Dominique Eade.....37
Carmen Lundy36
Jen Shyu.....36
Dena DeRose.....35
Madeline
Eastman29
Nellie McKay.....28

**RISING STAR
Composer**

**Robert
Glasper119**

Rudresh
Mahanthappa.....114
Ben Allison69
Mary Halvorson65
Frank Kimbrough52
Christine Jensen.....42
Marcus Shelby42
JD Allen41
Moppa Elliott.....40
Jenny Scheinman40
Anthony Wilson35
Laurence
Hobgood34
Tyshawn Sorey33
Steve Lehman32
Tord Gustavsen26

**RISING STAR
Arranger**

**John
Hollenbeck195**

Miguel Zenón166
Guillermo Klein90
Ben Allison77
Peter Apfelbaum65
Anthony Wilson65
Billy Childs62
Uri Caine.....61
Marcus Shelby55
David Weiss50
Gordon Goodwin.....47
Mark Masters41
Ryan Truesdell40
Dafnis Prieto.....36
Chie Imaizumi29
Warren Wolf21
Ben Goldberg20
Ezra Weiss16
Jonathan Frelich.....10

**RISING STAR
Producer**

**Robert
Glasper151**

Jason Moran.....106
Ravi Coltrane.....82
John Clayton.....81
Delfeayo Marsalis.....62
Larry Klein55
Spike Wilner/
Ben Rubin55
Taylor Ho Bynum53
Jeff Gauthier50
Bruce Barth.....45
Seth Rosner/
Yulun Wang.....38
Jana Herzen.....34
Wayne Wallace30
Trem Azul.....26
Zev Feldman.....26
Ben Ellman.....23
Lee Townsend.....23
Marc Free22
Lenny White22
Pedro Costa20
Craig Street.....20



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Following are the 165 critics who voted in DownBeat's 61st Annual International Critics Poll. The critics distributed up to 10 points among up to three choices (but no more than 5 points per choice) in each of two categories: Established Talent and Rising Stars. (Note: The asterisk [*] denotes a Veterans Committee voter.)

David Adler: The Village Voice, Stereophile, The New York City Jazz Record, JazzTimes	Jalylah Burrell: WYBCX Yale Radio	Andrew Gilbert: San Jose Mercury News, San Francisco Chronicle, Berkeleyside	Josh Jackson: WBGO—Newark	Peter McElhinney: Style Weekly	Alex W. Rodriguez: Ethnomusicology Review
Don Albert: ArtsLink, Financial Mail	Andrea Canter: JazzINk.com	* Ira Gitler: DB	Michael Jackson: DB, Chicago Sun-Times; Jazzwise	Damien McPherson: LEO Weekly	Antonio Rubio: DB, Jazz.pt, Correio da Manhã
Shannon Ali: DB, Caribbean Beat, The Revivalist	Nate Chinen: New York Times, JazzTimes	Jeff Gottschalk: Rabdaddy	Robin James: Minnesota Spokesman-Recorder	Bill Meyer: DB, The Wire, Signal To Noise, Chicago Reader, Time Out Chicago	Giovanni Russonello: CapitalBop, JazzTimes
* Frank Alkyer: DB	* Aaron Cohen: DB	George Grella: The Big City, The Brooklyn Rail, ClassicalTV, Culturebot, Sequenza21	* Willard Jenkins: DB, The Independent Ear, JazzTimes	Virgil Mihaiu: DB, Steaua, JazzContext, Jazzcompas	* Gene Santoro: Chamber Music, Weider History Group, Aficionado Media
Marc Rosenfeld: Antunes, Nextbop.com	Sharonne Cohen: DB, JazzTimes	Reynard Guy: Jazz Hot	David Brent Johnson: DB, WFU, A Blog Supreme (NPR)	Bill Milkowski: DB, Jazziz, Absolute Sound	Luigi Santosuosso: All About Jazz Italia
Bridget Armwine: examiner.com, bridgetjazzplanet.wordpress.com	Thomas Conrad: Stereophile, NYC Jazz Record, allaboutjazz.com, JazzTimes	* Frank-John Hadley: DB, x5 Music Group	Coen de Jonge: Jazzism, JazzBulletin NJA	Ralph A. Miriello: notesonjazz.blogspot.com, Huffington Post	Phil Schaap: DB, philschaapjazz.com
Hrayr Attarian: Chicago Jazz Magazine, Jazziz, All About Jazz	Owen Cordle: Charlotte News & Observer, JazzTimes	Carl L. Hager: All About Jazz, Jazz (Jazzers Jazzing)	Richard Kamins: step-tempest.blogspot.com	* Dan Morgenstern: Journal of Jazz Studies, Jersey Jazz	Chris Sheridan: DB, Jazz Review
* Paul de Barros: DB, Seattle Times	Michael Cote: DB, Blues Revue	* James Hale: DB, CBCMusic.ca	George Kanzler: Hot House, NYC Jazz Record	Allen Morrison: DB, American Songwriter, JazzTimes	Areif Sless-Kitain: DB, Time Out Chicago
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Angelika Beener: DB, Alternate Takes, NPR Music	Anthony Dean-Harris: nextbop.com	Eric Harabadian: DB, Media Stew/Freelance	Yoshi Kato: DB, iTunes Store	Ron Netsky: Rochester City Newspaper	Zan Stewart: Freelance
Peter Berkowitz: LEO Weekly	R.J. DeLuke: All About Jazz, Albany Times Union	George W. Harris: jazzweekly.com, Jazz Messenger	John Kelman: All About Jazz	Jon Newey: Jazzwise	W. Royal Stokes: Jazz-House.org, JJA News
Bill Beuttler: Boston Globe, Boston Magazine, JazzTimes	Matthew Dicker: DB, Washington Times, JazzTimes	Don Heckman: International Review of Music	Larry Kelp: KPFA—Berkeley, San Francisco Performances Jazz Series, Ashkenaz World Center, Berkeley Public Schools	Tim Niland: Music & More	Ned Sublette: DB
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Philip Booth: DB, Relix, Bass Player, JazzTimes, Jazziz	José Duarte: jazzportugal.ua.pt	Will Hermes: Rolling Stone, NPR, New York Times	* Kiyoshi Koyama: NHK-FM Jazz Tonight	* Ted Panken: DB, JazzTimes, Jazziz	Eliot Tiegel: DB
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Michael Bourne: DB, wbg.org	* John Ephland: DB, Relix, DRUM!	Rob Hoff: WQLN, JazzErie	David Kunian: DB, Offbeat, Gambit Weekly, WWOZ	Terry Perkins: DB, St. Louis Beacon, Oxford American.com	Mark F. Turner: All About Jazz
* Herb Boyd: DB, Amsterdam News, The Network Journal, Free Speech TV	Brad Farberman: DB, Wax Poetics, Relix	Eugene Holley Jr.: Wax Poetics, Philadelphia Weekly, New Music Box	Angelo Leonardi: Musica Jazz, All About Jazz Italia	j. poet: DB, Magnet, SOMA	Enrique Turpin: All About Jazz, Cuadernos de Jazz, LA Vanguardia
Bradley Brambarger: DB, Sound It Out, Listen	Libero Farné: Musica Jazz, All About Jazz Italia	Lyn Horton: Paradigm for Beauty	Bruce Lindsay: All About Jazz, Jazz Journal, JazzUK	Michael Point: DB, Houston Press, Austin Chronicle	Chris Walker: DB, LA Jazz Scene, California Tour & Travel, JazzTimes
Jon Bream: Minneapolis Star Tribune	Phil Freeman: The Wire, The Village Voice, Burning Ambulance	C. Andrew Hovan: DB, All About Jazz	Christopher Loudon: JazzTimes	Norman Provizer: DB, KUVO/KVJZ—FM	Dave Wayne: allaboutjazz.com
Pawel Brodowski: Jazz Forum	Steve Feeney: Portland Press Herald, Maine Sunday Telegram	Tom Hull: tomhull.com	Phillip Lutz: DB, New York Times, The Forward	* Bobby Reed: DB	Ken Weiss: Jazz inside Magazine, Cadence
Gigi Brooks: JazzTimes	David Franklin: Cadence	Peter Hum: The Ottawa Citizen	Jim Macnie: DB, The Village Voice	Tom Roney: New England Public Radio, Jazz Times	Jim Wilke: Jazz After Hours, PRI
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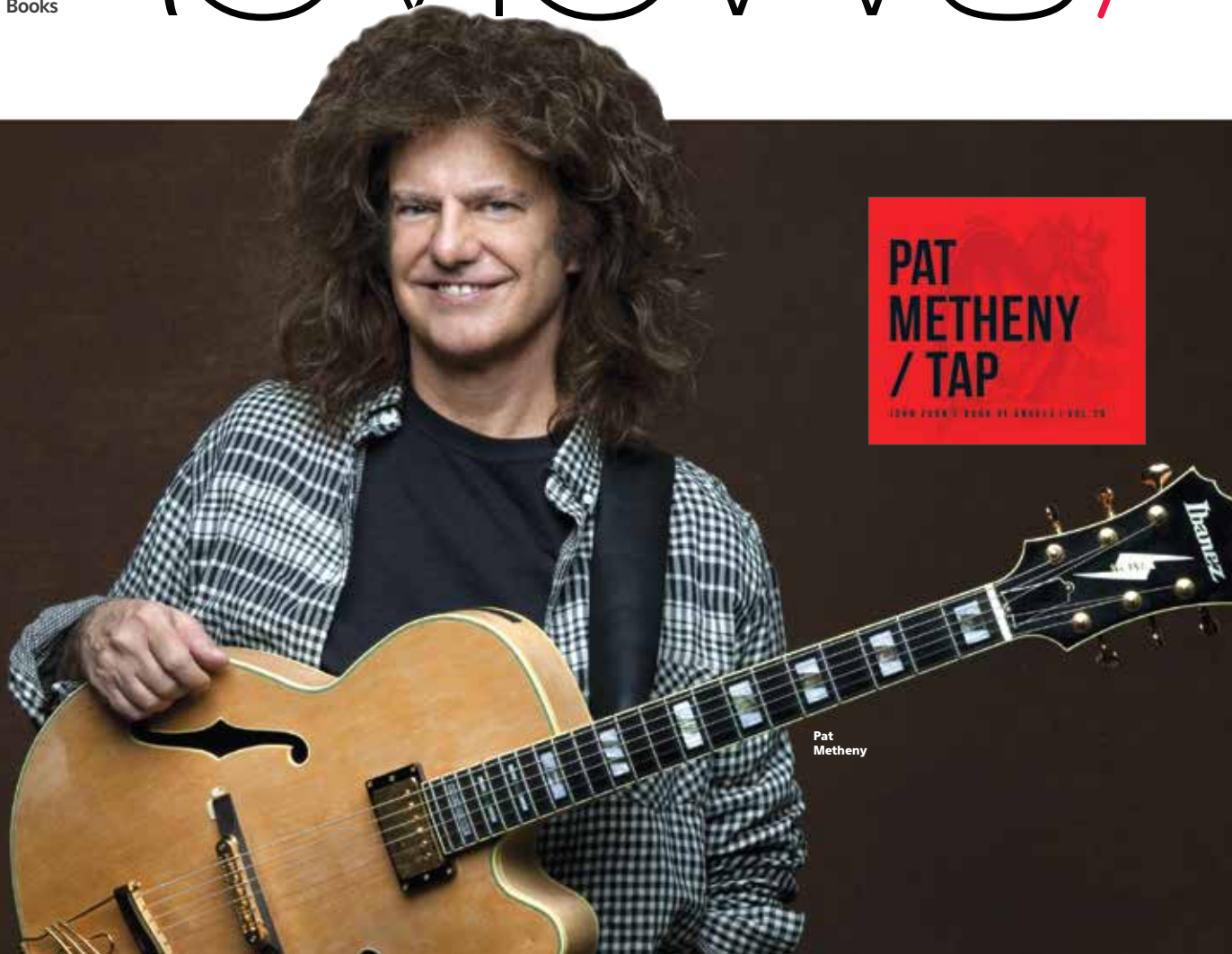
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Inside >

- 75 / Jazz
- 78 / Blues
- 85 / Beyond
- 87 / Historical
- 91 / Books

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Pat Metheny
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NONESUCH 535352

★★★★½

This splendid, thrilling, often gorgeous suite of John Zorn songs arranged and played by Pat Metheny is a surprise, since these two musicians travel in different circles: Zorn the mystic and abrasive experimentalist, Metheny the populist jazz/rock/folk guitar hero. But these two voyagers aren't so disparate. Metheny re-imagined Ornette Coleman's music on *Song X* and ventured into pure noise with

Zero Tolerance For Silence. Zorn has always had a soft spot for passionate, spiritual melodies and has never turned up his nose at rock. But the real kinship between these two musical giants has nothing to do with genre and everything to do with how each has created a personal universe of sound.

Metheny plays all the parts (except drums, by Antonio Sanchez), so stacked, interlocking layers are the key here, especially on the opening number, "Mastema," which features a sitar guitar line slinking over a clangy minimalist figure, with a fuzz guitar solo buried deep within. "Tharsis," faster, plays a similar

game, except with the asymmetrical meter of an ecstatic Macedonian dance, a rippling bass line staggering just behind. Metheny's synth guitar eventually soars.

Zorn has named many of his songs after archangels, and it is easy to imagine "Sariel" as the score for a battle in heaven, as a fetching middle European melody with an oud-like sound gets sprayed with strums by another stringed instrument, then the sky fills with distortions, squalls and skronk. Other tracks are more serene. "Albim," with a slow 6/8 pulse, conjures a mysterious night in Andalusia, a yearning acoustic guitar with a koto-

like edge giving way to bandoneon, then spooky electronics. "Phaniel" contrasts a sad and pretty acoustic melody with eerie wails and then clouds of synthesized strings that release gorgeously plucked guitar. The album closes with "Hurmez," a squiggly tune mostly for piano and drums that feels like a coda and gives Sanchez a chance to stretch out.

—Paul de Barros

Tap: John Zorn's Book of Angels, Vol. 20: Mastema; Albim; Tharsis; Sariel; Phaniel; Hurmez. (44:24)

Personnel: Pat Metheny, acoustic guitar, electric guitar, baritone guitar, sitar guitar, tipples, bass, piano, keyboards, orchestrionic marimba, orchestra bells, bandoneon, percussion, electronics, flugelhorn; Antonio Sanchez, drums; Willow Metheny, vocals (6).

Ordering info: nonesuch.com



Jonathan Finlayson & Sicilian Defence
Moment & The Message

PI 48
 ★★★★★

Even though he's been around the Pi roster for a few years now, Oakland, Calif.-native/New York-based trumpeter Jonathan Finlayson first really caught my ear on saxophonist Steve Coleman's superb recent disc *Functional Arrhythmias*. He's so lithe and adaptable, and works so well in the tricky time zones, that it's hard to miss him. Along with serving in Coleman's Five Elements, the trumpet-

er has also worked alongside Ravi Coltrane, Steve Lehman, Mary Halvorson, Tomas Fujiwara and many others. This debut CD puts that adaptability at the service of Finlayson's own musical concept, which is clearly related to Coleman's, but has its own personality.

Rhythmic complexity is a shared feature, certainly, and Finlayson's music further emphasizes this by limiting the harmonic material, not quite to the point of modality, but close, sometimes shuttling between a few chords. Meanwhile, constantly shifting bar lengths give drummer Damion Reid, pianist David Virelles and bassist Keith Witty plenty to contend with, whether the feel is tight and controlled ("Lo Haze") or more relaxed ("Ruy Lopez"). Miles Okazaki adds further textural and timbral dimension on electric and occasional acoustic guitar, joining Virelles contrapuntally on "Tensegrity."

If Finlayson's tunes have less of a systematic sensibility than Coleman's compositions, they also have a more open weave, leaving lots of room for the leader's impressive trumpet playing to ring out. "Fives And Pennies" takes five minutes to build into a measurable tempo, with Virelles holding a pedal nearly the whole time, mounting tension until a sprightly tune bursts forth.

—John Corbett

Moment & The Message: Circus; Lo Haze; Ruy Lopez; Carthage; Tensegrity; Le Bas-Fond; Tyre; Fives And Pennies; Scaean Gates. (63:01)

Personnel: Jonathan Finlayson, trumpet; Miles Okazaki, guitar; David Virelles, piano; Keith Witty, bass; Damion Reid, drums.

Ordering info: pirecordings.com

JD Allen
Grace

SAVANT 2130
 ★★★★★

We often hear musicians described as "post-bop," an artful way of dodging any real characterization of anything in jazz over the last 50 years. It's a spacious description that lets you know what it's not, but offers little in the way of affirmative clarity. That space serves JD Allen well on *Grace*, which defines its intent with bold precision: "a method for expressing narrative...not previously done in jazz." What we get is a mix of emancipated cadenzas and musings that sound in search of a chorus. The pay dirt, when it comes, seems unconnected to Allen's stated goal.

Annotator David Greenberg attempts to translate the music into a series of epic statements expressing such themes as oppression and good versus evil. Allen seems less preoccupied with all this. But it wraps the work in an affectation of pretense and that makes it seem vaguely false.

Putting that aside, Allen has that arch, mid-1960s emotional backbone in his sound that shuns Ben Websterish romanticism and reminds us how little jazz has really changed over five decades. But he makes it his own and pilots his course with precision, moderation and a grounded confidence that evades the shrill. On "Load Star" and "Cross Damon" he falls into a groove that swings gleefully, while "Selah" and "Little Dipper" (which



seems to stop mid-sentence) are among the nicer ballads. His principal foil is drummer Jonathan Barber, who asserts his prerogatives responsively through a subtext of parallel percussion patterns. Occasionally you may feel he's a bit busy, but he never unbalances the ensemble. Eldar Djangirov is tactful, restrained and, on his own, thoughtful. The material provides him with an open road. On balance, a good, even tempered recital without memorable impact.

—John McDonough

Grace: Mass; Load Star; Chagall; Luke Sky Walker; Grace; Detroit; Cross Damon; Poll Star; Papiillon 1973; Selah; The Little Dipper. (56:17)

Personnel: JD Allen, tenor saxophone; Eldar Djangirov, piano; Dezron Douglass, bass; Jonathan Barber, drums.

Ordering info: jazzdepot.com



Oliver Lake Big Band
Wheels

PASSIN' THRU 41230
 ★★★★★

One reason I get a kick out of Oliver Lake's big band is because you can hear the essence of the saxophonist-composer's aesthetics in almost every track. *Life Dance Of Is* and *Holding Together* were the first Lake discs to speak to me back in the mid-'70s; the leader's skills at moving from craggy bluster to askew lyricism to plush romance were the main calling cards. There's often been something unsettled about Lake's work. Almost 40 years later those qualities still make a mark on *Wheels*, his second (and a half) big band disc.

Case in point: the head of "Philly Blues" and the way it spills into its full brass and reeds rendering. There's bop at the center, tension running through the bar lines, and a constant pivoting taking place in the rhythm section's engine room. Oliver Nelson's "Hoe Down" wafts through the action, but as usual, the 70-year-old bandleader finds key spots to stick dissonance and distraction into the mix. Such juxtapositions aren't always subtle. There are moments of friction that grind like tectonic plates shifting—they crop up on the title suite as well. I've often deemed such provocative moves as wake up calls that Lake lobbs at the listener, and in the large they work. This large ensemble makes a very physical roar.

The blare of the alto solo on "Clicker," the smooth thematic roll on "Studder," the polyphony that gets sprinkled over the action on "Wheels Suite"—the gambits that helped shape Lake's work with the World Saxophone Quartet are reposed throughout the disc as well. The most linear the group gets is on a swag-centric spin through OutKast's "The Whole World." There's lots of clout when a big band rides a jaunty hip-hop riddim for all it's worth, and the swing they bring to the table augments the cadence of the Atlanta duo's original into something supercharged.

—Jim Macnie

Wheels: Drum Thing; Is It Real; Philly Blues; Wheels Suite; Clicker; The Whole World; Studder; Maassai Moves. (59:00)

Personnel: Oliver Lake, alto saxophone; Jason Marshall, baritone saxophone; Darius Jones, alto saxophone; Bruce Williams, alto saxophone; Mike Lee, tenor saxophone; James Stewart, tenor saxophone; Waldron Ricks, trumpet; Freddie Hendrix, trumpet; Nabate Isles, trumpet; E.J. Allen, trumpet; Aaron Johnson, trombone; Stafford Hunter, trombone; Alfred Patterson, trombone; Terry Greene, trombone; Yoichi Uzeki, piano; Marc Cary, piano (track 6); Robert Sabin, bass; Chris Beck, drums.

Ordering info: passinthro.org

The Hot Box

Critics >	John McDonough	John Corbett	Jim Macnie	Paul de Barros
Pat Metheny <i>Tap: John Zorn's Book of Angels</i>	★★½	★★★½	★★★★½	★★★★½
Jonathan Finlayson <i>Moment & The Message</i>	★★★	★★★★	★★★	★★½
JD Allen <i>Grace</i>	★★★	★★★★	★★★	★★★★
Oliver Lake Big Band <i>Wheels</i>	★★★★	★★★★	★★★	★★½

Critics' Comments

Pat Metheny, *Tap: John Zorn's Book Of Angels, Vol. 20*

Metheny assumes a procession of musical identities (and instruments) in search of Zorn, from ethereal classical guitar to Cecil Taylor-like grenades. Pieces gather force in different ways; some pretty, others rock and electronica. Another dazzling one-man show from a man of many faces. Now, will the real Pat Metheny please stand up?
—John McDonough

In the parochial world of creative music circa 1990, Metheny and Zorn seemed like oil and water, but here we see them more as yin and yang. Not every orchestration turns me on—the synthetic guitar midway through “Tharsis”—but there are many unexpected twists (like Metheny’s free piano) and the sum total is an invigorating take on the composer’s bottomless book.
—John Corbett

It’s meaty stuff that Zorn has offered the famed string player, and Metheny’s interpretations buzz with the kind of kinetics that draw you in deeper with every replay. Some of the tonal choices seem a tad grandiose (as usual), but the designs he brings to the table are inspired.
—Jim Macnie

Jonathan Finlayson & Sicilian Defense, *Moment & The Message*

Finlayson rolls through these originals with a clipped and snappish intellectual rigor. The music exudes polished exactitude. More cool lyricism than emotional warmth. Finlayson and Okazaki engage nicely on “Ruy Lopez.” Otherwise, an accommodating but poker-faced avant garde ride.
—John McDonough

Kudos for the intricacies of the M-Base permutations the trumpeter brings to his new disc. But by the time this program is over, the individual jumbles start to sound decidedly similar and oddly divorced of the dynamics the music seems to hold high.
—Jim Macnie

Finlayson’s burnished trumpet and zany, clipped improvisations have enlivened many an album over the past few years in the most delightful way, but his compositions on this album are so relentlessly wonky and herky-jerky as to be exhausting. Not that the band doesn’t play well together—they get an especially nice conversation going on “Tyre”—but I wanted to concede this match before it was over.
—Paul de Barros

JD Allen, *Grace*

Spacious and earthy, *Grace* presents serious, understated music from Allen, a singular tenor impossible to pigeonhole. Interesting to hear Eldar in this context, more serious than some, his richly chromatic harmonies drawing on classical background in an original way.
—John Corbett

The saxophonist’s quartet move is refreshing after making such an extensive trio statement, and the chemistry between these three new colleagues seems inspiring. There’s yet another level of authority to the horn lines here, which may be bolstered by sumptuous ideas pianist Eldar Djangirov feeds the boss.
—Jim Macnie

Allen’s burry, furry tone and his way of meandering, as if he were luxuriating in the view as he discovered it, are pleasant enough on their own, but when combined with a clearly matured Eldar on piano and a gently free pulse from the rhythm section, the result is irresistible. Soulful free-bop on a deliciously broken field.
—Paul de Barros

Oliver Lake Big Band, *Wheels*

This smart big band invites us to draw near. But watch out. Inside Lake’s alto is poised to come at us with a calloused aggression marinated in napalm. It’s a Trojan horse full of contrasting attack angles, from acrobatic shrieks and barnyard hokum to much fine ensemble writing. Weaves together with surprising balance and coherence.
—John McDonough

Not overly taut, loose and funky and spunky, with adventurous compositional moves—a vanguard big band the way you would want it done. Cool to hear some unfamiliar names playing so well and to catch Lake kicking tuchus.
—John Corbett

Lake touches a lot of bases here and his keening alto sax is always a pleasure, but the charts are not played with much precision and the recording quality is abysmal. The groove tracks are best but this album made me want to hear this band playing live on a good night.
—Paul de Barros

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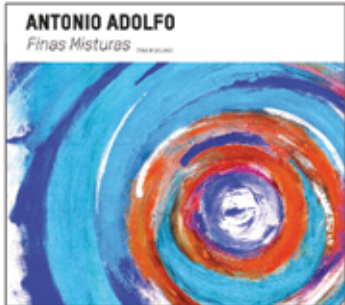


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Fredrik Ljungkvist Yun Kan 10 Ten

HOOB JAZZ 035

★★★★½

Swedish saxophonist Fredrik Ljungkvist has earned plaudits for his work in the powerful quintet Atomic, but that lean, resourceful band doesn't afford him the opportunities he explores on the stunning debut by his Yun Kan 10. The tenet expands his long-running quintet Yun Kan 5, but he does much more that double its power with the extra personnel. At times you might hear Yun Kan 10 as a free-improv-friendly new music ensemble,

with tricky unison passages featuring the pitch-perfect wordless vocals of Sofia Jernberg pairing with the leader's horns, the piano of Klas Nevrin or the violin of Katt Hernandez. Drummers Jon Fält and Raymond Strid provide polyrhythmic excitement, but the music rarely swings in conventional jazz fashion and the compositions also eschew post-bop forms. Still, although Ljungkvist may be drawing inspiration from various non-jazz sources, when the improvisation kicks in there's no missing the sensibility of his band members. "Lackritz," named for the given surname of Steve Lacy, has a brass blend that recalls *Birth Of The Cool*, while "Hold On To Your Hat!" sounds like it swipes a melodic line from "Chattanooga Choo Choo," but between the stately horns and Jernberg' zooming, whimsical voice it feels like a soundtrack for a sunny afternoon. The intense opening of "No Panic, Just Curious" sounds closer to Arnold Schoenberg than to Loren Schoenberg, carving out an opening for a wonderfully jagged, astringent solo from Hernandez before veering into a passage featuring colliding improvisations from the leader's baritone and the garrulous trombone of Mats Åleklint.

—Peter Margasak

Ten: Disc One: Lackritz; How To Break A Fever; Hold On To Your Hat; Fighter; Kun Lun. (41:06). Disc Two: Dolphinian Motion; Tuulikki; No Panic, Just Curious; Abraxas; Russia. (41:13)

Personnel: Fredrik Ljungkvist, soprano, tenor, and baritone saxophones; Sofia Jernberg, voice; Mats Åleklint, trombone; Per-Ake Holmlander, tuba; Klas Nevrin, piano; Mattias Risberg, Hammond organ; ARP Pro Soloist, Moog Taurus; Katt Hernandez, violin; Mattias Welin, bass; Jon Fält, drums; Raymond Strid, drums.

Ordering info: hoobrecords.com

Tommy Emmanuel/ Martin Taylor
The Colonel & The Governor

MESA/BLUEMOON 2307

★★★★½

Two solo guitar virtuosos join forces for a stellar set of intimate duets that are on the jazzy side while retaining a strong allegiance to melody. In some ways a throwback to the easy swinging duets of George Barnes and Carl Kress or even Chet Atkins and Les Paul, this session is underscored by an exuberant, good natured chemistry, as you hear them casually commenting on each other's licks, laughing back and forth, offering encouragement during solos. The charismatic Tommy Emmanuel, a gifted Atkins protégé, has built up a strong cult following over the years to the point where he can easily sell-out New York's 1,500-seat Town Hall. But he rarely touches on straight jazz repertoire in his shows. Nevertheless, Emmanuel acquits himself with taste and soul, along with some moments of fretboard flash, on relaxed versions of the Charlie Christian vehicle "A Smooth One," the jazz standard "Bernie's Tune," on which he affects the sterling fusillades of a Django Reinhardt, or the jaunty Tiny Bradshaw tune and 1942 hit for Benny Goodman, "Jersey Bounce."

British-born Martin Taylor, who has been one of the most outstanding fingerstyle jazz guitarists on the planet over the past 20 or so years, is com-



ing directly out the Django/Hot Club of France lineage. But he's refined his vocabulary to include some very personal harmonic choices along with his signature legato burn. For kicks, check out their Gypsy jazz inspired give-and-take on Irving Berlin's "Heat Wave" or their easy swinging rendition of George Shearing's "Lullaby Of Birdland," which opens with contrapuntal lines that owe more to Bach than Count Basie. —Bill Milkowski

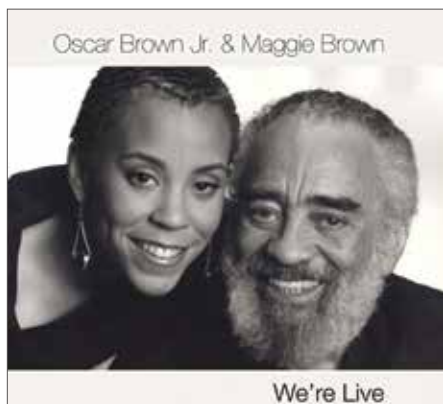
The Colonel & The Governor: I Won't Last A Day Without You; Jersey Bounce; Bernie's Tune; A Smooth One; True; Heat Wave; One Day; Lullaby Of Birdland; The Nearness of You; Down at Cocomo's; The Fair Haired Child; Secret Love; Wonderful Baby; I Wish I Knew How It Would Feel To Be Free. (61:32)

Personnel: Tommy Emmanuel, acoustic guitar; Martin Taylor, electric guitar.

Ordering info: tommyemmanuel.com

NEW FROM MOTÉMA

IN HONOR OF WAYNE SHORTER'S 80th BIRTHDAY!



Oscar Brown Jr. & Maggie Brown
We're Live

ESP-DISK 4071

★★★★

When it comes to acknowledging Oscar Brown Jr.'s legacy and exploring his dynamic repertoire during the civil rights era and beyond, the jazz community barely scratches the surface. Beyond the occasional covers of "Dat Dare," "Afro Blue" and "Work Song," his songs aren't that celebrated. Nor is he referenced as one of the great jazz singers of the past century as much as he should.

This charming live duet recording from 2001—and Brown's last recording before his death in 2005—hopefully should rectify those oversights. Captured at Chicago's HotHouse, this concert features Brown sharing the spotlight with his daughter, Maggie, who inherited his gift for whimsy and wit. When the two sing "Bird Chase" and "Billie's Brown Bounce" their voices dazzle as they soar parallel or twist and twine, creating musical fireworks that echo bebop horn lines. A similar sensation happens when they sing "When Malindy Sings," as their close harmonies and precise unison phrasing articulate Paul Lawrence Dunbar's humorous verses with tucked-in suspense.

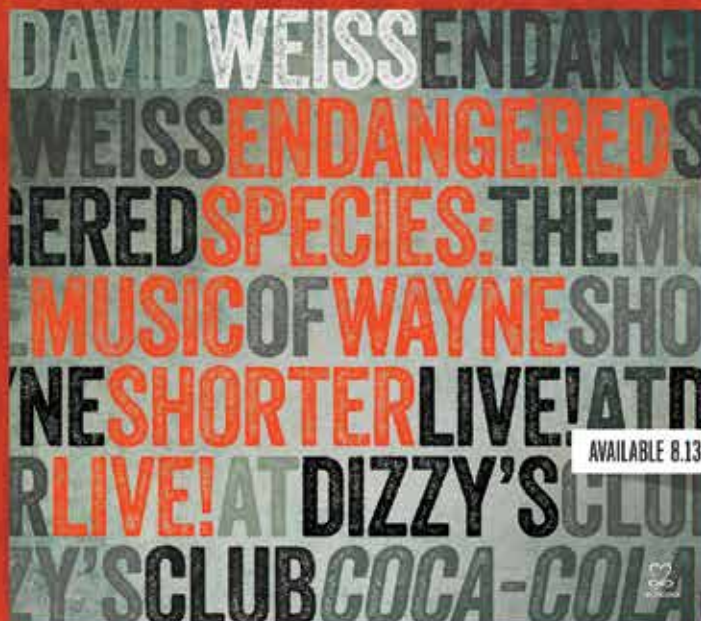
While the father-daughter duo performs none of Brown's aforementioned classics, Maggie Brown renders "Brown Baby" unaccompanied with regal reserve. Even more moving is Oscar Brown's solo, wry treatment of Thelonious Monk's "Round Midnight" renamed "Midnight (On The Beach)" as he contemplates mortality against Miguel de la Cerna's elegiac phrasing and the shadowy rhythms, created by bassist Yoseph Ben Israel and drummer Aveyal Ra. Another mediation on death occurs on "A Tree And Me," this time sung by Maggie, whose declarative vocals exhibits tenderness and wariness cloaked in heroic resolve.

—John Murph

We're Live: Introductions, Young Jazz, Bird to Word – Billie Brown's Bounce, Bird Chase, Midnight (On the Beach), A Tree and Me, All Blues Medley, Strongman, Insight, When Malindy Sings, All Over (Ode Owned Youth), My Little Maggie, Brown Baby, Old Lover's Song, Old Lovers Song.

Personnel: Oscar Brown, Jr., vocals; Maggie Brown, vocals; Yoseph Ben Israel, upright bass; Aveyal Ra, drums; Miguel de la Cerna, piano; Africa Pace Brown, vocals (7,9); TreSure (Angela, Cheryl and Caroline Brown), vocals (9); Aaron Graves, piano.

Ordering info: espdisk.com



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A MOTEMA TENTH ANNIVERSARY RELEASE

Shamie Royston Portraits

SELF RELEASE

★★★★½

Listeners may know Shamie Royston as the forceful pianist with alto saxophonist Tia Fuller. She's a keyboardist with a grasp of rhythmic variety, and while Royston likes to play hard and fast, she also has a solemn and tender side. Bassist Ivan Taylor and drummer-husband Rudy Royston match her forte for forte. This self-produced effort is Royston's first issue under her own name and, except for Horace Silver's "Summer In Central Park," the selections are originals.

She can play with a sense of discovery, as though the piece is new to her. She can also lay back and play rhythm while the drums vigorously engage in what Billy Higgins used to call "a wild man's dream." In fact, Rudy's trap drums often press at her back, pushing the pianist forward. The layered chords of Tyner are an influence but you'll also hear some of Sonny Clark's right-hand Morse code ("Homecoming") and an Ahmad Jemalesque "Ruby Goes To School." The tender Silver tune skirts his style completely. A conspicuously false note is the inclusion of vocalist Camille Thurman on "In This Quiet Place." Her Minnie Mouse voice doesn't enunciate enough for the listener to discern the lyrics, extemporizing on a scale before the cut just kind of dies off.

—Kirk Silsbee

Portraits: The Beast Within; Run; Portraits; Homecoming; Healing Hymn; Ascension; In This Quiet Place; Summer in Central Park; Inner Strength; Ruby Goes To School. (46:25)

Personnel: Shamie Royston, piano; Ivan Taylor, bass; Rudy Royston, drums; Camille Thurman, vocals (3).

Ordering info: cdbaby.com.



Jeff Albert's Instigation Quartet The Tree On The Mound

ROGUEART 0046

★★★★

Whether performing or producing his Open Ears Music series in New Orleans, trombonist Jeff Albert excels at using his own talent to bolster that of his peers. It's an idiosyncrasy that shines through on his excellent new disc. At the heart of *The Tree On The Mound* are four improvised

"Instigation Quartet" pieces. While Albert gives saxophonist Edward "Kidd" Jordan plenty of space to do his thing, the trombonist also brings a delicate balance of deference and leadership—a combo that allows the music to shape-shift from kinetic and cerebral ("Instigation Quartet #6") to witty ("Instigation Quartet #4") to sublime ("The Strut"). The album opens and closes with a pair of tunes by Fred Anderson, who, like Jordan, Albert and Hamid Drake, was born in Louisiana but grew tied to Chicago. Albert kicks things off with "Three On Two," laying a foundation of warm, round tones and a solemn pace—which Jordan challenges as he digs into his part with characteristic moxie. Albert maintains a welcome foil to Jordan's prickly provocations. By contrast, "Instigation Quartet #3" turns the focus to Drake and bassist Joshua Abrams. Their intro hisses and shakes like a rattlesnake, with Abrams plucking odd metered rhythmic attacks beneath Drake's pulsing harmonics.

—Jennifer Odell

The Tree On The Mound: Three On Two; Instigation Quartet #3; Instigation Quartet #1; Instigation Quartet #2; The Tree On the Mound; Instigation Quartet #6; The Strut. (52:32)

Personnel: Jeff Albert, trombone; Kidd Jordan, tenor sax; Joshua Abrams; double bass; Hamid Drake, drums.

Ordering info: roguart.com



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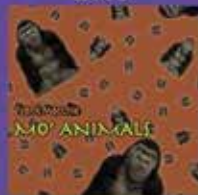
The Galapagos Suite
with Billy Childs,
Grant Geissman,
Bruce Fowler,
Valarie King

2004



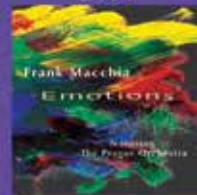
Animals
with Billy Childs
Vinnie Colaiuta
Dave Carpenter
Grant Geissman
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2011



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Keeping Kansas City Cosmopolitan

The term "Kansas City jazz" probably conjures up thoughts of Count Basie, Charlie Parker and the blues. Today the city's thriving scene demonstrates the wealth of talent exploring a diversity of styles and approaches, all helping to redefine the sound of Kansas City jazz.

Guitarist and oudist Beau Bledsoe describes his band Alaturka's music as an "auditory handshake" between Turkish folk and popular music and jazz. **Yalviz (Tzigane 201; 48:43 ★★★★★)** is a gorgeous and highly successful realization of that handshake. Alaturka maintains a perfect balance between the jazz and Turkish elements: saxophonist Rich Wheeler gives the long snaking melodies lyrical readings and solos in a jazz oriented vein; Bledsoe plays oud in a Turkish style; bassist Jeff Harshbarger is the group's foundation, while Brandon Draper's hand percussion adds rhythmic drive and texture. While not Turkish, the beautiful performances of two of Chick Corea's "Children's Songs" and Egberto Gismonti's "A Fala da Paixão" fit right in.

Ordering info: tziganemusic.com

Los Angeles native Matt Otto is one of Kansas City's top saxophonists. **Broken Waltz (JCR 143-12; 55:22 ★★★★★)** is the work of a consummate writer and player in Otto, and a top ensemble in tune with its leader's point of view. Possessing an individual voice on tenor, Otto is a deeply melodic and understated player, qualities which extend to his writing for saxophone, keys, bass, drums and bass clarinet. Otto's music doesn't burn—it smolders with a relaxed intensity. Sara Gazarek contributes vocalese lines on several tracks, with "Friday Song" being one of the album's standouts.

Ordering info: mattotto.org

Pianist Eddie Moore's **The Freedom of Expression (RIK; 62:36 ★★★★★)** incorporates soul, r&b and hip-hop elements into his take on contemporary jazz. Moore's compositions exude a sophisticated and soulful elegance. His band, which features a rotating cast of some of the city's finest young players, is based around a piano trio and is at times augmented by guitar, tenor sax or trumpet. Tight grooves, a miles-deep pocket and melodic solos abound.

Ordering info: eddiemooremusic.com

Organist Chris Hazelton's **Peregrination (Artists Recording Collective 2382; 58:34 ★★★★★)** is right out of the greasy B3 trio tradition. Joined by guitarist Danny Embrey and drummer Kevin Frazee, Hazelton opens proceedings with the shuffle "Harlem Groove." The track is representative of the album: it's bluesy, soulful and delicious. The ballads "For God So Loved The World" and "Weaver Of Dreams" are lovely, and Hazelton's warm and glowing sustained chords take the listener right to church.

Ordering info: artistsrecordingcollective.biz



Alaturka: Jeff Harshbarger (left), Brandon Draper, Beau Bledsoe and Rich Wheeler

T.J. Martley recorded over two dozen solo piano improvisations, choosing 10 to appear on the evocative **Meditations Vol. 1 (Tzigane 101; 58:52 ★★★★★)**. Martley, whose album is a significant artistic statement, is a master at motivic and melodic development. He's able to take what might at first seem like a benign idea and shape it into something profound and unexpected. Martley's pensive ruminations contain a mix of angular lines and attractive melodies, all wrapped in crunchy dissonance and accentuated by the pianist's use of space. There's a lot to unpack on this dense and challenging album.

Ordering info: tziganemusic.com

Taking a more straightahead tack is pianist Roger Wilder's **Stretch (Artists Recording Collective ARC-2444; 73:35 ★★★★★)**. Including saxophonists David Chael, Matt Otto, bassist Seth Lee and drummer Sam Wisman, Wilder's quintet works its way through five excellent Wilder originals (dig the strutting title track and the fun "Alley Cat Harrison"), Coltrane's "26-2" (a Chael/Wilder duet), Wilder's reconstruction of a popular hymn, and Vernon Duke's "Taking a Chance on Love," among others.

Ordering info: artistsrecordingcollective.biz

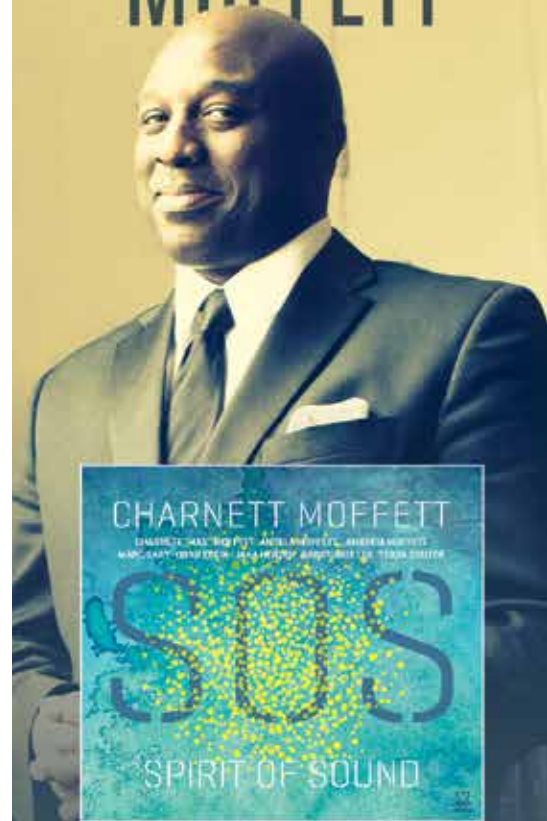
Trumpeter Clint Ashlock's **New Jazz Order (Self Release; 73:28 ★★★★★)** is a swinging big band date featuring many of K.C.'s top players. Ashlock balances full bodied section writing, such as on his arrangement of "The Night Has a Thousand Eyes," with a more nuanced and delicate approach, as on "Sioux." His soloists shine throughout, with Kevin Cerovich's trombone feature on "Legacy" standing out. K.C. hometown hero Bobby Watson lends his burning alto to Ashlock's infectious arrangement of Stevie Wonder's "Another Star" and "The Professor," a slinky blues.

Ordering info: clintashlock.com

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Jonathan Kreisberg
One

NEW FOR NOW 3

★★★★½



By now, the tradition of solo piano performance, on record and onstage, is long and deep enough to qualify as a genuine jazz subgenre. Solo guitar work, though, remains a specialty item, partly for the sheer technical complexity of coaxing a complete, lead-support musical entity from six strings versus the 10-fingered/two-handed sound world of piano. Few are chosen to shine in this mode—Joe Pass and Pat Metheny have mastered the form, for instance—and, with his truthfully, proudly named album *One*, Jonathan Kreisberg proves that he’s well up to the challenging self-reliant task.

Kreisberg has set out a daring course for himself, going down a mostly mainstream path of songs, with ear-massaging new takes on “Summertime,” “Tenderly,” “My Favorite Things” and “I Thought About You” while injecting fresh ideas and creative arranging diversions. He burns cleanly on fat-bodied jazz guitar, occasionally deploying coloristic effects and an overdub here or there, while also going acoustic on tunes such as “Skylark”—with a fervent single-line interlude—and Wayne Shorter’s fifth-stacking jewel “E.S.P.” and nods to more contemporary fare on Leonard Cohen’s “Hallelujah,” in moody and sometimes polytonal hues.

To give his 11-track record a touch of off-topic diversity, Kreisberg includes two feisty synth-toned original workouts, “Without Shadow” and “Escape From Lower Formant Shift.” But, compared to the richer clean-timbre and clearly jazz-aligned tracks on the album, these seem like stow-aways from another album yet to be made, maybe to be called *One 2*. Mostly, though, *One* states its case as a solo guitar album basking in the riches of expressive possibility, when the player knows how to juggle the elements, with nimble chops and a strong, coherent musical voice intact.

—Josef Woodard

One: Canto De Ossanha; Summertime; Without Shadow; Skylark; Caravan; Tenderly; My Favorite Things; Hallelujah; E.S.P.; I Thought About You; Escape From The Lower Formant Shift. (46:00)
Personnel: Jonathan Kreisberg, guitar.
Ordering info: jazzmart.com

Jared Gold
Intuition

POSI-TONE 8105

★★★★★



Jared Gold represents the youngest wave of jazz organists; that would be the post-Tony Monaco, Larry Goldings, Barbara Dennerlein and Bill Heid wave. In the company of journeyman guitarist Dave Stryker and drummer McCleenty Hunter, Gold gives a personal statement that also touches many of the mileposts of the organ’s jazz history.

Gold is not tied to overtly blues-based material. Carole King’s “Will You Love Me Tomorrow?” and the feel-good anthem of ’70s singer-songwriters, “You’ve Got A Friend,” are unconventional choices. Stryker doubles Gold’s theme lines for these soulful and atmospheric treatments. You’ll hear nods to Larry Young in Gold’s dissonant flights on “Shadowboxing.” He’s a playful melodist, and never more so than on the bopping funk of “Hoopin’ On Sundays.” Yet there are bass chords that can blanket the sonic landscape, often to spooky effect. Gold’s rolling fog feeling on “As It Were” almost nods to mood merchant Korla Pandit.

—Kirk Silsbee

Intuition: Will You Love Me Tomorrow?; The Crusher; Pro Zeca; Hoopin’ On Sundays; You’ve Got a Friend; Shadowboxing; Right Nowish; As It Were; Bedo’s Blues. (46:22)
Personnel: Jared Gold, organ; Dave Stryker, guitar; McCleenty Hunter, drums
Ordering info: posi-tone.com



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Hush Point *Hush Point*

SUNNYSIDE 1358

★★★★

Cool jazz and free-jazz are often posited as polar opposites. But *Hush Point*, a collective quartet formed by trumpeter John McNeil and saxophonist Jeremy Udden, aims to bridge that divide with tunes that are both soft-spoken and spontaneous. With drummer Vinnie Sperrazza sticking solely to brushes and bassist Aryeh Kobrinsky playing with a warm front-porch folksiness, the group emphasizes a muted intimacy. The disc opens with Jimmy Giuffre's "Iranic," which sets the pace by diving the quartet into a series of duos, each one a miniature dialogue. Giuffre is reprised for "The Train And The River," a stealth locomotive of taut forward momentum. The remainder of the disc is made up of originals. McNeil's "Peachful" is relaxed and summer-sun hazy, while Udden's "B. Remembered" is a loose-limbed bop homage to his mentor, Bob Brookmeyer. Kobrinsky's elastic intro to his closer, "Cat Magnet," sets the uneasily swaying pace for a bit of inebriated country-gospel rejoicing. *Hush Point's* name gives away their M.O., though that first word shouldn't be taken to imply timidity. Take the coiling, intertwining lines of Udden's "Bar Talk" or the simmering, darting intrigue of McNeil's "Finely Done": The foursome has a kinetic chemistry no less powerful for being kept under a constant, careful restraint.

—Shaun Brady

Hush Point: Iranic; Peachful; B. Remembered; Bar Talk; Fathers and Sons; Finely Done; New Bolero; The Train and the River; Get Out; Cat Magnet. (56:29)

Personnel: John McNeil, trumpet; Jeremy Udden, alto saxophone; Aryeh Kobrinsky, bass; Vinnie Sperrazza, drums.

Ordering info: sunnysiderecords.com.



Erwin Helfer *Erwin Helfer Way*

THE SIRENS RECORDS 5020

★★★★½

For close to 60 years, pianist Erwin Helfer has refined his approach to blues and boogie-woogie repertoire that thrived decades ago. He connected to that tradition's masters while also teaching generations of students in his Chicago home. Many of those students have embraced more modern jazz idioms, without abandoning his lessons.

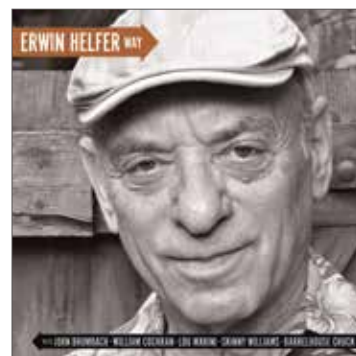
A group of those former students join Helfer for this disc. So, as can be expected, the disc is a joyous affair: like the way Helfer and tenor saxophonists John Brumbach and Skinny Williams trade solos on their version of Horace Silver's "The Preacher." Helfer and protege Barrelhouse Chuck continually rework their solos on each other's ideas throughout "E&C Boogie." The trio of Helfer, bassist Lou Marini and drummer William "Bugs" Cochran have an easygoing charm on Jelly Roll Morton's "Winin' Boy." But throughout *Erwin Helfer Way*, subtleties emerge that show how tricky it is to perform this music right. Helfer's own composition, "Within," features all sorts of complex intertwined left hand-right hand movements. Marini succeeds in coming up with an answer to the pianist's own strong bass lines.

—Aaron Cohen

Erwin Helfer Way: Chicken Shack; Take My Hand Precious Lord; The Fives; Within; Exactly Like You; Baby Won't You Please Come Home; E&C Boogie; Big Joe; Winin' Boy; Sweet Georgia Brown; Tin Roof Blues; The Preacher. (52:30)

Personnel: Erwin Helfer, piano; John Brumbach, tenor saxophone (1, 2, 10-11, 12); Skinny Williams, tenor saxophone (1, 12); William Cochran, drums (1-3, 9-12); Lou Marini, bass (1-3, 9-12); Barrelhouse Chuck, piano (7); organ (8).

Ordering info: thesirensrecords.com



LIVE TODAY is the debut recording from extraordinary bassist and composer Derrick Hodge. Best known as the anchor of the genre-bending, GRAMMY award-winning band Robert Glasper Experiment, Hodge brings all his experience as a soloist, bandleader, and composer to the fore on his impressive debut which features guest appearances from Glasper, Common and Alan Hampton.

DERRICK HODGE

LIVE TODAY

BLUE NOTE

Heroic Harp Masters

Various Artists: Remembering Little Walter (Blind Pig 5154; 56:01 ★★1/2)

Saluting the eternal Chicago blues harmonica kingpin in a San Diego club last December was a particularly accomplished group of direct descendants: Charlie Musselwhite, Mark Hummel, Billy Boy Arnold, Sugar Ray Norcia and James Harman. Supported by a fine band with Little Charle Baty on guitar (and briefly harp), each gets two songs identified with Walter in which to demonstrate the power of his craft; the grand finale, "My Babe" has a round robin of soloists. Behind their deeply layered playing, Musselwhite and Norcia appear to be the gents in clearest communication with rapture—and they're the truest singers hands-down.

Ordering info: blindpigrecords.com

Alan Wilson: The Blind Owl (Severn 0057; 39:29/38:22 ★★★★★) Almost all the tracks on this long-awaited 20-track overview of the short recording career of Canned Heat co-founder Alan Wilson provide proof of the depth to his singing and to his fat-toned harmonica playing. (He was also a skilled rhythm guitarist). Possessing an almost shrill high voice, equal parts plangent and fantastical, Wilson doesn't dramatize his desolate lyrics on unrequited love, loneliness and social alienation but instead inhabits them. His unflinching emotional naturalness even runs through the 1968 pop hit "On The Road Again," a raga-blues makeover of a country blues tune. Only after Wilson's death, at age 27 in 1970, did the band get lost in tedious boogie.

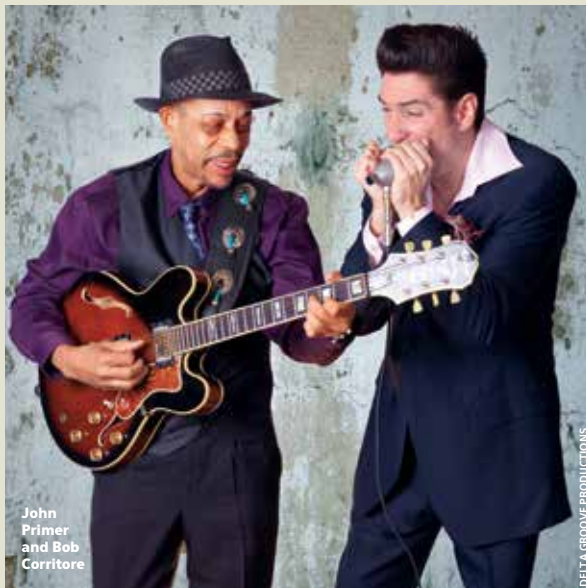
Ordering info: severnrecords.com

John Primer & Bob Corritore: Knockin' Around These Blues (Delta Groove 159; 55:37 ★★1/2)

Chicago guitarist-singer John Primer—a former aide-de-camp to Muddy Waters and Magic Slim and an estimable figure in his own right—combined forces with Phoenix-based harp player Bob Corritore for this rewarding set of not so obvious repertory like Bob Jones' "Leanin' Tree" and Jimmy Reed's "The Clock." The two musicians, along with pianist Barrelhouse Chuck and others, subscribe to the notion of Chicago blues as a vibrant entity rather than a museum relic. Corritore confidently steps out front on "Harmonica Joyride."

Ordering info: deltagroovemusic.com

James Cotton: Cotton Mouth Man (Alligator 4954; 48:56; ★★1/2) With new songs thematically tracing his life from the Delta to Memphis on to Chicago, James Cotton's latest ef-



John Primer and Bob Corritore

DELTA GROOVE PRODUCTIONS

fort is worthy of one of the grand old bluesmen. He gets lots of capable assistance—from ace songwriter-producer-drummer Tom Hambridge and, among others, redoubtable singers Gregg Allman, Ruthie Foster and Darrell Nulisch—but it's those hot squalls of massed sound rocketing out of his Seydel that carry the day. At lower temperatures, Cotton's rough-hewn artistry triumphs, too. Not physically able to sing in recent years, the septuagenarian does manage to rasp his way through the original acoustic blues "Bonnie Blue."

Ordering info: alligator.com

Jimmy Vivino & The Black Italians: 13 Live (Blind Pig 5153; 58:56 ★★1/2)

New Yorker Jimmy Vivino, a better than average guitarist and not as good a singer, put his outstanding seven-piece trans-genre band through its paces late last year at a Levon Helm Studios concert in Woodstock, N.Y. (He closes the album with two songs in honor of the Band's late drummer.) Just as captivating in a feature role as Vivino and singer Catherine Russell is Havana-born singer-harpist Felix Cabrera, who rides the grooves of his wildly eccentric tune "Animalism" and his Latinized treatment of Bob Dylan's "Maggie's Farm" to intoxicating heights.

Ordering info: blindpigrecords.com

Various Artists: Classic Harmonica Blues (Smithsonian Folkways 40204; 62:57 ★1/2)

This label sampler of album tracks recorded between 1952 and 2008 and festival tapes dating from 1977 to 1991 suffices as an introduction to now-deceased foot soldiers—Doctor Ross, Jazz Gilum, a few more—and one past master, Sonny Terry (with either his guitar-playing partner Brownie McGhee or a washboard band). Meet, also, talented contemporary harmonica folks such as Phil Wiggins (with his comrade-in-blues guitarist John Cephas or the Robert Johnson Tribute Band) and Annie Raines (part of John Sebastian's J-Band). The quality of the acoustic music is mainly satisfactory or good.

Ordering info: folkways.si.edu



Gregory Tardy Standards & More

STEEPLECHASE 31754

★★★★

Saxophonist Gregory Tardy has made his name as a sideman with the likes of Andrew Hill and Dave Douglas while focusing his albums as a leader on original compositions. So the key words in the title of his new CD are "& More." Although there are a couple of predictable chestnuts ("When I Fall In Love," "How Deep Is The Ocean"), Tardy expands the concept to include pieces by Kenny Barron, Wynton Marsalis and Cedar Walton, as well as an original ballad.

On the tenor ballads, like opener "I See Your Face Before Me," Tardy summons the entire history of the instrument, luxuriating in his big tone, knowing how to sit on a note and let it speak, how to bend a phrase with a singer's lyricism. The same attention to tone is apparent in his clarinet (he first trained as a classical player on the instrument)—Charlie Parker's "Billie's Bounce" and Barron's "Voyage" are uptempo but also unhurried, with plenty of room for Tardy's generous lower register.

The arrangements are refreshingly varied. On "When I Fall In Love," Sean Conly's bass states the ballad tune while Tardy's tenor improvises filigree around it, rushing ahead, laying back, then falling into sync with the melody. On the spare tenor-bass-drums arrangement of the contemporary Christian tune "How Deep The Father's Love For Us," a bass drone conjures ancient Africa. Cedar Walton's "Firm Roots" is a Blakey-style post-hard-bop flagwaver, with everyone (including pianist Keith Brown and drummer Jaimeo Brown) ripping it up. Perhaps the most exploratory piece is Marsalis' "Aural Oasis," a rhythmically free slow burn that ignites with trumpeter Philip Dizack's exuberant open-horn solo. Tardy's "A Prayer For The Preborn" is also a possible first here: a pro-life jazz composition. Politics aside, the writing and playing of this short piece are humble and inspiring.

—Jon Garelick

Standards & More: I See Your Face Before Me; Voyage; How Deep The Father's Love For Us; Billie's Bounce; When I Fall In Love; Secret Love; A Prayer For The Preborn; Aural Oasis; How Deep Is the Ocean; Firm Roots. (64:35)

Personnel: Gregory Tardy, tenor saxophone, clarinet; Philip Dizack, trumpet; Keith Brown, piano; Sean Conly, bass; Jaimeo Brown, drums.

Ordering info: steeplechase.dk

Keith Jarrett/Gary Peacock/Jack DeJohnette
Somewhere

ECM 2200
★★★★★

"You have to know the songs," Oscar Peterson used to admonish budding pianists. His lesson: Only through intimate knowledge of harmony, melody and lyrical nuance can you render the songwriter's hand invisible.

For 30 years, Keith Jarrett, Gary Peacock and Jack DeJohnette have been seizing ownership of standards, rendering them in a wide assortment of styles, depending on the mood of the moment. Since 1991, when the trio entered a studio to pay tribute to the recently departed Miles Davis, the band has recorded only live performances, and *Somewhere*—captured in 2009—is the first to be recorded since 2002.

Opening with an abstract, rhapsodic solo "Deep Space," *Somewhere* feels like it might veer into free territory, as 2001's *Inside Out* did, but after three minutes Peacock and DeJohnette establish a sauntering pulse, and by the 11-minute mark the trio is grooving hard on Davis' "Solar," with Jarrett executing some exhilarating runs. The "Somewhere"/"Everywhere" medley also covers broad territory, but in a different direction. From a gentle, sublime reading of the Leonard Bernstein/Stephen Sondheim theme, Jarrett shifts into one of his long, gospel-tinged vamps—a slow-burning build filled with ecstatic



releases, and a textbook illustration of DeJohnette's creativity. As Jarrett's other endeavors have receded and the trio has grown into one of the jazz world's most sought-after concert acts, the unit has become a vehicle for the pianist's various signatures. In fact, *Somewhere* serves up a cross-section of pianistic styles beyond Jarrett's native devices, touching on stride for a highly percussive "Between The Devil And The Deep Blue Sea" and bop for a steaming "Tonight."
—James Hale

Somewhere: Deep Space/Solar; Stars Fell On Alabama; Between The Devil And The Deep Blue Sea; Somewhere/Everywhere; Tonight; I Thought About You. (65:31)

Personnel: Keith Jarrett, piano; Gary Peacock, bass; Jack DeJohnette, drums.

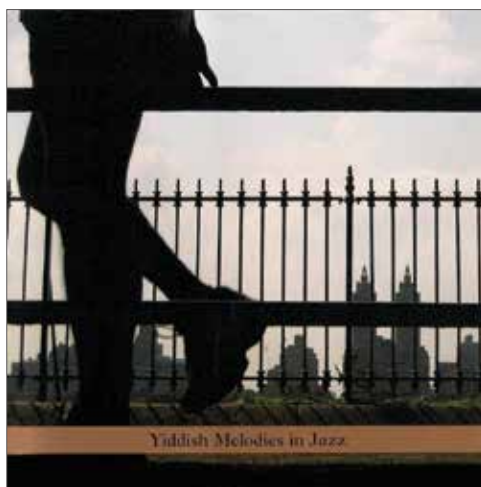
Ordering info: ecmrecords.com

Gabriele Coen
Yiddish Melodies In Jazz

TZADIK 8172
★★★★★

On the back of the booklet for *Yiddish Melodies In Jazz*, the engaging new album from the Italian saxophonist and clarinetist Gabriele Coen, there's a quote from filmmaker Joel Coen: "If the material is challenging, it forces you to challenge yourself when handling it." And while the material on *Melodies* isn't technically demanding, per se, the dare is there: to put personal spins on Jewish compositions that have previously been explored by jazz artists. At this task, Coen and his 8-year-old Jewish Experience quintet—pianist Pietro Lussu, guitarist Lutte Berg, bassist Marco Loddo, drummer Luca Caponi and Coen—succeed mightily.

With trumpeter Ziggy Elman's take on the traditional "Bublitzki" in mind, Coen and company give that tune a punkish funk beat powered by scampering piano and the leader's rich, passionate tenor sax. Abe Schwartz's "Di Grine Kuzine" opens with a brief chapter of unsettling free-jazz before a reggaeton-like drum pattern leads into a whimsical klezmer section. But the klezmer bit lasts only a few seconds: The rest of the tune, marked by Coen's soaring soprano and Berg's cutting, squiggly guitar, settles on a swaying reggae feel. The traditional "Der Shtiler Bulgar" begins with warm, smiling solo guitar before offering up military drums and a melody that sounds Celtic at times. "Yiddish



Mame," once given a whirl by Billie Holiday, is serious and spiritual, a 6/8 exploration guided by anguished tenor and stinging six-string. "Bei Mir Bist Du Schoen" features the most jarring moment on the album: After the tune has bopped along for four-and-a-half minutes, Berg's guitar erupts with dark lawnmower tones, thrusting the piece into double-time.
—Brad Farberman

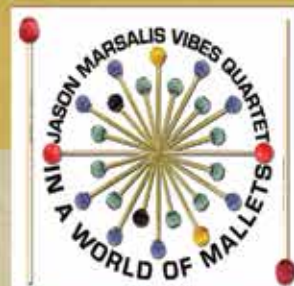
Yiddish Melodies In Jazz: Bublitzki; Di Grine Kuzine; Liri; Jewish Five; Yosel Yosel; Der Shtiler Bulgar; Bei Mir Bist Du Schoen; Mazal Tov From Tobago; Yiddish Mame; Leena From Palestina. (64:46)

Personnel: Gabriele Coen, tenor saxophone, soprano saxophone, clarinet; Pietro Lussu, piano; Lutte Berg, electric guitar; Marco Loddo, double bass; Luca Caponi, drums.

Ordering info: tzadik.com

BASIN STREET RECORDS

Jason Marsalis



In a World of Mallets

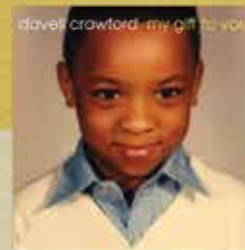
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David Murray
Infinity Quartet
Be My Monster Love

MOTÉMA 112

★★★★

Once one of the most prolific recording artists on the planet, saxophonist David Murray has become positively reclusive nowadays by comparison. Every new project brings promise.

Aside from a new rhythm section, the promise here involves the inclusion of singers Macy Gray, also a member of Murray's big band, and the suddenly ubiquitous Gregory Porter. While Porter lends his robust presence to three songs, Gray's role on the title piece is most memorable: Her highly textured voice is ideal to make author Ishmael Reed's surreal ode to bestial love roar. Murray matches the singer's ferocity with a woolly tenor solo that bounces all over the horn's register.

Reed's lyrics for "Army Of The Faithful" and "Hope Is A Thing With Feathers" don't carry the same poetic whimsy, nor do they scan particularly well, although Porter powers through them with as much soulfulness as he can muster. He sounds more at ease with Abiodun Oyewole's words for "About The Children," a re-imagining of the themes of "God Bless The Child" and "Strange Fruit."

Elsewhere, "French Kiss For Valerie" and "Stressology" provide effective showcases for the Murray who many listeners once heard as the obvious heir to Sonny Rollins. His stentorian tenor gushes torrents of notes, by turns tender and tough, and Marc Cary provides the kind of percussive support that Murray has previously found in pianists like D.D. Jackson and John Hicks. "The Graduate" features a welcome cameo by trumpeter Bobby Bradford—who sounds wispy but lyrical—but, like other parts of *Be My Monster Love*, feels like the seams might have been knotted a little tighter.

—James Hale

Be My Monster Love: French Kiss For Valerie; Be My Monster Love; Stressology; Army Of The Faithful; Sorrow Song; About The Children; The Graduate; Hope Is A Thing With Feathers. (56:32)

Personnel: David Murray, tenor saxophone; Bobby Bradford, trumpet (7); Marc Cary, piano, organ; Jaribu Shahid, bass; Nasheet Waits, drums; Macy Gray, vocals (2); Gregory Porter, vocals (4, 6, 8).

Ordering info: motema.com



John Vanore & Abstract Truth
Culture

ACOUSTICAL CONCEPTS 47

★★★★½

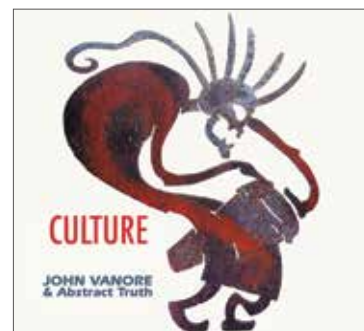
John Vanore puts his chamber music-inflected jazz ensemble notions forward on the fourth release by his band Abstract Truth. The intriguing trumpeter pushes expressive possibilities in the realm of big band culture, armed with a progressive attitude, yet also with clear roots in tradition and timeless musical values. At the impressive center of *Culture* is Vanore's ambitious, evocative three-movement "Easter Island Suite," running through various thematic and textural variations and dynamic heat levels. The loosely programmatic design moves through "Discovery," the fervent "Gods & Angels" and the alternately abstract and structured "The Secret Caves," framed by Brian Landrus' bass clarinet ambling over a 7/4 pulse and scramble. This set also includes Vanore's handsome Spanish-tinged big band chart "Mompou," adapted from composer Federico Mompou.

—Josef Woodard

Culture: Footprints; Parallax; Easter Island Suite: Discovery, Gods & Devils, The Secret Caves; Whispers Of Spring; The Arsenal; Mompou. (64:41)

Personnel: John Vanore, trumpet; Michael Mee, alto and soprano saxophone, flute and alto flute; Bob Howell, tenor and soprano saxophone; Joe Cataldo, Sean McAnally, Dennis Wasko, Kevin Rodgers, trumpet and flugelhorn; George Barnett, french horn; Larry Toft, trombone; Greg Kettinger, guitar; Craig Thomas, bass; Dan Monaghan, drums; Ron Thomas, piano; Brian Landrus, bass clarinet.

Ordering info: johnvanore.net



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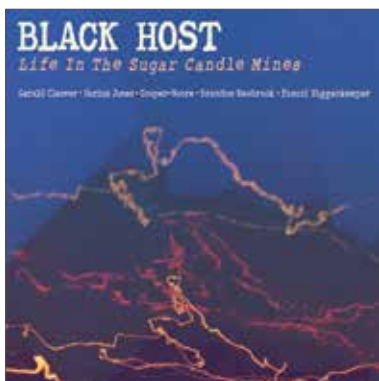
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Black Host
*Life In The Sugar
 Candle Mines*

NORTHERN SPY 039

★★★★★



Unbridled noise and nuanced textures mingle on *Life In The Sugar Candle Mines*, the massive debut from Black Host, a new quintet from Gerald Cleaver. The drummer's credit for "sound design" hints at his ringleader role, yet Cleaver functions more as a conduit than a featured player. His presence ensures that Black Host is as varied as the pedigrees of its players, whose clamorous dialogue runs through this feature-length tour de force. Though Cleaver dutifully cranks out a hard-driving, machine-like pulse at times, he more often works in understated atmospherics, hewing to the margins amid the atonal fray. That glorious squall comes from Darius Jones' alto sax and Cooper-Moore's uninhibited piano runs, abetted by guitarist Brandon Seabrook, who coaxes an array of tones ranging from hysterical cackles to cascading sheets of sound. Seabrook's soaring passages on "Hover" make the title seem like an understatement. While his amorphous chords yield to chunky shards of distortion, Jones and Cooper-Moore quickly steer the conversation back into a weightless reverie. The tune nods to free-jazz and noise-rock but doesn't fit into either category. "Test-Sunday" is a brooding negotiation that also falls between those two poles.

—Areif Sless-Kitain

Life In The Sugar Candle Mines: Hover; Ayler Children; Citizen Rose; Test-Sunday; Amsterdam/ Frames; Gromek; Wrestling; May Be Home. (77:39)

Personnel: Gerald Cleaver, drums, sound design; Cooper-Moore, piano, synthesizer; Brandon Seabrook, guitar; Darius Jones, alto saxophone; Pascal Niggenkemper, bass.

Ordering info: northernspyrecords.com

**Han Bennink/
 Uri Caine**
Sonic Boom

816 MUSIC 816-1201

★★★★



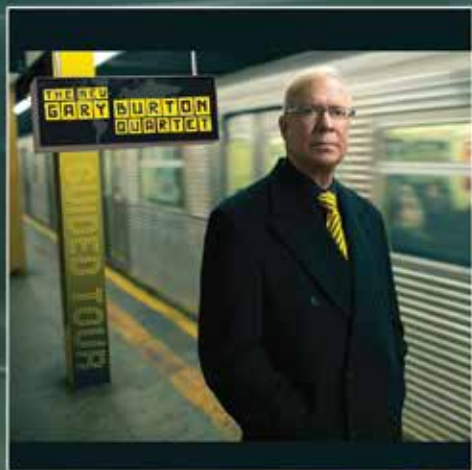
Recorded live in Amsterdam, *Sonic Boom* is an intriguing encounter between Dutch drummer Han Bennink and pianist Uri Caine: Seeing the two men cross paths was somewhat unexpected. Bennink is used to an open-ended format, but Caine definitely shares his encyclopedic knowledge of jazz. This explains why their deconstruction of "Round Midnight" fits right at home here. Various jazz idioms constantly spring out in kaleidoscopic fashion and are woven into an often angular and dissonant musical fabric. Bennink and Caine make a convincing case for a jazz continuum that too many people still fail to acknowledge. It is often forgotten that traditional jazz swing is the fountain Bennink drank from early on and this new recording is one more piece of evidence as he drives hard throughout the set. Caine's sprawling and larger-than-life playing reveals the influence of Bernard Peiffer, the great and mostly ignored French pianist who settled in Philadelphia in the 1950s and with whom he took lessons. While *Sonic Boom's* concept is not original, the delivery remains unpredictable even though it suffers from some shortcomings: The duo could have engaged in more of a dialogue and a lack of risk prevents the music from becoming utterly ecstatic.

—Alain Drouot

Sonic Boom: Sonic Boom; Grind of Blue; Hobo; "Round Midnight"; As I Was; Furious Urious; Upscale; True Love; Lockdown. (48:08)

Personnel: Han Bennink, drums; Uri Caine, piano.

Ordering info: uricaine.com



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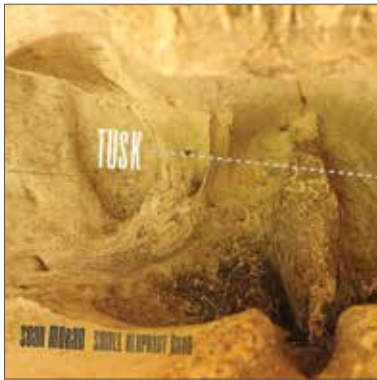
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Sean Moran Small Elephant Band
Tusk

NCM EAST RECORDS 40136
★★★★½

Nylon guitarist Sean Moran gives the genre “chamber jazz” a good, weird name. Leavening his excellent ensemble with angular compositions and curiously muted guitar solos, Moran creates sometimes spacious, sometimes claustrophobic music. An album that recalls the racing rhythmic spurts of Frank Zappa’s Yellow Shark Orchestra period, the darker soundtracks of Ennio Morricone as well as the cohesive performances of Astor Piazzolla’s ensembles, *Tusk* is full of delicious absurdities and irreverent abstractions. Occasionally raising sizzling to soaring, *Tusk* is also an acoustic meditation of glancing drumming, glowing vibraphone and searing clarinet. Delicate counterpoint and tightly aligned solos add to *Tusk*’s intensity. Everything emanates from Moran’s post rock inspired guitar work, as in the spaghetti western noir of “The Camel,” the pensive, note lurching drama of “Elliptical,” and “Moon Reflected,” a hallucinogenic composition of circuitous phrasing, swirling vibraphone chords, and solo guitar that seems reticent to take center-stage. For a few moments in the rapid-fire “Year Of The Snake,” Moran plays outside himself, running rampant over the guitar neck while humming a Keith Jarrett-like commentary, before quickly tucking his fingers back into the ensemble fold. —Ken Micallef

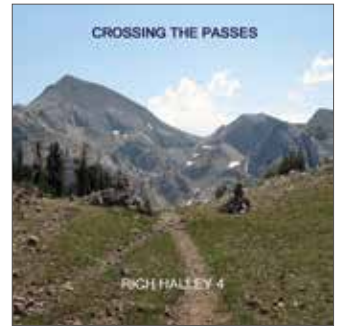


Tusk: Elliptical; Circle One Two; Monkeytown; Moon Reflected; Year Of The Snake; Then Mirrors; Dream Of Water; The Camel; To The Edge Of The World. (51:22)
Personnel: Moran, nylon string guitar; Michael McGinnis, clarinet/bass clarinet; Chris Dingman, vibraphone; Reuben Radding, bass; Harris Eisenstadt, drums.
Ordering info: sean-moran.com

Rich Halley 4
Crossing The Passes

PINE EAGLE 005
★★★★★

The cover of *Crossing The Passes* depicts two gravel paths converging within a mountainscape that is otherwise unsullied by human presence. So it’s a bit of a surprise to hear the brisk, often busy sounds within. This quartet plays with the easy confidence of men who have shared stages many times. Portland-based tenor saxophonist Rich Halley’s music occupies the point where populism and freedom come together. With its bristling bowed bass intro and swaggering groove, “Smooth Curve Of The Bow” is well steeped in the pungent funk that Julius Hemphill forged. The bandleader’s hefty-toned tenor dances easily on the unpredictable footing that his son, drummer Carson Halley, lays out for him on “Rain, Wind And Hail.” On the other hand, the way trombonist Michael Vlatkovich draws out the hints of melancholy and tenderness in the melody of “The Spring Rains” reaffirms the virtues of patience and simplicity. —Bill Meyer

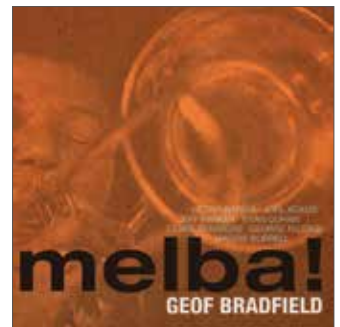


Crossing The Passes: The Only Consistent; Traversing The Maze; Looking West From West; Smooth Curve Of The Bow; The Spring Rains; Duopoly; Crossing The Passes; Basin And Range; Acute Angles; Rain, Wind And Hail; Journey Across The Land. (62:21)
Personnel: Rich Halley, tenor saxophone, percussion; Michael Vlatkovich, trombone, percussion; Clyde Reed, bass; Carson Halley, drums, percussion.
Ordering info: richhalley.com

Geof Bradfield
Melba!

ORIGIN 82637
★★★★★

If for no other reason than he’s giving orchids to the neglected legacy of the late trombonist/composer Melba Liston (who died in 1999 at the age of 74), Chicago-area saxophonist Geof Bradfield deserves our attention. It just so happens that in this release he’s composed a good little suite of pieces that touch on Liston’s considerable artistic journey, and turned his fine septet loose on it. Bradfield’s pieces are sturdy, and most would stand on their own in a live setting. He’s celebrating Liston, rather than isolating the trombonist or the composer/arranger.



Trombonist Joel Adams has the feature on “Kansas City Child,” denoting Liston’s place of birth. It’s as much a dirge as anything, with ominous mallets-on-tom-toms underneath Adams’ expressive, heart-clutching lament. Bradfield saves the 4/4 swing for “Central Avenue,” where Liston began to make her way in the tough, competitive jazz of 1940s Los Angeles. Guitarist Jeff Parker’s single-note guitar solo and his reflective work elsewhere might surprise some of his avant-garde fans. Bradfield’s bopping tenor, Ryan Cohan’s contrapuntal piano, and Victor Garcia’s lovely Dorhamesque trumpet make for a wonderfully evocative cut.

“Dizzy Gillespie” (for one of Liston’s most ardent champions) alternates between a rambunctious “Manteca”-type vamp and a poignant flugelhorn vehicle. Drummer George Fludas bashes on the former, while Garcia’s work is alternately soulful and somewhat stratospheric. Bradfield’s proclivity for swirling, fugue-like writing is best showcased on this piece. Musical African surfaces in “Randy Weston,” as Bradfield’s bass clarinet and Clark Sommers’ bass provide a virile rhythmic anchor. Bradfield has assembled a heartfelt tribute and, although the short vocal ballad “Let Me Not Lose My Dream” is almost over before it begins, an impressive statement. —Kirk Silsbee

Melba! Kansas City Child; Central Avenue; Dizzy Gillespie; Randy Weston; Solo Saxophone Introduction; Detroit/Kingston; Homecoming; Let Me Not Lose My Dream. (51:32)
Personnel: Geof Bradfield, soprano and tenor saxophones, bass clarinet; Victor Garcia, trumpet, flugelhorn, percussion; Joel Adams, trombone; Jeff Parker, guitar; Ryan Cohan, piano; Clark Sommers, bass; George Fludas, drums, percussion; Maggie Burrell, vocal (7).
Ordering info: originarts.com

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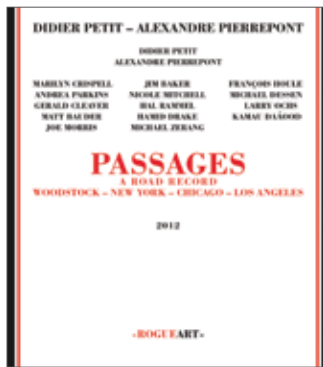
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**Didier Petit/Alexandre
Pierrepont**
Passages

ROGUE ART 42
★★½

Passages documents one free improviser's journey across America, and then some—and it's the "and then some" that gets this record in trouble. Didier Petit is an excellent cellist. He has a vibrant, woody tone and adroit phrasing that enables him to sound equally apposite riding Hamid Drake and Michael Zerang's hybrid Middle Eastern grooves, passing skeins of melody through Marilyn Crispell's canyon walls of piano chords, answering Michael Dessen's near-operatic trombone fulminations in kind, and out-atomizing Jim Baker's sun-splitting analog synthesizer blasts. He also productively disinhibits his partners, especially the ones who play electronics; Andrea Parkins uses his writhing figures as a launching pad for an astonishing foray that reconciles the sound worlds of Electric Ladyland, '70s INA-GRM and post-millennial digital manipulation. Petit is also an exuberant singer, ready to extend his bowing with wordless muttering and dire growling; you'd have to be a greater fan of extended vocal technique than this reporter to appreciate his hysterical interjections into Gerald Cleaver's incendiary drumming. And rather than simply play with great musicians from across the nation, he's asked them to digest and express segments of a long poem penned by Alexandre Pierrepont. That text, which is either impenetrably inexpressive or simply resistant to translation, rarely surfaces as an audible element in the music, and when it does, it's usually as a background presence. Next time, more playing, please. —*Bill Meyer*

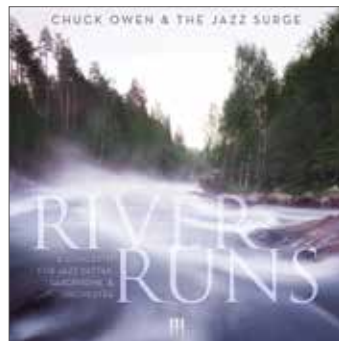
Passages: Passage; La Reine Rêve Rouge; Les Ciseaux De L'air Et De L'eau; L'alphabet De Leur Rayures; Soud L'arbre En Pleine Mer; Déesse-Allégresse; Des Griffes, Des Racine, Des Pierres; Vendanges; Il Faut Descendre Play Au Sud; Écluse; Le Gîte Et Le Couvert; Crâne-Sablier; Je Lis Sur Toute Les Lèvres. (56:57)
Personnel: Didier Petit, cello, voice; Alexandre Pierrepont, poetic serial, voice; Marilyn Crispell, piano, voice; Andrea Parkins, electric accordion and effects, laptop electronics, amplified objects; Gerald Cleaver, drums, percussion; Matt Bauder, tenor saxophone; Joe Morris, electric guitar; Jim Baker, analog synthesizer; Nicole Mitchell, flute; Hal Rammel, amplified pallet; Hamid drake, tar; Michael Zerang, darabukka; François Houle, clarinet; Michael Dessen, trombone; Larry Ochs, tenor saxophone; Kamau Daáood, voice; Chris Andersen, Kristen Garnier, Céline Craipeu, Michel Dorbon, Kai Dorsey, William Parker, Andrea Parkins, Josh Abrams, Jim Baker, Harrison Bankhead, John Corbett, Calvin Grant, Nicole Mitchell, Tomeka Reid, Kamau Daáood, Michael Dessen, Steven Isoardi, Alexandre Pierrepont, reading.
Ordering info: roguart.com



**Chuck Owen &
The Jazz Surge**
*River Runs: A Concerto
For Jazz Guitar,
Saxophone & Orchestra*

SUMMIT RECORDS 1044
★★★

Chuck Owen's fifth album has a narrative feel. The ominous and bass-laden first few bars of "Dawn At River's Edge" capture the trepidation that comes with moving through early morning darkness, as smatterings of softly rendered, high register strings and a tinkling triangle suggest a watery unknown. Crescendos and decrescendos rise and fall before suddenly the wind instruments take over, all daybreak and cheer. "Chutes And Wave Trains" boasts stop-and-go horn sections and dance-ready passages reminiscent of Leonard Bernstein's *West Side Story*—a plot seems to advance via jazz-influenced rhythms, while moods are governed by swells with classical roots. —*Jennifer Odell*



River Runs: A Concerto for Jazz Guitar, Saxophone & Orchestra: Dawn At River's Edge/Bound Away (Greenbrier & New Rivers, WV); Dark Waters, Slow Waters (Hillsborough River, FL); Chutes and Wave Trains (Chattanooga River, GA & SC); Side Hikes — A Ridge Away (Green & Colorado Rivers, CO & UT); Perhaps the Better Claim (Salmon River, ID); The River of No Return. (63:19)
Personnel: Chuck Owen, composer, conductor, orchestrator; Jack Wilkins, tenor saxophone; LaRue Nickelson, guitar; Rob Thomas, violin; Corey Christensen, guitars, Mark Neuunschwander, bass; Danny Gottlieb, drums.
Ordering info: summitrecords.com

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Brian Charette *Borderline*

STEEPLECHASE 31756

★★★★½

Few people can get away with playing solo organ. Churches and ballparks will hire someone to employ all their limbs for the congregation but it's a rare sight to get a jazz organist alone. Brian Charette, on his first solo organ album, tackles a lot of the standard repertoire but doesn't hesitate to throw a few curveballs into the mix. Many of those old chestnuts can get a little hokey, unable to slip out from the inherently loungey trappings of the instrument. Numbers like "Tico Tico" and "Girl

From Ipanema" carry on with all the components of that organ grinder sound, hanging just this side of Walt Wanderley but Charette seems well aware of those songs' reputations and not particularly concerned about liberating them from their populist history. When he slows the pace and lets the instrument resonate, there is an undeniable sweetness to his sound that goes beyond any cultural context. "Georgia" and "Body And Soul" take on a smooth, bluesy hum that shows off the instrument's relaxed capabilities while a blistering ride through "I Got Rhythm" showcases Charette's quick-fingered mastery of the instrument. The unexpected numbers however have a weight far more than one might think they are deserving of. Hall and Oates' "Sara Smile" gets a soulful slide while Bond theme "You Only Live Twice" plays with the multi-tasking aspects of the hulking keyboard for a soaring meditation. But it's the title track that takes the biggest cojones. There can't be that many straight-ahead jazz albums named after a Madonna song, so cheers to Charette for taking it there. The performance of "Borderline" works. The bouncy interaction between the bassline and melody are seamless, coupling recognition and disbelief in the same measure, while seemingly opening up a largely untapped musical corner for playful improvisation. —Sean J. O'Connell

Borderline: Windows; How Deep Is The Ocean; Body And Soul; Tico Tico; Sara Smile; Borderline; C Jam Blues; Up And Away; Corcovado; Georgia; Donna Lee; Girl From Ipanema; You Only Live Twice; I Got Rhythm; Spooky; Embraceable You (62:56)

Personnel: Brian Charette, Hammond B3.

Ordering info: steeplechase.dk

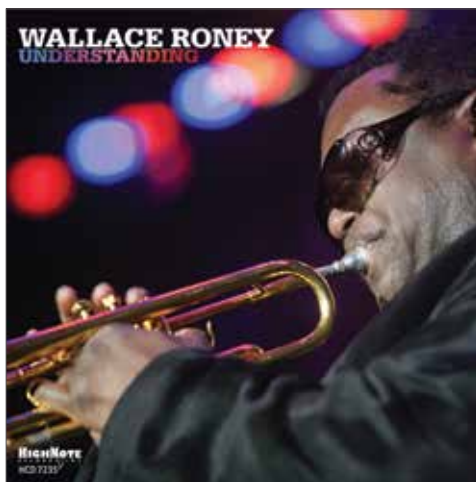
Wallace Roney *Understanding*

HIGHNOTE 7235

★★★★★

When it comes to consistency, Wallace Roney brings it. *Understanding* is yet another high-caliber release in the modern post-bop vein with the trumpeter leading almost an entire different, all acoustic ensemble from last year's outstanding disc, *Home*. He retains drummer Kush Abadey, who brings a thunderous excitability to the fore. But this time around, the trumpeter shares the frontline with two saxophonists: tenor Ben Solomon and alto Arnold Lee. They both yield robust tones, offering the ideal foil for Roney's sleek melodic improvisations. Eden Ladin and Victor Gould share the piano chair with Gould taking the lion's share, while Daryl Johns bolts the ensemble with solid yet sturdy bass lines.

Understanding finds Roney and company mostly exploring lesser-known gems. For instance, the title track is a mid-tempo jewel, penned by unsung drummer Roy Brooks. The song showcases Roney's increasingly rhythmic improvisations, which obscure the often-touted Miles Davis references, revealing other touchstones such as Woody Shaw's harmonic sense and Freddie Hubbard's crackling virtuosity. Solomon also radiates on "Understanding," fashioning a bright tenor sound as he uncoils a snaky improvisation atop of Abadey's jagged rhythms and Ladin's grace accompaniment.

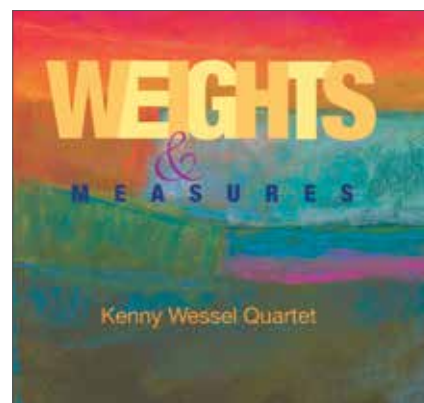


Roney also tips his hat to McCoy Tyner and Duke Pearson. Roney's reading of Pearson's gliding "Gaslight" is a delight, especially with Roney in between two fantastic saxophonists. The low-flame rendering of Tyner's ballad, "Search For Peace," is Roney at his finest as he coddles with melody, while Lee's piercing alto adds the right amount of intensity and intrigue. —John Murph

Understanding: Understanding; Is That So; Search For Peace; Gaslight; Red Lantern; Kotra; Combustible; You Taught My Heart To Sing. (58:54)

Personnel: Wallace Roney, trumpet; Arnold Lee, alto saxophone (2-7); Ben Solomon, tenor saxophone (except for 2); Eden Ladin, piano (1,4); Victor Gould, piano (2,3,5-8); Daryl Johns, bass; Kush Abadey, drums.

Ordering info: jazzdepot.com



Kenny Wessel Quartet *Weights & Measures*

NONOTONES 0101

★★★★★

Guitarist and Ornette Coleman protégé Kenny Wessel tackles provocative grooves and left-of-center ideas on his third recording as a leader. Playing a warm-toned electric throughout, Wessel opens with the second line flavored "Swamp Meyna," which has him repeating an angular, hypnotic line, eventually harmonizing it with a looping pedal, while tenor saxophonists Joel Frahm and Peck Allmond exchange fractured phrases. "Bahut Acha" opens in rubato fashion with Wessel dipping into some slippery, non-tempered phrasing. As the piece develops, it becomes anchored by bassist Brad Jones' deep-toned contrapuntal groove and fueled by Wollesen's loose-limbed bashing in 5/8 time. Wessel's solo here is lyrical and full of intuitive intervallic leaps. Frahm also turns in a heroic tenor solo and Wessel's fellow Coleman alumnus Jones adds a potent upright solo to the proceedings. The laid back title track, which is loosely based on the Jimi Hendrix version of "Hey Joe," has Wessel and Frahm in tight lock-step through the head as Wollesen grooves in understated fashion. The two kindred spirits further demonstrate their remarkable chemistry on the radiant guitar-sax duet, "Lullaby #2."

The quartet kicks up a storm on the surging, swinging "The Speed of the Bass," a feature for Frahm's powerful tenor and Wollesen's ferocious bashing. "Miniature" is a spacious free-jazz interlude for sax, guitar and drums while "Bone Dance" is a bit of dissonant avant-funk that contains some of the most outré moments on the album while also recalling Arthur Blythe's "Bush Baby." The collection closes with a spirited run through Coleman's "City Living," a great tune from the Prime Time repertoire. Wessel's take on it is faithful to a point, though more swinging than the furiously kinetic original, with the guitarist comping in syncopated pianistic fashion. —Bill Milkowski

Weights & Measures: Swamp Meyna; Bahut Acha; Weights and Measures; Lullaby #2; The Speed of the Bass; Miniature; Bone Dance; Lullaby #1; City Living. (50:00)

Personnel: Kenny Wessel, guitar; Joel Frahm, tenor sax; Brad Jones, acoustic bass; Kenny Wollesen, drums; Peck Allmond, tenor sax (track 1).

Ordering info: kenwessel.com

Mammoth Cash Box Paints Complex Portrait

Johnny Cash, circa 1960

The scope fits the subject. Johnny Cash was a complicated, monumental, generous, supremely gifted, God-fearing artist. All those qualities (and much more) are reflected in the 63-CD box set **Johnny Cash—The Complete Columbia Album Collection (Legacy 91047; ★★★★★)**.

The set spans from 1955 to 1990, encompassing all the albums Cash recorded for Columbia during his lifetime. In addition to 59 albums packaged in sleeves with the original LP artwork, there are two new compilations: one that features singles and guest appearances, and another that chronicles 28 songs from his pre-Columbia days, when he recorded at Sam Phillips' Sun Records.

The Sun sides—which include “Hey Porter,” “Wreck Of The Old 97” and “I Was There When It Happened”—not only feature the fretwork of legendary guitarist Luther Perkins, they introduce themes that Cash would revisit throughout his career: trains, prison, loneliness and gospel music.

Of all the thematic concerns the singer-songwriter explored during his diverse career, gospel music remained central and the most important.

Cash had wanted to record a gospel album at Sun, but Phillips was opposed to it. So when Cash arrived at Columbia, he soon recorded the cohesive, heartfelt *Hymns* (1959). This box set is rife with spiritual material, including the albums *Hymns From The Heart* (1962), *The Holy Land* (1968), *The Gospel Road* (1973) and *Johnny Cash Sings Precious Memories* (1975), as well as gospel songs that pop up in a variety of settings, such as “Peace In The Valley,” recorded with Carl Perkins and Jerry Lee Lewis, and included on a 1982 disc recorded live in Germany, *The Survivors*.

Just as is the case with Legacy's 73-CD box set *Tony Bennett: The Complete Collection*, this Cash box allows hard-core fans to dig deep into the artist's work. The 1964 single “Hammers And Nails,” for example, was recorded with The Statler Brothers, and it highlights the carefully calibrated, gospel-quartet style harmonies that prompted Cash to hire the vocal group for his stage show.

The set contains eight live albums, three Christmas discs, novelty cuts, soundtracks, patriotic songs, a children's CD, dozens of recitations (including “The Gettysburg Address” set to a gently picked acoustic guitar), civil-rights anthems, protest songs and love ballads, plus a 200-page discography booklet with an essay by Rich Kienzle.

Cash's concept albums—many recorded before the notion had fully bloomed in the rock realm—include *Ride This Train* (1960) and *Blood, Sweat And Tears* (1962), both focusing on American workers; *Bitter Tears: Ballads Of The American Indian* (1964); *Ballads Of The True West* (1965); the comedic *Everybody Loves A Nut* (1966) and *America: A 200-Year Salute In Story And Song* (1972).

Not everything Cash recorded was transcendent. Some of the production techniques—such as the pairing of sunny, female harmony vocalists with his rugged, rumbling baritone—have not aged particularly well. But diamonds abound here.

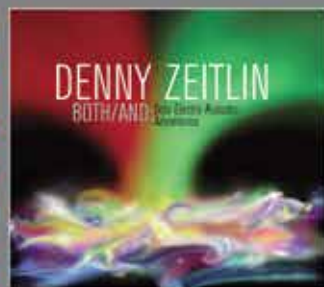
Empathy is the unbroken thread woven throughout Cash's oeuvre. Empathy for the killer is an undercurrent in his 1955 composition “Folsom Prison Blues.” And empathy is what Cash majestically conveyed when he sang it for inmates at that namesake institution on Jan. 13, 1968, during the recording of the spellbinding live album *Johnny Cash At Folsom Prison*.

That empathetic streak peaked on the title track to 1971's *Man In Black*, where Cash explains his preference for raven attire: “I wear the black for the poor and the beaten down, living in the hopeless, hungry side of town/ I wear it for the prisoner who has long paid for his crime but is there because he's a victim of the times.”

Empathy is also what made Cash a brilliant interpreter of other songwriters' material. Fans of progressive and alt-country could assemble their own mix of songs penned by Guy Clark, Rodney Crowell, Bob Dylan, Kris Kristofferson, John Prine, Billy Joe Shaver, Shel Silverstein and Tom T. Hall. That's pretty good company. **DB**

Ordering info: johnnycashonline.com

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SSC 1347 / in Stores July 16

Pianist/composer Denny Zeitlin has never been one to limit himself and his musical expression. In the late 1960s, he began to experiment with electronics as an expansion of his timbral range, as he wasn't satisfied with the limitations of the acoustic piano trio. Zeitlin's interest in electronics hasn't waned and he has recorded *Both/And* to embody his recent experiments with electronic instrumentation. It wasn't until the mid-1970s that Zeitlin would release any of his electronically enhanced music. His record *Expansion* and *Syzygy* featured the pianist along with an arsenal of electric keyboards, and synthesizers along a rhythm section, featuring percussionist George Marsh and either Mel Graves or Ratzo Harris on bass. Zeitlin effectively utilized elements of jazz, funk and avant-garde to make a handful of unique recordings. Ultimately, Zeitlin would score the 1978 remake of the film *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*, which was the grand culmination of incorporating electronic instruments with acoustic, including an orchestra of strings and winds. On *Both/And*, Zeitlin has recorded a collection of compositions that were created by overdubbing element upon element to make lushly arranged pieces of music featuring keyboards, woodwinds, percussion, etc. The only acoustic instrument appearing on the album is his Steinway grand piano.



iTunes.com/DennyZeitlin
www.legacyrecordings.com





Carn Davidson *Nine*

ADDO 14

★★★★½

Pursuing that piano-less terrain pioneered by baritone saxophonist Gerry Mulligan in the early 1950s, Tara Davidson (saxophones) and trombonist William Carn put their own stamp on the strain, arranging original material for their nine-piece chordless ensemble. The pair, both JUNO nominated artists, nudge the muse somewhere between chamber jazz and that equally renowned but loosely defined 1950s style, “crime jazz,” as composed by such notables as Henry Mancini, Quincy Jones, Elmer Bernstein and Lalo Schifrin.

Though it’s more implied than literal, there’s no denying the bold moves and urban atmospheres created by the Carn/Davidson group in opener “Battle Scars,” with its coolness and pensive, zigzagging tempos, the breezy Latin flourishes portrayed in “Out Of Necessity” (can you say, “Mannix?”), the cerebral, Bill Holman worthy brass spread of “Code Breaking,” and the super swinging mellow tones of “Time Flies,” which somehow pulls off the trick of making seven horns sound like 16. Carn/Davidson’s particular skill, beyond writing compelling material, is scoring, arranging and voicing horns to create the widest chordal possibilities (as in the lovely counterpoint of the Ellington-ish “Marni’s Way”), and doing so naturally, in the pocket, in the groove. Their artistry is not about pushing the envelope but maintaining tradition, and wonderfully so. Drummer Fabio Ragnelli comes from the Mel Lewis school of gentle persuasion; tenor saxophonist Kelly Jefferson lays down a pungent, warmhearted trail; Perry White’s bass clarinet plays humorous Don Quixote to the ensemble’s down-the-center approach. *Nine* satisfies. —Ken Micallef

Nine: Battle Scars; Out Of Necessity; South Western View; When You Least Expect It; Code Breaking; The Gift; June; Time Flies; Marni’s Way; Malice. (71:27)

Personnel: William Carn, trombone; Tara Davidson, alto, soprano saxophones; Kelly Jefferson, tenor saxophone, flute; Perry White, baritone saxophone, bass clarinet; Jason Logue, lead trumpet, flugelhorn; Kevin Turcotte, trumpet, flugelhorn; Terry Promane, trombone, bass bone, tuba; Andrew Downing, bass; Fabio Ragnelli, drums

Ordering info: williamcarn.com



Rob Mazurek Exploding Star Electro Acoustic Ensemble *The Space Between*

DELMARK 5007

★★★★

Cornetist Rob Mazurek defines the Buddhist concept of Indra’s Net as “a continuous reflection of, but always changing reality of, our universe and what is not seen or heard.” *The Space Between*, his collaboration with the dancer, choreographer, and video artist Marianne M. Kim, is about as abstract and intriguing as that idea, which guided the project. Brought to life with assistance from Mazurek’s Exploding Star Electro Acoustic Ensemble, the music is minimalist, foreboding and thrillingly disorienting.

Though divided into eight sections, *The Space Between* is essentially one long piece. From Guilherme Granado on sampler, Todd Carter on “sonic manipulation” and Matt Bauder, Damon Locks and Mazurek on electronics come backdrops including cloudy, swelling noise and sparkling, tinkling space-age sounds. Against those and other landscapes, Nicole Mitchell’s commanding flute growls, darts, jumps and searches. The leader’s cornet barks, screeches and emits long tones. Jeff Kowalkowski’s piano rumbles and asks questions. And the percussion provided by Carrie Biolo and Tortoise’s John Herndon rustles intermittently. From time to time, Locks coolly delivers lines like “the mountain has grown wings today,” “overnight, the burnt landscape turned green,” and “let me live in the minutes before the end begins again.” To his Exploding Stars, the leader has provided “written scores,” “hidden scores” and “video scores.” What are the latter two? Mauricio Takara contributes cavaquinho, a four-string guitar used to play samba, though it’s not clear where. Musically, *The Space Between* is a wild ride. —Brad Farberman

The Space Between: Vortex 1-5; We Are All One With The Moon And Planets; Only; The Shifting Sequence; Illumination Drone 17; Space Between; Seven Blues; Indra’s Net. (40:09)

Personnel: Rob Mazurek, electro acoustic composition, written scores, hidden scores, video scores, paintings, cornet, main electronics, text (1-2); Marianne M. Kim, video, choreography, dance; Todd Carter, live sound recording and sonic manipulation, recording and mixing engineer; Damon Locks, voice, electronics, text (3-8); Nicole Mitchell, flute; Matt Bauder, electronics; Jeff Kowalkowski, piano, electric piano; Carrie Biolo, percussion; Mauricio Takara, electric cavaquinho; Guilherme Granado, sampler; John Herndon, drums.

Ordering info: delmark.com

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Earl Hines Set Modern Path

The farther jazz moves on, the more its canon tends to edit itself, consolidate and narrow. Newer names crowd out old ones, exerting a telescope effect that inflates the present and compresses the past—an optical illusion of memory where lines of perspective distort relative influence. In recent decades the memory of Earl Hines has been playing Ginger Rodgers to Louis Armstrong's Fred Astaire—remembered as an appendage of his partner's "West End Blues" and "Weatherbird." His comeback in 1964 after two decades of obscurity restored his reputation as a major piano soloist. But what's been overlooked is that for 20 years Hines led an important big band that helped formulate many of the innovations that evolved into the "modern" swing orchestra. This is the main business of the **Classic Earl Hines Sessions: 1928-1945 (Mosaic 254; 74:58/77:13/59:52/67:39/71:08/67:06/77:18 ★★★★★½)**.

Like the handful of silent film actors who survived the conversion to sound, he straddled two ages. His band was one of the few born and molded in the twilight of antiquity that evolved into modernity. This was because Hines did not tether himself to a particular big band sound. His piano voice was his own, but with a familiar logic negotiable most anywhere. This gave his arrangers freedom to develop and move forward. Hines may have been his own principal soloist, but the band belonged to his arrangers.

Created in 1928 and moored for 12 years in Chicago's Grand Terrace ballroom, Hines' band backed floor shows, played dance sets, and wanted to be liked. He saw no dishonor in commercialism, so when the "artist" was away, the entertainer was eager to please with a Cinemascope grin and a voice that could scat like Armstrong or play the mumbling minstrel ("Have You Ever Felt That Way?"). The first of these CDs offers a typical hot dance band of the '20s, full of two-bar breaks, thin saxophone voicings and an arthritic two-beat, banjo-tuba rhythm section that trapped soloists (Hines included) in a vocabulary of quarter notes. Jazz was trying to swing but could muster only a frantic but staccato energy ("Sensation Mood").

The breakthrough came in 1932. After a two-and-a-half-year recording gap and a switch from Victor to Brunswick, we find a softer, more pliant rhythm section of hi-hat, guitar and often bass, though with a slap edge. Still, what a difference! Then in February 1933 Hines took on a fourth saxophone and smart arranger in the person of Jimmy Mundy, a student of Fletcher Henderson who gave Hines some of the early cornerstone works of the nescient swing era. His first chart, "Cavernism," shook off the Jazz Age cobwebs, enriched



Earl Hines

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the reeds and showed that the heart of swing was relaxation. Listen to Hines splash wildly over the keys at the end of the second take. The band originated many Mundy charts, two of which Mundy took with him to Benny Goodman in 1935: "Take It Easy" (a.k.a. "Swingtime In The Rockies") and "Madhouse." Hines plays them with surprising reserve, still clinging to a dimly audible tuba. Though not widely known to white audiences in the '30s, Hines was clearly a visionary figure.

After another two-year gap, the band emerged in 1937 with its first important horn soloist, Budd Johnson, a Texas tenor with latent Lester Young impulses and a gift for arranging. He would carry over into the more polished Victor years of 1939-45—the sonic upgrade from the Brunswicks is startling—when Hines finally found broad success and a matinee-idol singer in Billy Eckstine. The later Victors, including an unexpected small band date with Sidney Bechet and Rex Stewart, occupy half this box. The band never sounded sharper or more disciplined. Even Hines had slimmed his phrasing to a single-note swing style. He still led the double life of a successful leader, though, co-existing with the pop music business. So prepare yourself for those ballads and vocal trios.

By 1945 the formulas that seemed so fresh when Hines embraced them 12 years earlier were grown-up, comfortable and, alas, exhausted under their own familiarity. Hines would later recover his original primacy as a major soloist. But it's been nearly 40 years since the band has been reissued. And 70 years out, those old Mundy and Johnson charts sound wonderful.

DB

Ordering info: mosaicrecords.com

KRISTIN SLIPP
DOV MANSKI



A THOUSAND JULYS

KRISTIN SLIPP voice
DOV MANSKI piano, wurlitzer
SSC 1347 / In Stores July 16

Two musicians who have made it a goal to impart their love of classic jazz repertoire and the pursuit of an evocative sound and image are vocalist Kristin Slipp and pianist Dov Manski. The duo's new recording, *A Thousand Julys*, presents their unique take on compositions made famous in the golden age of vocal jazz recordings with an approach unlike that which has been heard previously.

Most importantly, they didn't want to fall into the typical jazz clichés and conventions presented through the ages: flamboyant vocal gestures, gushy arrangements, and over-sentimentality. Instead, they chose to treat these songs simply, letting the songs speak with unadorned, pop-like arrangements.

CHRIS
MORRISSEY



NORTH HERO

CHRIS MORRISSEY bass MICHAEL LEWIS tenor sax
AARON PARKS piano MARK GUILIANA drums

SSC 1332 / In Stores July 16

It may seem a grand gesture for bassist/composer Chris Morrissey to name his new recording *North Hero*. The title is striking and Morrissey is in earnest. Whether it is meant as a brazen self-portrait or an evocative handle to the lonely but hopeful music found inside is for you to decide. The eight ear-catching songs range from euphoric to heartbreaking and the versions that comprise *North Hero* are raw and inspired.



itunes.com/KristinSlipp
itunes.com/ChrisMorrissey
www.mosaicrecords.com



**Rempis
Percussion
Quartet
Phalanx**

AEROPHONIC 001
★★★★

**Wheelhouse
Boss Of The Plains**

AEROPHONIC 002
★★★★



Chicago-based saxophonist Dave Rempis is the latest musician to take the plunge and start his own record label. The first two releases on Aerophonic are both excellent albums by contrasting ensembles. Taken together, they effectively establish his current aesthetic concerns, good taste in accompanists and consummate musicianship.

Although Wheelhouse has been active since 2005, *Boss Of The Plains* is the trio's debut recording. It is also one of the instigators for Aerophonic's founding; after languishing in another label's hands for a couple years, Rempis took it back and decided to put it out himself. Originally the group performed compositions, but

by the time they recorded in 2010 they had dropped them in favor of free improvisation. This seems to be Rempis' preferred mode for generating material; of the seven going concerns listed on his website, only one, The Engines, uses written compositions. Wheelhouse's improvisations strike a balance between open-ended exploration and cogency; the musicians may be negotiating their path second-to-second, but they have sufficient mutual understanding to have a pretty good idea where the music will go. Without a drum kit and with Rempis restricting himself to alto and baritone saxes, it's evident that one

of the means of balancing this music is by frequency and pitch. The vibes are on top, and the bass, of course, on the bottom. Rempis spends a lot of time in the higher range of his horns, sketching shapes on the bottom of Adasiewicz's cloud shapes that spike lyricism with urgency. Another balancing point is velocity, with either McBride or Rempis swapping the responsibility to play long, patiently expressed parts that serve as foundations in the absence of a drum kit.

The Rempis Percussion Quartet is more thoroughly documented. *Phalanx*, which includes two complete concerts recorded in 2012, is the

group's sixth album overall, and the second since bassist Ingebrigt Håker Flaten joined and pushed the envelopes of what had been a well-established dynamic until the sides split. Previous bassist Anton Hatwich was superb at both grounding and propelling the group, so that Rempis' unfurling lines and the two drummers' waves of sound and rhythm surged with irresistible momentum. They can still do that on *Phalanx*, but they never stay in that mode for long. Håker Flaten is as likely to abandon the center and tangle with Rempis as he is to hold it. Paradoxically his more aggressive posture frees Daisy and Rosaly to play more gently, working more with more intricacy and space. The result transforms from within with gripping intensity. —Bill Meyer

Phalanx: Disc One: Algonquins; Cream City Stomp. (52:36) Disc Two: Anti-Goons; Croatalus Adamantooths. (74:59)

Personnel: Dave Rempis, alto, tenor, baritone saxophones; Ingebrigt Håker Flaten, bass; Tim Daisy, drums; Frank Rosaly, drums.

Boss Of The Plains: Song Sex Part 1; Song Hate; Song For; Song Juan; Song For Teens; Song Heaven; Song Fife; Song A-Team; Song Sex Part 2; Song Tree.

Personnel: Dave Rempis, alto, baritone saxophones; Jason Adasiewicz, vibraphone; Nate McBride, bass.

Ordering info: aerophonicrecords.com

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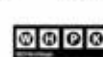
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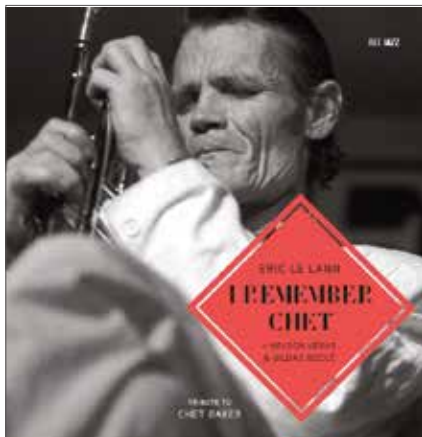
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Eric Le Lann
I Remember Chet

BEE JAZZ 057
★★★★

Eliane Elias
I Thought About You: A Tribute To Chet Baker

CONCORD JAZZ 34191-02
★★★

When taken together, these new releases by trumpeter Eric Le Lann and pianist-singer Eliane Elias paint a full picture of trumpeter Chet Baker. Elias focuses on the vocal aspects of Baker's work, trying to match his sensitive delivery, with Le Lann offering a stunning instrumental tribute that is both vulnerable and powerful.

There is no "My Funny Valentine" in Le Lann's world, which seems to focus on the grittier, fragile aspects of Baker's performances, Le Lann's brittle, cracking trumpet playing paying tribute to the late Baker's technique. In the liner notes, Le Lann talks of meeting Baker for the first time, during one of his final concerts, a performance at the New Morning club in Paris during which Baker played a disappointing set. The emotion Le Lann found during his short time with Baker carries over to *I Remember Chet*, his excellent record of standards associated with different points in Baker's career. Le Lann excels at the instrumental tunes, but he also handles vocal tunes wonderfully, singing out melodies through his trumpet, accompanied only by bassist Gildas Bocle and guitarist Nelson Veras.

On Elias' *I Thought About You*, a breezy, light rundown of 15 standards associated with Baker, vocals are front and center. The singer's strong, lightly accented voice suits her small combo well on a variety of tunes, but she excels on Latin-tinged readings of "There Will Never Be Another You" and "Embraceable You." Though her songs tend toward ballad fare, she isn't maudlin or cloying in her readings, imbuing the tunes with just enough emotion; however, she closely toes the fine line between emotional and sappy on "I Get Along Without You Very Well" and a few other songs.

While her vocals are the main event, her excellent sidemen help shape each tune with small solos. Trumpeter Randy Brecker weaves

a succinct, simple introduction to "That Old Feeling" before stretching out a little more in the solo section. Elias' bluesy piano solos, which appear on nearly every tune, appear full and rich, sitting as perfect interpretations. Though her improvisations verge on the formulaic, they are exactly what her tributes call for. One of the best tunes here is "Just in Time," which begins with a rousing piano intro before moving into a double-time verse, Elias only accompanied by guitar chords and a blistering walking pattern on Marc Johnson's bass. The quicker tempo fits her delivery, which lies in the middle of her range, perfectly, her voice shining in the exposed space

with stripped down instruments. —Jon Ross

I Remember Chet: For Minors Only, If I Should Care, The More I See You, I am a Fool to Want You, Summertime, The Touch of your Lips, Milestones, Zingaro, Love for Sale, Angel Eyes, Backtime. (56:36)

Personnel: Eric Le Lann, trumpet; Nelson Veras, guitar; Gildas Bocle, bass.

Ordering info: beejazz.com

I Thought About You: I Thought About You, There Will Never Be Another You, This Can't Be Love, Embraceable You, That Old Feeling, Everything Depends on You, I've Never Been in Love Before, Let's Get Lost, You Don't Know What Love Is, Blue Room, Just Friends, Girl Talk, Just in Time, I Get Along Without You Very Well. (54:42)

Personnel: Eliane Elias, vocals, piano; Marc Johnson, bass; Steve Cardenas, Oscar Castro-Neves, guitar; Victor Lewis, Rafael Barata, drums; Marivaldo Dos Santos, percussion.

Ordering info: concordmusicgroup.com

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*(Margasak, Down Beat, March 2013.
Margasak is also citing two different 2012 Anderskov albums "superb" "Granular Alchemy" with Agnostic Revelations, and "Phone Book" by Tivard/Anderskov - both out on ILK, and available at iTunes etc.)*

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Steve Kuhn *The Vanguard Date*

SUNNYSIDE 1350

★★★★½

Enrico Pieranunzi *Live At The Village Vanguard*

CAM JAZZ 5047

★★★★½

Two veteran jazz pianists, two exceptional jazz trio recordings, both recorded at New York's hallowed Village Vanguard.

Steve Kuhn's *The Vanguard Date* documents the prolific pianist's mid-'80s years with his telepathic and expressive trio of bassist Ron Carter and drummer Al Foster (who has never sounded better in a straight-ahead setting). To say *The Vanguard Date* is a monster of a recording would be a criminal understatement.

This trio inhabits a special groove whether it's Tadd Dameron's barnstormer "Superjet," Jimmy Van Heusen's Sinatra-personified "I Thought About You" (in swooning ballad mode) or Kuhn's own "Clotilde," a serene samba whose performance is magical and inspired, the pianist's notes divine. As with every track here, Kuhn imbues his performance with a personality that is equal parts harmonic weight, light-as-air gracefulness and sublime melodies that flow from his every improvisation. (The single-note solo section of "Clotilde" is the quintessence of "more is less," a grand, simple statement of pianistic eloquence).

Enrico Pieranunzi, a more classically traditional jazz pianist than the cerebral, flowing Kuhn, relies on his trio in a different way, and if Paul



Motian was your drummer, you would, too. As Motian charges and bassist Marc Johnson complies on this 2010 recording, Pieranunzi rides the prevailing winds like a wizened sea captain. Even from the first track, "I Mean You," it's clear Motian is also helming this ship. His every agitated rhythm, snare jab and ride cymbal glance make a special music all its own, to which Pieranunzi is both attendant and reveler.

—Ken Micallef

The Vanguard Date: Clotilde; Superjet; Little Waltz; The Zoo; I Thought About You; Music Prayer For Peace; Dance Only With Me; Lullaby. (53:02)

Personnel: Steve Kuhn, piano; Ron Carter, bass; Al Foster, drums.
Ordering info: sunnysiderecords.com

Live At The Village Vanguard: I Mean You; Tales From The Unexpected; Pensive Fragments; My Funny Valentine; Fellini's Waltz; Subconscious Lee; Unless They Love You; La Dolce Vita. (57:52)

Personnel: Enrico Pieranunzi, piano; Marc Johnson, bass; Paul Motian, drums.

Ordering info: camjazz.com

Matt Holman's Diversion Ensemble *When Flooded*

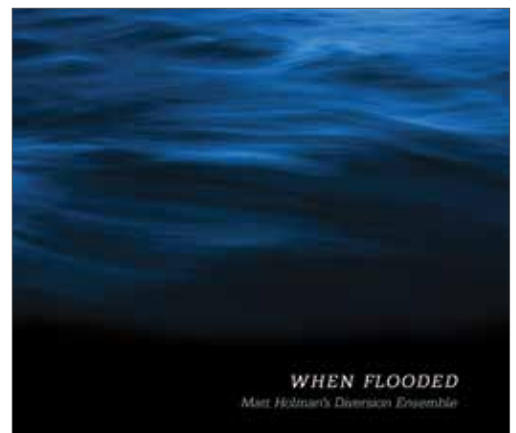
BROOKLYN JAZZ UNDERGROUND RECORDS 036

★★★★

Trumpeter Matt Holman's Diversion Ensemble is rounded out by clarinetist Mike McGinnis, cellist Christopher Hoffman, guitarist Nate Radley and drummer Ziv Ravitz. It's an unusual instrumentation that raises questions: How will the quintet function without a bassist? Does clarinet and cello mean this is a chamber album?

Those worries go straight out the window once the lush, gorgeous sounds of *When Flooded* start to play. On the ominous "Earworm," McGinnis' earthy clarinet and the leader's piercing trumpet form a tense, snaking two-headed head. On "Kindred Spirits," Hoffman's meditative cello snaps into deep, rubbery bassline mode once the piece begins in earnest. And on "Chain Of Command," when Ravitz's drums are at their wildest, you can hear Hoffman's firm, rugged cello pedal loud and clear, even as a three-way improv conversation shared by guitar, clarinet and trumpet rages in the forefront.

Is *When Flooded* a chamber album? Often it is. But not on the title track when Holman and McGinnis unleash jagged improvised lines and



a winding melody over what sounds like power chords. And not on "Tandem" when Hoffman digs into a soulful solo over spidery indie-rock guitar riffing, clarinet-and-trumpet backgrounds and Ravitz's funky brushwork. And not during the cacophonous free-jazz moment at the end of "Chain Of Command."

—Brad Farberman

When Flooded: Kindred Spirits; Tutti; When Flooded; Chain Of Command; Tandem; Earworm; Between; Where The Tracks End; Syndrome. (56:24)

Personnel: Matt Holman, trumpet; Mike McGinnis, clarinet, bass clarinet; Christopher Hoffman, cello; Nate Radley, guitar; Ziv Ravitz, drums, percussion.

Ordering info: bjurecords.com

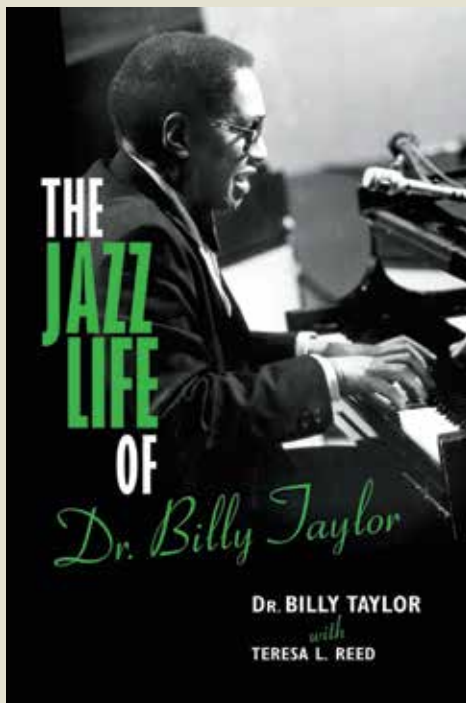
Musician, Teacher Billy Taylor Exemplified Class

The ebullient pianist, composer, educator and author Dr. Billy Taylor almost single-handedly made jazz a thriving educational discipline, and presented it in the media with clarity and dignity—all of which comes across in the pages of *The Jazz Life Of Dr. Billy Taylor* (Indiana University Press). The North-Carolina-born, Washington, D.C.,-bred Taylor was a poetic and propulsive musician who recorded more than 60 recordings as a leader, who, before the term “multi-tasking” was invented, launched groundbreaking, pioneering parallel careers as an Emmy and Peabody winning radio broadcaster, variety show musical director and TV correspondent.

He was also an acclaimed author of nine books, including *Billy Taylor's Taylor Made Piano*, and was a tireless spokesman, who coined the phrase “jazz is America's classical music.” This concise and compelling autobiography was co-written with Teresa Reed, director of the School of Music at the University of Tulsa. She began working with Taylor in 2006 and continued her work after his passing in 2010 at 89.

The most illuminating passages deal with Taylor's early life. Those looking for a clichéd, dark ghetto tale of black poverty and suffering in Taylor's reminiscences of growing up in the nation's capital in the 1920s and '30s will not find it here. Instead, Taylor—the son of a dentist and homemaker—proudly describes the D.C. middle-class enclave he grew up in that produced a segregated yet thriving African-American businesses, art venues, and role models in an age where “there was an equally significant artistic and cultural movement among our people that echoed the well-known achievements of the Harlem Renaissance.” That refinement was evident in Taylor's Dunbar High School, one of the greatest black high schools in the country, which boasted teachers like historian Carter G. Woodson and Taylor's piano teacher Henry Grant, who encouraged Taylor to “listen to Debussy etudes and [former pupil] Duke Ellington together so we could compare the similarities between their use of harmony.”

Teachers and mentors occupy a special place in Taylor's heart, from his piano-playing Uncle Bob to Undine Smith Moore, the classical pianist/composer who urged Taylor to drop his sociology major at Virginia State to music. He graduated in 1942, and headed to New York a year later. There he jammed at Minton's Playhouse, secured several prestige-building gigs with Eddie South, Don



Redman, Ben Webster and Cozy Cole, and became the house pianist at Birdland from 1949 to 1951. It was during this period that Taylor penned his first book, *Billy Taylor's Basic Bebop Instruction*, where jazz education entered his life, which also included his wife, Theodora, and later his children Duane and Kim. “Those early opportunities to speak and write about jazz foreshadowed things to come,” he writes.

In the ensuing decades, Taylor would record a number of excellent recordings, including *My Fair Lady Loves Jazz* and *It's A Matter Of Pride* and even penned a soul-jazz standard, “I Wish I Knew How It Would Feel To Be Free.” His profile as an educator and broadcaster also grew, as evidenced by his history-making stints as a disk jockey and program director on New York's WNEW and WLIB radio stations. He also gave back as an educator through his role in co-creating Jazzmobile, the Harlem-based mobile performance venue that provided free jazz concerts and lessons to inner city youth. Taylor broke ground as musical director of “The David Frost Show,” being the first African-American in that position, hosted National Public Radio's “Jazz Alive,” and served as a cultural correspondent for “CBS Sunday Morning.”

Though Taylor, who earned his doctoral degree at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst in 1975, approached his role as jazz educator, ambassador and spokesman with verve, the book makes clear that his pianism, an astonishing, technically impressive amalgam that spans all of the eras of jazz, was overlooked as a result. Still, Taylor did not mind so much—as he writes, “At the time, I knew that my involvement in these various efforts took away the precious hours that I would have liked to spend writing songs and playing the piano. Looking back, however, I have no regrets.” **DB**

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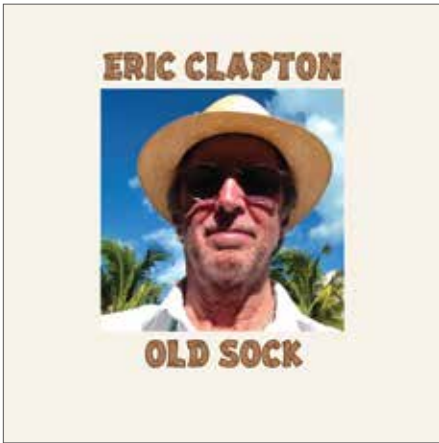
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Eric Clapton
Old Sock

SURFDOG 18015
★½

It ought to be enough to note that, as this disc was playing on my office stereo, a colleague walked by and, pausing at the door, said, “Jimmy Buffett?”

But why stop there? Eric Clapton is a hard-shelled veteran. The man has survived three separate inductions into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. He is a Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire—and that is among the lesser of His epithets. The Grammy count stands at 17. He’s darn near 70 years old, and he can do what he wants, with whomever he wants.

So that, apparently, is what he did. More power to him. On this recording with him are Taj Mahal, J.J. Cale, Chaka Khan, Steve Winwood, Sir Paul McCartney, a gaggle of competent players, and even his young daughters. No one on the list is used to noteworthy musical effect, but I’ll bet it made for a heck of a garden party.

The recording sessions—done in Los Angeles when, as he put it in a promo video, he “had two weeks to kill”—produced covers of 10 of Slow Hand’s old favorites, and two new tunes written by guitarist Doyle Bramhall. One of those, “Gotta Get Over,” has a few tasty licks and sounds something like the radio-friendly Clapton of recent seasons. McCartney drops by to provide some vocals on an old-timey “All Of Me,” and the pair harmonize nicely. But high points are few and far between. “The Folks Who Live On The Hill”—a sweet, deceptively tricky Kern and Hammerstein ballad, recorded by Frank Sinatra, Peggy Lee, Sarah Vaughan and everyone else—receives a plunky, plodding treatment. “Your One and Only Man,” a lesser-known Otis Redding gem, gets a goofy faux-reggae run-through. Peter Tosh’s “Till Your Well Runs Dry” is similarly sanitized.

Chill out, mon, you may be thinking. Clapton’s Crossroads Centre for addicts, down in Antigua—it saves lives. Surely we can come to some agreement with the veteran, as he sings on the opening cut, “Further On Down The Road”: “If we get down and things get sad/ We can cheer up each other/ And grin ‘cuz things just ain’t that bad.” We could, indeed. But we’d be wrong. —David Zivan

Old Sock: Further On Down The Road; Angel; The Folks Who Live On The Hill; Gotta Get Over; Till Your Well Runs Dry; All Of Me; Born To Lose; Still Got The Blues; Goodnight Irene; Your One And Only Man; Every Little Thing; Our Love Is Here To Stay. (54:00)

Personnel: Eric Clapton, vocals, electric guitar, acoustic guitar, 12-string guitar, dobro, mandolin; Doyle Bramhall II, electric guitar, acoustic guitar, slide guitar, mandolin, backing vocals; Willie Weeks, bass, upright bass; Steve Gadd, drums; Walt Richmond, upright piano, keyboards; Greg Leisz, pedal steel, mandolin; Chris Stainton, clavinet, Fender Rhodes, Wuritzer, Hammond B3 organ; Taj Mahal, harmonica, banjo (1); Jim Keltner, drums; Steve Winwood, Hammond B3 organ (8); J.J. Cale, vocals, electric guitar (2); Paul McCartney, upright bass, vocals (6); Abe Laboriel, Jr., drums; Tim Carmon, Hammond B3 organ, chord organ; Henry Spinetti, drums; Justin Stanley, clavinet, mellotron, drums; Matt Chamberlain, drums; Matt Rollings, keyboards; Simon Climie, percussion, piano; Frank Marocco, accordion; Gabe Witcher, fiddle; Stephen “Doc” Kupka, baritone sax; Joseph Sublett, tenor sax; Nicholas Lane, trombone; Sal Cracchiolo, trumpet; Sharon White and Michelle John, background vocals; Chaka Khan (4), Julie Clapton, Ella Clapton, Sophie Clapton, Nikka Costa, Wendy Moten, Lisa Vaughn, vocals.

Ordering info: surfdog.com



Frank Rosaly
Cicada Music

DELMARK 6006
★★★★

Any suggestion that the clarinet has lost ground in contemporary jazz gets its latest refute from Frank Rosaly, who as a drummer might seem like an unlikely champion for the instrument. But with *Cicada Music* he makes a persuasive case for its continued vitality, as well as its versatility. Drawn to the sound of woody timbres bathing in the warm glow of the vibraphone, the Chicago-based Rosaly tapped three clarinetists—James Falzone (alto), Keefe Jackson (bass and contrabass), and Jason Stein (bass)—to fill out a sextet anchored by vibraphonist Jason Adasiewicz, who also contributed arrangements for Rosaly’s original music.

The album marks Rosaly’s first as a leader following a handful of strong solo recordings and countless other appearances, and grew out of soundtrack work for a documentary about scrap-metal collectors. Textured remnants from his score are woven throughout the disc on percussive interludes like the ominously buzzing “Bed Bugs,” but Rosaly’s band has since taken on a life of its own. *Cicada Music* serves mostly as a showcase for the unique tonal palette of his collaborators, a group of improvisers who are well acquainted (no surprise given Chicago’s tight-knit scene) yet still driven by curiosity.

A vivid, abstract dialogue winds through “Wet Feet Splashing” with clarinets pecking and chirping at one another before converging on a hard swinging eighth note ostinato that’s as thrilling as it is short-lived. “Typophile/Apples” opens with overlapping layers of free exploration that recede as bassist Jason Roebke pivots to a series of graceful and propulsive motifs, complementing linear melodies and unusual voicings. As a drummer, Rosaly has proven time and again that he’s a gifted colorist but here he reveals himself to be a talented composer as well.

—Areif Sless-Kitain

Cicada Music: The Dark; Wet Feet Splashing; Yards; Babies; Adrian; Driven; Tragically Positive; Bedbugs; Typophile/Apples; Credits. (52:34)

Personnel: Frank Rosaly, drums, percussion, piano, electronics; James Falzone, clarinet; Jason Stein, bass clarinet; Keefe Jackson, tenor saxophone, bass clarinet, contrabass clarinet; Jason Adasiewicz, vibraphone; Jason Roebke, bass, cracklebox.

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Mike Pride *Birthing Days*

AUM FIDELITY 077

★★★★

Mike Pride *Drummer's Corpse*

AUM FIDELITY 078

★★★★

Multifaceted drummer and mercurial composer Mike Pride's oddly engaging modern quartet From Bacteria To Boys blends avant garde and edgy rock along with touches of r&b and intricate classical motifs on *Birthing Days*, the group's second release.

A suite of tunes written in a flow of inspiration following the birth of his first child, it opens with the explosive free piece "79 Beatdowns Of Infinite Justice, The," with Jon Irabagon on tenor in full-blown latter-day John Coltrane mode and Alexis Marcelo playing Sun Ra-esque lines on a purposefully cheesy-sounding synth. While this piece builds to some cathartic peaks on the back of Irabagon's unbridled wailing along with Pride's savage traversing of the kit and Marcelo's wild synth excursions, there is a clear structural integrity that kicks into place in the last half of the tune.

The quirky title track, with Irabagon on alto and Jason Stein contributing bass clarinet parts, deftly shifts from harmolodic grooving to intricate counterpoint to catchy '70s r&b motifs, underscored by Marcelo's funky clavinet work. Stein also offers a virtuosic bass clarinet solo on this well-constructed, odd-metered opus that sounds like it could've been composed by a committee consisting of Ornette Coleman, Ronnie Laws and Eric Dolphy.

"Marcel's Hat" is a pensive free interlude with Pride on glockenspiel, Peter Bitenc bowing his upright, Marcelo on piano and Irabagon on alto. "Brestwerp" is a straight-up midtempo swing number fueled by Bitenc's big-toned bass walking and Pride's loose, highly interactive pulse on the kit, while the beguiling "Lullaby For Charlie" carries the lyrical and luminous quality of Coltrane's "Central Park West." By contrast to that reflective number, underscored by Pride's sensitive brushwork, "CLAP" is a dense, dissonant blast of collective improvisation. More flavors come into the picture on the up-tempo hard-boppish romp "Fuller," which has some fiery exchanges between Irabagon on alto and Jonathan Moritz on tenor and also features an extended drum solo by Pride.

"Occupied Man," Pride's answer to Ornette Coleman's "Lonely Woman," opens with an extended drum solo. As the band enters, the piece morphs abruptly from peaceful rubato to jarring staccato. The emotionally charged closer, "Motiaon," was written on the evening that Paul Motian passed away. With Pride on brushes, underscoring the plaintive melody with a firm but unpredictable touch, it's the perfect ode to an important forefather.

The clever title *Drummer's Corpse* (a play on drummer's corps) is the first indication that Pride is operating in subversive waters on this powerfully cathartic experimental project. The 33-minute title track is a maelstrom of percussive bashing by a battery of fellow drummers and kindred spirits over a grinding machine-like drone. The intensity level and



darkly mesmerizing quality here is reminiscent of such pioneering noise works as Glenn Branca's epic guitar army piece, *Symphony No. 1* or Lou Reed's *Metal Machine Music*.

The 26-minute "Some Will Die Animals" is sedate by comparison, with Pride's sparsely coloristic drumming underscoring the koto-like avant extrapolations of guitarist Chris Welcome and the droning arco work of bassist Eivind Opsvik. The intensity level picks up as the three improvisers interact with multi-layered simultaneous recitations by Marissa Perel, Yuko Tono-hira and Fritz Welch. Strictly for adventurous

listeners and punks of all ages. —Bill Milkowski

Birthing Days: 79 Beatdowns Of Infinite Justice, The; Birthing Days; Marcel's Hat; Brestwerp; Lullaby For Charlie; CLAP; Fuller Place; Pass The Zone; Occupied Man; Motiaon. (61:32)

Personnel: Jon Irabagon, alto sax, tenor sax; Alex Marcelo piano, synthesizer; Peter Bitenc, double bass; Mike Pride, drums, percussion, glockenspiel; Jonathan Moritz, tenor sax (6, 7); Jason Stein, bass clarinet (2, 6).

Drummer's Corpse: Drummer's Corpse; Some Will Die Animals. (59:00)

Personnel: Oran Canfield, Russell Greenberg, John McLellan, Bobby Previte, Ches Smith, Tyshawn Sorey, drums (1); Marissa Perel, vocals, Fritz Welch, vocals, percussion (1, 2); Chris Welcome, guitar (1, 2); Eivind Opsvik, double bass (2); Yuko Tono-hira, recitation (2); Mike Pride, drums, organ, vocal, percussion, gongs, nose flute, recitation (1, 2).

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Afro-Peruvian Jazz: A Journey of Discovery



**THE GABRIEL ALEGRÍA
AFRO-PERUVIAN SEXTET:**
Laura Andrea Leguía (left), Gabriel Alegría,
Freddy "Huevito" Lobatón, Yuri Juárez,
Shirazette Tinnin and John Benitez

WHEN YOU THINK OF PERU, you may think of mountain ranges, Machu Picchu, pan flutes or other Andean traditions. But I want you to set aside these images for now. Think instead about the simple fact that black slaves first landed in Peru with the Spanish *conquistadores* in the 1500s. The Afro-descendant population of coastal Peru, living alongside the indigenous and Spanish population, primarily shaped what we now call Afro-Peruvian jazz music.

I have been hearing the Afro-Peruvian rhythms and musical conversations my entire life, but I know that for many this is a brand-new sound. The goal of this article is to help you begin your own journey of discovery into Afro-Peruvian jazz music, a journey that I hope will prove equally fulfilling to veteran artists, jazz educators, students and lovers of this music alike. To offer a point of entry into the world of Afro-Peruvian jazz, I reference specific tracks on The Gabriel Alegría Afro-Peruvian Sextet's latest album,

Ciudad de los Reyes (Saponegro), released Feb. 12.

Definition of Afro-Peruvian Jazz

Afro-Peruvian jazz music is the natural and seamless fusion of black American music (known as jazz) with the black musical traditions of coastal Peru (commonly referred to as Afro-Peruvian or *criollo* music). Elements taken from each musical tradition are reinterpreted together as one. The resulting vocabulary provides an aesthetic and musical attitude that is uniquely Peruvian and American.

Historical Implications

Peru's capital city, Lima, was founded in 1535 by the Spanish conquistador Francisco Pizarro. Under Spanish slavery models, cultural indoctrination and "inclusion" of black slaves in religious, cultural and musical activities was commonplace. Peruvian independence was proclaimed in 1821 and abolition of slavery in 1854. Within and throughout these power-

ful events, the musical traditions of coastal Peru became a syncretic art form. Today, the music is not African, Indigenous or European; it is simply Afro-Peruvian (or *criollo*) music.

Instrumentation

Here is a list of key instruments for your Afro-Peruvian sound arsenal.

The *cajón*. According to master percussionist Freddy "Huevito" Lobatón, "The cajón is the starting point to understand the soul of Afro-Peruvian music." This is the most important instrument in Afro-Peruvian jazz music. It is a simple, rectangular box made of wood, which the player strikes with the palms of the hands while seated on it. Listen to the variety of sounds created by the cajón solo on "El Primer Final" (track 12, 4:30). The true Peruvian cajón does not have resonators (but the latter Spanish adaptation does).

The *cajita*. In colonial times in Peru, church collection boxes doubled as instruments. Today, the *cajita* is a trapezoidal box made of wood with a hinged lid. It is hung around

the player's neck and played with a small wooden mallet. A good example of the higher-pitched sound is at the very beginning of "La Puertecita" (track 1).

The *quijada de burro*. Literally, the jaw-bone of an ass. Stemming from Africa, Huevito adds that "the Peruvian version of the quijada de burro is used not only as a rattle but also as a virtuosic percussion instrument played in the manner of a *guiro*." A good example is on "El Primer Final" (track 12, 4:19).

Acoustic *criollo* guitar. A nylon-string guitar is an indispensable sound in Afro-Peruvian jazz music. "The fingerpicking style of coastal Peru is idiosyncratic, colorful and entirely unique," says Afro-Peruvian guitarist Yuri Juárez. "Its contribution to the music cannot be overstated and should be nurtured carefully in any Afro-Peruvian jazz ensemble." Listen to Juárez's guitar work on "Tarde o Temprano" (track 3, 1:29).

Hugo Alcázar, the creator of the language of the Afro-Peruvian jazz drum set, adds the following:

“Drummers should focus on learning the patterns of each percussion instrument (cajita, cajón and quijada) as they practice them on the drum kit. It is very important to understand the accentuation of the patterns as well as the rhythms.” Alcázar’s drum solo on “Capicua” (track 5, 1:52) uses various accentuations interchangeably, all taken from percussion instrument patterns.

Latin Jazz Differences

Latin American jazz music has distinctly different sounds, grooves and instrumentation depending on the country of origin. I’d like to mention some examples of what makes Afro-Peruvian jazz music unique and different from any other form of Latin American jazz music.

The instrumentation in Afro-Peruvian jazz music is based on wooden or bone percussion instruments such as the cajón, cajita and quijada de burro.

Rhythmic patterns are not layered as in other traditions. For example, there is no central clave in Afro-Peruvian music. Check out “Carrousel de Luces” (track 2) and notice how Huevito’s cajón comes in and out of the drumming provided by Shirazette Tinnin.

Rhythmic patterns played on instruments such as the cajón, quijada and cajita are actually guidelines for improvised accompaniment, not set patterns.

The accentuation of phrasing in Afro-Peruvian music is continuously on the upbeats, rather than the downbeats. This gives the music a constant sense of urgency at fast tempos and elasticity at slow tempos.

Bassist John Benitez adds that “most every genre in Afro-Peruvian music is in 12/8 time, due to an elongated bass line underlying most grooves. This is quite different than the 6/8 Afro-Cuban or duple time Brazilian grooves players are familiar with.” The fast *festejo* pattern can be heard on tracks 1 (“La Puertecita”), 5 (“Capicua”), 7 (“Caras II”) and 12 (“El Primer Final”). The slower *landó* and *tondero* patterns can be heard on tracks 3 (“Tarde o Temprano”) and 8 (“A Lima Llegó el Tondero”), respectively. All of these grooves are in 12/8. The Peruvian waltz known as *valse* (written in 3/4 but often felt in 12/8) can be heard on tracks 6 (“Junio y Garua”) and 11 (“La Princesa Voladora”).

Attitude

Every groove in Afro-Peruvian jazz music evolves from a dance. Therefore, the execution is about transmitting energy at all times. *Guapeo* is the name of the shouts and calls of encouragement heard throughout Afro-Peruvian music. According to Huevito, “They are not optional but a necessary part of conveying the energy and spirit of Afro-Peruvian music.” Adds American drummer Shirazette Tinnin, “In the jazz context, *guapeo* seems to link to the church, as understood by the African-American experience.”

Jazz Elements

Several elements that come from the American jazz tradition are vital to our music:

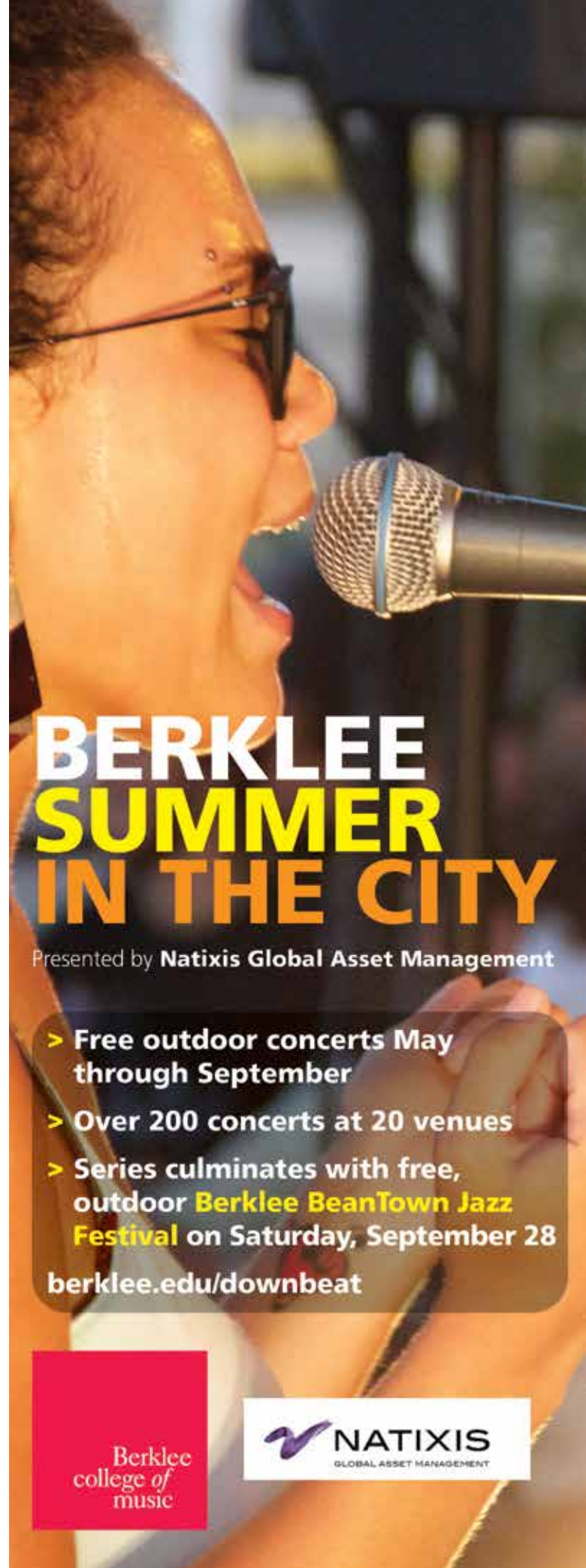
The presence and sensibility of the blues. Notice how the minor *tondero* pattern is fused with a minor blues sequence on track 9, “A Lima Llegó el Tondero.” The experience of the *tondero* is brought to life by the sensibility of the blues.

A sense of functional harmony. Afro-Peruvian jazz music uses functional harmony where a sense of direction is created by the relationships between chords around a key center.

The importance of improvisation. Saxophonist and composer Laura Andrea Leguía observes that “since most grooves in Afro-Peruvian music are in 12/8 time and accentuation of phrase occurs on upbeats, usual vocabulary (such as bebop scales, diminished scales, etc.) needs to be realigned rhythmically, giving players many new avenues for artistic expression.” Leguía’s own playing is based on what she calls “diatonic transposition.”

The time-honored tradition of swinging is most important to Afro-Peruvian jazz music. “It don’t mean a thing if it ain’t got that swing!” said Duke Ellington. If they could have met, Don Pepe Villalobos Caverro might have answered, “Guitarra, cajón y olla, es la música criolla!” **DB**

Trumpeter and flugelhornist Dr. Gabriel Alegría has been at the forefront of the Afro-Peruvian jazz music movement since 2005. Alegría has led more than 600 concerts, master classes and clinics throughout the United States, Europe and Peru, including the groundbreaking Tour Perú model. His Webby Award-winning website is gabrielalegria.com. Alegría is currently a professor of jazz music at New York University.



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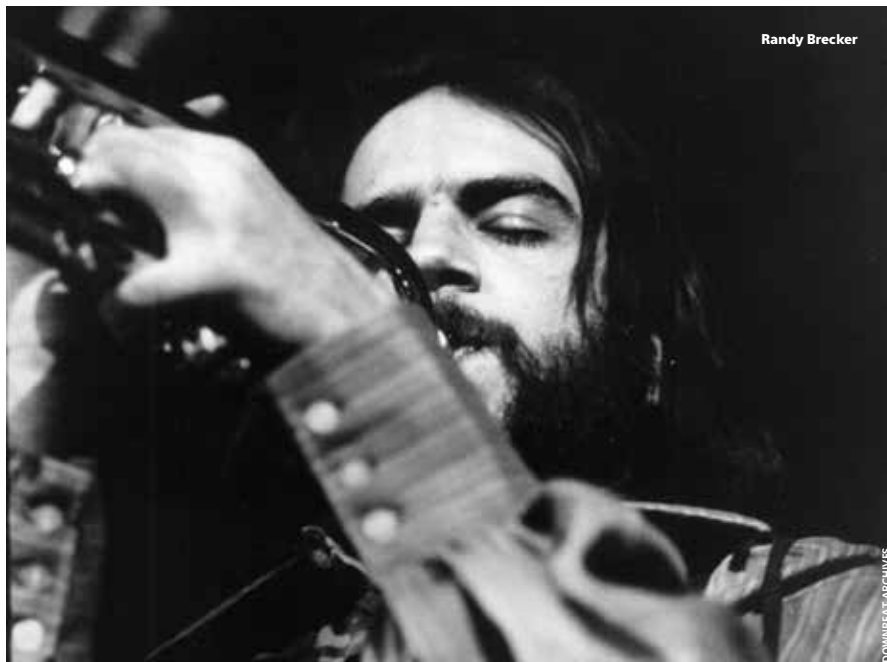
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Randy Brecker

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Randy Brecker's Trading-8s Trumpet Solos on 'Sponge'

HEAVY METAL BE-BOP (ARISTA), THE CLASSIC Brecker Brothers live album from 1978, features fine playing and great compositions from trumpeter Randy Brecker. For his song "Sponge," Brecker changed the middle section from what had appeared on the original studio version (from the 1975 album *The Brecker Bros.*)—allowing him, saxophonist Michael Brecker and guitarist Barry Finnerty to trade eight-bar sections. It's a simple three-chord pattern in F minor, starting on the root, going to the $\flat VI$ on the way to the V chord and leading back to the I for the next soloist.

Each of the soloists makes a point of ramping up the energy with each eight, egging each other on to an exhilarating crescendo. Randy takes the first round, and it's the sparsest of his solos. He plays with a swung 16th-note feel, and 16th-note triplets are the densest rhythm he plays here. But in his remaining solos, we find strings of 32nds, bringing the rhythmic energy to new heights. This is especially evident in his final chorus, which is nearly filled with 32nd-note runs, producing his most rhythmically dense statement.

Brecker uses more than just rhythmic intensity to heighten the energy. He employs other techniques, including a harmonizer effect that adds a fifth to each of his pitches. For the second, third and fourth choruses, he starts and concludes with this effect, but turns it off in the middle. The length of time that he disables the harmonizer increases with each chorus, start-

ing with a little more than a measure in the second (bars 14–15), two-and-a-half measures in the third (24–26) and about five bars in the final chorus (32–36).

He also uses a wah-wah effect—not the conventional mute wah-wah associated with trumpet, but the electronic one more common in blues and rock guitar.

Another intriguing aspect of Brecker's choruses is how they spill over into other choruses. In every instance, his lines trail a beat or two into the next eight, and for the third and fourth chorus he starts about a half-beat early, overlapping the guitar solo.

Brecker also builds and dissipates tension through the use of chromatics. One curious choice is the A natural. The composition is in F minor, and Brecker does a lot of playing within the F minor scale. So A natural, the major third, is one of the most "out" notes you could play. In the first two choruses, Brecker softens this by using the A as a passing tone between $A\flat$ and $B\flat$ (measures 4, 7, 11 and 18). One very clever technique of incorporating this pitch is heard in measures 4 and 7: rhythmic displacement. Brecker plays the same lick, but in measure 4 he starts it in beat two, while in bar 7 he moves it over a quarter note, beginning on beat three.

So far, Brecker hasn't given the A more duration than a 16th note, so the ear never gets a chance to really hear it as a dissonance. In his third chorus, however, Brecker starts creating

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more tension by emphasizing the A natural, and he does this right in the first measure, leaning on the A on beat four (and not using it to connect to a B \flat). He revisits this idea of pushing the A \flat up to A twice more, in measures 22 and 24. This certainly adds quite a bit of tense energy to this cho-

rus, which is dissipated in the final chorus, where Brecker goes back to using the A as a passing tone (bars 32, 34, and 35). **DB**

Jimi Durso is a guitarist and bassist based in New York City. Visit him online at jimidurso.com



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What sets Firebird apart from other manufacturers is the company’s willingness to consult with customers, find out exactly what they want in a saxophone and determine which configuration is best for them. “When we set up a horn with a particular tone goal in mind, we can recommend, configure and sometimes custom-configure those elements to get to the tone color the player is looking for,” said Firebird founder Ken Caviaasca, an experienced professional saxophonist. “We can come up with a product that’s recommended for you directly.” It’s a boutique mindset that helps the player choose his own tonal destiny.

Firebird saxophones offer nearly all the quality of brand-name pro horns at surprisingly reasonable prices. If you have a “dream sound” in your head that you just gotta get out, or if you need a second horn to play in lieu of your primary axe, Firebird has a sax for you. —*Ed Enright*

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I play-tested the Mio M7 E, a sterling silver, open-holed professional flute with a low B foot.

Warming up on the M7 E was a pleasure. The flute responded quickly and easily, thanks to its free-blowing lip plate. Its hand-cut Royal Crown headjoint and a specially designed Mio riser allowed the instrument to speak with ease at low volumes and helped create a noticeable depth of sound across the full range.

Outfitted with an offset G, the M7 E’s key design felt great in my hands (which are on the small side). As I ran some scales and basic patterns, I noticed how everything fell right into place, and the keys had the kind of uniform resistance that you typically find on high-end flutes. With this kind of setup, you can play fast passages with precision and confidence. The accurate-feeling keywork allowed me to focus more on sound production and tone.

Once I got up and running on the M7 E, I was able to get some great sounds out of it, from clear, bright highs to warm, smoky lows. I found it to be extremely expressive as well. Playing with a gentle vibrato really brought the flute to life, and I could cover a wide dynamic range without struggling or having to make any drastic adjustments. I discovered that I could even produce a hearty growl with a little vocal manipulation, which proved especially effective while soloing. All of the flutes in the Mio line are acoustically adjusted at the company’s finishing factory in Salt Lake City, which makes a huge difference in boosting the quality of their tone production.

The most innovative feature of the M7 E is the inclusion of a second crown joint—made of titanium with a semi-precious stone attached—which gives the player another pallet of sounds to choose from. The titanium crowds adds tonal weight and makes the overall sound a little more harmonically complex. While performing in a small orchestra as part of a commercial stage production, I noticed how gently the M7 E blended with other flutes, clarinets and strings when I had the regular silver headjoint on it.

Other professional features of the M7 E include silver-plated nickel-silver keys, a split E mechanism, “Y” key arms and Italian-made Pisoni pads.

As a woodwind doubler, I appreciated the M7 E for its responsiveness and overall ease of tone production.

I had no problems switching from baritone sax or bass clarinet to flute within a single piece of music—it spoke with a solid initial attack every time I brought it to my lips, and I didn’t suffer any of the fatigue that sometimes comes with changing embouchure at a moment’s notice. Overall, the Mio M7 E was a joy to play, and its professional design and features inspired me to perform at a higher level.

—*Ed Enright*

cannonballmusic.com



DW Jazz Series

Resonant Snare

The concept behind the DW Jazz Series of snare drums is to deliver a sound that is consistent with drums manufactured in the '50s, '60s and '70s by using woods and construction techniques that were common during those decades.

Jazz Series shells are a combination of three plies of gumwood that are sandwiched by two plies of North American hard rock maple on either side. Unlike drums from DW's Collectors and Classics series, the Jazz Series shells have no reinforcement hoops. The idea is to create a more resonant sound that is slightly less focused and more suited for performance in ambient situations, be it live or mic'd in a studio.

The Jazz Series also features DW's "Butter Edge" bearing edge. It's a more rounded bearing edge, similar to the bearing edges on vintage kits (as well as DW's Classics line). The result is a rounder, fuller sound than what you'd get on a drum sporting a steeper bearing edge.

The Jazz Series model I checked out was a 5- by 14-inch (a popular bebop size) 10-lug snare that has a natural satin oil finish with chrome hardware and die-cast hoops (standard on the series). The snare head is a crimped, single-ply coated head that is made for DW by Remo. The thing I love most about this head—other than the fact that it's an actual quality head and not something you will replace the second you get home from the drum



shop—is

that it features DW's Tuning Sequence, which is basically numbers printed directly on the head, near the edge of the drum, that correspond to each lug on the drum. This makes it easy to keep track of what lug gets tuned next as you are making your way around the drum with a drum key.

Another important feature of this snare, other than its great sound, is DW's MAG throw-off with the three-position butt plate. Looks-wise, the roundness of the throw-off is reminiscent of one of my favorites, the Slingerland Zoomatic, but without the problematic protruding lever. The multi-position lever in the butt plate allows you to have four different snare tensions available at a moment's notice. I found switching between sounds during a live set was much easier than in the past. Going from a greasy-sounding

New Orleans groove with loose snares to a tighter backbeat funk sound was as easy as a flip of the three-position lever. As for the main throw-off, the body has a magnet inside so it is kept steady while in place; when you need to turn the snares off, a simple flick will accomplish this.

Sound-wise, the drum was responsive at various tunings and at all volume levels. Whether tuned up high and tight or low and loose, from heavy backbeats to the quietest press rolls, the drum never sounded choked or floppy, and it delivered a tone that did not disappoint. Even though it is marketed as a jazz drum, a drum of this caliber can operate well in many different tunings and can be used across genres.

—Matt Kern

dwdrums.com

TheGigEasy iPad Mount/AirTurn BT-105

Tools for a Paperless Performance

When Apple premiered the iPad in 2010, musicians rapidly embraced it. Among the early adopters was a classical pianist named Hugh Sung. He launched The Gig Easy Company, which now offers a line of hardware and software products for the iPad that provide a complete solution to musicians transitioning into the world of "paperless" music.

The iPad's screen size is perfect for displaying a full page of music or lyrics. It has many apps capable of displaying a PDF file, which is the standard format for most digital and scanned sheet music. What was missing was a way to mount the tablet for easy viewing on stage and a hands-free method of turning pages. Sung answered these needs with two great products: TheGigEasy iPad Mount and the AirTurn BT-105 Bluetooth page-turner.

TheGigEasy is a holder that uses four spring-loaded arms to secure the iPad. Attaching and removing your tablet is fast and easy, and the plastic clips will not scratch it. The basic mount sells

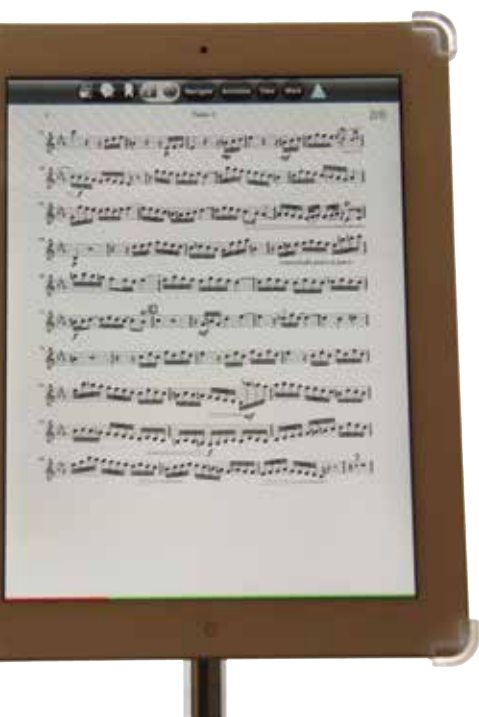
for around \$79, with several versions available. The mic stand mount allows for mounting on top of any standard microphone stand, or side mounting via an optional accessory. TheGigEasy even offers its own collapsible lightweight tripod stand. One of the best features of TheGigEasy is its ability to freely rotate so you can quickly change from portrait to landscape viewing mode.

The \$120 AirTurn BT-105 page-turner uses Bluetooth connectivity to communicate wirelessly with your iPad. The unit consists of a transmitter with two pedals available for forward and backward page-turning. Simply pair up your tablet with the AirTurn and it will function with any compatible software (there are numerous apps available for iOS, Android and Mac/PC computers). I tested the BT-105 with TheGigEasy sheet music-reading app for iPad, and it functioned flawlessly.

No doubt, tablet technology has made an impact on the music industry. As more musicians discover its advantages, the demand for solutions like TheGigEasy and AirTurn will continue to grow.

—Keith Baumann

airturn.com



Toolshed > GEAR BOX



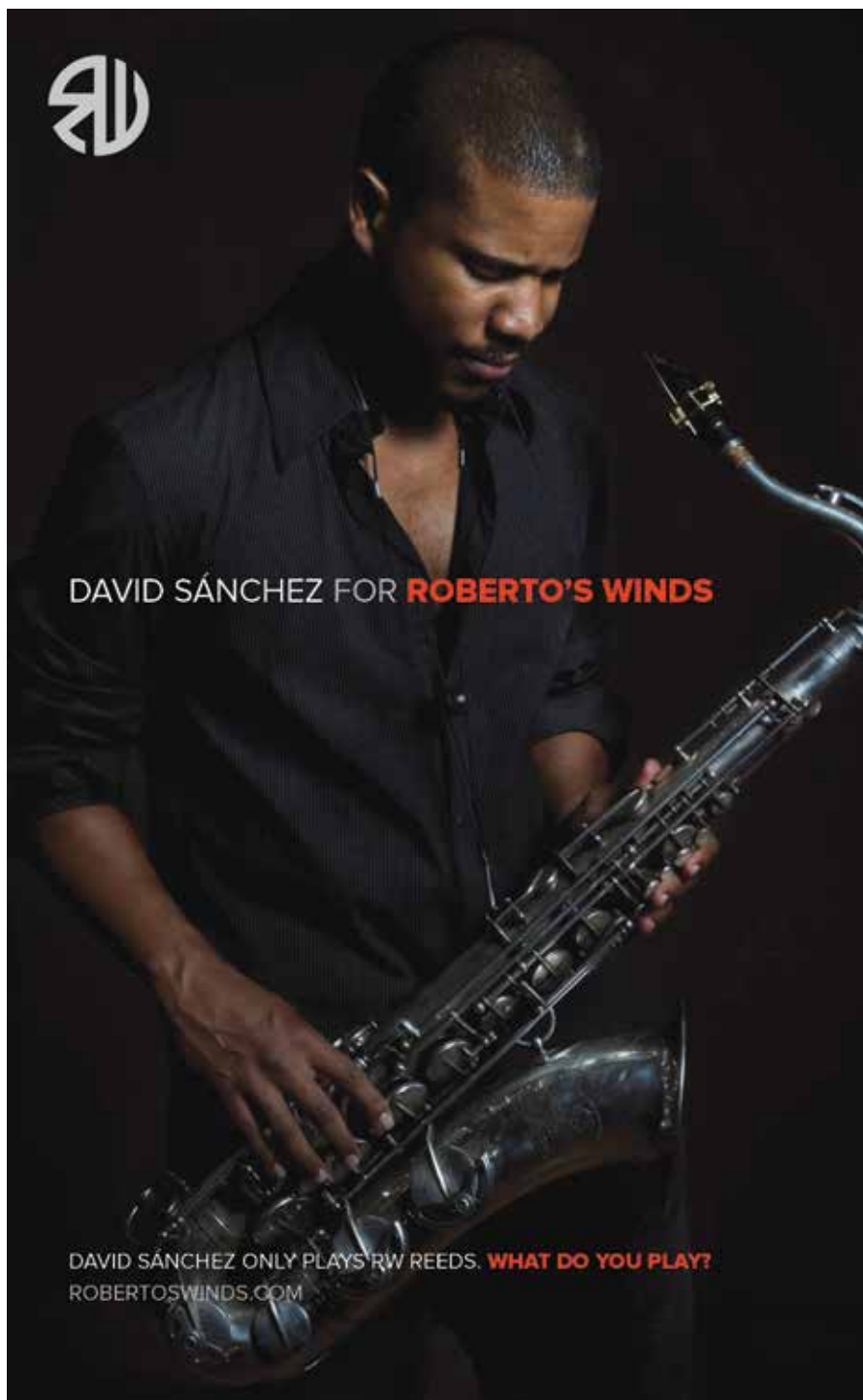
Reed Launch

Gonzalez Reeds has launched the Classic, Jazz and GD (pictured) lines. Classic reeds feature a thin tip balanced with a thicker design toward the heel. Jazz reeds have a thicker tip and flexible palette that makes them more dynamic and versatile. GD reeds have a thicker tip and a longer palette for a richer sound. conn-selmer.com



Heavy Hitter

The Railhammer Anvil pickup is designed for players who want the chunky tone and sustain of a high-output design along with tonal clarity and string definition. A ceramic magnet, 44-gauge wire and increased winding help produce amp-pummeling power and girth. Fast riffs, complex chords and palm muting are defined and cut through the mix. railhammer.com



Dig In

The Gold Digger from Radial Engineering gives studio engineers the ability to quickly compare and select the best-sounding microphone to suit the character of a particular voice. It features four radio-style switches that can be used to activate each microphone one at a time. Phantom power (48 volts) is generated and managed inside the unit to ensure switching between mics will be quiet and pop-free. radialeng.com

Plush Cans

Tascam's new TH-02 closed-back headphones deliver clear, balanced sound. Featuring plush cushioned ear cuffs and a padded headband, the TH-02 can be put to work for hours of comfortable use. Both left and right ear cuffs offer full 90-degree rotation for an excellent fit, and a folding design makes the headphones easy to transport and store. tascam.com



EQ Collection

Universal Audio has released the API 500 Series EQ Plug-In Collection for the UAD Powered Plug-Ins platform and Apollo High-Resolution Audio Interface. The API-endorsed, UA-developed collection features emulations of the API 550A three-band and API 560 graphic equalizers. uaudio.com



Cymbals in the Bag

DrumFire's CB4000 cymbal bag holds up to four 22-inch cymbals. Smaller pockets accommodate hi-hats and cymbals up to 15 inches. Adjustable backpack straps allow for hands-free transport and can be tucked away inside a back pocket when not in use. The bag features double-pull zippers and a double handle with Velcro closure for comfortable carrying. onstagestands.com



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Jamal Nichols (left), Anat Cohen and Matt Wilson at Jazz at the Bistro in St. Louis on April 18



Esperanza Spalding

Educational Angle at Core of Greater St. Louis Jazz Festival

THE GREATER ST. LOUIS JAZZ FESTIVAL celebrated its 10th anniversary on April 18–20. The highlights were three evening concerts featuring a lineup of internationally acclaimed musicians.

Clarinet and saxophone player Anat Cohen and drummer Matt Wilson led a quintet at the intimate Jazz at the Bistro club in downtown St. Louis on April 18. An all-star lineup billed as the Monterey Jazz Festival on Tour—bassist and musical director Christian McBride, vocalist Dee Dee Bridgewater, saxophonist Chris Potter, trumpeter Ambrose Akinmusire, pianist Benny Green and drummer Lewis Nash—played at the Touhill Performing Arts Center on the campus of the University of Missouri St. Louis on April 19. Doc Severinsen and his Big Band closed out the fest April 20.

For Jim Widner, founder of the festival and director of jazz studies at the University of Missouri St. Louis, the most important events take place before those star-studded evening performances, when approximately 800 students from more than 35 high schools and colleges across the Midwest attend big band and jazz combo clinics at the Touhill.

“Without the students and the clinics, you wouldn’t have a festival,” Widner said. “You would only have headliner concerts. Students are at the heart of our event.”

That was clearly the case on the first morning before the festival at the Touhill’s Lee Theater, where Cohen and Wilson worked with combo after combo.

After listening to one group perform a version of “Once I Loved,” both musicians joined the young players on stage and encouraged them to move beyond the skills needed to play the right notes—and find the emotional core of the music. Cohen had found the lyrics to the song on the Internet, and read them aloud from her cell phone to the combo.

“Listen to the emotions in the words,” Cohen explained. “This is someone baring her soul:

*“I will hold you close,
Make you stay,
Because love is the saddest thing when it goes away,
Love is the saddest thing when it goes away.”*

“Now take those emotions and go beyond just playing the right notes in the right places,” Cohen advised. “Get in the moment!”

Wilson then asked the trumpet player in the combo to play the melody of the song, and had the other musicians listen.

“What she’s playing is the core,” he said. “Your job is to build around that and expand that feeling.”

Widner and other outstanding jazz educators/musicians (Denis DiBlasio, Rick Stitzel, David Seiler, Mary Jo Papich, Brett Stamps and Allen Beeson) served as clinicians for the big bands in attendance.

While Stitzel worked with the Blue Valley West High School Band (from the Kansas City, Kan., area), band director Daniel Kirk discussed the importance of the festival in the development of his students.

“This is the third time we’ve attended,” Kirk said. “We come every other year. We only go to two-to-three clinics a year, but we always try to make sure this is on our schedule. We get great feedback from the clinicians, and I can tell the difference it makes.”

For Widner, a recent partnership with Jazz St. Louis in booking the evening concerts is expected to be a key element in the growth of the event. But he makes it clear that the quality of the educational component is the bottom line for him.

“From day one, this festival has been the crown jewel of the UMSL Jazz program,” he said. “This is the 10th year, and we’re definitely proud of the fact it has grown in size and stature. But we’re most proud that it has maintained a high standard of quality—in both instruction and performances.”

The 11th annual Greater St. Louis Jazz Festival is scheduled for April 24–26, 2014. —Terry Perkins

Canadian Exchange: The Banff Centre in Alberta, Canada, has announced the lineup for its annual International Jazz Workshop on May 22–June 8. This year’s series, directed by pianist Vijay Iyer, features mainstage shows from bassist Esperanza Spalding and saxophonist Ravi Coltrane. Other performers include trumpeters Wadada Leo Smith and Ambrose Akinmusire, bassist Linda Oh and percussionists E.J. Strickland, Dafnis Prieto and Rajna Swaminathan. banff.ca

Business Cents: Producers Jimmy Iovine and Dr. Dre have donated \$70 million to the University of Southern California to establish the USC Jimmy Iovine and Andre Young Academy for Arts, Technology and the Business of Innovation. The program caters to undergraduate students interested in pursuing marketing, business entrepreneurship, computer science and engineering, audio and visual design, and the arts. usc.edu

Quad Talk: The University of Miami’s Frost School of Music dedicated the still-evolving Marta S. Weeks Music Quadrangle on May 16, honoring the iconic philanthropist, patron of the arts and trustee emeritus. miami.edu

Follow the Leader: The New School for Jazz and Contemporary Music hosted the 11th annual Student Leadership Awards banquet at the Theresa Lang Student and Community Center on April 26. Sponsored by the Office of Student Development and Activities, the event celebrated excellence in student programming, leadership and community-building on campus. newschool.edu

Sketches in Spain: Berklee College of Music has partnered with Sónar, the international festival of advanced music and new media art, and announced its participation in the 20th edition of Sónar in Barcelona June 13–16. Representatives from the Berklee in Valencia program will discuss the recent implementation of a master’s degree in music technology and present business models introduced at the school’s Rethink Music event. berklee.edu

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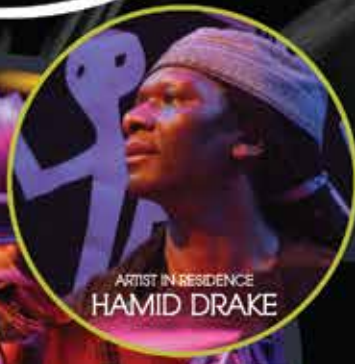
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Antigua Winds.....27 antiguapro-one.com	Evans.....5 evansdrumheads.com	Motéma Records.....71, 73, 75 motema.com
Bari Mouthpieces..... 10 bariwoodwind.com	Festival Mimo.....89 mimo.art.br	New Jersey Performing Arts Center..... 34 njpac.org
Basin Street Records..... 79 basinstreetrecords.com	Geraldo Henrique Bulhões Music.....80 geraldohenrique.com	P. Mauriat Instruments.....107 pmauriatinstruments.com
Bell Production Co..... 26 bellproductionco.com	Guelph Jazz Festival..... 82 guelphjazzfestival.com	Roberto Winds.....100, 101 robertoswinds.com
Berklee College of Music..... 95 berklee.edu/downbeat	Heads Up..... 17 headsup.com	RS Berkeley.....90 rsberkeley.com
Billy Bauer Music..... 97 billybauersmusic.com	HW Products.....97 hwproducts.com	Sabian..... 39 sabian.com/en
Blue Note Records.....77 bluenote.com	Hyde Park Jazz Festival.....88 hydeparkjazzfestival.org	Sam Ash.....96 samash.com
BlueLand Records..... 65 bluelandrecords.com	Intakt Records..... 2 intaktrec.ch	Sony Music.....25 sonymusic.com
BMI..... 53 bmi.com	IPO Recordings..... 63 iporecordings.com	Sunnyside Records..... 85, 87 sunnysiderecords.com
Buffet Crampon USA..... 51 buffet-crampon.com	J.J. Babbitt.....37 jjbabbitt.com	Theo Wanne Mouthpieces..... 47 thewanne.com
Butman Music..... 29 igorbutman.com	Jacob Anderskov Music.....90 jacobanderskov.dk	TUM Records..... 18 tumrecords.com
Cacophony Records..... 74 frankmacchia.net	Jamey Abersold..... 62 jazzbooks.com	Vandoren..... 3 wearevandoren.com
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Chicago Jazz Festival..... 103 chicagojazzfestival.us	Jim Pepper Festival..... 83 jimpepperfest.net	WBGO, Jazz 88.3 FM..... 76 wbgo.org
Columbia College Chicago.....4 colum.edu/music	JodyJazz Mouthpieces..... 35 jodyjazz.com	William Paterson..... 43 wpunj.edu
Cuba Education Tours.....61 jazzcuba.com	Lawson Rollins.....86 lawsonrollins.com	Zildjian..... 19 zildjian.com
Czech Ease..... 92 czech-ease.com	Litchfield Jazz Festival..... 93 litchfieldjazzfest.com	Zoom..... 108 zoomfx.com
Dream Cymbals..... 15 dreamcymbals.com	Local 802..... 76 justiceforjazzartists.org	
DW Drums..... 59 dwdrums.com	LP.....8 latinpercussion.com	

Javon Jackson

Tenor saxophonist Javon Jackson—a Berklee College of Music graduate and former member of Art Blakey’s Jazz Messengers—was, as a teenager, inspired to become a professional musician after experiencing encounters with Sonny Stitt and Dexter Gordon. The list of jazz giants with whom Jackson has performed includes Freddie Hubbard, Elvin Jones, Ron Carter, Charlie Haden and McCoy Tyner.

Jackson was one of the artists-in-residence at the 34th annual Tri-C JazzFest Cleveland. In addition to adjudicating student ensembles and presenting daily clinics, his residency included a special concert paying tribute to Gordon on the 90th anniversary of his birth. Jackson’s latest album is *Lucky 13* (Solid Jackson Records), featuring Les McCann on piano. Jackson’s second Blindfold Test took place in front of an audience at Cleveland’s State Theatre during the festival.

Lester Young

“I’ve Found A New Baby” (*The Complete Lester Young Studio Sessions On Verve*, Verve, 1999, rec’d 1946) Young, tenor saxophone; Nat Cole, piano; Buddy Rich, drums.

Unbelievable! Buddy Rich on drums, Nat “King” Cole on piano and the one, the only, Lester Young on tenor saxophone. I’m familiar with that; it’s an incredible recording from the ’40s. What’s incredible about it, first of all, is there’s no bassist! Nat Cole was the bass *and* the piano—most people know Nat Cole as a vocalist, but he was an unbelievable piano player who influenced many, many jazz pianists. Lester Young, he’s the head of the snake . . . [he] and Coleman Hawkins. You’ve gotta give a little bit more to Coleman Hawkins, but Lester Young was the person who influenced so many great jazz artists, including Miles Davis, John Coltrane, Charlie Parker. Buddy Rich, all drummers will agree, is probably technically the greatest drummer who ever lived. That’s just an incredible recording. There are two of these [trio dates]; the other was with Red Callendar, Nat Cole and Lester Young. A thousand stars!

Melissa Aldana

“I’ll Be Seeing You” (*Second Cycle*, Inner Circle 2012) Aldana, tenor saxophone; Gordon Au, trumpet; Joseph Lepore, bass; Ross Pederson, drums.

I liked his use of space, nice tone and nice inflection . . . I have no idea who it was, but the soloist is very engaging. For a listener like myself, it seems like he has the history and the lineage well put together. It was somebody younger, because there were things that he did that were more what we call *today*—the way he used the altissimo range, the higher side of the saxophone—so it’s more of a contemporary artist. [After] I knew it was a younger person just by the way that she phrased. It had a more contemporary style to it, but her sense of phrasing gave me the idea that she has studied the history of the saxophone. 4 stars.

Dexter Gordon

“Let’s Get Down” (*Homecoming: Live At The Village Vanguard*, Columbia, 1977) Gordon, tenor saxophone; Woody Shaw, trumpet; Ronnie Matthews, piano; Stafford James, bass; Louis Hayes, drums.

This one gets a thousand stars, too! Life is funny; I lived in Cleveland, Ohio, for a little bit and then we moved to Denver, Colorado. As a 13-year-old, my father took me to see two saxophonists who changed my life. The first person he took me to see was Sonny Stitt. Then a few months later, he took me to see Dexter Gordon. When I saw [Gordon] I said, “I want to do just what he does.” I was tall for my age, and this tall man [Gordon] came out, and he was suave, and he was cool and he played the saxophone brilliantly . . . I said, “I want to be just like him.” As life and fate would have it, I’ve been able to do career-wise the same things Dexter did, in terms of touring, performing and having groups and making recordings.

What’s interesting is that from this recording [*Homecoming*], I have played with and know four of the musicians: Ronnie Matthews, the pianist, who I worked with quite a bit; Louis Hayes is like an uncle or big brother; Woody Shaw,



Javon Jackson (left) and writer Willard Jenkins at Cleveland’s State Theatre on April 20

JEFF FORMAN

I got to know him during my time with Art Blakey; and I got to play with Stafford [James] quite a bit. Dexter is the first bebop saxophone player to put the styles of Lester Young, Coleman Hawkins and Charlie Parker on the tenor; some would say Wardell Gray, but I’ll give the nod to Dexter.

Kenneth Whalum III

“A Song For Tomorrow” (*To Those Who Believe*, Self-release, 2010) Whalum, tenor saxophone; Robert Gasper, piano; Chris “Daddy” Dave, drums; Derrick Hodge, bass.

The composition and presentation were beautiful. The sound was beautiful, the interplay was wonderful and it had a real freshness to it. Was that Branford [Marsalis]? I’d give that about 4 stars; it was strong. The saxophonist seemed to be influenced by Branford. [After] I’ve never heard him. He sounds great.

Lucky Thompson

“’Twas Yesterday” (*New York City, 1964–65, Uptown*, 2008, rec’d 1964) Thompson, tenor saxophone; Dave Burns, trumpet; Danny Turner, alto saxophone; Cecil Payne, baritone saxophone; Benny Powell, trombone; Hank Jones, piano; Richard Davis, bass; Al Dreares, drums.

On a ballad, everything is slowed down to nothing, so you’re exposed, you’re naked. So whatever your impression is, it’s left out there for everyone to see at a much slower pace. The true test of an artist is the ability to play a ballad. That was beautiful, very reminiscent to me of Clifford Jordan—it had that kind of spirit. I don’t know the piece, but I really like the treatment of the saxophonist. For the presentation I’d probably say 5 stars. [After] Lucky is 5 stars! He was an individual soprano saxophonist and an incredible tenor saxophonist, and I probably have that recording. Lucky Thompson was unbelievable.

Benny Golson

“Turning Point” (*The Complete Argo/Mercury Art Farmer/Benny Golson/Jazztet Sessions*, Mosaic, 2004, rec’d 1962) Golson, tenor saxophone; Wynton Kelly, piano; Paul Chambers, bass; Jimmy Cobb, drums.

That was beautiful. Some of it was reminiscent of Benny Golson, and some of it reminded me of the tenor saxophonist with Duke Ellington, Paul Gonsalves—who plays a little more sideways than that. It was really nice, but I don’t know who it is. I’d give that 5 stars. [After] It’s been so long since I’ve heard these things. I should know Benny Golson—I’m a Jazz Messenger, for God’s sake! That goes back to a thousand stars for Benny Golson. He’s a close friend who’s been so helpful to me and been supportive of so many musicians, a person I look up to greatly as a composer, as a saxophonist and as a man—one of the most incredible people I’ve ever known. **DB**

The “Blindfold Test” is a listening test that challenges the featured artist to discuss and identify the music and musicians who performed on selected recordings. The artist is then asked to rate each tune using a 5-star system. No information is given to the artist prior to the test.



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