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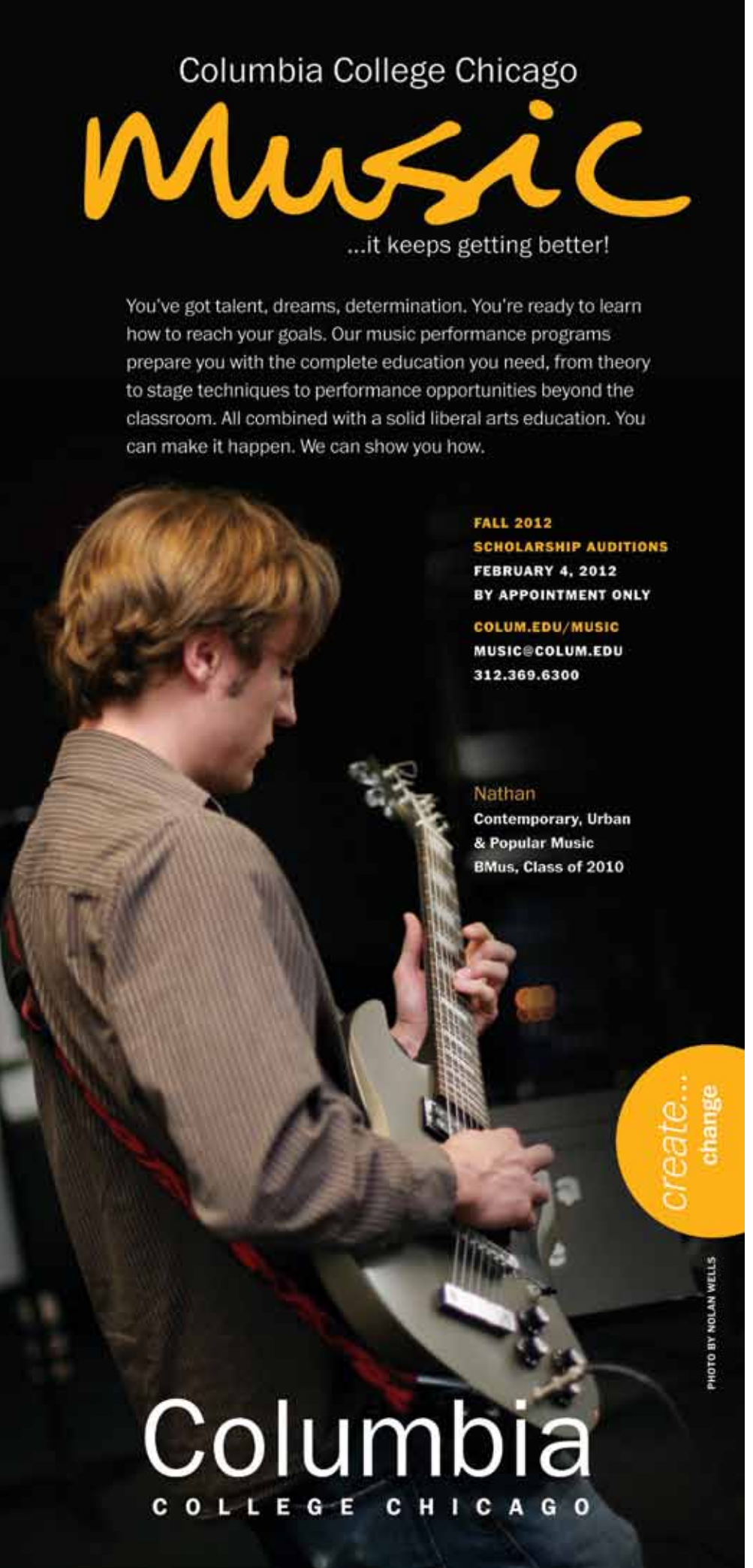

DOWNBEAT

JANUARY 2012

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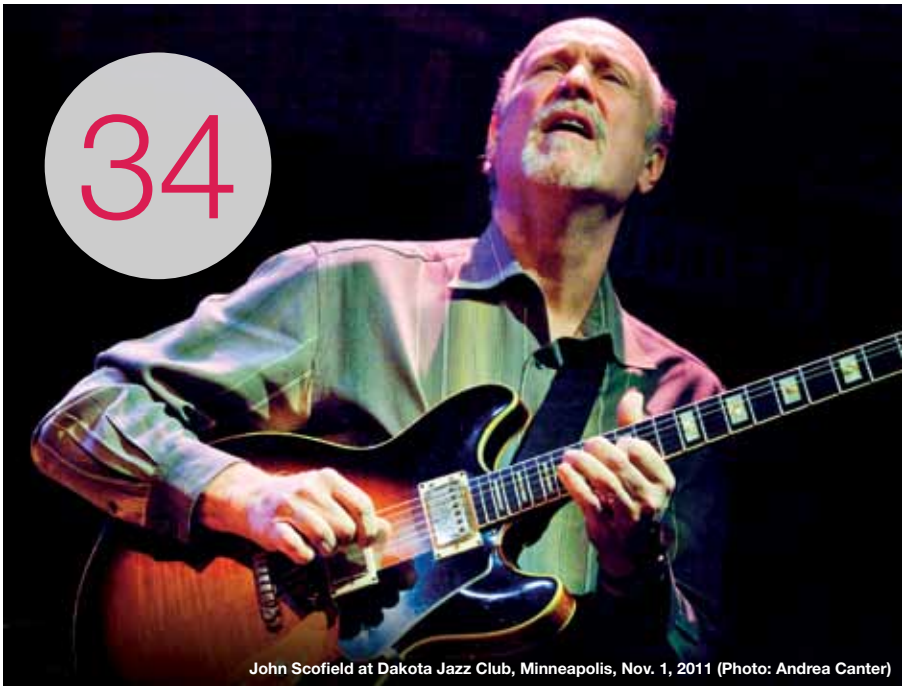
JANUARY 2012 inside

ON THE COVER

26 3 Cohens
Unconditional Love
BY DAN OUELLETTE

For siblings Anat Cohen (tenor saxophone and clarinet), Avishai Cohen (trumpet) and Yuval Cohen (soprano saxophone), the concepts of music and family are intertwined. Shared DNA goes deep, which is partly why 3 Cohens has taken the kindred ensemble to top-tier status, evidenced by its third—and best—CD, aptly titled *Family*.



John Scofield at Dakota Jazz Club, Minneapolis, Nov. 1, 2011 (Photo: Andrea Canter)

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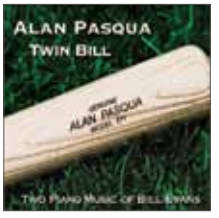

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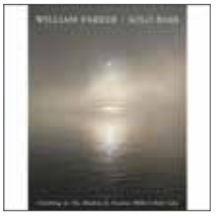
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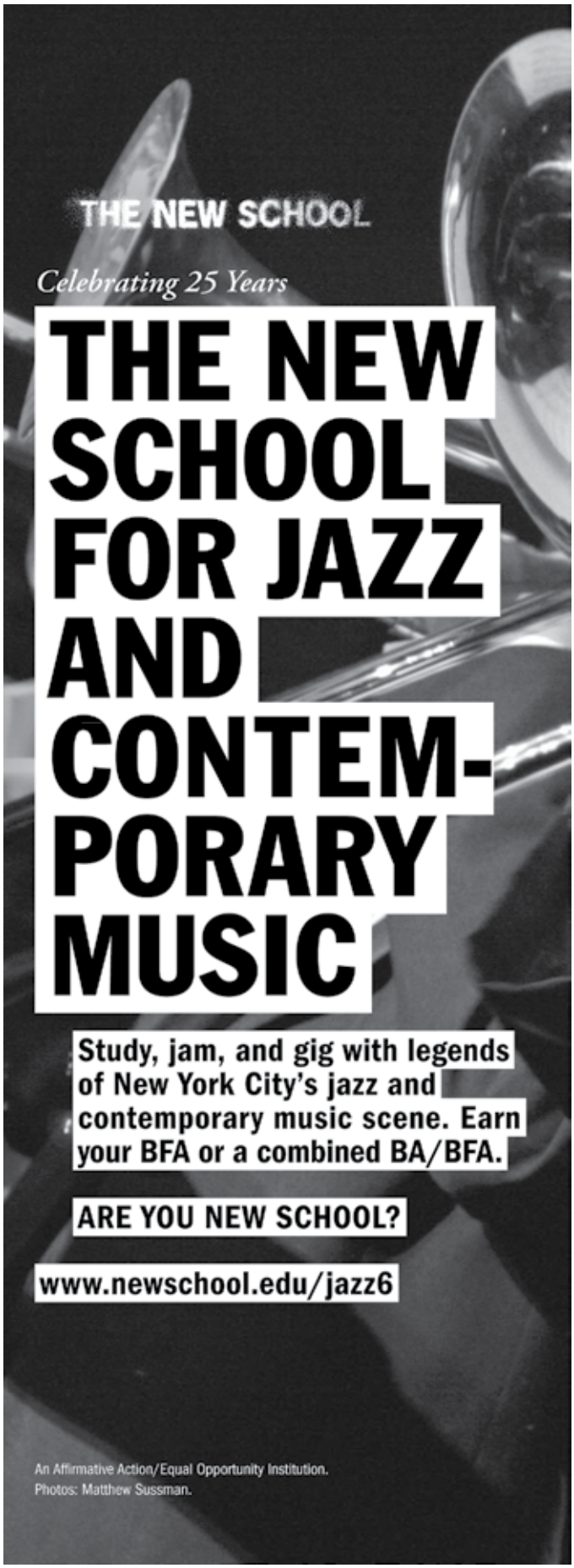

Famous Jazz Families

Adderley. Brecker. Dorsey. González. Heath. Jones. Marsalis. The history of jazz is populated with a certain set of surnames that evoke thoughts of both musical excellence and familial connections. If you love the work of a great jazz artist, it makes sense that you'd want to hear the music of that artist's family members.


Avishai (left), Anat and Yuval Cohen
JIMMY AND DINA KATZ

Fans of Cannonball Adderley are often fans of Nat Adderley. Collectors of Michael Brecker's albums also own Randy Brecker CDs, and they rave about the Brecker Brothers discs that the siblings recorded together. The Joneses? You could spend 10 years *only* listening to the music of Hank Jones, Thad Jones and Elvin Jones. And how different would the annals of jazz be without the contributions of brothers Percy, Jimmy and Tootie Heath? Jazz fans in New York (and around the world) revere both Andy and Jerry González (see page 14). Then there's Wynton Marsalis, who turned 50 on Oct. 18 (see page 16). He would not be the titan he is today had it not been for the influence of his father, Ellis, and the musical experiences he has had with his brothers Branford, Delfeayo and Jason.

And now we add another surname to the list of great jazz families: Cohen. The fantastic new CD from the 3 Cohens is appropriately titled *Family*. Dan Ouellette's interview with Anat, Avishai and Yuval Cohen conveys a tale that illustrates the transcendent power of unconditional love (see page 26). One thing that makes this jazz family stand out is that it consists of two brothers and a *sister*. Anat Cohen is unquestionably among the elite artists in jazz today. In the 2011 DownBeat Critics Poll, she won the Clarinet category and was voted the Rising Star winner for Soprano Saxophone. She has won the Clarinet category in the DownBeat Readers Poll for two consecutive years. The music she makes with her wildly talented brothers, Avishai and Yuval, exemplifies the power of musical DNA. There's a telepathy that occurs on the bandstand when you've known a collaborator for literally your entire life.

We also have exciting news regarding another Cohen—DownBeat Reviews Editor Aaron Cohen (who is a fan of the 3 Cohens, but not related to them). On Nov. 15 in New York, Cohen was honored with an ASCAP Deems Taylor Award for his October 2010 cover story, "Ray's Kind Of Jazz." The article is an analysis of Ray Charles' connections and contributions to jazz. The ASCAP Deems Taylor Awards are given in recognition of outstanding print, broadcast and new media coverage of music. (Cohen's first book, *Aretha Franklin's Amazing Grace,* was published in October by Continuum as part of its 33 1/3 series.)

This was the third ASCAP Deems Taylor Award that DownBeat has received in recent years. Ted Panken was honored for "Smalls Universe," his feature on the jazz venue Smalls, published in our June 2006 issue. John McDonough was recognized for "Elegant Vintage," his feature on Nat King Cole, published as the cover story in the May 2005 issue.

The DownBeat staff is proud that our magazine has been recognized yet again for its commitment to superlative, in-depth music journalism. It's what we do. **DB**

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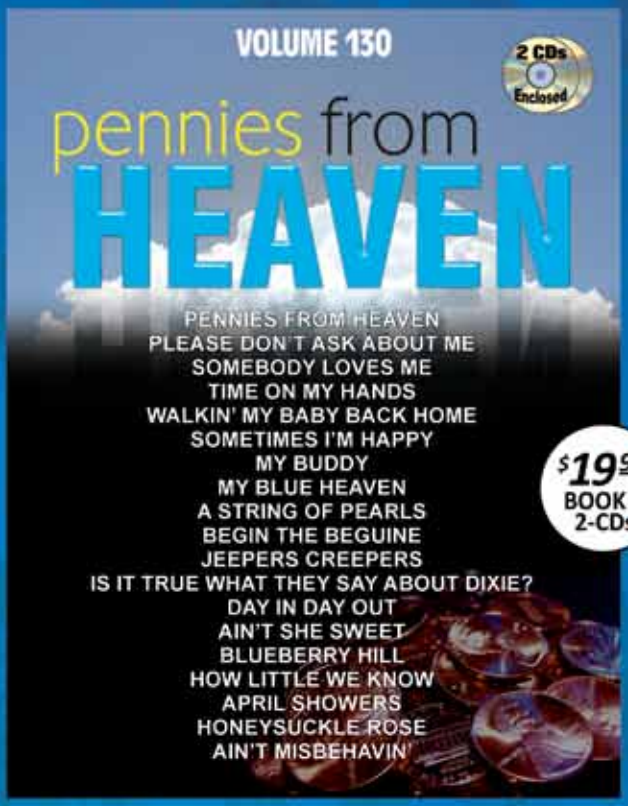

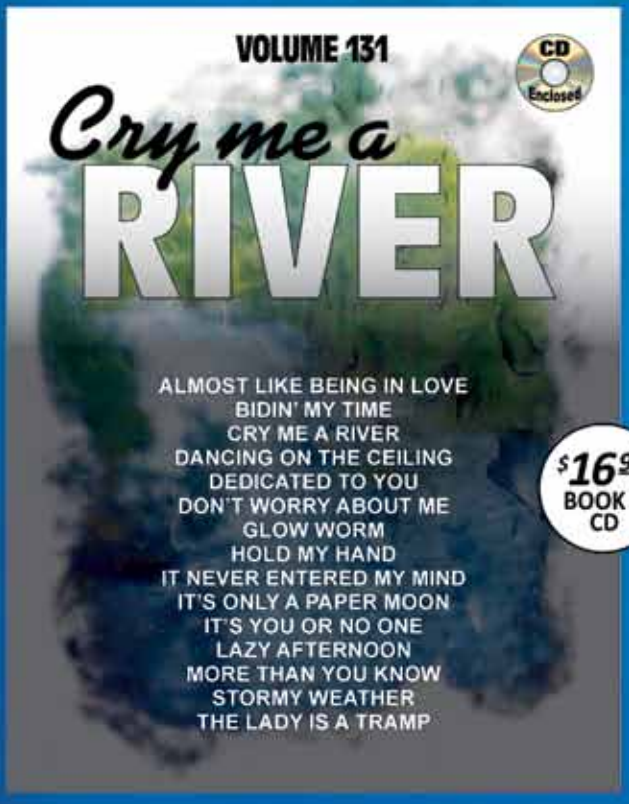

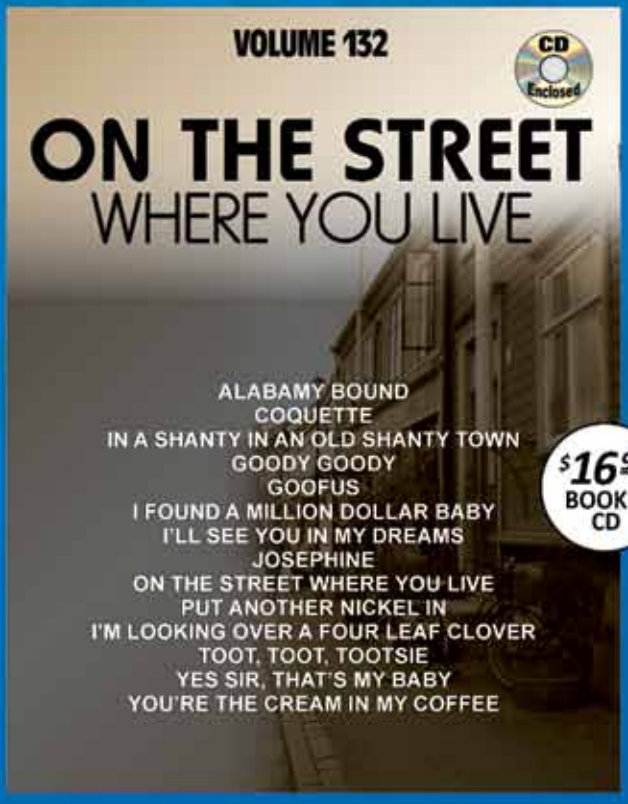

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Chords & Discords

Defending Lunceford

I feel compelled to refute the article by John McDonough on Jimmie Lunceford (Historical column, November). I was one of the youngsters who bought the records and danced to the bands of Duke Ellington, Benny Goodman and Lunceford. By being in the right place at the right time, I became Ellington's secretary in 1943. Even though my loyalties were with the Ellington band, I must say that the Lunceford band was a close favorite. By today's standards, yes, the singing of Dan Grissom is corny. But then? It was listened to with beating hearts and lascivious thoughts by the young women of Los Angeles. In fact, two of his admirers and would-be sleeping partners had a fight with a pistol outside the Dunbar Hotel on Central Avenue, where the band stayed.

Perhaps through today's ears and eyes (and because of the show-business approach of this band), Mr. McDonough has some justification for his critique. But we were all crazy about the band then—oh, the beat, the solos, the handsome young men! In Los Angeles in the early '40s, I can vouch for the fact that the jazz buffs were Lunceford fans.

CLAIRE P. GORDON
CLGORDON@CHARTER.NET

Praise for Pathak

Thank you for including the Pro Session with Kalyan Pathak in your November issue. He has a wonderful clarity and simple approach for getting Western ears like mine to hear, recognize and understand what is going on rhythmically in the Indian music that I love. His contrast of the "Indian master lesson" with his "Western lesson" helps me to appreciate both the affinities and differences between the musics, as well as our pedagogical methods. Like any great improvisor, Pathak gets a lot across in just a few lines.

TOM MCCARTHY
ADJUNCT LECTURER, TRITON COLLEGE

Hail Beck

Kudos to all who voted for Jeff Beck in the 76th Annual DownBeat Readers Poll (December). His diverse creativity in all genres of music is finally being recognized. He is a perfectionist who demands 100 percent commitment from all musicians who surround him. Having had the pleasure of seeing him several months ago, I was in awe at how tight his group was, as well as his unbelievable musicianship and how, to this day, he is still so focused in his music.

STEVEN B. BLUM
FARMINGTON HILLS, MICH.


Jimmie Lunceford

Mulligan, Bari Sax Supreme

In Andrew Hadro's article on the baritone saxphone (The Insider, December), how can he say that Gerry Mulligan was "another poor baritone saxophonist doomed to play section parts"?

What about Mulligan's playing with Chet Baker, Bob Brookmeyer and Art Farmer? His many solos with the Concert Jazz Band? His wonderful playing with Ted Rosenthal and Bill Mays, and the great sessions he did with Dave Brubeck? His solos were filled with wit and charm, and could they ever swing. I suggest that Mr. Hadro listen to some of this music. He was way off-base. Mulligan was one of the untouchable jazz greats.

JIM HUBLER
WHITTIER, CALIF.

Corrections

- In the December issue, someone spiked the editors' eggnog. In our article about *Sounds And Silence: Travels With Manfred Eicher*, we mistakenly called Ethan Iverson a drummer. He is, of course, one of our finest pianists! In our review of Oliver Jones/Ranee Lee/Montreal Jubilation Gospel Choir: *A Celebration In Time*, we went vowel happy. The record label website should have been justin-time.com, not jusatin-time.com.
- There were two errors in our feature on Johnny Otis (The Beat, November). Otis' correct age is 89, and the singer depicted in the photo with him and Esther Phillips should have been identified as Mel Walker.

DOWNBEAT REGRETS THE ERRORS.

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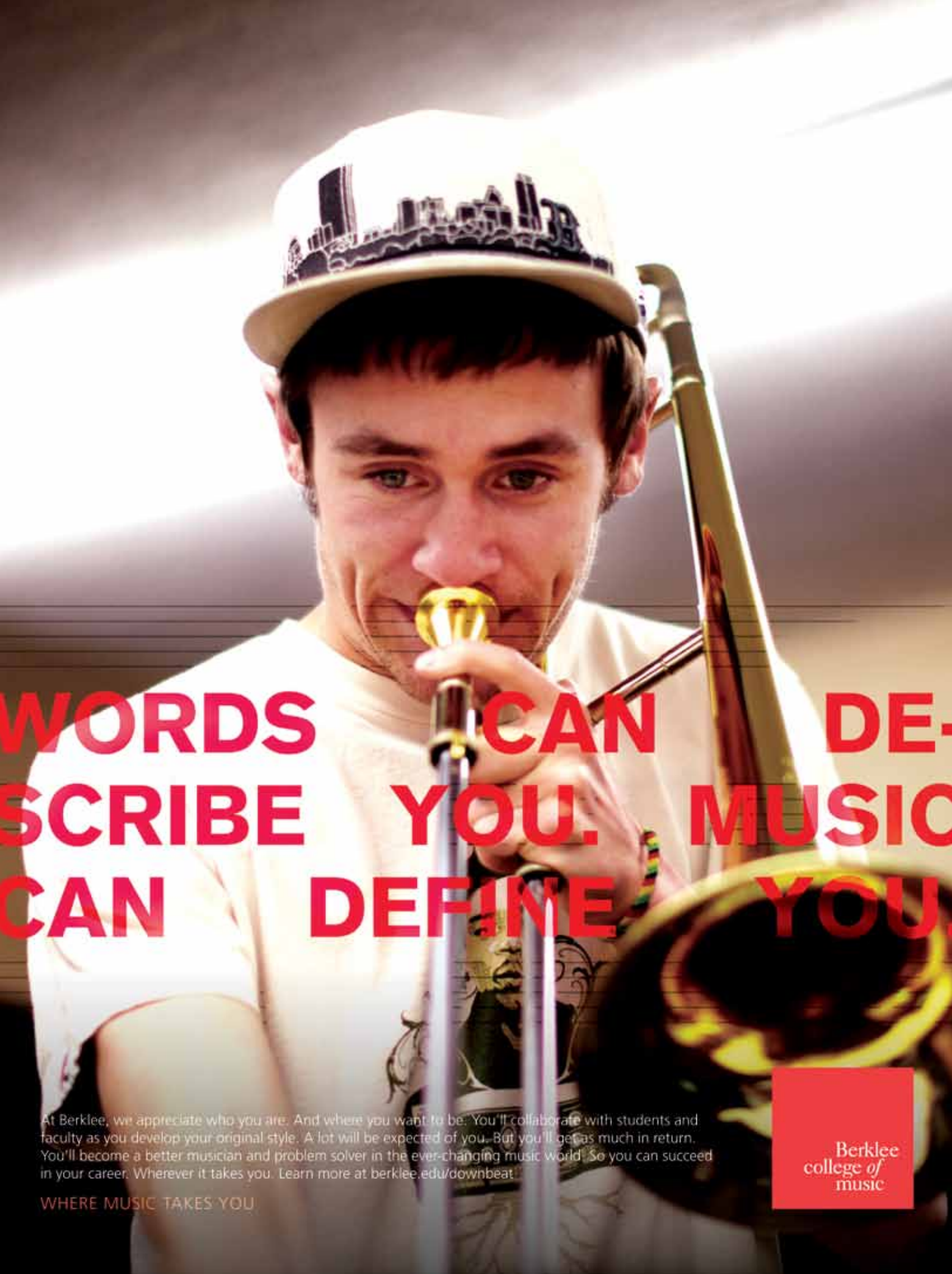
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The Beat

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A Scene Grows In Brooklyn

'Size Matters' Gives Original Big Band Music a Dependable Stage


JC Sanford Orchestra

FRAN KAUFMAN

On a recent Monday night in Brooklyn, saxophonist Joshua Shneider set out for the Tea Lounge cafe, site of the weekly "Size Matters" big band series. His jaunts to the neighborhood spot on Mondays had become so habitual that his wife remarked, "This is like your bowling night, huh?"

With a crowd of regulars and a casual vibe, Tea Lounge has become a congenial home for the progressive big band community. Venues in Manhattan traditionally host house big bands every Monday evening, but the Tea Lounge offers a fresh twist: different large ensembles every week with repertoires consisting almost entirely of original music from the scene's exploratory edges.

Trombonist JC Sanford launched the Tea Lounge's "Size Matters" program in March 2010. It began as a monthlong event but quickly became a hub for new big band music, playing host to such groups as the Bill Mobley Big Band, Alan Ferber's Expanded Ensemble and the Delphian Jazz Orchestra—more than 30 outfits in all.

"Tea Lounge is one of the really rich places in New York for big band writers," composer Javier Arau told a crowd gathered to see his big band in October.

Arau's band might not exist if not for "Size Matters." He had been composing for years and participated in the BMI Jazz Composers Workshop—a breeding ground for young big band arrangers—but hadn't ever formed a working big band of his own. "It felt like too big of a mountain to climb," he said. For him, the series was "a catalyst to actually work on getting the band together."

Sanford said that Arau's experience is common. The weekly stand has motivated several other BMI veterans and would-be leaders to debut new projects at Tea Lounge, having partially alleviated one of the greatest hurdles to the enterprise: the hassle of hustling for a gig.

Performance opportunities are hard to come by, and big bands face additional barriers. The sheer size of a big band limits the number of venues in which it can play. And more bodies mean more complimentary drinks and potentially a bigger paycheck from the venue—possible deterrents for club managers.

Despite these challenges, the New York scene is rife with young big band players and composers who continue to push the movement forward, taking cues from disparate genres, incorporating unconventional instruments and finding new ways to harness the unique energy of a dozen-plus voices on the bandstand.

It's a positive sign for big bands that an important new stage for this music is located in Brooklyn, a borough increasingly defined by its rising artistic profile. Tea Lounge in particular has served as a reliable arts incubator over the years, with music most nights of the week and weathered red-brick walls that serve as an exhibit space for visual artists.

"It feels uniquely Brooklyn, this series," Sanford said. "It just seems like this is why people want to live here, because it's so comfortable. It's like the perfect community vibe."

Though Tea Lounge isn't ideal for serious listening—the music competes with both the hiss of the espresso machine and the free Wi-Fi for patrons' attention—players say they like the casual, carefree atmosphere. "There's always somebody who's dying to play there," Sanford said.

Mike Holober, a pianist and associate director of the BMI clinic, can attest to the scene's appeal. He's played with 10 different bands at Tea Lounge, some of them multiple times. He says he's drawn by the experience of playing forward-thinking music in larger ensembles, a sentiment echoed by several other players.

"On the NYC big band scene," Holober said, "when someone puts in the effort to create a night's worth of music, great musicians will always want to play." *—Eric Bishop*

Riffs


Jon Weber

ALLEN SHARPE

New Hire: Pianist Jon Weber will take the place of Artistic Director Marian McPartland as the host of "Piano Jazz," the longest-running jazz program on NPR. Weber's tenure will begin in January. He will continue to conduct interviews and play piano but will be refocusing the show toward recognizing jazz's rising stars.

Remembering Butch: Drummer George "Butch" Ballard died Oct. 1 in Philadelphia at the age of 92. Ballard famously performed with Duke Ellington and Count Basie. He is said to have also played on over 300 recordings, including stints with Louie Armstrong.

Stepney Sessions: Chicago's Indie-Art Media Studio hosted "Replay: A Charles Stepney Listening Session" on Oct. 28. The event included both popular and unreleased works by the gospel artist, as well as the official relaunch of the Charles Stepney Foundation, a non-profit dedicated to education on intellectual property rights.

Capital Contributor: DC Jazz Festival founder and Executive Producer Charles Fishman was presented with a 2011 Distinguished Service to the Humanities Award from the Humanities Council of Washington, D.C. Fishman was honored for his contributions to the arts community at an awards ceremony and celebration on Oct. 13 at Hogan Lovells.

Canada Blues: Swamp-funk artist JJ Grey and his band Mofro were nominated for a Maple Blues Award in the B.B. King International Blues Artist of the Year category. The 15th Annual Maple Blues Awards ceremony, which recognizes blues music throughout Canada, will take place in Toronto on Jan. 16.


Jerry González

MICHAEL WEINTROB

Caught

O'Farrill Offers Spirited Tribute to González Brothers

In the early '70s, young musicians knew that brothers Andy and Jerry González's house on Gildersleeve Avenue in the Bronx was *the* place for musicians to hang. To open the 10th anniversary season of the Afro Latin Jazz Orchestra, ALJO director Arturo O'Farrill programmed an homage to the two trailblazers. The 13-number concert took place at New York's Symphony Space on Oct. 14.

The González siblings have always made exemplary music. Equally comfortable with Monk and Machito, they brought a next-generation musical bilingualism to Latin jazz. In their early careers, they played with Dizzy Gillespie, then with Eddie Palmieri and with Ray Barretto, the alpha and omega of New York Latin bandleaders. The Grupo Folklórico y Experimental Nuevayorquino—a band that articulated an influential past-to-future vision of New York Latin music—was founded at Andy and Jerry's in the early '70s. Bassist Andy was co-founder and music director of Manny Oquendo's Libre (founded in 1974 as Conjunto Libre, and they're still working, but its timbalero namesake has passed), in which Jerry played trumpet, flugelhorn and congas.

In the early '80s, Jerry started the Fort Apache Band, with Andy on bass, and with them made one of the milestone albums of Latin jazz: 1988's *Rumba Para Monk*. It was part of an impeccable string of releases by the group. Jerry's star turn in Fernando Trueba's 2000 documentary *Calle 54* was followed by his relocation to Madrid, but he keeps coming back to New York, where Fort Apache continues to gig occasionally, recently packing the Blue Note on a Monday night in August.

Though rooted in Latin big-band history, the ALJO looks forward. Its carefully themed concerts favor premieres of new compositions, including, on this occasion, O'Farrill's "Andy And Jerry's: A Tribute To Fanny And Oscar." Jerry brought in two musicians from the active Spanish scene: Arranger Miguel Blanco conducted his charts playing clave and güiro in lieu of a baton, while the young Cadíz-born saxophonist Antonio Lizana impressed the audience both with his alto playing and with his *cante jondo* vocals on Blanco's "Gnossienne 3 (Tientos)," a convincing Gypsy-style reworking of Erik Satie. Blanco also contributed arrangements of Pedro Flores standard "Obsesión" and, from the Fort Apache book, Larry Willis' "Nightfall." O'Farrill conducted Michael Philip Mossman's arrangement of Andy González's "Vieques."

The concert was both musically deep and consistently entertaining. The big-band setting, with a forest of percussion up front and the mambo-honed 5-4-4 ALJO horn section ringing the stage in a semicircle, helped expand the familiar tunes, effectively opening up the old charts from four horns to 13 horns. The last three numbers of the program were drawn from the Libre repertoire. "We're channeling Manny Oquendo," Andy González announced before counting off a number. After the Libre version of Freddie Hubbard's "Little Sunflower," they closed with two hot vocal numbers, "Alabanciosa" and "Que Humanidad," featuring veteran singer Jorge Maldonado and *soneos* (vocal improvisations) by the up-and-comer Joseph "Quique" González. When it was time for the *moña* (the last brass feature before the final vocal section) the trombones achieved liftoff, and then the *coro* repeated a memorable lyric from Ñico Saquito, one that I remember singing along with Libre at gigs in the '80s: "*Qué humanidad/somos libres de verdad…* Such humanity, we are truly free." —*Ned Sublette*

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Wynton @ 50

Musicians, label executives and industry veterans look back at the famed trumpeter's many achievements.

All eyes have turned to a special birthday taking place in the jazz community: Wynton Marsalis turned 50 on Oct. 18. In celebration of Marsalis' birthday, a number of people in the music shared their thoughts on Wynton and his professional and/or personal impact.

As a member of Weather Report back in the late 1970s, drummer Peter Erskine was working in Los Angeles with Jaco Pastorius on the bassist's new album. Lo and behold, there was something going on around the corner. "During the mixing of *Word Of Mouth*, Jaco decided impulsively one night that we all had to go check out this new trumpet player and his brother [Branford Marsalis] who had just joined Art Blakey's band," Erskine recalled. "Jaco and me and my girlfriend plus two or three other folks all piled into a car and drove to some jazz club to hear Wynton. Excited by all that we heard the night before, I told [Joe] Zawinul about the gig that next morning. He told me, 'Ellis Marsalis and I were very tight, very good friends. We would always hang out together when I would travel to New Orleans with Cannon's band.' Joe said, 'I was the only white musician in an all-black band [with Cannonball Adderley], and Ellis was the only black musician in an all-white band [Al Hirt]. Ellis would always complain about how corny his band was, but how he had to keep doing the gig so he could feed his family. He had a lot of kids. Yeah, I remember Wynton. He was a little kid with glasses.'

"My two favorite things about Wynton," Erskine continued, "are that, number one, he has a really cool family, and two, he played a huge part in getting the music of Duke Ellington into America's schools."

For Graham Haynes, the connection to Marsalis includes classical music. "When I was at Queens College, I studied to be a jazz and classical trumpet player," Haynes said. "Around mid-1979 I heard about a guy named Wynton Marsalis who was supposed to be a monster at jazz and classical. I met and heard him around the end of that year and I said to myself, 'I'll never be as great as this guy is at both.' That was the end of my career as a classical trumpet player. I gave up the idea that I could do both. Soon after, we met and talked about several things that we were into, including classical trumpet. What amazed me—in addition to his playing—was that he sang to me all of the orchestral parts to, I believe, the Haydn Trumpet Concerto.

"Wynton and I didn't agree on some things, like musical styles. We've gone in different directions, but I will always respect his mastery, knowledge and his love and dedication to music."

Randall Kline, founder and executive artistic director of SFJAZZ, is a fellow music executive who, oddly enough, shares Marsalis' birthday. Kline says upfront that Wynton's unstinting support for SFJAZZ is a major reason why the organization is so successful. Like Erskine, his memories of Marsalis go back to the trumpeter's early days playing with Art Blakey. Apart from his performances with both large and small ensembles at the SFJAZZ Festival, Kline cited another important role Marsalis has played. "I think of Wynton and his connections with young people," Kline said. "What he's done to encourage young musicians, he does it naturally. When he's in San Francisco, there's always some high school kid backstage who he's giving a lesson to on the spot. High school all-star bands, middle school programs that exist at SFJAZZ, he's just off and running with that stuff, teaching and playing with them."

"My first encounter with Wynton was with him and Branford in New Orleans," said veteran trumpeter Marcus Belgrave. "It was quite extraordinary because the two of them were able to perform quite well with only a drummer: no

chord instrument or bass. I thought this was truly amazing because at the time they were only 14 and 16 years old. They were well-versed in tradition. I raved about them when I returned to Detroit. However, my comments fell on deaf ears with the local DJs until Wynton's first record won him a Grammy—the rest is history. He has connected us from the 20th to the 21st century with his leadership in the traditions of jazz and the classical American music. His strong opinions and dedication have opened doors for many young people to express themselves and continue the legacy."

"I'm very appreciative of all the great one-liners Wynton would whisper in my ear while playing on the bandstand with him in 1995–'96," said bassist Reuben Rogers. "Things like 'Sound!' 'Tone!' 'Tempos!' Makes me crack up just thinking about it. Ultimately, he was pointing out some of the key fundamental things I needed to develop as a young bassist. I can still hear him now."

> "[Wynton] is prolific and a perfectionist according to his own musical and moral compass, expecting the most of himself and others—from musicians in his band all the way up to the federal government."
> —*Aaron Goldberg*

"Wynton's superlative musicianship, leadership skills and unparalleled devotion to promoting the cause of jazz music and African American genius to a general audience needs no comment," said pianist Aaron Goldberg. "He is prolific and a perfectionist according to his own musical and moral compass, expecting the most of himself and of others—from the musicians in his band all the way up to the federal government. Working with him is a joy and a challenge. Beyond the bandstand, it is an inspirational study in how to work hard, set goals and achieve them. Wynton's gifts go beyond his uncanny ability to play the trumpet and his unique improvisational voice on his instrument. His greatest talent may be something that is not normally thought of as a talent—the ability to work hard, to apply himself fully, from the smallest details of technique to the largest problems of society. Apparently, without ever needing to sleep."

Goldberg added, "One particularly underappreciated aspect of Wynton's character is his psychological acumen, his nuanced ability to read the people around him. Touring with Wynton's band means also trying to guard his lefty jump shot, hold your own in chess and joust over politics and aesthetics, all great pleasures in their own right. I was nevertheless unprepared for one night in his hotel room when in the course of a conversation about Thomas Mann on democracy, Wynton offered insight into my own character that even a professional psychoanalyst would have found startlingly incisive. Wynton applies his formidable intelligence widely, including to the social realm, and he is far more sensitive and generous on a personal level than is commonly known."

Perhaps speaking for the younger cats who have come up through the ranks and been touched by him over these past couple of decades, vibraphonist Stefon Harris effused, "I want to thank you, Wynton, for believing in me and always being a shining example of what is possible when you have a confluence of vision, passion and determination. Your gifts are truly tremendous and plentiful. The most striking among them being your generosity and commitment to America's greatest cultural contribution to the world. With love, respect and admiration—happy 50th, big brother!"

—*John Ephland*


Paul Brady (left) with Dan Morgenstern

ED BERGER

Words From The Modern-Day Hot Club

Vindicating Jazz's Most Famous Gypsy

I'm a 29-year-old guitarist for the Hot Club of Detroit with two degrees in jazz. But at age 17, when I moved to Paris for two years, I did not have a guitar.

Names like Miles Davis and Wes Montgomery didn't interest me as much as French girls and partying did. But our house came with a rack of CDs, one of which was by Django Reinhardt and the Hot Club of France. I put the CD into the player and listened to "I Got Rhythm."

Around the same time, my father introduced me to Art Tatum and Oscar Peterson, two pianists whose virtuosity and phrasing grasped me the same way that Reinhardt did. I never thought of Reinhardt as being anything other than a jazz musician like Tatum or Peterson. I didn't know he was a Gypsy or that there was such a thing as "Gypsy jazz" (often described as a hybrid of Gypsy folk music and swing). Today the term "Gypsy jazz" is ubiquitous, heard wherever Django is mentioned. However, the idiom did not exist during his lifetime.

"The Gypsy influence on Django's playing as a jazz artist is not that powerful," said jazz historian and former DownBeat editor Dan Morgenstern (who saw Reinhardt perform in Copenhagen in 1939). "He may have been ethnically a Gypsy playing jazz, but he was not a Gypsy musician. He could play Gypsy music, but even in most of his original compositions there is very little trace of that."

What Reinhardt played back then was known simply as "hot jazz," which eventually evolved into bebop. Following his early death in 1953, and notably after the 1999 Woody Allen film *Sweet And Lowdown*, there have been annual festivals and concerts dedicated to Reinhardt. But the guitarists and other instrumentalists involved (save for the occasional George Benson cameo) are typicaly not the kind you would find performing "Nancy With The Laughing Face" with a pianist or drummer at a New York club. Reinhardt, however, was the consummate jam session player: He recorded and performed with the most celebrated jazz artists of his day—namely Rex Stewart, Coleman Hawkins, Duke Ellington and Dizzy Gillespie.

The rising popularity of Reinhardt's music has inspired a sizable circle of modern musicians, professional and amateur, and the enthusiasm generated by them has been an overwhelmingly positive phenomenon. That being said, I find myself disappointed with the consistent misapplication of the term "Gypsy jazz" to Reinhardt's music. Although players today approach the music with both passion and discipline, most do not understand that Reinhardt was first and always a true jazz guitarist. After participating in Reinhardt festivals and tribute concerts all over the country, I've noticed that the majority of hobbyists (and even some professionals) display adequate-to-outstanding guitar technique and requisite Reinhardt licks. But they demonstrate little concept of proper jazz harmony, phrasing, or deft improvisation. In sum, they produce a sound that is not very reminiscent of Reinhardt whatsoever.

Ironically, one remarkable jazz musician who does honor Reindhart's style today is not a guitarist. Saxophonist James Carter and the Hot Club of Detroit have performed together every December in Detroit for six years now, and Carter has shown himself to be a Reinhardt disciple in the deepest sense. His playing is positively frightening. His time has the power to make you feel notes in the back of your throat. I find this especially interesting because Reinhardt's time was so admired by Coleman Hawkins that he specifically mentioned it to Morgenstern.

Django Reinhardt should not be remembered by musicians as only the father of Gypsy jazz, despite the popularity of his imitators and followers. Many of these musicians fail to appreciate the bigger picture. Reinhardt's position should be with the great pioneering virtuosos of jazz improvisation—in the truest sense, one of the canonical jazz cats. **DB**

Caught

L.A. Experiences Miles Through Ambrose

Trumpeter Ambrose Akinmusire's quintet performed an achingly subdued tribute to Miles Davis' most publicly accessible period on Oct. 22 at the Segerstrom Center for the Arts' Samueli Theater in Costa Mesa, Calif. Over the course of 75 minutes, with the aid of three projection screens, a handful of raspy audio clips and a live narrator, the band addressed Davis' transition from bop-soaked youth to swaggering king of cool—while working hard to resist the expectation of a tribute.

Akinmusire quickly established himself as more than capable but was disinterested in filling Davis' shoes, opening the show with a solo workout that highlighted his impeccable precision. He evoked tea kettle whistles and tube radio hues, and was later joined by the rest of his young band: Walter Smith III on tenor saxophone, Sam Harris on piano, Marcus Shelby on bass and Justin Brown on drums.

During an early performance of Sonny Rollins' "Airegin," Akinmusire and Smith drove hard over the propulsive rhythm section. Their momentum was derailed by narrator Donald Lacy Jr.'s forced beatnik patter and a slideshow that highlighted available merchandise in the lobby. It was unfortunate that all the bells and whistles distracted from the music.

Members of the band rarely raised their sound above a whisper, leaning heavily on atmospheric ballads and contemplative solos. In a more characteristic Davis move, Akinmusire, aside from the occasional nod or smile, never communicated with the audience through anything but his trumpet.

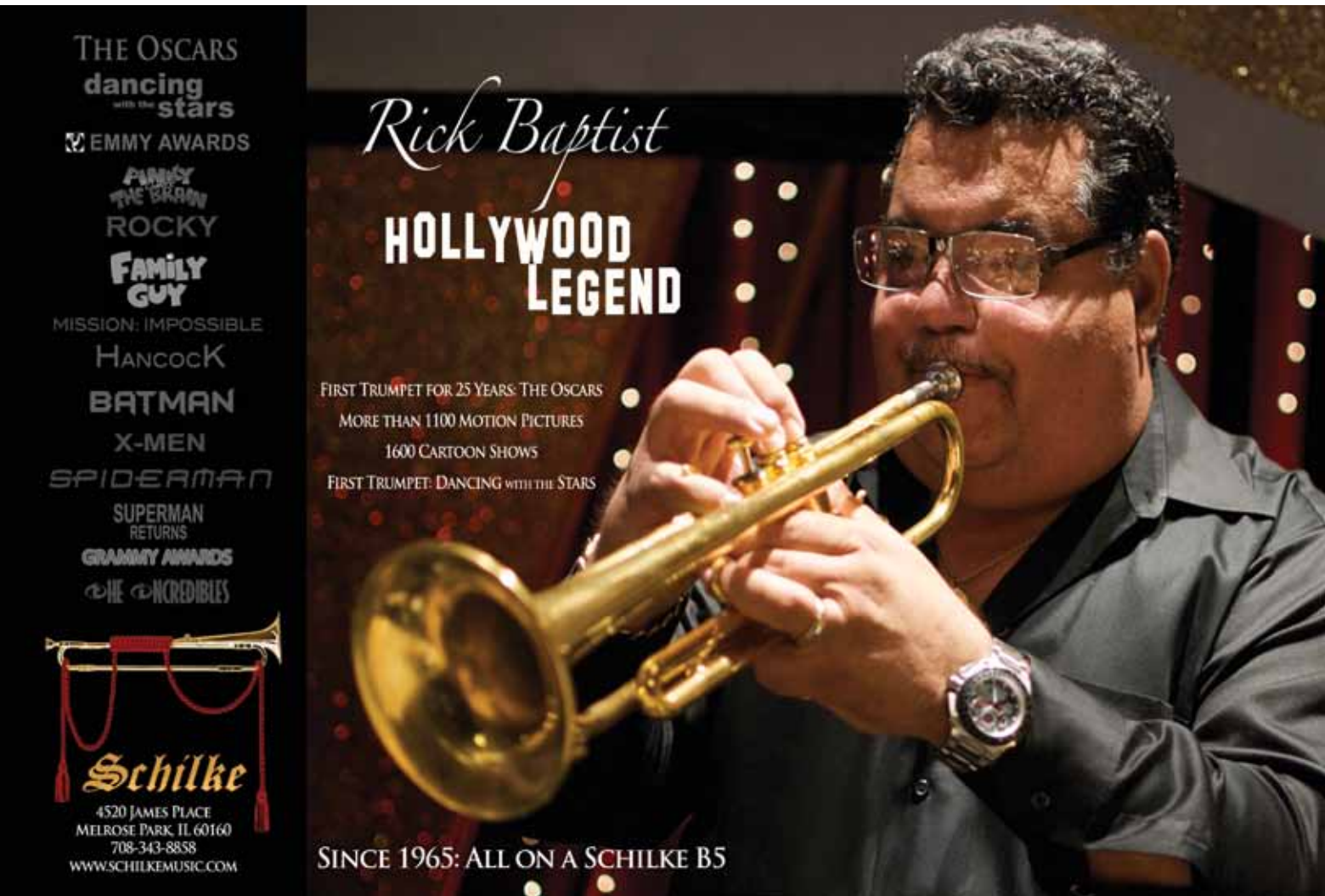
One of Akinmusire's many talents as a leader is his willingness to relinquish the spotlight. Smith evoked Bach and Coltrane during a brief solo turn, and Brown got a moment to display his funky thunder following an audio clip of Davis linking James Brown and *Kind Of Blue*. Harris offered a wandering solo and a run through "'Round Midnight" in a piano trio, adhering to the casual cool that dominated the evening. The band reconvened for a gentle spin on "Flamenco Sketches." Akinmusire provided his own delicate take on Davis' modal swirls, but the evening ended abruptly with Akinmusire and Harris intertwined in a meditative duet.


Ambrose Akinmusire (second from left) at the Samueli Theater

MAURY PHILLIPS

Akinmusire and his band are a wonderfully talented collection of musicians who were unable to unleash their full fiery potential. Their professional sheen only allowed a few windows for genuine spontaneity. It would be interesting to see them tackle the next decade of Davis' life and raise the pulse.

—Sean J. O'Connell



Caught

Smith Paints Stark Portrait of Societal Struggles

Trumpeter Wadada Leo Smith ended his magnum opus *Ten Freedom Summers* with a soundbite from Martin Luther King's prophetic "I've Been To The Mountaintop" speech, but the five hours of music over three October nights at Los Angeles' Red Cat were anything but derivative. Smith illustrated the psychological impact of the American Civil Rights struggle with compositional interpretations of historical events under such headings as "Defining Moments In America" and "What Is Democracy?" The performance was inspired by playwright August Wilson's narrative collages from the *Pittsburgh Cycle*, in which 10 plays document the African-American experience over several decades.

The stage was divided between members of Smith's Golden Quartet—drummer Susie Ibarra, bassist Jeff Lindberg and pianist Anthony Davis—and the nine-piece Southwest Chamber Music ensemble, conducted by Jeff von der Schmidt. Though each group performed several segments separately, they united for three sections.

Smith handwrote all the music (nearly 300 pages) for each musician, facilitating cross-pollination between the conventional and improvisational, and counterbalancing rhythmic and intervallic cells. The concept was novel even to experimentalist Davis, who timed his scurries up and down the keyboard via eye contact with harpist Alison Bjorkedal across the stage. The often-fierce Ibarra had to rein in for long stretches, but bassist Lindberg was naturally stoic and contributed impressive arco work. Such an ambitious project would be impossible without the Southwest ensemble's prior exposure to the trumpeter's innovative *modus operandi*.

Smith's writing for strings was audacious. On successive nights, violinist Lorenz Gamma, cellist Peter Jacobson, and violinists Jan Karlin and Shalini Vijayan increased their melismatic counterpoint. One instrument would gliss up as the other went down during introductory sections. Vijayan's intimate interaction with Smith and precise intonation in the highest register during "Lyndon B. Johnson's Great Society" and "The Civil Rights Act Of 1964" were utterly stunning.

The real-time visuals created by videographers Jesse Gilbert and Carole Kim suffered technical setbacks the first couple of nights but kicked in for the finale.

Smith's trenchant playing climaxed during "September Eleventh, 2001: A Memorial." He varied his attack from intense chromatic runs that recalled Miles' Davis fusion period or the gravitas of *Sketches Of Spain* to chilling long-tones drawn to a whisper. Smith affirmed that the battle for civil liberty was an essentially positive experience for humanity, but his writing suggested a starker legacy. He did, however, permeate "The Freedom Riders Ride" with raucous, defiant blues. —*Michael Jackson*

Musicians Resonate Through George Klabin's Label and Intimate Recitals

George Klabin is a big-picture kind of guy. His label, Resonance Records, is one arm of his Rising Jazz Stars Foundation, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Like its parent company, Resonance presents new artists to the jazz public: violinist Christian Howes, Romanian pianist Marian Petrescu, flutist Lori Bell, singers Angela Hagenbach and Greta Matassa, Swedish guitarist Andreas Öberg and pianist/composer/arranger Tamir Hendleman among them. The roster is hedged with household names like pianist/arranger Bill Cunliffe, pianist John Beasley, Brazilian flugelhornist Claudio Roditi and Italian pianist Dado Moroni.


George Klabin

PATRICK SCHNEIDER

Southern California has many ongoing jazz salons, but Klabin's Rising Jazz Stars recitals—held in a converted Beverly Hills building—are recorded professionally and taped with state-of-the art video equipment. "There are two areas I've excelled at—working with unique creative virtuosos and helping them get their best work in front of the public," Klabin said.

He added, "My feeling is that the mainstream jazz of the 1960s and the '70s was the apex of jazz. The greatest practitioners in that era had the best melodic, harmonic and rhythmic content. My artists are all working off of those traditions in one way or another."

Klabin also began releasing unknown material by past masters. The initial release was Freddie Hubbard's *Pinnacle: Live & Unreleased From Keystone Korner*. "I'm only issuing music that has never seen the light of day," he said. "That ranks with the artist's best work. I'll be putting out a Bill Evans album and the first new Wes Montgomery album since his passing in 1968."

In college, Klabin hosted a jazz show on WKCR at Columbia University, his alma mater. "I started with earphones, six microphones and a two-track tape recorder," he recalled. "I had to get it right." He worked as an engineer at a studio owned by erstwhile French horn player Don Elliott on New York's West Side. "Don Schlitten produced for Prestige there," Klabin noted. "I recorded Dexter Gordon, Pucho and the Latin Soul Brothers—about eight albums."

In 1969 Klabin bought a half-interest in a small studio, where the son of business partner and violinist Harry Lookofsky had recorded. They called it Sound Ideas. In 1973, Klabin and Lookofsky moved into the former Capitol Records Studio on West 46th Street, first occupying the upstairs studio complex and then, in 1975, the 3,000-square-foot main studio, which was rebuilt with a 24-track mixing board. "We were one of the few New York studios that could accommodate a symphony orchestra," he recalled.

At Sound Ideas, Klabin first recorded incidental music for "The Archies" TV show. It was the disco era and the hit "A Fifth Of Beethoven" was a Sound Ideas product, as were five James Brown albums for Polygram and the early Denon digital jazz recordings. Klabin recorded many Roulette jazz releases, as well as Blue Note, CBS and many other labels. He closed the studio in 1981 and spent 22 years away from music in a professional capacity.

He moved west, producing concerts at The Vic in Santa Monica. The Beverly Hills recitals followed. Since 2008, there have been 28 Resonance releases. In 2010, Cunliffe won a Grammy for best arrangement on *Resonance Big Band Plays Tribute To Oscar Peterson*, and Roditi's *Brazilliance X4* was nominated for a Latin Grammy. In 2011, Beasley's *Positootly!* received a Grammy nomination for best jazz instrumental CD.

Resonance artist Hendelman, a sought-after pianist and orchestrator, sees how Klabin's skills figure into his work: "Part of the producer's job is to know when it's time to go for one more take and when it's time to move on. George has great ears, and he gives the artist space to make the creative choices to make the album that the artist wants. It's refreshing and inspiring to have someone like George, whose mission is to support the music and deliver it in its most realized form to the audience's ear."

Bell appreciates Resonance's full-service nature. "He puts a lot of production value into the recordings," she said. "He's really hands-on. He likes to be in control, but he really does listen to us. If you've seen the videos of the concert that Tamir and I did on the Resonance website, you see that the production values are first-rate."

—Kirk Silsbee

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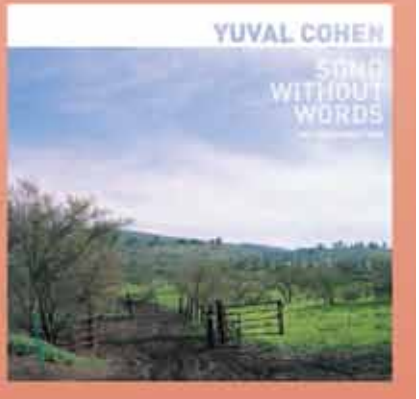

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Dan Tepfer
Back To Bach

Four years ago, shortly before hit time at a small venue in the Czech Republic, well into a tour consisting primarily of solo free-improvisation concerts, pianist Dan Tepfer opted to do something different.

"It's a tall order to make up something every night, and I had nothing to lose," Tepfer recalled during a recent interview in his home base of Brooklyn. He had been carrying a score of Bach's *Goldberg Variations*, and decided to play several, using them as springboards upon which to improvise. "People responded strongly, and it took me to a different place." Over the next few years, he developed his Goldberg investigations into a project in which he played about half the variations and stretched out on the improvisations until, as he puts it, "it seemed obvious that I should do a record."

The result, *Goldberg Variations/Variations* (Sunnyside), is one of the more audacious, accomplished recordings of 2011. Rather than deconstruct or swing the repertoire, Tepfer treats the suite idiomatically, functioning alternately as a classical pianist—with a point of view that will make sense to Baroque aficionados—and as a virtuoso improviser saturated in the tropes and syntax of the jazz canon. In distinction to his live performances, he frames each invention precisely within the form, duration and implied narrative of the "chapter" upon which it is based. Some cohere more effectively than others, but the overall attitude is spontaneous and in-the-moment, denoting Tepfer's command of the raw materials and prolonged reflection upon the "text."

Tepfer, 29, recorded the variations three times before arriving at the final version. "I tried to identify elements in each variation that I found important, figure out what they actually evoked in me, and thought I'd express that idea," he said. For example, when extemporizing on "Variation 7," composed in G, he "imagined two people dancing, with the guy being a little shy; they're young, not great dancers, but there's some chemistry."

He added, "I absolutely do not want it to sound like an exercise. I want to sound like a person making a commentary on someone's music, and that person has to come through clearly. It was a huge challenge to play an improvisation in the studio and decide whether or not it had that tone—even on those variations where I tried to achieve something technically related to what Bach was doing, whether switching hands or playing very fast."

Tepfer observed that his five-year association with alto saxophonist Lee Konitz has accelerated the process of what he calls "figuring out what I sound like." As is clear from their 12 fluid, extemporaneous conversations on *Duos With Lee: 2009* (Sunnyside), a highlight of Konitz's golden years discography, the octogenerian master and his acolyte both understand how a no-schmaltz, follow-the-line approach heightens the emotional resonance.

"Whatever the context, Lee sounds exactly like himself," Tepfer said. "Working with someone of that singularity has forced me to really think about *who* I am, what it means to be me playing music."

The identity that Tepfer is mapping out in notes and tones gestated in Paris, where his biologist father and opera singer mother, both native Oregonians, moved at the cusp of the '80s. Tepfer first studied Bach as a pre-adolescent conservatory student. On summer vacations in Oregon, his maternal grandfather, the eminent jazz pianist Chuck Ruff, offered "an open invitation to make music up and hooked me up with recordings." As intrigued with science and mathematics as with the arts, Tepfer took a degree in astrophysics at the University of Edinburgh, while singing in and conducting several operas and playing three nights a week in local jazz clubs. Then he attended New England Conservatory, where Danilo Pérez, Bob Brookmeyer and Steve Lacy—an acquaintance from Paris—were consequential mentors.

"Danilo got me to develop a stronger sense of time," Tepfer explained. "He helped me get out of my European arrogance and reevaluate what I knew and didn't know about being an actual, happening jazz musician. He started me transcribing, which I'd never done, but now am doing more and more."

To illustrate the point, Tepfer sang a chorus of Lester Young's solo on "Shoe Shine Boy," a staple of Lennie Tristano's pedagogy that Konitz followed during his own formative years.

Then, in his own argot, Tepfer paraphrased Young's epigram, "You can't join the throng until you sing your own song." "I'm drawn to people with strong voices, who aren't interested in recreating something that already happened," he said, an assertion given weight by a glance at his early autumn itinerary, which included local gigs with individualists Noah Preminger, Will Vinson, Rob Garcia, and Alexis Cuadrado. "I value people who listen to a lot of music and can say whether something is good or bad, not whether it agrees with their certain stylistic viewpoint." —*Ted Panken*

Rahsaan Barber
Raising Eyebrows


RUSTY RUSSELL

The jazz underground in Nashville climbs closer toward daylight with the release of saxophonist Rahsaan Barber's *Everyday Magic*. In a town where Western-hatted buskers fill the main drag downtown with their versions of Hank Williams classics, Barber and a community of like-minded musicians woodshed their ideas at each other's homes, grab occasional—*very* occasional—gigs at the Nashville Jazz Workshop or F. Scott's and often come up with music that would raise eyebrows in any so-called jazz center.

"There have been world-class musicians here all of my life," says Barber, who was born with his twin brother Roland in Music City. "You think about John Birdsong, Beegee Adair, Chester Thompson, Jim Ferguson, Don Aliquo, Jeff Coffin. You see the detail that goes into the charts and the work that goes into making sure the musical product is at a high level. Nashville is *phenomenal* for that. It's as good and even better than any place in terms of the preparational aspects of music making."

Everyday Magic is the latest confirmation of Barber's argument. On its nine tracks, Barber's band, also called Everyday Magic, performs with extraordinary intensity. Guitarist Adam Agati (replaced since these sessions by James DaFilda), pianist Jody Nardonne, bassist Jerry Navarro and drummer Nioshi Jackson cruise through Barber's tunes with precision where required but more often with an intuitive, highly tuned give-and-take at every tempo. Written in 6/8 in divisions of 4 and 2, "Jubilee" explodes into straight 4/4 on solos that break back into 6 after each player's fiery turn. A reflective intro to "Innocence," arranged on a motif played unison on piano and bass, sets up eloquent musings by Barber on flute. "Memphis Soul" is a crackling funk strut, "Manhattan Grace" an altar call to believers in the gospel of musical truth.

By intention, every moment of *Everyday Magic* targets the widest possible audience, not just those initiated into the hip elite. "The group is a medium, for lack of a better word, for us to stay passionate, not just for music but for people, communication, honesty and integrity," he explains. "The comment we get most regularly is, 'I didn't even know I liked jazz!' I'm comforted because a lot of people who are down with the record would not classify themselves as jazz fans. But they'll say, 'Tell me what else to get. I love this!'"

Certainly Barber's fellow Nashvillians get the message of "Floodsong." Building from a piano statement of the 7/8 motif, it seems to transport Barber within seconds into an altered state of ecstatic blowing, born by the subtext of Middle Tennessee's massive flood of May 2010.

"I was very fortunate because I did not lose anything in the flood," he recalls. "But Jerry Navarro, our bassist, lost his entire home studio. This tune comes out of that experience. When we play it, we've had people say they could feel the water."

"We cut this record in July, just after the flood," Jody Nardonne says. "That weekend, we played a gig at the Jazz Workshop on Friday. I think we had kind of goofed around with this tune; maybe we had some rehearsal earlier that week. But it was amazing, the intensity that we played with at the gig that night. And when we went to record it, we tapped into something we always knew was there."

Is it fury, then, that fuels his searing, climactic improvisation on this track? Barber thinks for a second before answering, "I'd say it's reverence, especially on some levels of the trials of that situation and also the tenacity we needed to recover."

Barber believes so strongly in his community that with the release of *Everyday Magic* he launches a record label, Jazz Music City, dedicated to hipping the world on what his peers have to offer. "There's more than enough here for a record label," he insists. "I can already hear some of my friends in New York going, 'You've got to be kidding. A jazz label in Nashville, Tennessee?' I just hope we can be smart enough to prove to them that we're not kidding."

—Bob Doerschuk

Ali Ryerson

Passion Built On Trust

Oftentimes, it's just a matter of asking for what you want. Ali Ryerson learned that last February while working with the flute manufacturer Gemeinhardt at the Mid-Atlantic Flute Fair in Reston, Va. Dave Pirtle, president and CEO of the company, approached her about the idea of her designing her own line of "dream flutes." Ryerson says that it took two split-seconds to jump on the opportunity.

At the time, she had a new album in mind and was seeking backing to pay for the recording sessions. Two record labels showed interest, but Ryerson said that they would have owned the resulting masters, and she would have had to pay for the sessions. Later that week at the Flute Fair, she asked Pirtle if Gemeinhardt would consider financing a portion of her disc. She thought of a nifty title, *Con Brio!,* which has a double meaning. In Italian, it means "with vigor," but "Brio!" also denotes the signature flute series that she would help design for Gemeinhardt.

By the end of that week, Ryerson had convinced Gemeinhardt to finance the entire recording session. "I own the album. They are not looking for a profit from the album at all," Ryerson says, minutes after teaching the fundamentals of jazz and flute to two enthusiastic groups of kids at the Burgundy Farm Country Day School in Alexandria, Va., right outside of Washington, D.C. "Everything about the album is completely honest and from the heart. One of the beautiful things is that I don't have any contracts with Gemeinhardt. There is not one single thing in writing. I don't want it. Everything is on a handshake. I would do anything for that company, and vice-versa. It's like that old-fashioned relationship where people trust each other."

Ryerson is not just a rubber-stamp endorser of the Brio! flutes. She advises the manufacturer on such details as headjoints, placement and height of the keys, the lip plate and the cut. For Pirtle, she's the ideal spokesperson: "I don't look for an artist who would just say, 'Hey, for *X* amount of money, I'll endorse your product,'" he said. "I want someone who really believes in the product because they're passionate about it."

The flutist packs plenty of passion into the exquisite *Con Brio!* (ACR Music), teaming up with her longtime collaborator, keyboardist Pete Levin, as well as the supreme rhythm section of drummer Danny Gottlieb and bassist Mark Egan. Sometimes Ryerson shares the front line with guitarist Mike DeMicco; other times, it's with Mike Mainieri, whom she was very excited to play with for the first time. "Certain instruments complement each other. When I heard Mike, I could just hear myself with that sound and texture," Ryerson explains.

The combination of Ryerson and Mainieri certainly entices on songs like Mainieri's pneumatic "Sarah's Touch," Levin's tranquil "Another Time, Another Place" and composer Erik Satie's "1st Gymnopédie." "I've played with a lot of amazing flute players in my career," Mainieri says. "I love Ali's phrasing; she's very expressive. Although she knows a lot of technique, she doesn't necessarily play it all the time. That in and of itself emotes a lot of passion."

Other highlights include Ryerson's sanguine reading of John Abercrombie's "Jazz Folk" and her sparkling turn on Jimmy Guiffre's "Shadows."

Back at the Burgundy School, Ryerson emphasizes "sound" as she demonstrated the differences among the instruments in the flute and piccolo family. She manages to sneak in a couple of cherry-picked standards—Richard Rodgers and Lorenz Hart's "Have You Meet Miss Jones?" and Moe Koffman's "Swingin' Shepherd Blues"—while holding the attention of students, ranging from kindergarteners to 8th graders. "My biggest thing in flute playing is about the sound," Ryerson says. "I've worked long and hard for a lot of years, studying classical music to develop my sound."

When asked how she got into music education, Ryerson traces it back to when she was 11 years old, when she *taught* piano and beginner guitar while growing up in Armonk, N.Y. "I guess I was proactive," she says with a smile. "And I liked earning a buck." —*John Murph*

Ingrid Laubrock
Sonic Explorer

It all started with Cannonball. Impressed by alto legend Julian Adderley's playing on Miles Davis' *Kind Of Blue*, Ingrid Laubrock was in her teens when she set her mind on playing the saxophone. But she had to wait until she left her small village near Muenster, Germany, and landed in London to see her life as a saxophonist start to take shape. After gaining some recognition in Great Britain, she moved to New York a few years ago.

"London has many great musicians, but they mainly come from the U.K. and there is more separation between them based on the type of music they play," she said during a recent visit to Chicago for a performance with drummer Mike Reed's Myth/Science Assembly at the Chicago Jazz Festival. She certainly has not cut her ties while embarking on a new path. Her latest disc, *The Madness Of Crowds* (Intakt), is the second recording by Sleepthief, a trio she formed with British pianist Liam Noble and drummer/husband Tom Rainey, which can be viewed as a bridge between London and New York.

The band's choice of moniker makes sense because imagination is key to comprehending Laubrock's music. "I get a lot of ideas from dreams," she said. "I write them down because what happens at night is very important to me." Sleepthief is also a vehicle Laubrock uses for pursuing an interest in abstraction—something she developed before leaving England. The band's music is created on the spur of the moment; no instructions are given or discussed ahead of time because Laubrock views such tactics as counterproductive.

Laubrock steps in as a leader when the time comes to select and sequence the pieces for an album—challenging tasks that Laubrock relishes. "It is interesting to see how your mind can mess with you," she said. "One day, you like certain selections, and the next, you want to hear something else. It is hard to be objective, and I understand why some musicians ask a producer to do it." Ultimately, she follows her instinct.

Despite the new connections she has made since her arrival in the States, the saxophonist is


LYDIA PUZER

comfortable playing with a core group of musicians. When Laubrock was commissioned to write a piece to be unveiled in early December at the New Jazz Meeting in Karlsruhe, Germany, she decided to put together an octet made up of old English acquaintances and new American cohorts. "I have a funny relationship with Germany because I have never been part of the scene there," she said. "But it is nice to go back home and be recognized." —*Alain Drouot*

3 COHENS

UNCONDITIONAL LOVE

By Dan Ouellette
Photography by Jimmy and Dena Katz

Chemistry. Alchemy. Telepathy. All are appropriate words to describe the otherworldly quality of improvisation by a band with longstanding personnel credentials.

Then, of course, there's that rarity of synced-in expression: the genome factor, as has been manifest historically by the Heath Brothers (Percy, Jimmy, Tootie) and the Marsalis clan (father Ellis and his children Branford, Wynton, Delfeayo and Jason).

Shared DNA goes deep, which is partly why 3 Cohens has taken the kindred ensemble to top-tier status, evidenced by its third—and best—CD, aptly titled *Family*. The trio, from oldest to youngest sibling, consists of soprano saxophonist Yuval, clarinetist/tenor saxophonist Anat and trumpeter Avishai. *Family* was released in October on Anzic Records, the label that Anat formed in 2005 with business partner Oded Lev-Ari and which releases her own and her brothers' individual recordings as well as non-Cohen artists who, as Anat puts it, "have a connection to us or who fit the vibe we've created here."

Born in Tel Aviv, Israel, they attended the same music schools and all gravitated to jazz, with each attending Berklee College of Music. In addition to the family group, the three siblings each enjoy careers as talented leaders. Yuval's duo recording, *Songs Without Words*, with pianist Shai Maestro, was released on the same day as *Family*, while 2010 saw Avishai's trio (with Omer Avital and Nasheet Waits) releasing *Introducing Triveni*, and Anat delivering *Clarinetwork: Live At The Village Vanguard* with bandmates Benny Green, Peter Washington and Lewis Nash.

But in their familial band, 3 Cohens, there's something special at work—a new level of anticipation and celebration. Witness the joyful—and at times, whimsical and intimate—conversations and interweaving horn textures on *Family*, an incredible 10-song collection of straightahead jazz with lyrical, swinging, improvisationally vital originals, Charles Mingus-inspired music and fresh arrangements of New Orleans-tinged tunes. It's particularly amazing given the events of Yuval's "medical setback," as Anat calls it, and his miraculous recovery from having ependymoma (a cervical spine tumor in the neck), which


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sidelined him for several years. Assisting the Cohen homecoming party is the stellar rhythm section of bassist Matt Penman, drummer Gregory Hutchinson and pianist Aaron Goldberg, augmented on two numbers by special guest vocalist Jon Hendricks.

Shortly before 3 Cohens began a six-night residency at New York's Village Vanguard in early November, the siblings settled in for a conversation about their career as a family band, from its humble beginnings, through the turmoil years and to its newfound jazz stardom. On this cool and cloudy October afternoon in Anat's hip, spacious Brooklyn apartment—which boasts a terrific view of the East River between the Williamsburg and Manhattan bridges—Anat wore a black-and-white striped blouse, and the long-bearded Avishai sported a knit cap and white zip-down sweater with a chain of a miniature metal trumpet. Because Yuval resides in Tel Aviv, we invited him to join the discussion via Skype. Casually dressed, Yuval appeared clear as day on Anat's MacBook Pro, strategically positioned on her dining room table.

The following interview is the first time Yuval has talked about his medical episode—and the first time Anat and Avishai had heard Yuval share certain details of his journey.

When you were younger, did the three of you ever think about deliberately forming a band together?

Anat: When we grew up, we never talked about that. Yuval and Avishai had some gigs together, but that's when they were both younger. When you're young, two or three years' difference is quite big.

What is the age difference among you?

Anat: I'm a year-and-a-half younger than Yuval, and Avishai is three years younger than me. So when I was 13, Yuval was nearly 15 and Avishai was just 10, which was a big difference then. But we were playing in the same bands, separately, at the conservatory and with big bands at school. We always had the understanding that we had something in common that connected us. And that was jazz. We really didn't appreciate that then as we do now. Making a band of the three of us came much later.

When you were all younger, did you play together?

Avishai: It was divided between Yuval doing the serious practicing and getting the work done, and then me and Anat goofing around on our instruments. But even though we were goofing around, we were practicing how Charlie Parker played through the [Jamey] Aebersold books.

Anat: As far as Yuval being more serious, let's just say that he was much more methodical in his approach to music and practicing. Avishai and I were hoping that Yuval's discipline would rub off on us as far as this is how to practice—long tones to scales.

Avishai: But we were just playing.

Anat: Yes, it was more random.

Yuval, were you giving your siblings advice at the time?

Yuval: Now that I hear Anat and Avishai talking, I'm aware of how much more disciplined I was. I was very strict and serious about the music, and they were loose, easygoing. I'm still very serious, but I'm also envious of how loose they are. It's not easy for me, and it's taken me 30 years to work at that. But you have to remember that I was going first, and they were walking behind, following me.

When Yuval first went to Berklee, did the two of you think that you'd follow?

Anat: That was the thought behind it. We all went to the Tel Aviv School for the Arts and the Thelma Yalin High School for the Arts, and then the Jaffa Music Conservatory, and we had all been studying jazz for years. By the time we graduated from school and then served in the [Israeli] army, it was time to think about adult life. As jazz musicians, Berklee was probably the best option, and we knew that we could get scholarships.

Did you all get scholarships?

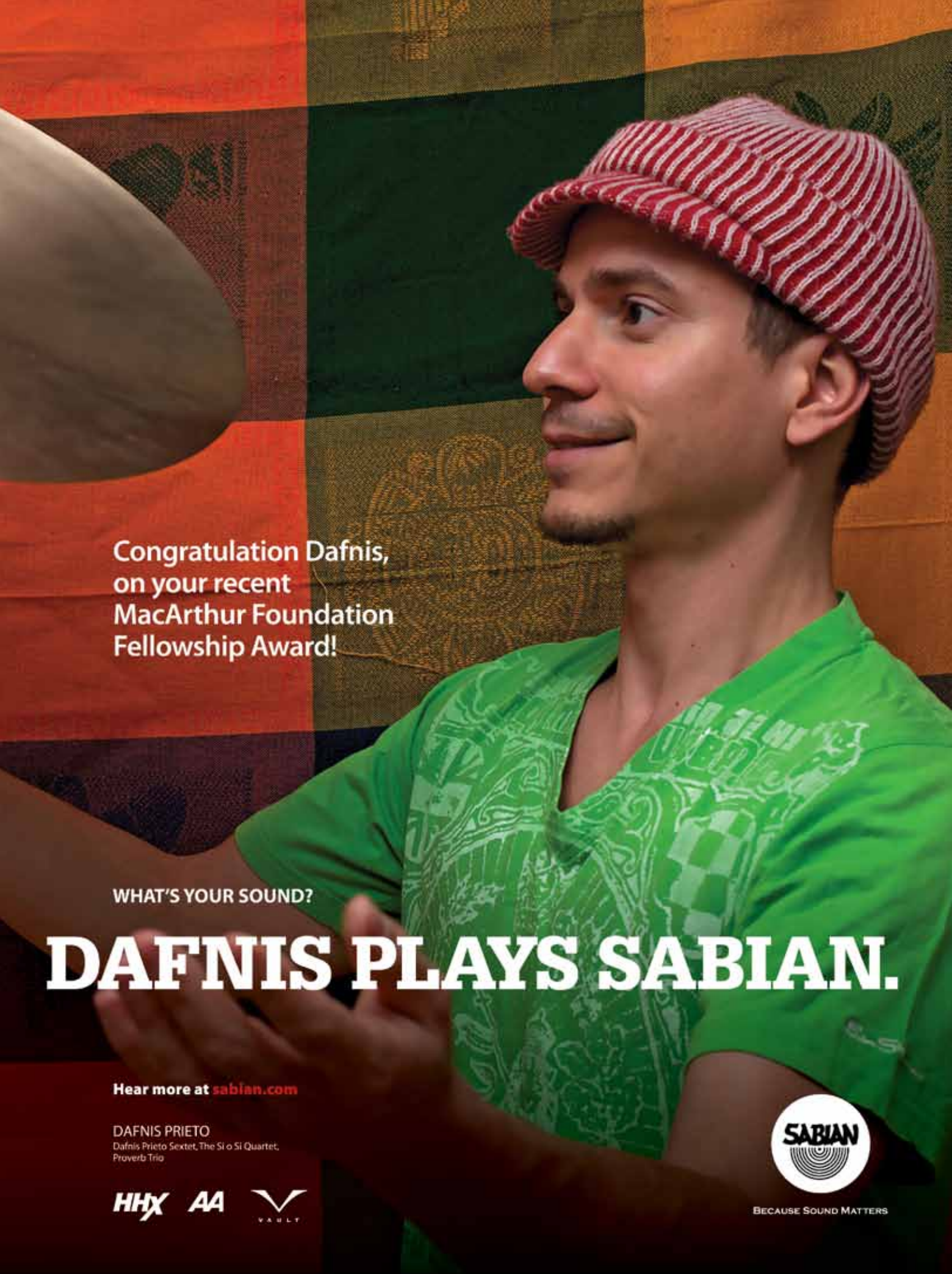
Anat: Yes, some more and some less.

Avishai: When I was growing up, it wasn't even a decision that I had to make. It was the obvious path for me. Maybe it wasn't as obvious to Yuval, but it was for me. Before Yuval went to Berklee, when I was 13 or 14, I remember that music was my path. And in high school, when you plan which classes to take, I wasn't too worried because I thought, "I'm going to be a musician anyway." It was obvious to me. I felt like we were all going to be professional musicians.

Anat: That's what each of us did from an early age. Going to the conservatory became our life. It had bands, and we'd practice twice a week in them. Then we did New Orleans music and big band rehearsals. All of our friends were from the conservatory. So, you're right, Avishai. It became our path without us choosing it. And our parents supported us, driving us to lessons, taking us to the conservatory, getting us to gigs.

Avishai: When you grow up with siblings who are doing different things, it makes it harder. But we were all musicians, so it felt very natural.

Yuval: And normal and obvious. When I hear about siblings who have bad relations with each other, I think that that is super-weird. It should be that siblings not only know each other well, but they're also a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part of each other. What we have is so fortunate.

Anat: For us, it's always been about dealing with the same things, questions, problems.

Which opens up the discussion to the fact that being together as a family playing in the same band almost didn't occur. What happened?

Yuval: I had already graduated from Berklee and was living in New York. I was a salesman at Manny's Music [on West 48th Street] and paving my way into the city, trying to figure out what to do. Life in New York was great. I auditioned at Manhattan School of Music, and they gave me a full scholarship to do my master's there. I was so happy. Everything seemed so clear. Like Avishai said, we knew exactly what we were going to do. There was no doubt.

When did your life begin to take a different turn?

Yuval: I was playing in the city and doing some recordings as a session man, but then I started to get a pain in my neck. It got worse when I was moving into a new apartment and was schlepping all my stuff into the new place. I didn't know what was going on. I went to a Chinese doctor, a chiropractor, but it still got worse. I went to Japan to perform with my good piano friend Masako Hamamura.

Avishai: I remember that. I was there in Japan at the same time. We met up there.

Yuval: Avishai was on a Berklee mission, but I was there on my own project. But my neck became so painful I couldn't sleep. So I'd be out on the streets in the early morning, around the same time as the bakers and fishermen were beginning work. The pain became ridiculous. I became petrified. I couldn't even twist my head.

Were you able to play the alto?

Yuval: Actually, I could. But then, even the breathing became painful. I didn't know what was going on, but the pain was so great that I returned to New York. My uncle arranged for me to get an MRI at a hospital where he worked. Afterward, I went home, but he came to see me and told me that the MRI wasn't good and that I was going to have to see an expert that day. That's when I met the surgeon Dr. Fred Epstein. He looked at the MRI and told me I had a benign tumor in my spinal cord and that he was going to have to remove it. He was such a warm and lovely person that I trusted him right away. Four or five days later, he operated on me. And when it was over, he told me it was successful. But after the operation—Avishai and Anat, you know better than me what happened next because you came to the hospital.

Avishai: I was in Israel after a semester in Berklee and was about to return to Boston when my parents called me and told me that I needed to go to New York with my father because of Yuval's operation. We actually saw him before the surgery, and Yuval looked great. He looked rejuvenated because he was on heavy, heavy steroids for the pain.

Yuval: You're right. The medication was strong.

Anat: [*laughs*] Nothing like a good painkiller.

Avishai: But if Yuval kept taking that, he'd develop a big hole in his liver. But at the time, he seemed normal. He was jumping, swimming, hanging out. We had no idea what would happen after the operation.

Anat: I was on the road in Ecuador. I remember my roommate in Boston called me and told me not to panic, but that Yuval was going to have an operation. I landed in New York and went straight to the hospital right after the operation. Everyone told me it went well, but we had no clue as to what was going to happen. The operation was Sept. 8, and Yuval's [24th] birthday was Sept. 9.

Anat: We brought him a cake, put it on his stomach with candles, and he couldn't move. We didn't know what that meant. We figured, "OK, he'll recover, go to school at Manhattan and get back to his life." What we didn't know was that Yuval would have to relearn everything from scratch—how to feel, to walk, to play music.

Avishai: I remember the first time he attempted to walk.

Anat: We both watched him. He was hooked up to this machine so the blood would flow to his feet. He tried to walk. Avishai and I, like a brother and sister would do, were joking and trying to get Yuval to laugh. He told us, "Don't do that. If I laugh, I'm going to fall." But we had no idea what a challenge that was—and what challenges were ahead.

Yuval: I went back to Israel. I was in a wheelchair, and the doctors said they couldn't guarantee me that I'd walk again. It was that bad. The worst part was my left hand. I couldn't use it at all. My most vivid memory is on the plane from JFK. I took out my soprano saxophone that was in a box. I opened the box with my right hand. I just looked at it, and I thought, "I can't believe this is happening. Now I'm lost. That's it. My life is there in the box, and I'm here." And I remember thinking, "What now?"

Anat and Avishai, how did you feel about your brother not being able to play an instrument?

Anat: The strongest memory at the hospital was my father saying, "I don't care if he can play an instrument. I want him to be able to brush his teeth on his own, to see him use the bathroom by himself. I want him to function again as a person. I don't care about the saxophone."

Avishai: We were worrying about Yuval's career. But my dad would say months later, "Look, he's walking. Look, he's driving a car."

Anat: At the time, Avishai and I were still students at Berklee, and we'd go to see Yuval as often as we could. We visited him in Israel as much as possible, but with classes and the flying … and Yuval didn't want us to visit him.

Avishai: I spent a whole summer in Israel, and I remember playing wheelchair basketball in the hospital with Yuval. It wasn't until months later that we really understood. We kept thinking that he was getting better, so it'll all get better soon. It wasn't just one shock—"Oh, he's not going to be able to play." It took us months to realize.

Anat: Right. Until we actually heard him trying to play and how much of a struggle it was. I started to cry. I didn't realize how hard it would be for him play again.

So, Yuval, you decided to go to law school.

Yuval: I had no choice. I was rehabilitating in Israel for months. I was getting better, but my left hand was just gone. Still, I used the saxophone as a therapeutic device, trying to use my fingers to get a sound. But it sounded terrible, and it was emotionally exhausting. That's when I knew I had to do something with myself while I was getting physically better. I guess I could have studied sound engineering, but to be suddenly thrown out of the music world was just too much for me. I couldn't be involved in music. So I studied law.

Avishai: First of all, Yuval was always so brilliant in anything he did, so to pick up law, we knew he would be brilliant in that. With the saxophone, he had been a phenomenal player—top of the game, an inspiration to students in Israel, both jazz and classical. His teachers always used him as an example: "Yuval is how you should be, the way he practices is how you should practice."

Anat: Now you know how easy it was to follow him. Teachers would find out Yuval was my brother, and immediately they'd say, "You're Yuval's sister? Oh, you'll get an A."

Avishai: Yuval was at the top, and suddenly it was hard for him to not be among the best—to be less than what he was. If he couldn't be the best, he'd have to do something else.

Why did you decide to eventually leave law and return to the saxophone, and why soprano, not alto?

Yuval: I could only play soprano, but not by choice. Even when I played the soprano, I had to have all kinds of things built onto it, so I could see what my fingers are playing. With the alto, I had no way of having eye contact with my fingers, which had very little sensation.

So, when did you come back to music?

Yuval: I never really stopped. I kept trying to play, but it was too frustrating. I wanted to be playing at the highest level, but I wasn't able to play anything. I had no control of my fingers. It was crazy. But I kept trying, and I had saxophone experts come and put things on my sax, like mirrors. Eventually, I guess, I just got lucky to be able to play again. Friends wanted to make a record, and they asked me to play on it. I struggled through it, note by note. But slowly I started to play more. It was a long, painful journey, but I was beginning to get my freedom back.

Anat: Yuval still kept his law practice, but began to play more music. He started to teach and became one of the most sought-after teachers. Some of his students have since moved to New York. Then he started to play weekly in Tel Aviv with a band. We were happy to hear that, and whenever I came home, I would sit in and get involved again in the Israeli jazz scene. It was fun to start playing again in a relaxed atmosphere. Of course, we were happy that Yuval had become a lawyer—a musician and a lawyer—so that if I ever need help, if I'm in a helpless situation that many musicians find themselves in, it could come in handy. It's good to know a good lawyer. [*laughs*]

Avishai: And he doesn't charge us too much. [*laughs*]

Yuval: Now it's my turn to talk about my sister and brother. From the moment they arrived at Berklee, each one was becoming a great musician, a master of their instrument. They became stylistically versatile. And they created their own names. As a result, they've paid me


photo by Gangi N all that jazz

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back. They stayed in the real jungle of New York when I was in Israel, taking care of my journey. When we go to festivals now, everyone knows them and admires them. I'm so grateful to see that and now be able to play with them, even though I'm limited in my technical ability.

Avishai: I beg to differ about that last part.

It's interesting that you were the leader before—Anat and Avishai followed you—and now the roles are somewhat reversed. How did the first 3 Cohens album, *One*, come about?

Anat: Yuval was playing that weekly gig in Tel Aviv and was invited to go to Poland for a tour that turned out really successful. Avishai and I joined him, with other Israeli musicians. That was really the first time the three of us played together in this way. The power of it transferred to the audience. There was an extra excitement in the music based on the love we have for each other. The audience actually helped us understand what we have even before we fully realized it. That's what made us decide to record together. So we used some of the songs we played from that tour, went into the studio and released the album underground in 2003. That's the beginning of 3 Cohens.

The improvisational conversations in your music are quite impressive.

Anat: What's so special about the three of us playing together is the dialogue that comes from us knowing each other so well—personally and musically. We know where we're each coming from and where we're going. And, we respect each other. We're not like a rhythm section locking in. We're developing a blended sound as a horn section not only when we play in unison, but also when we blend, based on the amount of space there is among us to become one sound—it's almost as if we sound like one person. Horn sections may work together for years to sound like they're really tight, but we do it naturally. In some rhythm sections where I don't necessarily know the other musicians, I worry: "Am I stepping on somebody else's toes, or am I taking too much of their space, am I underplaying or overplaying?"

How is that different in 3 Cohens?

Anat: I know exactly where my brothers are going.

Avishai: We don't worry about stepping on toes. We trust each other, and that gives us more freedom. It's egoless.

Is there sibling rivalry?

Avishai: Not at all. It's respect and unconditional love. You can't ask for more. When someone else shines, you're happy for them. If Yuval is playing a solo and it's killing, I'm not going to outdo him. In fact, I'll skip my solo to let him keep going.

Yuval: The feeling we have onstage is that we come from the same background. As kids, we played in youth orchestras, New Orleans Dixieland bands, the big bands. We had the same teachers. And yet 25 years later, we're different even though we have the same background.

Are there specific songs on *Family* that capture the essence of your family?

Avishai: I wrote the song "Family" for Anat and Yuval. I had them in mind. I recorded it first with the SFJAZZ Collective. In the melody there are intertwining lines for the horns—the tenor, the soprano, the trumpet—to play seamlessly together. This represents the way we play.

Given that you are three siblings in the same band, people are adding you into jazz history, like the Heaths, the Joneses, the Marsalises. What's your take on that?

Anat: I can't even imagine being put together with the Heath brothers or the Jones brothers. They're legends; they're heroes. I'd just like to keep our legacy alive and the spirit of jazz alive.

Avishai: It's not our place to locate ourselves in the jazz tree, but we are family.

Anat: Yes, definitely family. **DB**

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JOHN SCOFIELD

The Art of the Ballad

By Ken Micallef ⋮ Photo by Hyou Vielz

"I wasn't good at playing ballads until now," John Scofield says, remarkably.

Not good at playing ballads? This, from a musician widely recognized, along with his compatriots Bill Frisell and Pat Metheny, as one of the greatest jazz guitarists of his generation? The gods must be crazy. Over a mushroom omelet in a Lower East Side eatery, Scofield offers a surprising self-appraisal.

"Or until fairly recently I couldn't play ballads," he adds, matter-of-factly. "I've always worked on burning, worked on playing hot jazz in one way, shape or form. I've always loved ballads, but I only got it together recently. I remember after I made the new record, I was pretty happy with how it came out. I wondered, 'Could I play ballads all night in a club? Would people would go for that?' [If] you do it in a club, it comes off as sensitive music. I love to try and get down and froth at the mouth. It's part of me."

A Moment's Peace (Emarcy) is Scofield's first album of electric ballads. The 59-year-old musician is joined by an extremely empathetic quartet: Scott Colley, bass; Larry Goldings, piano and organ; and the ever-elastic drummer and rhythmic magician Brian Blade. Though billed as a ballads recital of sorts, *A Moment's Peace* is more like loud jazz in a small room. Scofield's axe sounds less and less like a standard guitar, more like mewing felines, mating aliens, angry arachnids. Scofield's signature Ibanez guitar growls and yawns, leaps and goes limp, then turns as playful as a cat with a ball of yarn. Scofield tugs at the tunes as only he can. The track listing includes "Gee, Baby Ain't I Good To You," Lennon & McCartney's "I Will," "I Loves You Porgy" (performed with a wonderfully iridescent glow), "You Don't Know What Love Is," "I Want To Talk About You" and the equally form-fitting "Lawns" (composed by Carla Bley), as well as "Throw It Away" (written by Abbey Lincoln).

Scofield's handful of new compositions gracefully complement the mood, especially the familiar-sounding "Simply Put"—a sentimental, sweet composition that somehow recalls Don Grolnick, Pat Metheny or Stevie Wonder more so than the bluesy funk flows that have made Scofield king. "Simply Put" is warm, soft and as textured as felt.

"I guess I appreciate what happens in reflective music more now," Scofield admits. "There was a point when I was younger, when if the performance wasn't totally cathartic that I felt it wasn't really getting there. But now, I am able to leave more space and let it be not such a big deal."

While preparing to record *A Moment's Peace*, the guitarist listened to the great ballads albums, including the elephant in the room: John Coltrane's *Ballads*.

"Coltrane's *Ballads* really inspired me," Scofield acknowledges. "He really plays beautifully on there. Sometimes he doesn't even take the improvised solo. With all those standards on *Ballads*, it takes about two minutes to play the whole melody. Then Trane would let McCoy [Tyner] play another two minutes, then he would play the second half of the melody out. But the way Trane played those melodies and the way he got little improvised sections in between the melodic phrases—I love it. He definitely inspired me with that record. And I love *Coltrane Plays The Blues*, too."

John Scofield has been on a roll for years. To an even greater degree than his brethren in that famous jazz guitar triumvirate, Scofield continues to present his artistry in novel ways. In recent years Scofield has recorded a scorching Tony Williams tribute (*Saudades* with Trio Beyond: Jack DeJohnette and Larry Goldings), a gorgeous, slightly ethereal big band outing

John Scofield at the Cologne Philharmonic Hall, May 21, 2011

(Metropole Orchestra's *54*, arranged by Vince Mendoza), a New Orleans blues buster (*Piety Street*), plus *That's What I Say: John Scofield Plays The Music Of Ray Charles*, and most recently, *In Case The World Changes Its Mind*, with his old pals Medeski, Martin & Wood.

But Scofield has always been a restless musician who refuses to sit politely in one trick bag. Such early '80s records as the recently reissued *Shinola* mixed fiery post-bop with a near grunge trio approach; *Still Warm* remains a fusion/R&B/space jazz landmark, as is Marc Johnson's *Bass Desires*, with its head-tripping improvisations. Scofield reached critical mass and crossover stardom with *Blue Matter* and *Loud Jazz*. He helped make stars of Joe Lovano and Bill Stewart on the kinetic/frenetic, straightahead *Meant To Be* and *What We Do*, then revisited his love of r&b on *Hand Jive* and *Groove Elation*. Perhaps most surprising, in the early 2000s Scofield reinvented himself as a jam-band jester on *Bump* and *Überjam*, spinning contagious computer loops onstage to audiences young enough to be his kids. In all these projects, John Scofield was either one step ahead of the game or the guy dealing the cards.

"There's a lot of things I want to try," Scofield explains. "And record companies always want you to try something new. Jazz records are never like pop records, where if you have a hit, they want you to recreate it. Part of me would like to make a bebop record every time because you get a little better at it with different cats.

"When I first got called to play gigs in jazz," he continues, "it was at the beginning of fusion. I was getting called by the old greats of jazz because they had decided to have a guitar player in their group. Gerry Mulligan called. I got the gig. The fusion years threw me into all these other places that I wouldn't have gone on my own. I did have a background in rock and blues as a kid that I could draw from. So I've had these things I've always wanted to get to. *Piety Street* was something I wanted to do for a long time. Recording with the Metropole Orchestra, too. I usually think about these projects for years and years. It gestates and there's an original desire, and it isn't always clear how it's actually going to be completed."

So, far from the typically cash-and-carry world of jazz recording sessions, Scofield and his wife Susan, who actively manages her husband's concerns, have astutely plotted his career.

"It's more premeditated than it looks," Scofield says with a chuckle. "I want the music to be loose; jazz has to be relaxed in order to make the creative stuff happen. But I think about it a lot. I think about the songs we'll do, and I try to get the guys who are right for the music. Then once I have the band assembled, I write. Some projects are more successful than others. [For] the ones that really work, I guess it was the right time to do that one. I didn't choose Metropole, for example. They offered me a gig. They do these great concerts all over Holland. This is a studio band that plays together all the time. Susan and I thought, 'Wow, this is great. Let's record it.' We [were gigging], so I had already heard how it was turning out."

Susan Scofield's contributions go well beyond a managerial role. Ever wonder about Scofield's wry choice of song and album titles? Thank you, Mrs. Scofield.

"Re: Susan," Scofield later emails, "She's been my business partner for 30+ years. Without her, I would be driving a cab and playing the midnight jam session at Smalls. She's also the BEST tune titler in the world! Here are just some of her great (funny) tune titles from my CDs: 'Go Blow,' 'Mister Coleman To You,' 'Some Nerve,' 'Dance Me Home,' 'Make Me,' 'So Sue Me,' 'Not You Again' (same changes as 'There Will Never Be Another You'), 'Phone Home,' 'Best Western.'"

> "When you play slowly, you can really hear the different levels of attack and how each note in a phrase is different. It's harder, but for me, it's way more rewarding. It slows everything down so you can really get into something."

The couple's sense of humor extends to album covers. The cover photo of *A Moment's Peace* depicts the shadow of what appears to be a rotund, bald man walking along a prison wall lined with barbed wire. The muted cover art colors add to a sense of isolation.

"That isn't a picture of me," Scofield says with a laugh. "We found that picture on the Internet. That looks like me in jail though, right? A moment's peace? You gotta go to jail. It's a cell-phone picture. We really liked it. But it's not a prison wall—it's a bridge in Edinburgh."

Scofield says writing softer material comes naturally to him: "When I start to play acoustic guitar by myself, ballads just come out of me. There's this thing with solo guitar—you play chords, you play melody, reflective stuff." Playing softer *electric* guitar, however, required a different mindset. Burning at lower volumes demands control, something Scofield has refined over four decades of guitar playing.

"You want to get a nice sound out of the guitar, so you play in a way where you're striving for tone as opposed to playing bebop-type, fast, eighth-note lines, where it's not as necessary. You don't want to overdrive the amp too much; you want it to sing like a voice. Like soft singing is evocative, and loud singing is another thing. They both have their place. But in order to simmer, you have to listen to the rest of the band all the time. And play with guys who like to play soft."

So, are ballads actually harder to play, as some people say?

"When you don't play real fast, your choice of notes becomes very obvious," Scofield acknowledges. "And the tone on your instrument is really important. When you're playing a slower melody, you have an opportunity to develop each note. You have a chance to make the note longer, and where you cut it off becomes very important. When I listen to my very first records, I didn't know how to cut off a note. I didn't know how to control that. The beautiful thing is we're not synthesizers; we're human beings, and when you play slowly, you can really hear the different levels of attack and how each note in a phrase is different. It's harder, but for me, it's way more rewarding. It slows everything down so that you can really get into something."

As with any instrument, guitar players develop a certain strength from years of pure playing. There's a power and a sense of direction that can't be earned any other way. Given Scofield's inherent talent, you'd think his monster technique was also second nature. But even he acknowledges the good day/bad day syndrome, which once seemed beyond his control.

"I am able to sit down and play at the drop of a hat now. That's what happened from playing for such a long time. When I was younger, it was just an unfamiliar feeling. One day I would feel really in touch with the music, but getting back to that took a long time. Now, I can pretty much just do it automatically. Technically, there's a certain strength that most young players in their 20s don't really have. They might be good, but they're unable able to project, whether that's sound or strength or the concept to make their playing be heard. It's not volume, but just your ideas being such that the music is strong. Eventually, you will get that strength and become yourself as a guitarist.

"The really freak guitar players, like Django Reinhardt and George Benson, have that strength early on," he adds. "These guys are unbelievable. They have this massive strength. It's freakish, because I use a legato technique on the guitar. I don't pick every note. My right hand won't go that fast. I play a note, then hammer on the next note on the same string so my right hand doesn't have to pick twice. That creates this loose kind of sound. It just so happened that I liked a similar sound with horn players like Lester Young and Wayne Shorter. I applied that legato technique on the guitar to achieve that loose sound."

Influenced early on by blues greats B.B.

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Backstage, the Blue Note in New York, May 12, 2010 (Photo: John Rogers/Johnrogersnyc.com)

King, Albert King and Otis Rush ("All these blues guitar players are wacko; they bend the notes and there's all kinds of in-between pitches"), Scofield was attracted to sliding notes and distorted tone. Later, he copied Shorter, Charlie Parker, John Coltrane and Sonny Rollins. Another major influence was Miles Davis, as was the harmonic language of Bill Evans, Herbie Hancock and Chick Corea. Scofield says his playing was shaped by "all these jazz instruments other than guitar."

"If I had just stayed with guitar, it would have been really limiting," Scofield notes. "So in my 20s, I spent a lot of time trying to play like a horn player. But you have to forget your influences. Get away from them. Some guys are so obsessed with playing great technically that when you hear them, you are witnessing this monumental amount of effort. I never liked that. What I really liked was Miles, who was more like a magician. And Wayne and those guys, they would play fast but it was a lot more than that. I always believed in that magic element in jazz."

Scofield's mother and father came to Dayton, Ohio, from New Orleans and the Midwest, respectively. Born in Dayton, Scofield grew up in Wilton, Conn., just a quick train ride away from the riches of New York City. Picking up guitar at age 11, he studied jazz with a local teacher. When he enrolled at Berklee, things took off.

"I practiced all the time," he recalls. "The second year, Gary Burton came to teach, and I knew his bands. I lived with [bassist] Chip Jackson and a drummer, and Gary would come jam with us all the time at our apartment. His A-band was Mick Goodrick and Abe Laboriel and a drummer named Harry Blazer. But we played Gary's book, all Chick Corea, Keith Jarrett, Steve Swallow and Mike Gibbs tunes. I learned all those songs, and he used us on a few gigs."

In 1974 Scofield dropped out of Berklee to "shed," but soon landed a spot with Gerry Mulligan. His first gig? The Carnegie Hall reunion concert with Chet Baker.

"That totally blew my mind. I borrowed a car to drive to New York. I showed up at the Carnegie Hall stage door with my little amp. I was 21. I was green and nervous and shaking as I played on that record."

Scofield joined the very popular Billy Cobham/George Duke Band in '75, then played on Charles Mingus' *Three Or Four Shades Of Blue* in 1977.

"I didn't have much to do with Mingus," Scofield explains. "He just wanted guitar and I was one of the young guys around. He was this huge presence. I just played my parts and got through it without being yelled at. Afterwards, I left and the record came out, and I was on a Charles Mingus record! Right after that, he was unable to play bass. I joined Gary Burton's quartet for six months—Pat Metheny had left to start his group."

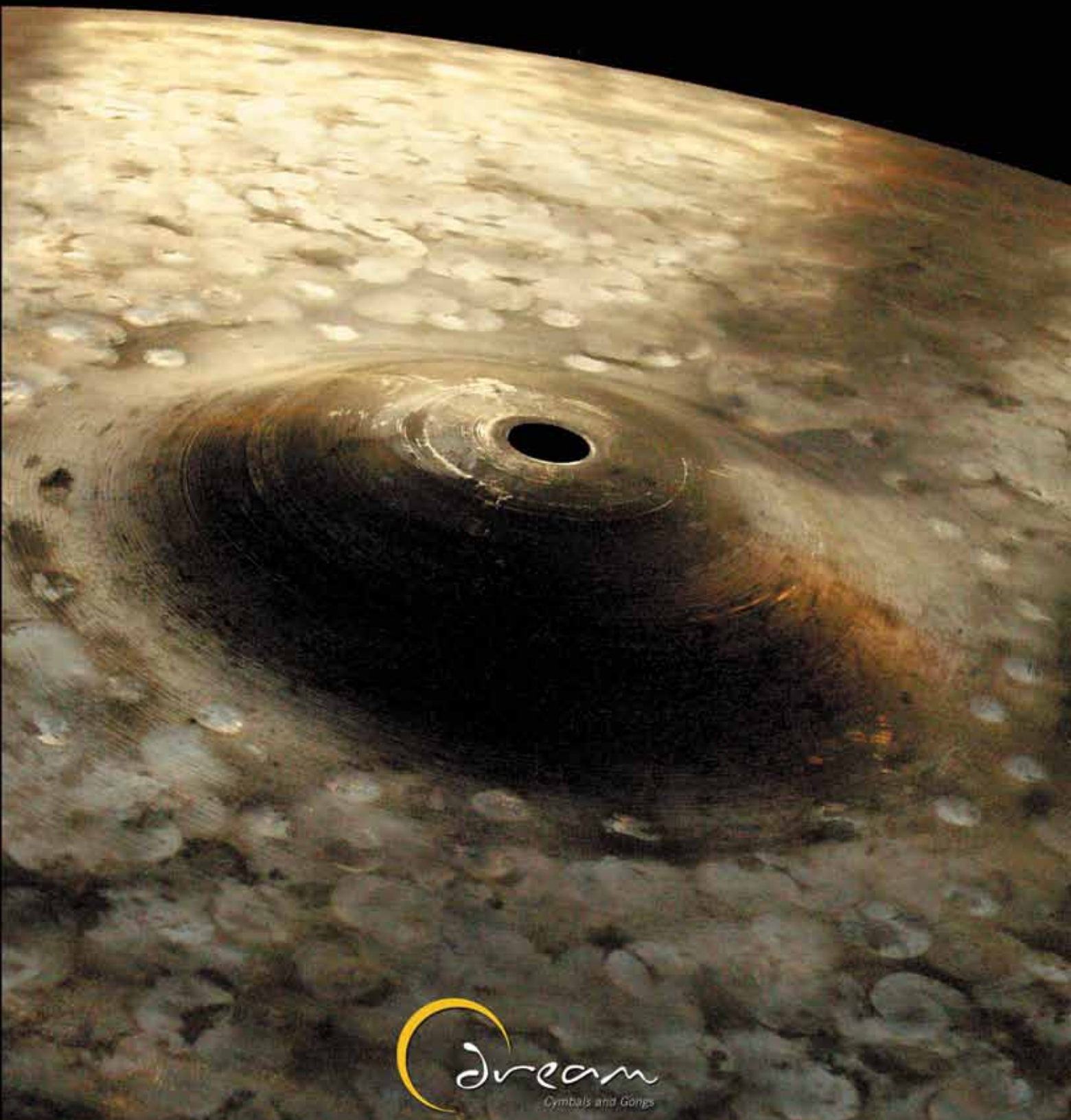
Scofield cut a handful of solo albums and toured Europe. He became an in-demand session player, then got a major break as the guitarist in Miles Davis' band and recorded the groundbreaking *Decoy*, where he contributed not only guitar, but also compositions.

"Miles was really important, and that was around the first time I really nailed it," Scofield says. "That was Miles' concept he'd been working on ever since *Bitches Brew*. He wanted to play these freeish, open rock jams but with superimposed colors over those beats. The heads on *Decoy* were taken from solos that either he or I played in rehearsals. Gil Evans would transcribe them for us. Miles played one of the tracks for [Columbia vice president of jazz] George Butler, who wanted Miles to go commercial. He didn't like it. Miles was futuristic."

John Scofield's oeuvre may never be considered futuristic because he's too grounded, too organic, too damn funky to have his head in the stars. To hear him tell it, he's a working stiff, a talented player who has worked for everything he's got, and somehow knew when to pull the trigger on the album concepts that constantly erupt from his fertile mind.

"I have been trying to do the same exact stuff since I started playing the guitar," Scofield says. "And trying to get better and more expressive. When I first heard the blues, then right after that I heard Charlie Parker—those guys just blew me away. Of course, there's all this outside stuff, from country & western to modern classical, to things in pop music that I've checked out. I have simplified. Certainly as a composer, I've simplified. But basically, I feel like I am doing the same thing—practicing, trying to get my fingers to do it right." **DB**

Sometimes Dreams can be dark...



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Peter Brötzmann at Abrons Arts Center, New York, June 8, 2011

Peter Brötzmann
PERPETUALLY SEEKING FREEDOM

By Josef Woodard ⋮ Photography by Peter Gannushkin

It was a late spring afternoon at the Cinema Laurier in Victoriaville, Quebec, and free-jazz icon Peter Brötzmann was doing what he does best, even at the crack of 1 p.m. In a commanding solo concert, the reedman, going strong at age 70, unleashed his characteristic volcanic, fire-breathing intensity on alto, soprano and tenor saxophones. But he also disarmed his audience with washes of tender musicality, including lovely renditions of "I Surrender Dear" and "Lonely Woman" to close.

So much for Brötzmann's reputation as just an expressionistic, stern, noise-machining blower.

Victoriaville's avant-leaning festival—officially called Festival de Musique Actuelle de Victoriaville (FIMAV)—is one of the ripe spots the German periodically visits when he does make it over the Atlantic, although he remains underemployed in North America. For the 2011 edition of FIMAV, Brötzmann delivered both this solo performance and a riveting set by his power trio with Norwegian drummer Paal Nilssen-Love, an empathetic ally for the past dozen years, and electric bassist Massico Pupillo. With its rock-flavored spirit, this is another of Brötzmann's groups that is tailor-made for the younger recruits in his cross-generational camp of followers.

Last summer, another of Brötzmann's festival visits was in the river-centered town of Kongsberg, Norway, where the same trio rattled the architecture of That Little Extra, a small house-turned-cultural-center. I bumped into the saxophonist on the street after sound check that afternoon, saying I looked forward to hearing him that night. "I hope I can hear it," he grumbled, revealing a high level of sensitivity and serious concerns regarding the venue's acoustic conditions. But the close quarters ended up intensifying the performance: He recalled later, "We were quite satisfied with the results, at the end. It was working quite all right."

Also on that festival program, Brötzmann checked in with his own historic past by performing with an old free-jazz comrade, British saxophonist Evan Parker. This Kongsberg meeting resulted in an alternately thundering and probing saxophonic dialogue. (Immediately after that show, I headed over to Charles Lloyd's concert in the Kongsberg church, and Lloyd sounded as if he was playing under layers of gauze by comparison.)

When Brötzmann hits the stage, mighty sonic gusts pour forth, but with a distinctly human expressivity attached, in his vocal-like phrasings and injections of guttural sounds mixing in with his amped-up saxophone tone. There is a particular Brötzmann timbre that makes it seem as if he has created a new waveform all his own, a sonic parallel to those who create their own typographical fonts. The result may be cathartic for admirers or overbearingly noisy for detractors; either way, it's powerful in its severity. And the lyricism in the margins—echoes of his love for Coleman Hawkins and Ben Webster—only helps to frame and accentuate the tough stuff.

It's a sound that has become Brötzmann's signature, going back to the '60s, when he was blazing trails with other European free-jazz pioneers. Born in Remscheid, Germany, in 1941, he took a winding path to music through art school. He experienced an epiphany upon catching a Sidney Bechet concert, and developed a conceptualist aesthetic partly honed by his encounters with the visual artists Joseph Beuys and Nam June Paik. For decades, through a huge discography and regular live performances with countless groupings, Brötzmann has kept the pure improvisational faith and held the torch.

At the time of our interview late last summer, Brötzmann was preparing to make his second visit to China, exciting new turf for him. "I'm always learning," he says via telephone from Wuppertal, Germany. "It's always good to see what these guys are doing. Of course, they have a completely different meaning about what improvised music could be, because of the lack of information over a long period. They don't know too much about the blues, I would say. But that's OK. That might be coming. And they have their own way of doing improvised music.

"The good thing that I learned from my first visit, the young people are very open and very curious. They want to know."

One might say the same about the perpetually evolving Brötzmann.

I heard you both in Victoriaville and Kongsberg this year, a fair cross-section of settings. One common denominator was the potent trio with Massimo Puppilo and Paal Nilssen-Love. Perhaps partly because of the electric bass presence, this trio seems to tilt more in the direction of rock than other groups of yours.

Massimo comes originally from rock music, and Paal Nilssen-Love grew up as the son of quite a good bebop drummer, but in his early years, he played all kinds of stuff. He is a very, very energetic player.

I still like the double bass, of course. I'm always glad when I can play with Ken Kessler in the Chicago Tentet or, for example, a younger man I very much like, Eric Gravis. Of course, there is also William Parker, now a grand old man in the scene. But with the electric bass, especially if you find good players and they know what they are doing, it gives you a different kick. Even if you are an energetic player, as I'm used to being, you still get a kick in your ass and you have to do even a bit more.

In Kongsberg, you had a duet with your longtime ally Evan Parker. Do you interact with him much anymore?

We see each quite often, because Evan is one of the few Englishmen traveling around. We still have contact. I think the last thing we did together before this duo was a kind of double trio concert at Victoriaville maybe six years ago. And the duo concert was, indeed, the first and only one we have done so far. We've known each other now for 45 years.

How was the experience for you, given that you go back with him almost to the beginning of your musical adventure?

He was in my very early larger ensembles. On the other hand, he was organizing things for me and Peter Kowald over there in London and Scotland. But we always had different styles of playing. When I met him first, he was playing all the Coltrane licks, all the scales. Even with the sound, he tried to go that way. For me, I had no teacher. I had nothing. I didn't know anything, or not too much. I just liked to play the horn. He was surprised at what kinds of sounds I got out of the horn, and I was always very envious because he could do all the things I couldn't. [On that scene] there was a third very important man: Willem Breuker. We all three played the same horn, but from the very beginning, we each had something very different in mind, but it fit together very well.

Now, to see Evan and to try this, it was a good old friendship thing.

Your particular back story is fascinating, in that your trajectory into music went through art. That must have influenced your musical development.

I'm quite sure [that's true]. If I look at these two guys I just mentioned—Willem and Evan—they had the teachers, they studied. Willem Breuker did know everything about composition, counterpoint, harmonies. I was much more seriously busy with my studies for the arts.

In my town [Wuppertal], we had a very good gallery, and I was lucky to meet Joseph Beuys and Nam June Paik, very important men for me. Music was always there, and I needed it, but it was a couple of years later that I more or less decided, "OK, I want to do that." So I came into the music from a completely different angle than my other comrades, here in Germany or England.

I didn't have to follow the rules because I made the rules myself, in terms of the way of playing the horn, the mouthpiece I was using, the reeds and everything. Of course, I learned by working with the other guys, with Globe Unity Orchestra, sometimes in the theater of classical music, from Mauricio Kagel or others. I

ON BRÖTZMANN'S SIDE

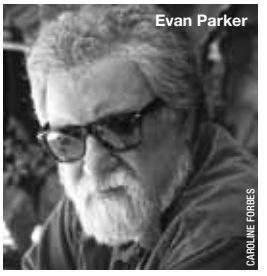
Peter Brötzmann has worked with countless collaborators over the decades, many of whom are still active among his ever-widening international circle of colleagues. Those who have found themselves working alongside the iconic free-jazz saxman usually have no trouble recalling insightful observations from the experience.

Looking back on their mid-July rendezvous in Norway, saxophonist Evan Parker commented, "To spend some time and play with Peter in Kongsberg was a great pleasure. We talked about his tenor saxophone, which is a beautiful hand-built special from Japan, we talked about the eternal struggle to find a good reed, the history of our [vintage Berg Larsen] mouthpieces and, of course, life, the universe and everything.

"I have to thank Peter for inviting me to play in Germany, first with the *Machine Gun* band and later with the various small groups that developed out of that. Playing with him and [Peter] Kowald soon introduced me to Alex [von Schlippenbach] and [Paul] Lovens, and that has been a very important part of my musical life ever since."

One of the strongest young protégés and now comrades of Brötzmann is Chicago-based saxophonist Ken Vandermark, who has played in various settings with the German reedist, including the formidable Chicago Tentet, the reed trio Sonore (alongside Swedish saxophonist Mats Gustafsson) and as a guest with the quartet Full Blast.

"Playing with Peter has been very intense from the beginning," Vandermark admits. "It's always challenging. Even though his musical statements


Evan Parker

CAROLINE FORBES


Ken Vandermark (left) with Paal Nilssen-Love

ZIGA KORITNIK

are always clear, they're so strong that it's hard to always feel confident that I can creatively add to the situation. No one has pushed me as hard to take risks so consistently. What has evolved has been this level of risk. The more I come to understand, the further he challenges me."

Reflecting on the question of Brötzmann's cultural legacy, Vandermark explains, "His significance as a musician would have been secure if all he had done was record *Machine Gun*, but Peter has done so much more than that: as an instigator, as an organizer, as an improviser, as a visual artist. Peter was one of the key figures who helped establish a truly European approach to jazz. His creative work has spanned more than four decades, and his playing is stronger now than it's ever been."

Norwegian drummer Paal Nilssen-Love has been hailed as one of the most talented and musical drummers to enter the public jazz stream in the past several years. He brings virtuosic power but also an uncommon nuance to the diverse contexts he plays in, including a fascinating solo drum setting (which was a highlight of last summer's Kongsberg Jazz Festival). And Nilssen-Love's fateful connection with Brötzmann has led to one of the more inspired saxist-drummer matchups. He first played with the saxman in 2000, and was involved in the Tentet starting in 2003. He notes, "Since then we've done more and more together—in trios, quartets, quintets with various lineups and, not least, duo, which has seen two CD releases."

Nilssen-Love recalls, "The first gig was, of course, mind-blowing: exhilarating, incredible and challenging on all levels, physically and mentally. Through the years, there have been more gigs, and then a gradual and mutual agreement of music, playing and life has developed; and a very strong friendship through music and touring. On stage—and off—he still surprises and pushes fellow musicians, and is also humble enough and keen to meet new ways of playing." —*Josef Woodard*

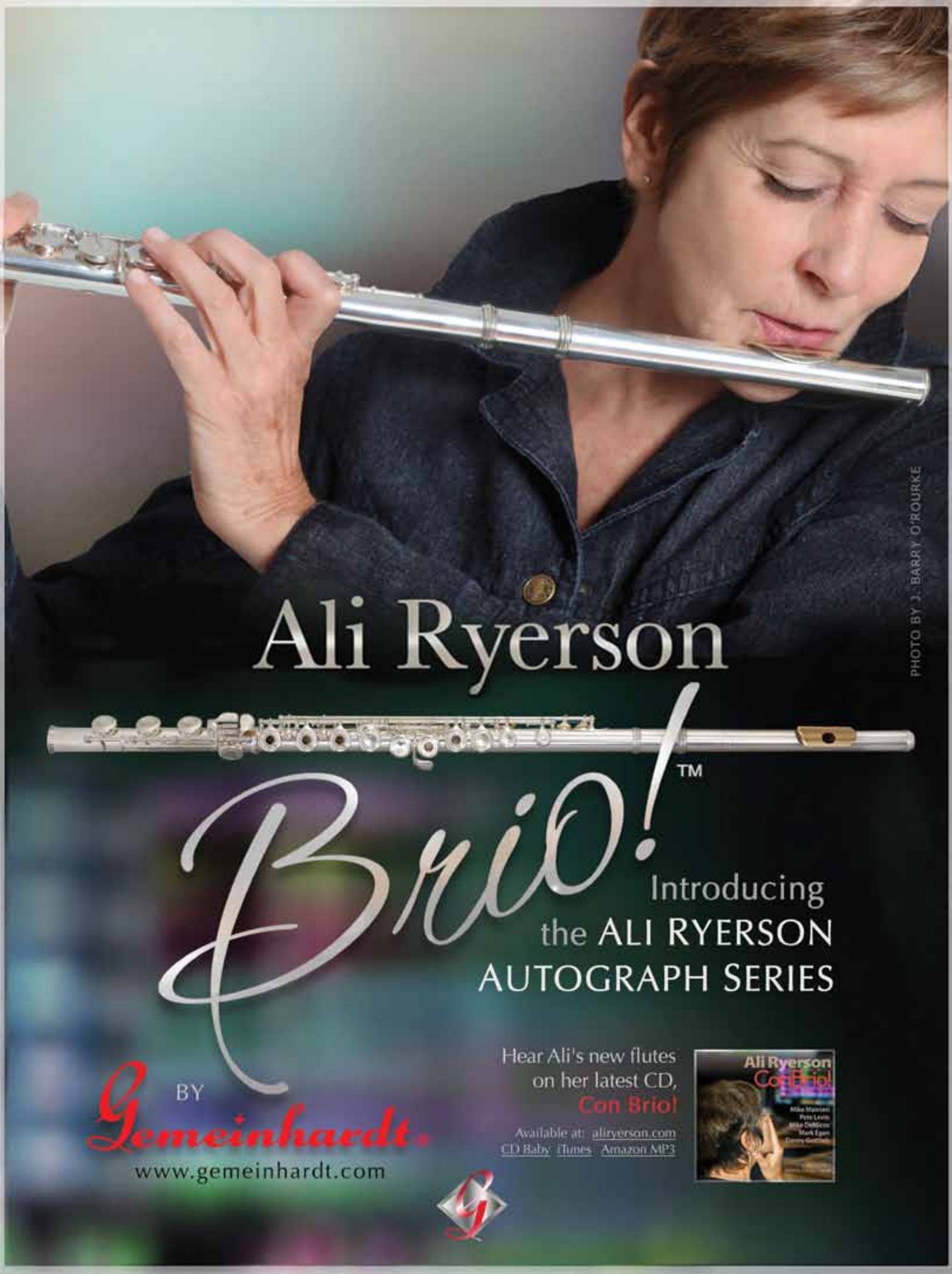

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PHOTO BY J. BARRY O'ROURKE

had to learn, and I wanted to learn. But I always kept the freedom to do it my way. It took maybe more time and more effort, but after all these years, I'm quite glad that it was that way.

If you go to the States and you start to work with American musicians—and black American musicians, which I did very early—you don't have to try to copy somebody. You have to come and you have to play your shit, and then, after a while, if you're a bit persistent and strong enough, you get respected. I met Milford Graves very early. I met Andrew Cyrille, Alan Silva, all these guys. After a while, they saw, "OK, here is a guy who does it his way." I think I got quite a bit respected because of that.

With those art-world figures you encountered early on, the general spirit was a radicalization and reinvention of what previously existed. Did that inform your attitude about music?

In this period, let's call it the after-war period here in Europe—and especially in Germany, because of the history of it—when you started to think about where you want to go, you didn't have to do whatever had been up until then. You had to invent your own thing. You couldn't trust anything anymore. Of course, it was a good thing on one hand. I think the first American guy I met and talked to was Steve Lacy. Then Don Cherry followed, and Carla Bley. Cecil [Taylor] I met in the middle '60s.

Brötzmann at Clemente Soto Vélez, New York, April 18, 2010

In the history of art, it's not uncommon that you first have to destroy what there is and build something new. That was our general feeling, especially here in Germany, because of our history, because of the Third Reich and six million Jews and so on. Of course, you learn very quickly that, even if you denied the old truths, as soon as you start to set up something for yourself, you build up new rules. If I look back nowadays at what we thought we had done in the '60s as a kind of big revolution in the music, it was just a little step. It was not such a big deal.

Your '60s albums —*For Adolph Saxe*, *Machine Gun* and *Nipples*—seem to have come out of the box fully assembled and with a strong viewpoint from the beginning. But you're saying that, in hindsight, you see how far you have come?

[*laughs*] That is, of course, difficult to say. I would say that what I'm doing now was already there, let's say, when I started to take music really serious, in the middle '60s. In 45 years, you learn a lot. You get a much wider range to look at what you are doing, to look at yourself.

I can handle the horn nowadays the way I want to handle it. In the early years, it was just not possible. I had to learn. I'm glad that I still have to learn more. But the essential things, I think, have been there from the very beginning.

Has it partly been a sonic mission, exploring sound and texture from the horn, maybe more than riffs, per se?

Yeah. Of course, that changed over the years, and it even changes with the different horns I am playing. The horn has to sound, somehow. It has to have a very personal voice. If you listen to even [Coleman] Hawkins' worst recordings, he sounds like Hawkins. That is what I want to reach for myself, and I think I have come quite far with it. When people hear my sound, they think, "Oh, that must be Brötzmann."

That's the most fantastic thing with jazz music, and what we shouldn't forget. Jazz music is not so much a history of styles, but persons. Piano players like James P. Johnson or Ellington or Monk came out of the same sources. These persons made the music. The style was, at the end, quite unimportant. With all modesty, I hopefully have that.

In your case, the tenor offers a particular strength of identity. Does it hold a special place for you?

From alto to bass saxophone, I am still playing nearly all the horns. But the main thing I always come back to is the tenor. You can sing with it, much more than with the alto. The tenor, after a while, gets to be a part of your body. You hear these stories about Lester Young sleeping with his horns when Billie [Holiday] wasn't there [*laughs*]. It shows that there is a complex connection between the horn and the person.

There are arcs of phrasing and nuances in your playing, and a lyrical side. Does it frustrate you to be stereotyped as the "headbanger jazz guy," let's say?

It's very hard. If you go through this long period to always have had difficulties to get accepted, then it doesn't matter so much what other people think. My friends and the handful of good comrades in jazz say, "Brötzmann, it's all right what you are playing."

In my own country, people still don't want to recognize what I'm doing. This might be frustrating, from time to time. On the other hand, if I come to your country, or Poland and the Eastern Bloc, or to Lebanon, young people come up and tell me they are moved by what I am doing. That is fantastic.

What we can call the "lyrical side" of my playing was always there. It was there with the trio with [Fred] Van Hove and [Han] Bennink. But I have the image of a guy who is playing just as loud as possible and screaming, and making all this noisy music. That might have changed a bit in the last years. It's getting lighter as we are old folk, whether or not it's better.

Do you find you appreciate the moments you are in the midst of making music, given the tensions all around the musical life, apart from the music itself?

Yeah. For me, it's not a new situation. I had to fight for every gig, for everything myself, through all those years. But for the younger generation, it is really difficult. They are not used to it. They finish the music schools and conservatories and they think, "OK, now I can play and I want to play. What is happening? Where can I play?"

When we started, and I also mean the English guys—from Incus, Derek Bailey, Tony Oxley, Evan, Paul Rutherford and more—and the Dutch guys—Misha Mengelberg, Han Bennink, Willem Breuker—we all had a feeling of solidarity. We really did everything together for a longer period. We set up our own record labels. We developed a kind of network for distribution and playing.

It is really a sign of our times that everybody prefers to think of themselves, and doesn't realize that solidarity is the most important thing, in the music and in the field around the music. It's not enough if you communicate via the 'net and know everything. You have to play together, you have to work together.

It seems that you are going almost as strong as ever, musically. Do you have that feeling yourself?

I still believe that what I'm doing is necessary—not only for myself, but for others, too. That I am able to do it with the help of my friends is a fantastic thing.

In our communities, in our world, in our political systems, everything is so determined that you have to try to do something different. You decide what to do, not somebody else. *Freedom* is a big word, and we know that freedom is a very limited thing in our society. But in the work, we still can reach it. We can try to get as far as possible. That's what you learn, really, being on the road. That is so. **DB**

Best CDs Of 2011

★★★★★ MASTERPIECES

Preservation Hall Jazz Band/ Del McCoury Band
American Legacies

PRESERVATION HALL RECORDINGS/MCCOURY MUSIC

What the Preservation Hall Jazz Band is currently doing for traditional New Orleans jazz, Del McCoury starting doing a decade ago for bluegrass; without altering the spirit of either early 20th century art form, both groups have successfully updated and broadened the audiences for their music. A seamless marriage of banjo, brass, breakdowns and polyphonic improvisation layer this swinging romp. —*Jennifer Odell* (June 2011)

Brian Lynch
Unsung Heroes: A Tribute To Some Underappreciated Trumpet Masters

HOLISTIC MUSICWORKS

Unsung Heroes honors the legacies of 10 underrated trumpet players. The series is more than a tribute; it's an effort to preserve and perpetuate the bop legacy. The CD features Lynch's peers and proteges performing a trove of obscure compositions. While releases like *Unsung Heroes* appear with some frequency, few sound as accomplished or exuberant. —*Eric Fine* (July 2011)

Paul van Kemenade
Close Enough

KEMO

Dutch saxophonist Paul van Kemenade's expressive alto and bluesy feel betray a likely debt to David Sanborn and Maceo Parker, but might also have been distilled from Bunky Green, Johnny Hodges or Amsterdam-based saxophonist Michael Moore. Clawing for precedents ends there, since this is a unique record. Despite the alto's distinct pump in the mix, there is great sensitivity to dynamics and a lovely hover betwixt classical, composition and improv.
—*Michael Jackson* (July 2011)

Karrin Allyson
'Round Midnight

CONCORD JAZZ

Karrin Allyson has long been known for gathering choice material from far-flung sources and fashioning superior albums—a skill never to be sneezed at. This ennui-soaked program is no exception; her ability to shape songs to conform to an overall vision more than justifies her production credit shared with Nick Phillips. —*Kirk Silsbee* (October 2011)

Maraca and His Latin Jazz All-Stars
Reencuentros

DESCARGA SARL

Luxurious and lively, flutist Orlando "Maraca" Valle's *Reencuentros* shows him at a new level of artistic growth. It's an international dream Latin jazz band—the "all-star" billing is no hype—coupled with a marvelous, 18-piece Cuban string orchestra. Part of the dreamlike quality of the project is to hear Puerto Rican, U.S.-based Cuban and Cuban-Cuban musicians playing together as if there were no obstacles. Mutual admiration illuminates the music. This is a repeatedly listenable, well-thought-out CD.
—*Ned Sublette* (November 2011)

Tá Lam 11
Mingus!

JAZZWERKSTATT

Bass clarinetist/solo saxophonist Gebhard Ullmann and his mostly reed-based aggregate present a portrait of Charles Mingus in a variety of colors: some, but not all of them, bold. Add to that palette more than a bit of impressionism, as these expertly arranged deliveries (most by Ullmann) contribute a new understanding and viewpoint on Mingus' incredible corpus. Clearly, this band is in love with this music, which, in case anyone was wondering, is also played with resonant ferocity. —*John Ephland* (December 2011)

Tierney Sutton Band
American Road

BFM JAZZ

This signals a new maturity for Tierney Sutton, a gifted singer. She achieves a new level of interpretation and conceptualization that, up to now, she has only visited. A range of musical Americana—from 19th century folk songs to George Gershwin to Harold Arlen & Yip Harburg to Leonard Bernstein & Stephen Sondheim to Jerry Lieber & Mike Stoller—is well chosen. Singer and band work hand-in-glove: The rhythm section gives her room but also support, an arrangement that works both ways. Sutton's luminous alto has seldom sounded so pure. —*Kirk Silsbee* (December 2011)

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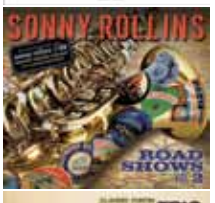
★★★★★ Historical


Aretha Franklin

Davis, Miles - Quintet	*Live In Europe 1967: The Bootleg Series Vol. 1*	Columbia/Legacy	Dec.
Franklin, Aretha	*Take A Look: Aretha Franklin Complete On Columbia*	Sony/Legacy	June
Modern Jazz Quartet	*The Complete Atlantic Studio Recordings Of The Modern Jazz Quartet, 1956–1964*	Mosaic	Oct.
Various Artists	*California Concert: The Hollywood Palladium (CTI Records 40th Anniversary Edition)*	Sony Masterworks Jazz	Feb.
Various Artists	*Cartagena! Curro Fuentes & The Big Band Cumbia And Descarga Sound Of Colombia 1962–'72*	Soundway	July
Various Artists	*FMP Im Rückblick–In Retrospect 1969–2010*	FMP	May

★★★★½ New

AfroCubism	*AfroCubism*	World Circuit/Nonesuch	April
Bauder, Matt	*Day In Pictures*	Clean Feed	April
Bernstein, Steven - Millennial Territory Orchestra	*MTO Plays Sly*	The Royal Potato Family	Dec.
Blaser, Samuel	*Consort In Motion*	Kind Of Blue	Nov.
Carll, Hayes	*KMAG YOYO (& Other American Stories)*	Lost Highway	Sept.
Carrington, Terri Lyne	*The Mosaic Project*	Concord	Sept.
Claudia Quintet + 1	*What Is The Beautiful?*	Cuneiform	Dec.
Cohen, Avishai	*Introducing Triveni*	Anzic	Feb.
DeFrancesco, Joey	*One Take, Volume Four*	Alma	March
Douglas, Dave	*United Front: Brass Ecstasy At Newport*	Greenleaf Music	Aug.
Evans, Charles/Neil Shah	*Live At Saint Stephens*	Hot Cup	March
Fleet Foxes	*Helplessness Blues*	Sub Pop	Sept.
Goodwin, Gordon - Big Phat Band	*That's How We Roll*	Telarc	June
Grusin, Dave	*An Evening With Dave Grusin*	Heads Up	Oct.
Holland, Dave/Pepe Habichuela	*Hands*	Dare2	Jan.
Hurst, Robert	*Bob Ya Head*	Bebob Records	April
Hurst, Robert	*Unrehurst, Volume 2*	Bebob Records	April
Jensen, Christine - Jazz Orchestra	*Treelines*	Justin Time	June
Lake, Oliver - Organ Quartet	*Plan*	Passin' Thru	April
Marriott, Thomas	*Constraints & Liberations*	Origin Records	Oct.
Mehldau, Brad	*Live In Marciac*	Nonesuch	June
Moroni, Dado - Trio	*Live In Beverly Hills*	Resonance	June
Mostly Other People Do The Killing	*The Coimbra Concert*	Clean Feed	June
O'Farrill, Arturo - The Afro Latin Jazz Orchestra	*40 Acres And A Burro*	Zoho	July
Orquestra Jazz Matosinhos	*Our Secret World*	Word Of Mouth Music	Feb.
Rollins, Sonny	*Road Shows, Vol. 2*	Doxy/Emarcy	Oct.
Rudd, Roswell	*The Incredible Honk*	Sunnyside	Nov.
Santos, John - Sextet	*Filosofía Caribeña, Vol. 1*	Machete Music	June
Schärli, Peter - Trio featuring Ithamara Koorax	*O Grande Amor*	TCB	May
Shipp, Matthew	*The Art Of The Improviser*	Thirsty Ear	June
Smith, Wadada Leo/Ed Blackwell	*The Blue Mountain's Sun Drummer*	Kabell	March
Spanish Donkey	*XYX*	Northern Spy	Oct.
Strickland, Marcus	*Triumph Of The Heavy, Vol. 1 & 2*	Strick Muzik	Nov.
Trio Dolce Vita	*Amarcord*	Jazzwerkstatt	July
Vitro, Roseanna	*The Music Of Randy Newman*	Motéma	Aug.
Williams, Ben	*State Of Art*	Concord Jazz	Oct.
Wyatt/Atzmon/Stephen	*For The Ghosts Within*	Domino	Feb.

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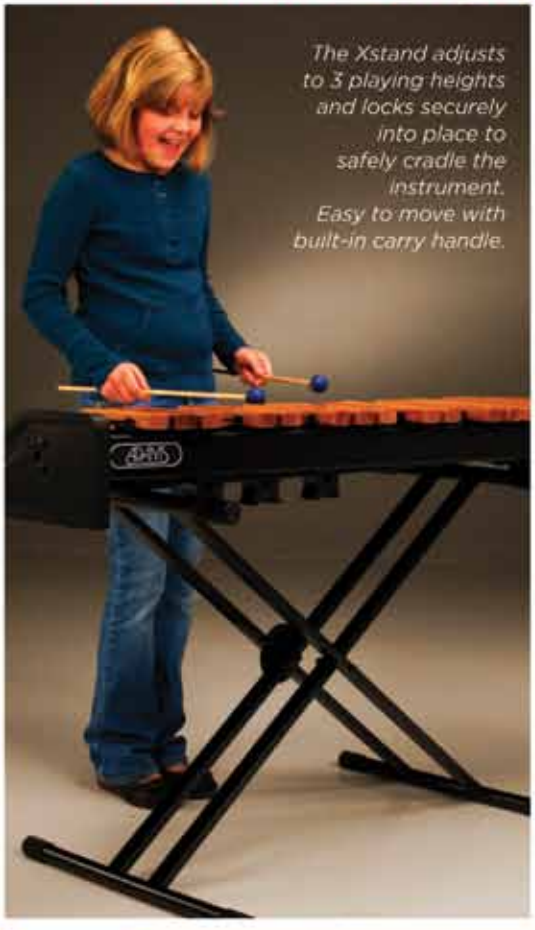

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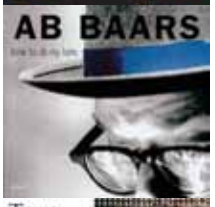
Ardoin, Made	*Mama, I'll Be Long Gone*	Tompkins Square	Sept.
Hubbard, Freddie	*Pinnacle*	Resonance	Oct.
Hubbard, Freddie	*Red Clay*	CTI/Masterworks	Feb.
Kuti, Fela	*Fela Kuti: Vinyl Box Set I*	Knitting Factory/Label Maison	June
Magic Sam Blues Band	*West Side Soul*	Delmark	July
Soft Machine	*NDR Jazz Workshop*	Cuneiform	April
Turrentine, Stanley	*Sugar*	CTI/Masterworks	Feb.
Zé, Tom	*Studies Of Tom Zé: Explaining Things So I Can Confuse*	Luaka Bop	Aug.

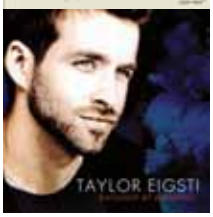
★★★★ New



Abrams, Muhal Richard	*SoundDance*	Pi	July
Ahleuchatistas	*Location Location*	Open Letter	Nov.
Akinmusire, Ambrose	*When The Heart Emerges Glistening*	Blue Note	April
Alden, Howard	*I Remember Django*	Arbors	Oct.
Allen, JD - Trio	*Victory!*	Sunnyside	June
Arriale, Lynne	*Convergence*	Motema	April
Arrive	*There Was…*	Clean Feed	Aug.
Avital, Omer	*Free Forever*	Smalls Records	Oct.
Avital, Omer - Quintet	*Omer Avital Quintet*	SmallsLive	April
Baars, Ab	*Time To Do My Lions*	WIG	Feb.
Baca, Susana	*Afrodiaspora*	Luaka Bop	Oct.
Ballister	*Bastard String*	PNL	June
Ban, Lucian/John Hébert	*Enesco Relmagined*	Sunnyside	Jan.
Band Of Gypsys Reincarnation	*40 Years After*	Inter-You KFT	Feb.
Bärtsch, Nik - Ronin	*Llyria*	ECM	Feb.
BassDrumBone	*The Other Parade*	Clean Feed	Sept.
Bennett, Tony	*Duets II*	Columbia	Dec.
Berg, Nils - Cinemascope	*Popmotion*	Hoob Jazz	Oct.
Bibb, Eric	*Troubadour Live*	Telarc	July
Bishop, Jeb - Trio	*2009*	Better Animal Recordings	April
Bixler, David/Arturo O'Farrill	*The Auction Project*	Zoho	Jan.
Bloom, Jane Ira	*Wingwalker*	Outline	May
Bohler, Kaye	*Like A Flower*	KB Records	Aug.
Breinschmid, Georg	*Brein's World*	Preiser Records	March
Broo, Magnus	*Swedish Wood*	Moserobie	March
Brown, Rob - Trio	*Unknown Skies*	Rogue Art	Sept.
Caine, Uri	*Twelve Caprices*	Winter & Winter	Sept.
Camilo, Michel	*Mano a Mano*	Decca/Emarcy	Nov.
Carter, James - Organ Trio	*At The Crossroads*	Emarcy	Dec.
Cervini, Amy	*Lovefool*	Orange Grove	Feb.
Charles, Etienne	*Kaiso*	Culture Shock	Nov.
Chestnut, Cyrus - Trio	*Journeys*	Jazz Legacy Productions	March
Cho, Mina	*Originality*	Mina Cho Music	Feb.
Clayton Brothers	*The New Song And Dance*	Artistshare	Jan.
Clayton, Gerald	*Bond: The Paris Sessions*	Emarcy	June
Cleaver, Gerald - Uncle June	*Be It As I See It*	Fresh Sound New Talent	April
Clemente, Felice - Quartet	*Nuvole di Carta*	Crocevia Di Suoni Records	Nov.
Cohen, Avishai	*Seven Seas*	Sunnyside	Dec.
Cole, Freddy	*Talk To Me*	Highnote	Nov.

★★★★ New



Corea, Chick/Stefano Bollani	*Orvieto*	ECM	Dec.
Corea, Clarke & White	*Forever*	Concord	July
Crump, Stephan/James Carney	*Echo Run Pry*	Clean Feed	Feb.
Cruz, Adam	*Milestone*	Sunnyside	Sept.
Cuadrado, Alexis	*Noneto Ibérico*	BJU Records	June
Cymerman, Jeremiah	*Fire Sign*	Tzadik	Dec.
Da Mata, Vanessa	*Bicicletas, Bolos E Outras Alegrias*	Sony Music Brasil	March
Dawkins, Ernest - New Horizons Ensemble	*The Prairie Prophet*	Delmark Records	July
Degibri, Eli	*Israeli Song*	Anzic Records	April
Del Grosso, Rich/John Del Toro Richardson	*Time Slips On By*	Mandolin Blues	March
Delgado, Issac	*L-O-V-E*	Sony Classical	Jan.
Delirium	*Green Side Up*	ILK	Oct.
Dengue Fever	*Sleepwalking Through The Mekong*	M80	Jan.
Dengue Fever	*Electric Cambodia*	Minky 1	Jan.
Dessen, Michael - Trio	*Forget The Pixel*	Clean Feed	Oct.
Dingman, Chris	*Waking Dreams*	Between Worlds Music	Oct.
Dinucci, Kiko	*Na Bocas Dos Outros*	Desmonta	March
Earl, Ronnie - The Broadcasters	*Spread The Love*	Stony Plain	Jan.
Eigsti, Taylor	*Daylight At Midnight*	Concord	March
Electric Willie	*A Tribute To Willie Dixon*	Yellow Bird	Oct.
Endangered Blood	*Endangered Blood*	Skirl	April
Endsley, Shane - The Music Band	*Then The Other*	Low Electrical	Oct.
Eskelin, Ellery/Gerry Hemingway	*Inbetween Spaces*	Auricle Records	May

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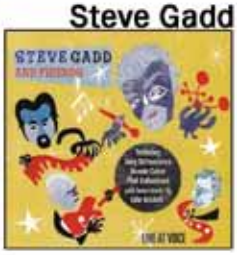

Bob Sheppard

Luis Conte

Larry Goldings

John Daversa

Alan Pasqua

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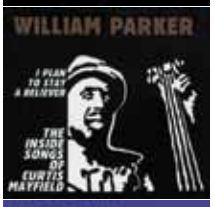
Evans, Peter - Quintet	*Ghosts*	More Is More	Aug.
Farinacci, Dominick	*Dawn Of Goodbye*	eOne	Nov.
Fernández, Agustí/Joe Morris	*Ambrosia*	Riti	Oct.
Flaten, Ingebrigt Håker/Håkon Kornstad	*Mitt Hjerte Altid Vanker-1*	Compunctio	Oct.
Friedlander, Erik	*Bonebridge*	Skipstone Records	Oct.
Gillet, Helen	*Running Of The Bells*	(self-released)	Oct.
Giraudo, Pedro	*Córdoba*	Zoho	Aug.
Gojogo	*28,000 Days*	Porto Franco	Nov.
Gold, Jared	*Out Of Line*	Posi-Tone	March
Gonzalez, Jerry	*Jerry Gonzalez Y El Comando De La Clave*	Sunnyside	Dec.
Goode, Brad	*Tight Like This*	Delmark	Jan.
Green, Benny	*Source*	Jazz Legacy Productions	Aug.
Greene, Jimmy - Quartet	*Jimmy Greene Quartet*	SmallsLive	April
Haarla, Iro	*Vespers*	ECM	Oct.
Haden, Charlie - Quartet West	*Sophisticated Ladies*	Emarcy	June
Haimovitz, Matt - Uccello	*Meeting Of The Spirits*	Oxingale	May
Hamilton, Scott/Rossano Sportiello	*Midnight At NOLA's Penthouse*	Arbors Jazz	June
Harrell, Tom	*The Time Of The Sun*	High Note	Oct.
Harrison, Joel	*String Choir: The Music Of Paul Motian*	Sunnyside	June
Haverstick, Neil	*Hide & Seek*	Microstick	Dec.
Herbert, Matthew	*One Pig*	Accidental	Nov.
Hersch, Fred	*Alone At The Vanguard*	Palmetto	June
Hoenig, Ari	*Punk Bop*	SmallsLive	April
Hunter, Charlie	*Public Domain*	Spire	Feb.
Husband, Gary	*Dirty & Beautiful Volume 1*	Abstract Logix	Oct.
Ibrahim, Abdullah/Ekaya	*Sotho Blue*	Sunnyside	July
Iyer, Vijay/Prasanna/Nitin Mitta	*Tirtha*	ACT	May
Jazz Passengers	*Reunited*	Justin Time	Jan.
Jones, Darius - Trio	*Big Gurl (Smell My Dream)*	AUM Fidelity	Dec.
Jones, Darius/Matthew Shipp	*Cosmic Lieder*	AUM Fidelity	July
Jordan, Stanley	*Friends*	Mack Avenue	Dec.
King, Dave - Trucking Company	*Good Old Light*	Sunnyside	Oct.
Klang	*Other Doors*	Allos Documents	June
Klein, Omer	*Rockets On The Balcony*	Tzadik	March
Kuti, Femi	*Africa For Africa*	Knitting Factory	June
Lane, Adam - Full Throttle Orchestra	*Ashcan Rantings*	Clean Feed	Jan.
Léandre, Joëlle	*Can You Hear Me?*	Leo	July
Les Doigts de L'Homme	*1910*	Alma	Oct.
Liebman, Dave - Group	*Turnaround*	Jazzwerkstatt	March
Lloyd, Charles - Quartet	*Mirror*	ECM	April
Lô, Cheikh	*Jamm*	World Circuit/Nonesuch	Oct.
López-Nussa, Harold - Trio	*El País De Las Maravillas*	World Village	Nov.
Lovano, Joe - Us Five	*Bird Songs*	Blue Note	March
Magic Pocket & Morten Qvenild	*The Katabatic Wind*	Bolage	Oct.
Mahanthappa, Rudresh	*Samdhi*	ACT	Dec.
Malone, Russell	*Triple Play*	MaxJazz	Feb.
Maranhão, Rodrigo	*Passageiro*	MPB/Universal	March
Marsalis, Branford/Joey Calderazzo	*Songs Of Mirth And Melancholy*	Marsalis Music	Aug.
McCabe, Alexander	*Quiz*	Consolidated Artists Productions	Jan.
McClain, Mighty Sam/Knut Reiersrud	*One Drop Is Plenty*	KKV	Nov.
Mehldau, Brad/Kevin Hays	*Modern Music*	Nonesuch	Dec.

★★★★ New



Mela, Francisco - Cuban Safari	*Tree Of Life*	Half Note	Nov.
Mezei, Szilárd - Szabad Quartet	*Februári Fadöntés*	No Business	June
Microscopic Septet	*Friday The Thirteenth, The Micros Play Monk*	Cuneiform	March
Mitchell, Roscoe - The Note Factory	*Far Side*	ECM	Feb.
My Silence	*It Only Happens At Night*	482 Music	Sept.
Nechushtan, Alon	*Words Beyond*	Buckyball Records	May
Nelson, Matt - Trio	*Nostalgiamaniac*	Chicago Sessions	Aug.
NY Jazz Initiative	*Mad About Thad*	Jazzheads	Aug.
Oneida	*Absolute II*	Jagjaguwar	Nov.
Palmer, Jeff	*Permutation*	Rank	March
Parco Della Musica Jazz Orchestra/ Maurizio Giammarco	*Open On Sunday*	Parco Della Musica	Nov.
Parker, William	*I Plan To Stay A Believer: The Inside Songs Of Curtis Mayfield*	AUM Fidelity	Jan.
Parr, Charlie	*When The Devil Goes Blind*	Nero's Neptune	May
Pavone, Mario - Orange Double Tenor	*Arc Suite T/Pi T/Po*	Playscape	March
Pelt, Jeremy	*The Talented Mr. Pelt*	High Note	April
Peplowski, Ken	*In Search Of…*	Capri	July
Peterson, Ralph - Unity Project	*Outer Reaches*	Onyx Music Label	Sept.
Pilc, Jean-Michel	*Essential*	Motéma	Aug.
Pirodda, Augusto	*No Comment*	Jazzwerkstatt	Nov.
Pride, Mike - From Bacteria To Boys	*Betweenwhile*	AUM Fidelity	April
Psychic Paramount	*II*	No Quarter	Nov.
Rawls, Johnny	*Memphis Still Got Soul*	Catfood	July

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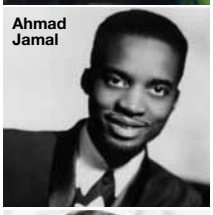
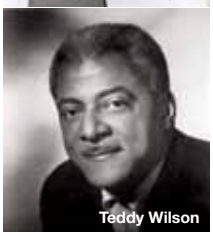
Reed, Eric	*Something Beautiful*	WJ3	Dec.
Reed, Mike - Loose Assembly	*Empathetic Parts*	482 Music	Feb.
Rempis Percussion Quartet	*Montreal Parade*	482 Music	June
Robinson, Jason	*The Two Faces Of Janus*	Cuneiform	Jan.
Rosenberg Trio	*Djangologists*	Enja	Jan.
Rubalcaba, Gonzalo	*FE…Faith*	5Passion	Aug.
Rueckert, Jochen	*Somewhere Meeting Nobody*	Pirouet	Nov.
Sabbagh, Jerome/Ben Monder/Daniel Humair	*I Will Follow You*	Bee Jazz	March
Santos, John - El Coro Folklórico Kindembo	*La Esperanza*	Machete Music	June
Satanique Samba Trio	*Bad Trip Simulator #2*	(self-released)	March
Schlippenbach Trio	*Bauhaus Dessau*	Intakt	Jan.
Scofield, John	*A Moment's Peace*	Emarcy	Nov.
Scorch Trio	*Melaza*	Rune Grammofon	May
Sellers, Joey - Solo Trombone	*What The…?*	Circumvention	April
SFJAZZ Collective	*Live 2010: 7th Annual Concert Tour*	SFJAZZ Records	Feb.
Shelby, Marcus - Orchestra	*Soul Of The Movement: Meditations On Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.*	Porto Franco	April
Shelton, Aram - Quartet	*These Times*	Singlespeed	Jan.
Shyu, Jen/Mark Dresser	*Synastry*	Pi	Nov.
Sipiagin, Alex	*Destinations Unknown*	Criss Cross	Oct.
Siskind, Jeremy	*Simple Songs For When The World Seems Strange*	Brooklyn Jazz Underground	Feb.
Smith III, Walter	*III*	Criss Cross	March
Sorey, Tyshawn	*Oblique-I*	Pi Recordings	Nov.
Stafford, Terell	*This Side Of Strayhorn*	MaxJazz	June
Starlicker	*Double Demon*	Delmark	Sept.
Sturm, Rolf	*Balance*	Water Street Music	Feb.
Taylor, Cecil/Tony Oxley	*Ailanthus/Altissima: bilateral dimensions of 2 root songs*	Triple Point	Feb.
Taylor, Dennis	*Steppin' Up*	Kizybosh	June
Tedeschi Trucks Band	*Revelator*	Sony Masterworks	July
Tepfer, Dan - Trio	*Five Pedals Deep*	Sunnyside	May
Tiempo Libre	*My Secret Radio*	Sony Masterworks	July
Touré, Sidi/Friends	*Sahel Folk*	Thrill Jockey	March
Trio 3 + Geri Allen	*Celebrating Mary Lou Williams*	Intakt	Dec.
Trondheim Jazz Orchestra/Eirik Hegdal with Special Guest Joshua Redman	*Triads And More*	MNJ	March
Udden, Jeremy - Plainville	*If The Past Seems So Bright*	Sunnyside	Oct.
Valdés, Chucho & Afro-Cuban Messengers	*Chuco's Steps*	4Q	Jan.
Various Artists	*Nine Lives: A Musical Adaptation, Vol. 1*	Mystery Street Records	June
Vu, Cuong - 4-tet	*Leaps Of Faith*	Origin	July
Wallace, Wayne - Latin Jazz Quintet	*To Hear From There*	Patois Records	June
Walter, Weasel/Mary Halvorson/Peter Evans	*Electric Fruit*	Thirsty Ear	April
Ware, David S.	*Onecept*	AUM Fidelity	Jan.
Ware, David S.	*Organica (Solo Saxophones, Volume 2)*	AUM Fidelity	Dec.
Ware, David S./William Parker/ Cooper-Moore/Muhammad Ali	*Planetary Unknown*	AUM Fidelity	Sept.
Wilkins, Reverend John	*You Can't Hurry God*	Big Legal Mess	May
Wilner, Spike	*Solo Piano*	SmallsLive	April
World Saxophone Quartet	*Yes We Can*	Jazzwerkstatt	May
Zeitlin, Denny	*Labyrinth: Live Solo Piano*	Sunnyside	Sept.
Zenón, Miguel	*Alma Adentro: The Puerto Rican Songbook*	Marsalis Music	Dec.

★★★★ Historical





Bamba, Sorry	*Volume One 1970–1979*	Thrill Jockey	Oct.
Dixon, Bill	*The Complete Remastered Recordings On Black Saint & Soul Note*	CamJazz	July
Dixon, Bill	*Intents And Purposes*	International Phonograph	July
Fahey, John	*Your Past Comes Back To Haunt You (The Fonotone Years 1958–'65)*	Dust-To-Digital	Dec.
Getz, Stan	*Stan Getz Quintets: The Clef & Norgran Studio Albums*	Hip-O Select	Sept.
Hanna, Sir Roland	*Colors From A Giant's Kit*	IPO Recordings	Aug.
Jamal, Ahmad	*The Complete Ahmad Jamal Trio Argo Sessions 1956–'62*	Mosaic	Jan.
Jobim, Antonio Carlos	*Stone Flower*	CTI/Masterworks Jazz	Feb.
Johnson, Syl	*Complete Mythology*	Numero Group	April
King, Albert/Stevie Ray Vaughan	*In Session*	Stax	June
Laws, Hubert	*Morning Star*	CTI/Masterworks Jazz	Feb.
Sarmiento, Michi - Su Combo Bravo	*Aqui Los Bravos! The Best Of Michi Sarmiento Y Su Combo Bravo1967–'77*	Soundway	July
Sinatra, Frank	*Frank Sinatra: Concert Collection (DVD)*	Shout! Factory	Aug.
Sledge, Percy	*The Atlantic Recordings*	Rhino	April
Terrell, Tammi	*Come On And See Me*	Hip-O Select	April
Threadgill, Henry-Air	*The Complete Novus And Columbia Recordings Of Henry Threadgill And Air*	Mosaic	March
Tipica	*Tipica '73*	Fania	July
Various Artists	*The Best Of Soul Train (DVD)*	TimeLife	Feb.
Washington, Dinah	*The Fabulous Miss D!: The Keynote, Decca & Mercury Singles, 1943–1953*	Hip-O Select	May
Wells, Junior - The Aces	*Live In Boston 1966*	Delmark	Jan.
Western Jazz Band	*Songs Of Happiness, Poison & Ululation*	Sterns	Oct.
Wilson, Teddy	*Solo, Big Band*	Storyville	April

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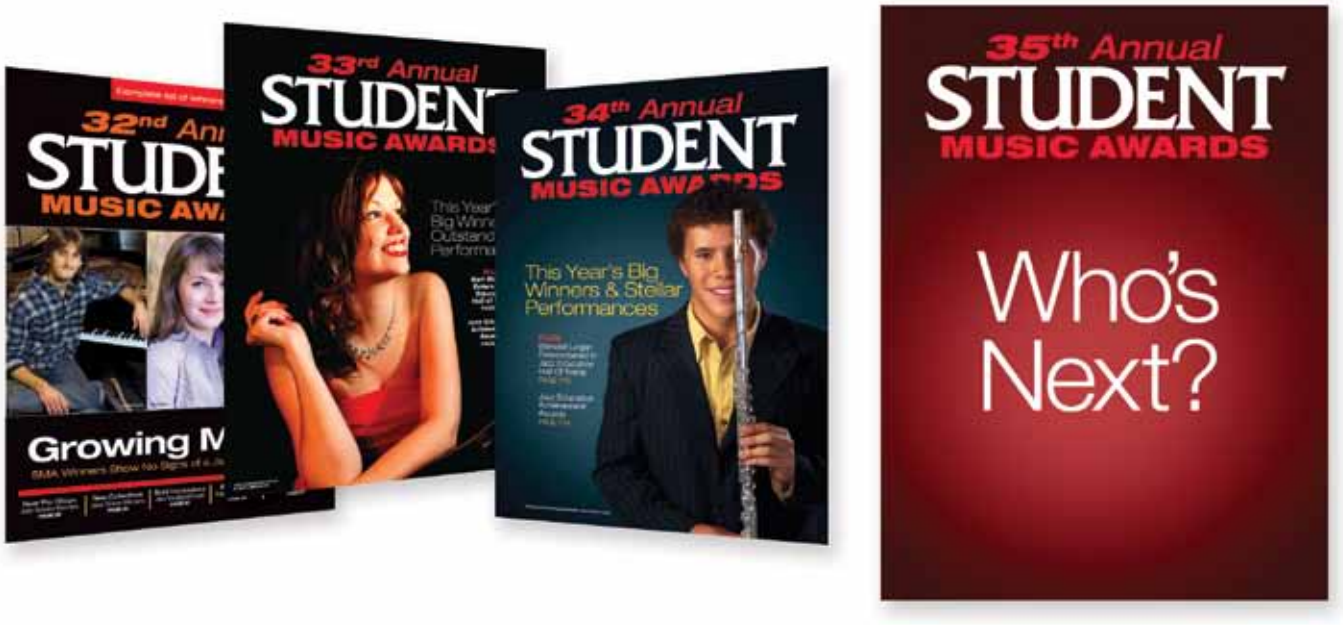

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CATERINA DI PERRI

Lionel Loueke (top) and Miguel Zenón

An Italian Renaissance

Whether they're promising conservatory students or acclaimed international artists, every musician at Siena Jazz speaks the same language.

By James Hale ⋮ Photography by Caterina Di Perri

Up on the ramparts of a 16th-century fort, a young man was blowing Coltrane riffs over the tiled roofs of the ancient city of Siena, Italy. Among the olive trees, a trio of bassists was thumping walking lines.

The summer masterclasses of Siena Jazz—Italy's only degree-granting jazz program—were in session. Housed spectacularly inside the Fortezza Medicea—a remnant of the region's former Spanish rule—the two-week summer institute accommodates 120 students. Many are from Italy, but a large number comes from northern Europe, with the occasional pupil journeying all the way from North America. And all of them are eager to study with such musicians as Dave Douglas, Eric Harland, Miguel Zenón, Franco D'Andrea and Greg Osby.

"The number of teachers and the density of talent and experience here is an incredible attraction," said Peter Qualtere-Burcher, a tenor saxophonist and Whitman College student from Eugene, Ore. "It's an amazing environed castle here." Qualtere-Burcher, who is embarking on his second summer in the program, added, "The Zen of jazz is definitely present here."

Siena Zen master, Director Frank Caroni, can be found in a glass and brick-walled office atop the school's main building. Caroni was a young prog-rock bassist in Siena in the mid '70s when he decided to shift his educational focus toward the jazz-rock fusion that was ruling the music scene.

"There was no one in Siena who was teaching jazz," Caroni said through translator Luca Mercurio, a member of the school's administration. With that in mind, Caroni reached out to the members of Perigeo, an established Italian fusion band that had toured in support of Weather Report. In August 1978, three members of Perigeo—D'Andrea, saxophonist Claudio Fasoli and drummer Bruno Biriaco—staged the first summer jazz workshop for 37 students. Three months later, Perigeo bassist Giovanni Tommaso jumped onboard, and the group welcomed an additional 46 students. But the need for a year-round program was evident, and the wheels had already been set in motion.

"Teaching was still odd in jazz," Caroni said. "There were few jobs teaching jazz in Italy, so it was hard to justify charging fees. What was in it for the students?"

Caroni's solution was to convince Siena's city council to fund the program. In doing so, he not only laid the groundwork for the program's success, but also for the future of jazz education throughout Italy.

Mercurio noted that Italy's tax structure offers no advantage to individuals that fund private institutions like Siena Jazz. Therefore, the challenge laid in convincing government about the importance of supporting the arts, which Caroni successfully accomplished. Thirty-five years after he initially got city politicians to fund his dream, Siena's mayor, Maurizio Cenni, contributed the foreword to a commemorative coffee-table book, in which he credited Siena Jazz with making his city "a European jazz capital."

Since its founding, Siena Jazz has led to the development of nearly 700 jazz programs throughout Italy. And while municipalities like Perugia grab the international spotlight with star-studded festivals, Siena has quietly fueled the country's burgeoning jazz education system.

"It's a virtuous circle," said Caroni, who estimated that 70 percent of the jazz teachers in the country's conservatories are among Siena Jazz's 6,000 alumni. "As the pioneer in Italian jazz education, we have been very rigid about measuring our success and planning for the future."

For students, the amount of public funding that Siena Jazz receives doesn't go unnoticed. Caroni said he constantly stresses to students the need to recognize that it's public money that equips the school's 20 permanent classrooms and supports the state-of-the-art Arrigo Polillo Jazz Study Center—a massive collection of jazz recordings and printed materials that has serviced scholars throughout Europe since 1989.

The the growth of Siena Jazz has been slow, it's also been steady. Caroni has deliberately kept the program's growth at low throttle through the years, carefully testing new ideas before adding them. For example, his latest initiative—a concentration in string improvisation—was introduced last year with a "string masters" course. It will eventually grow into its own program of study.

"I like to eliminate the possibility of error," said Caroni.

Given his cautious approach, it's difficult to imagine how much planning will go into the next steps toward the program's development. Soon, Siena Jazz will be recognized as Italy's only university-level jazz program. According to Mercurio, this would have been impossible before the advent of the European Union, which permits private institutions to grant academic degrees with the approval of individual countries' ministries of culture.

With the Italian government's imprimatur, Siena Jazz will introduce a five-year bachelor of music program with 72 students in each year of the program. They also plan to add a three-year master's degree program for an additional 52 students annually. The addition of an extra year to these degree programs is characteristic of Caroni, who said the extra year of preparation will ensure that his students are both devoted

Bassist Omer Avital (far right) with Siena Jazz musicians

Siena Jazz players with Greg Osby (fourth from left)

Dave Douglas

to jazz study and ready to collaborate in the selfless way that he calls "interplay"—one of the few English words he uses with ease.

"Franco's approach to group interaction has definitely been successful," said D'Andrea. "It is one of his concepts that sets the Siena program apart."

Qualtere-Burcher caught on to Caroni's approach immediatey upon his introduction to Siena Jazz in 2010. "It was just this heightened philosophical awareness of the music, this transmitting of an open mind and open ear, and how to grow organically in an individual manner. In the U.S., it's a very competitive environment, and you are always faced with these quantifiable measures of your skill—How fast can you play? How high or loud? Here, it's 'Did you lose your ego?' 'Were you listening to the other players?' 'How well did you react to the group?'"

That sense of ego-free playing and group dynamics was evidenced at Siena's nightly concerts, which are held inside the walls of the fortress between summer workshops. Young players like Qualtere-Burcher mixed easily with veterans like Douglas and trumpeter Avishai Cohen, and displayed neither bashfulness or brashness.

Drummer Jonas Pirzer said the interaction with artists is one of the things that differentiate the program. "I learn a lot by watching people play, but I also learn by interacting with experienced musicians when they're not playing," Pirzer said. "They teach you just by the way they carry themselves and express themselves to you and to other students."

Singer Kim Dhondt, who's in her second year at a conservatory in Antwerp, Belgium, echoed Pirzer's sentiment. "I feel like I'm already improving after less than a week because it's such an intensive program," she added. "It's not just how to play, but what to play and why to play. I'm used to teachers telling me to learn the basics before taking chances. Here, teachers tell me to start singing freer things and using different tensions."

According to Caroni, the basics are still essential. "You have to be able to play the history of the music and understand where the music of today comes from," he said. A key element of both the summer workshop and the regular Siena Jazz program is a mandatory jazz history course, led by journalist and translator Francesco Martinelli. The course plays as important a role as Marcello Faneschi's music theory and ear training classes.

Caroni added that creating a well-rounded student is no different than ensuring the chemistry of a band.

"It's the satisfaction I get from seeing young people fill their lives with good ideas," he said. "It's the idea of sharing this music instead of competition. We started this to help others, to show music students how to study and improve their playing. Jazz is serious art, and our goal is to show young people that they have to give all their energy to it if they are serious about being jazz musicians." **DB**

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Jim Snidero's Jazz Class

The saxophonist, composer and author of three new educational texts discusses how he applies his own musical philosophies in the classroom.

By Michael Gallant ⋮ Photography by Jack Vartoogian/FrontRowPhotos

For Jim Snidero, teaching isn't just about getting students to play the right notes or scales. Rather, his vision of jazz education centers on a potent alchemy of technique, language, personality and—perhaps most importantly—taste.

Easier said than taught? No doubt. That's why it's a good thing that the alto saxophone player's efforts are informed by decades spent honing his own chops on the bandstand and in the studio. Snidero has collaborated with artists ranging from Brother Jack McDuff and Eddie Palmieri to Frank Sinatra and Sting. His 16 albums as a bandleader showcase a clean and rich horn tone, deep swing and effortless musicality that many aspiring sax wizards can only dream of. Snidero's latest recording, *Interface* (Savant), is as accessible as it is sophisticated, especially with the mastery of guitarist Paul Bollenback (on acoustic and electric), bassist Paul Gill and drummer McClenty Hunter added to the transcendent, often hard-grooving mix.

Though Snidero currently teaches part-time at both The New School for Jazz and Contemporary Music and Princeton University, his educational efforts stretch beyond the classroom walls. He has published 43 instructional books for his three *Jazz Conception* series, each volume containing original works of music crafted to teach musicality, theory and solo construction. "These etudes give the grammar of the language of jazz great clarity," said Jimmy Heath, in praise of the series, and Randy Brecker described them as "one of the best tools I've seen for learning and practicing jazz vocabulary and phrasing."

Here's what Snidero had to say about his musical philosophy, his books and recordings and how even a masterful saxophonist can remain a student of the founding icons of jazz.

How do you teach a student to really say something through music?

You can point out facets of a great player's music when you're listening together with students. "Do you hear how he made that D cry? Do you hear how he used just a little bit of a bend to make the melody feel melancholy and soulful?" There're a lot of intuitive decisions that are informed by experience, talent, personality and hard work. And there are learnable techniques that can add both expression and meaning to your playing. You can't breathe life into your playing just by using the techniques, but it's hard to do so without them.

So technique is really just the beginning.

There has to be knowledge of technique and language, as well as an awareness of the spirituality of playing. It's also very important to have taste, and it's very difficult to teach people how to have taste.

How do you go about teaching something that abstract?

You can point it out to people and say, "This or that great player didn't bend too much here because it would have been distasteful. He or she rested. Why? Because that moment came after a very dense passage, and if the player had continued, the effect may have been lost."

Great players do things like that intuitively. And for students, awareness like that comes from a eureka moment when they're playing or practicing—"Oh, that's what it feels like!" When I was first able to really play, I had moments where I felt like the music was moving people and moving me. I felt satisfied, happy about what I'd played and fulfilled on a deep level. I tell students to try to remember that, to put themselves in that frame of mind and create music that moves people. Again, that has to be set against ability, knowledge and taste. And then you reach for spirituality and personality—and the combination of all of those factors is what makes the greatest guys the greatest.

If you're trying to reproduce something you felt before, how do you still make your performance fresh?

I'm talking more about *how* you play than what you play. You want to be able to transcend notes and progressions and put yourself in a space where you just let your emotions control the moment, with complete control of the music and the language. That's what's so hard about [keeping things fresh].

In your eyes, who embodies this approach?

My yardstick is always the guys that I grew up listening to. I feel that they were the best of all time. Not to slight anyone around now, but if you listen to Miles, it's just great. John Coltrane, Charlie Parker, Sonny Rollins—they're all so profoundly deep, tasteful, skillful and spiritual. It's also so warm. Even when

Coltrane would go way out, it was never cold, and that's one thing that I use as a way to judge music.

How do you try to bring that level of mastery to your own music?

The best way that I can really reach their level—and I have not given up hope of playing as well as they did—is to practice all the time, deal with the things I can't yet do and compare myself to them. But those guys practiced a lot, too, so there's more to it than just shedding.

What do you feel you cannot do?

I can't get in the moment as consistently as they do. When I listen to any of those masters, they seem completely crystallized in the moment. What they're playing consistently comes from the very core of their souls. I can't do that as often as I want.

How would you, or a student, get there?

It's a psychological battle, in a way. It's a matter of being completely confident. You have to know that, when you get up to play, you're going to be creating something truly wonderful. If you have that kind of confidence and you hear the music so clearly because you've played so much, you're there. Much of it comes down to playing and practicing a lot, and working through technical problems.

Like what?

If you have issues with your instrument or playing technique, it's very hard to be in the moment. If there's any doubt about that at all, it's going to be hard to relax to the point where you're completely still. That's a damn hard thing to do every time you play, man. It really is.

Your music seems easy to connect with, both for jazz fans and newcomers.

Some people confuse dissonance and abstraction with being modern, and sometimes people confuse simple or consonant themes with being old-fashioned. It's not true. I love dissonant music and I've written lots of dissonant compositions, but I don't feel like I have to write a crunch chord just to make someone say, "Oh yeah, that's now!" Some players can be so concerned about being hip that they lose sight of the spiritual and human side of the music, so it starts to sound like a science project. That sort of work can be technically amazing, and I can appreciate it, but for me, that's not what music's about.

How do the roles of musician, bandleader and educator intersect for you?

I want to bring what I've learned as a saxophonist and bandleader to students. I'm not afraid to tell a student if something's good, if it's not good, and why. I have been inspired by teaching experiences—I get excited about explaining things in ways students haven't heard before. Plus, I've had some amazing teachers myself, so it's nice to bring that kind of experience to students.

What are your thoughts on tone—both for yourself, and for your students?

I have conversations with students who say things like, "I want a dark sound." Now, you can emphasize the lows of your sound, but what a lot of people don't realize is that the best tone is both complete and complex. Too much darkness becomes dull, and too much brightness becomes strident. If you listen to great singers like Pavarotti and Sinatra, their voices have a full spectrum of color. They can change that color, as I do with my saxophone sound, but the underlying sound is clear and rich.

UCF

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UCF Music's Jeff Rupert understands that music is an art and a business—and so the department started its own record label. Flying Horse Records has released two albums and they're rising in the charts.* *"The goal is to give the students a voice, let them help make the record company."*

* *The Jazz Professors* charted for 17 weeks to #19 on *Jazz Week*
Jazz Town by UCF Jazz Ensemble I charted for 10 weeks to #42 on *Jazz Week*

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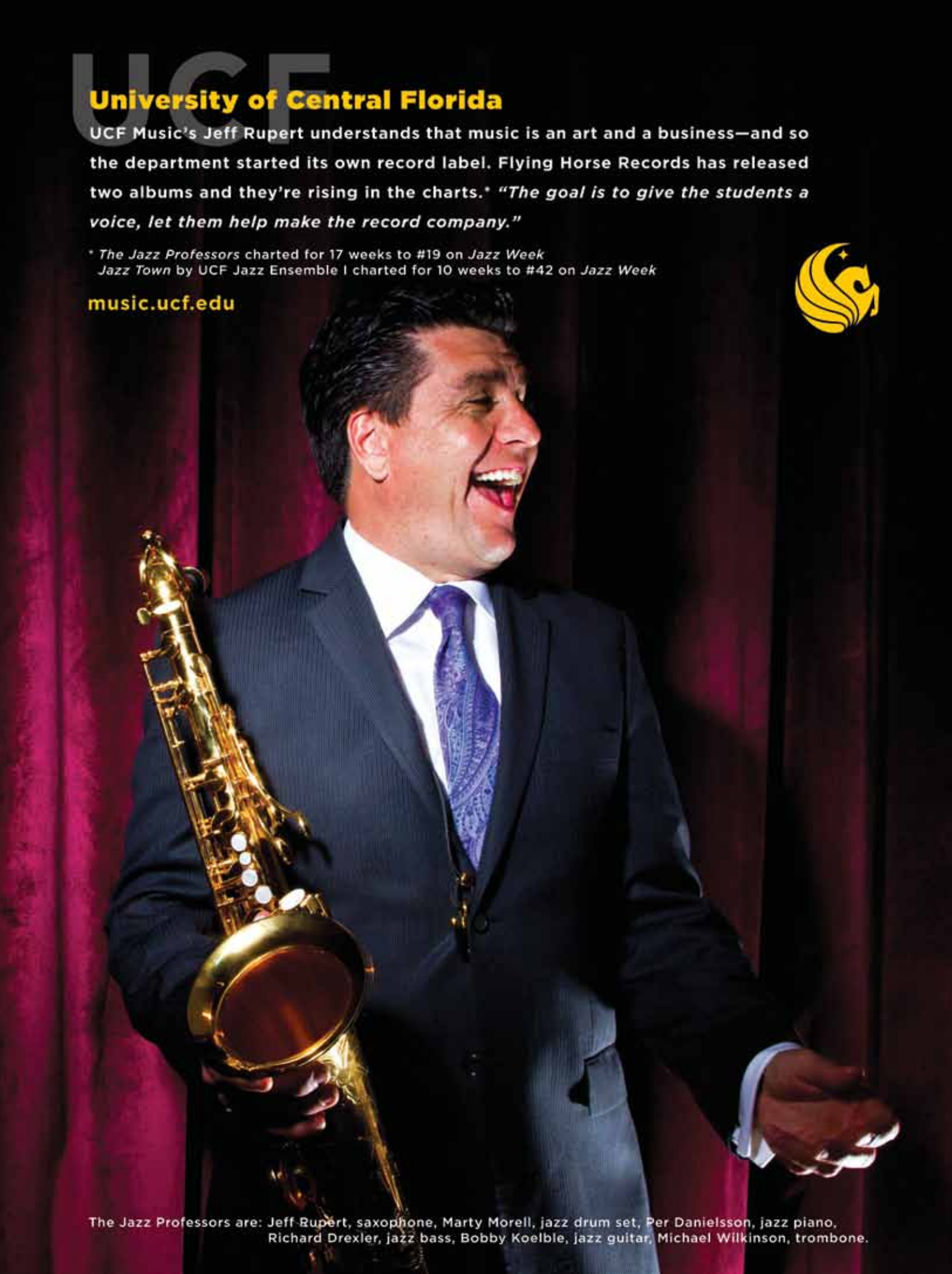

The Jazz Professors are: Jeff Rupert, saxophone, Marty Morell, jazz drum set, Per Danielsson, jazz piano, Richard Drexler, jazz bass, Bobby Koelble, jazz guitar, Michael Wilkinson, trombone.

What was your compositional process like for *Interface?*

I wanted to capitalize on Paul Bollenback's acoustic guitar sound, integrate it and still make the project sound like jazz. When I'm constructing an album, I try to think about keys, tempos and forms—how the record will progress from one track to another and what the effect will be. When I'm actually composing, I usually start by thinking about mood and tempo, and then address color and length. Sometimes I find a melody to base things off of, and sometimes it's just a chord progression.

Some of your compositions seem much shorter than others.

The song "After The Pain" isn't very long—just 19 measures. It repeats the same theme with a little variation—and the piece swings, which is what I love most about jazz. Sometimes it's best to just have an elegant simplicity to what you write. Just finish it and go on to the next piece. In fact, one of the hardest things about writing music is knowing when to stop.

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How is the writing process for your books different than—or the same as—writing for one of your records?

It's different because the pieces in the books are composed solos with no space for improvisation. Plus, they're constructed for someone who wants to learn how to get from point A to point B on a standard song like "Stella By Starlight"—I try to give a few choruses of what works, and explain why it works. But I do still have exactly the same standards and values when I write for the books as when I compose for my own bands, and I think that's why I've been successful. The instructional compositions and performances sound authentic—and they swing.

So they're not dumbed down.

Not at all. Sometimes they're simpler, but that doesn't make them any less good. In fact, it's a great challenge to write something fairly simple that you can hear 20 times as an educated listener and still like. What I tried to do for many of these instructional pieces was to figure out how to write simple things that still use the language of the guys that I've learned from.

What's an example?

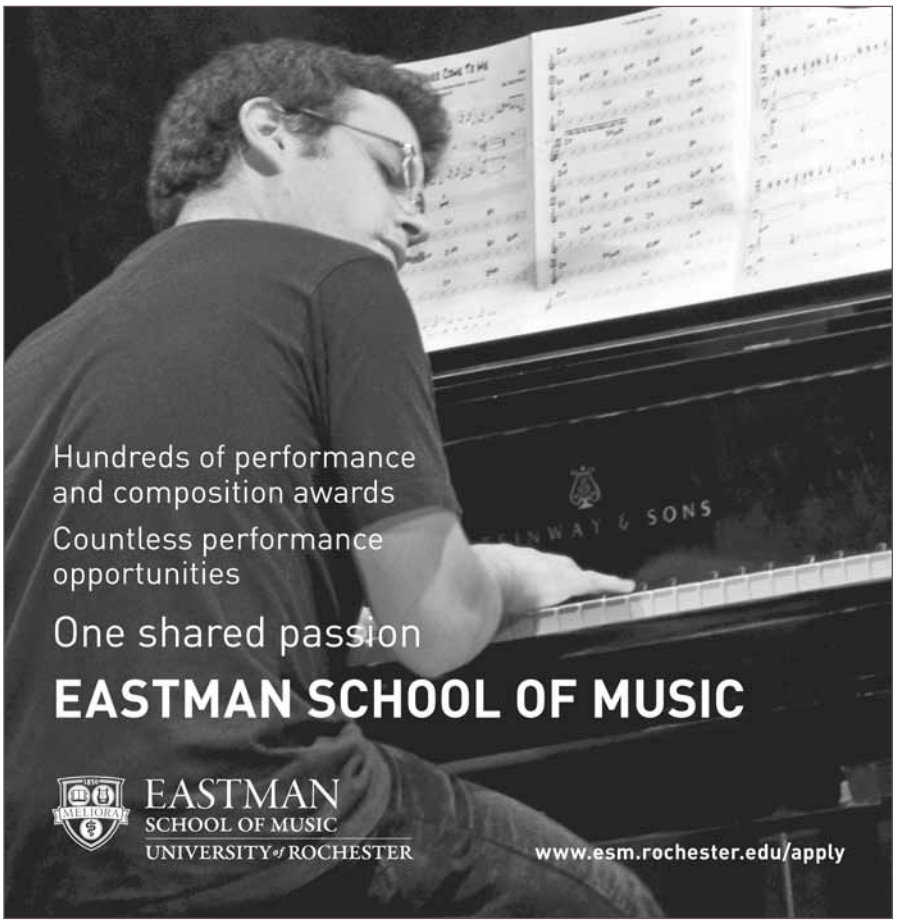
Listen to the way that Miles plays on "So What." What Miles plays is often simple, but it's so tasteful. When I feel like I've written something like that, something that isn't terribly complex but still says something, I find it very satisfying. On *Interface*, a few of the tunes are like that—fairly simple, but you feel like you've been somewhere after you've listened to them. To me, that's what those guys I look up to always did. That's why I always judge myself against them.

What have been some of your favorite moments as a player?

Two of my greatest musical moments on the bandstand were playing with Frank Sinatra and Tom Harrell. They're both geniuses. I did a few tours with Tom in Europe. He's amazing. I was in Sinatra's band for four years—it was so good, so close to the source. I saw people crying when he sang tunes. It's incredible how a guy like that could get so inside the moment and be so absolutely confident. Sinatra's singing was a pure expression of the human spirit.

What about a favorite moment as an educator?

One of the nicest things anybody ever said to me came from a trumpet player at the Brubeck Institute. He was 18 years old, an unbelievable player. He said that he learned to play jazz from studying my books. That was an amazing thing to hear. **DB**



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Garfield High School Jazz Ensemble

No Accounting for Love

Garfield High School's Secret Jazz Society

By Zoe Young

There's no denying Garfield High School's stellar jazz program. Under the leadership of drummer Clarence Acox, the Seattle school's jazz band has consistently placed in—if not won—the Essentially Ellington big band competition, and thanks to an extremely active touring schedule, they've lapped the European continent multiple times. It's a sobering realization when many members of such an award-winning ensemble aren't even old enough to vote, but out of this dichotomy emerges an interesting point. On top of the complicated business of playing jazz, these kids have to undertake the business of being high-school students. How do you juggle a pro touring itinerary with AP English and prom dates?

Affording to Garfield senior Julian Garvue, who plays trumpet in the school's prestigious A Band, the feats of the jazz band are just business as usual within the greater Garfield community. "We're just another crowd, like the drama kids or the jocks. The conversation might go something like, 'Oh cool, you play music,' but it's rare that the other students or even teachers really know what we're doing." Garvue said he thinks the lack of interest stems from jazz's relative unpopularity among other Garfield students, and he has a point. In a fight between Dave Brubeck and Justin Bieber, the victor is the latter on today's high-school campuses. The issue, however, may stem from a lack of exposure. Only three to four of the 12 to 14 shows that the Garfield jazz band plays annually are held in the school's auditorium. Although the band is extremely gifted, their talent is showcased primarily on the road. But even in the face of this rigorous program, Garvue has never run into opposition from another teacher when he's had to miss class. "They just think of it as another field trip," he said. "I wish we toured even more."

So, jazz is less popular among high school students—newsworthy? Absolutely not. But within the context of the jazz community, Garfield students are receiving a jazz education on which they can build for the rest of their lives.

"The music is based on tradition," Acox said. "Students need to learn the language before they start inventing their own words." For Acox, that means studying the masters. "I encourage individual listening as well as group listening. At first I would bring in recordings for the students. Now they're bringing them in for me." Recruited by Garfield from Southern University in 1971, Acox was hired to revamp the school's music program. "There were 17 kids in the band room when I walked in the door." He said. "Now we have 85 students in jazz ensembles alone."

Garvue also feels the benefits of Acox's bedrock teaching style, though his road to that realization was less conventional.

"Before Garfield, I really didn't think about older [music]." Garvue said. "When I started out on piano, my dad showed me Schoenberg. I really loved it, but Mozart never did it for me. It was the same with jazz. I was a modern elitist from the get-go, but Acox didn't let me stay that way. Now when I listen to Red Garland or Hank Jones, I feel like I get it. Those guys really swung hard, and I can respect it."

Going into a semester, Acox usually has a clear idea of the repertoire his bands will undertake. As a given ensemble grows, however, he's often willing to bend.

"If we really hit the Basie—I mean really hit it—he might let us play a Mike Holober tune or something by Maria Schneider," Garvue said. "But we have to earn it." And they do. The Garfield jazz band has a history of "really hitting" their repertory, and the manic European touring schedule might be responsible.

"Whenever you become a road band, you get very tight as a group," Acox explained. Of course, the warm European reception also helps. "They love jazz over there. Every small town has a minister of music, and the kids can feel how much they care about jazz specifically. [The students] feel more appreciated in Europe, but we've never competed over there. I want them to have a good time on tour, not feel the pressure of competition."

The band also bonds personally on tour. "We have our best discussions on the bus," Garvue said, "regardless of resenting being on the bus."

But even in the face of such budding professionalism, the band's teenage mentality still shines through from time to time.

Acox told the story of a trip to the Montreux Jazz Festival.

"We were playing at a beautiful resort. The stage overlooked the French Alps, and the audience was really enjoying themselves. It was a perfect show, except the trumpet section kept missing their entrances. They stand in the back, so I couldn't see what was going on until the set was over. When I went back there I saw that the stage was over a topless pool and they'd spent the whole set staring! I read them the riot act, but we laugh about it now." **DB**

School Notes


Curtis Fuller

MARK E. OLSON

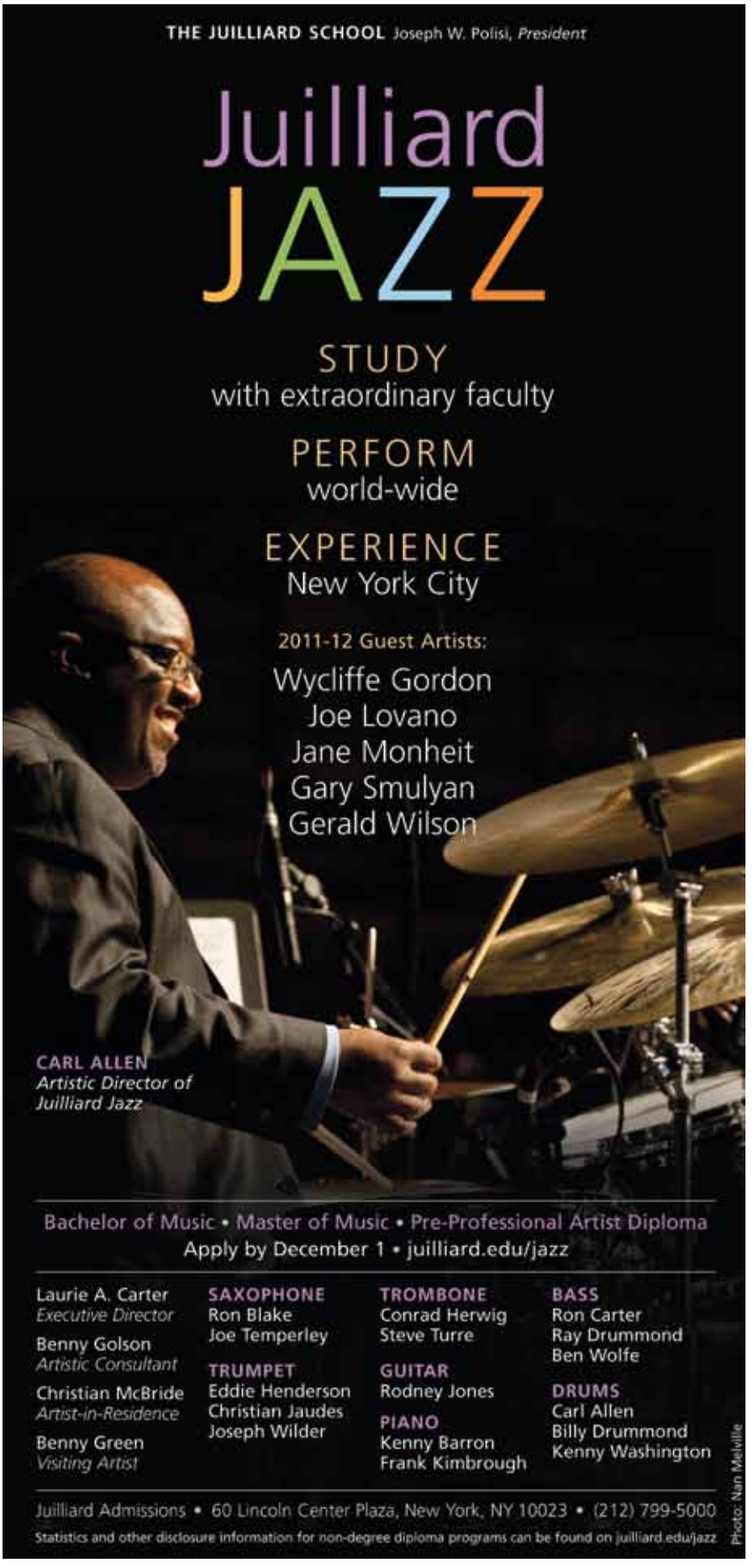
Crimson Jazz: Trombonist Curtis Fuller will participate in Harvard University's celebration of renowned jazz label Blue Note Records. Between Nov. 12–April 14, Fuller and other Blue Note artists will host a series of on-campus events that include workshops, public conversations, performances and exhibitions of cover art by Blue Note designer Reid Miles.

Business Sense: Julliard School professor Antonio Ciacca conducted a workshop entitled "The Business Of Music" at Manitoba Music on Nov. 9. Ciacca, who is also the director of programming at Lincoln Center, discussed current industry trends and offered advice for developing business models. He also advocated using the Internet and social media as part of suggested overall business strategies.

Lecture Hall: John Redmond was appointed as the University of Miami Frost School of Music's newest music business and industries lecturer. Redmond, whose tenure began this year, previously held positions at Universal Music Publishing (Canada) and PolyGram Music Publishing. He also formed Publish This, a Miami-based company that specializes in music publishing and copyright management issues.

Calhoun Clinics: Living Colour drummer Will Calhoun conducted a series of educational clinics between Oct. 26–28. In adding to providing instruction that spanned several genres, from rock to jazz, Calhoun also discussed his trance- and urban-influenced new disc *Jazz Meets World*.

Hoag at 80: Kansas University's School of Music announced plans to celebrate the 80th birthday of bassist and professor emeritus of music theory and composition Charles Hoag on Nov. 14. The event was set to include concerts by KU faculty members. Hoag was also on the bill to perform some of his original compositions.



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The Gwendolyn Brooks Middle School Jazz Ensemble

Welcome to Tone Town!

The JodyJazz-endorsed Brooks Middle School Band raises jazz awareness in Harvey, Ill.

By Hilary Brown

They're the youngest group in history to play the Chicago Jazz Festival. They've rubbed elbows with Orbert Davis and Ron Carter and have their sights set on playing the White House. And after receiving an endorsement deal with JodyJazz, the Gwendolyn Brooks Middle School jazz ensemble is sounding better than ever.

JodyJazz President Jody Espina caught wind of the group from saxophonist Dudley Owens, who is currently endorsed by the Savannah, Ga.-based mouthpiece company. Owens had recently conducted a clinic at Brooks Middle Schools and initally tipped Espina off to the virtually undiscovered Harvey, Ill., ensemble.

"Dudley knew of the band," Espina explained. "They were one of two middle school bands invited to play the Midwest Clinic. They were going to have a show and wanted to print a full-page ad for me in their catalog. They needed mouthpieces, so it sounded like a good deal, but as a low-income school, I was happy to do it on that."

It was also Owens who sang the praises of Espina's bright, articulate product to Brooks Middle School Band Director Roosevelt Griffin. Griffin said that the group's talent far exceeds the normal junior high repertoire. And for a six-piece saxophone section, which breezes through Count Basie and bebop, and occasionally deviates from middle-school jazz standards, the school-supplied mouthpieces just weren't cutting it.

"Most of these kids are coming from mouthpieces for concert band," Espina explained. "Concert band mouthpieces are very quiet, so they blend in with the flutes. It's a very different sound than you hear in the jazz world. So many

bands are struggling against a drumset, some brass that's blaring and maybe a bass guitar."

Interested in the prospect of helping an underprivileged neighborhood, Espina equipped the saxophone section with a selection of mouthpieces—a round-chambered, traditional design and the brighter, more articulate JodyJazz Classic model—which allowed students to tailor their horns according to their style and skill level.

"I talked to [Griffin], and I do try to customize the mouthpieces to some degree," Espina said. He noted that the jazz mouthpieces, equipped with a removable spoiler for volume, are like "having an instant sixth gear that lets [students] project more. It adds to the collective synergy of school bands."

What resulted from the partnership was an unprecedented amount of public attention—for both the middle school ensemble and Espina himself. The realization came full-circle during the 2010 Midwest Clinic, a prestigious band and orchestra conference in Chicago. The JodyJazz-toting Brooks ensemble—already adept at seamless soloing and improvising—blew away a ballroom of more than 500 people and received three standing ovations. For Espina, the endorsement was a rather unexpected marketing tool.

"Their concert was just unbelievable," Espina said. "The band directors just streamed up to the JodyJazz booth, all wanting mouthpieces for their sax sections." The decision to endorse middle school bands has turned into business as usual for Espina, who recently offered an endorsement deal to Caleb Chapman's Utah-based Super Crescent Band.

Band directors weren't the only ones who noticed a difference. Griffin said that the confidence level of his students has soared, as has the popularity of the jazz ensemble class. "We've definitely grown," said Griffin, whose current jazz band now features a much larger sax section. He also said that even now, after receiving their mouthpiece makeover, the veterans of the original horn section stand a bit taller as they perform.

"They noticed the actual tone was a bit better," Griffin said. "It really opened up their sound. My lead alto player now has two JodyJazz mouthpieces, and he switches them out depending on what type of music he's playing."

Espina added that the change is quite obvious just from looking at the students' faces. "They're having more fun," he said. "And when they're having fun, everything just starts to gel."

The Brooks Middle School Jazz Band's Midwest Clinic fame has affected more than their sound. More importantly, the success has had far-reaching cultural effects. It's revitalized an overall interest in jazz music, not only for the students, but for the entire town of Harvey.

"We've brought a lot of exposure and a lot of good things to the community," Griffin said. "We're trying to bring back jazz as a cultural change to Harvey, and we're doing it starting with the kids."

The band director hopes to bring more performers to the area, and he's received no shortage of offers. Recent visitors and clinicians have included Ari Brown, the Fatum Brothers, Ernie Adams and Greg Ward—an all-star lineup that he's referred to as "a pretty big list."

"We brought out a group recently from New York to the school," Griffin recalled. "A lot of parents came out to the concert who normally wouldn't experience jazz."

The attention hasn't fazed Harvey's unsung heroes, either. If anything, it's only made the ensemble more ambitious. Since the Midwest Clinic, they've maintained a great relationship with JodyJazz, occasionally appearing in advertisements and receiving performance-priced mouthpieces in exchange. They've also attended the University of Chicago Jazz Academy, and performed at the Illinois NEA Convention. Most of the time, they are the youngest artists on the bill.

The ultimate goal for the Brooks ensemble is to head to Washington, D.C., but Griffin said that the greatest gratification simply comes from giving the students the opportunity to perform. "The community is really backing us," he said. **DB**

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Making The Hammond B3 Organ Sing With Expression

Dr. Lonnie Smith is a master of the Hammond B3 organ. For more than five decades he has furthered the sound of jazz organ, created a worldwide fan base and revealed his musical talents on more than 70 albums. Today, his name is truly synonymous with the instrument.

DownBeat asked Smith to provide some tips on the proper approach to playing the Hammond B3 and how to utilize the classic tonewheel organ to its full potential. He shared with us some of the advice and pointers that he frequently passes on to his own students.

Dr. Lonnie's Lesson

"First and foremost, I tell young players that the right-foot pedal is *not* a volume pedal; it's an expression pedal, and a lot of them don't know that so I have to explain. When you push down on the expression pedal, it's like you're bringing a big band up; you *are* the big band. A lot of players use that to go full-blast, and that's not what you use it for. And I tell them to not use it as a time-keeper, as they will frequently use it to create the feeling of a beat. That is one of the worst things I've heard, and I try to stop that constantly, but a lot of young players can't help it. I take my stick and hit them on the foot and say, 'No, no, no.' You are the orchestra and you have a lot of power under your hands, so don't abuse that muscle you have. If you keep the expression pedal turned all the way up, that can make people hate the organ sometimes.

"The expression pedal helps you be a voice, like a human voice. Take, for instance, when you're singing: You don't just sing at one level. When you're not using the pedal properly, you're just playing notes, because the instrument is not touch-sensitive. When you use the pedal, think of an accordion, where you push the bellows to make it 'breathe.'

"Another important part of playing the organ is using the Leslie speaker—that's like a marriage. When you play a Leslie, it's also like it has a voice. It's like an operatic singer: When you go up and hits those notes that mean something, the ones that count, it's there. I like to show students how it feels, because they might never have felt the vibrations of the speaker. And when you use that properly, it surrounds the room.

"When you play the Leslie flat, in the 'off' position, it sounds a little like when you have a cold and the membranes of your nose are stopped up. And then, once you set the Leslie in motion, it's like it opens up the nasal passages and you can breathe. When it's set to slow rotation, it's beautiful on ballads, like it's massaging you slowly. And when it spins fast, the heavens open up. I will change it up in the middle of a song, depending on where I am and the effect I'm looking for at that moment.

"Then there are the drawbars, which I love because they determine all of the different sounds that you use. You've got four sets of drawbars to work with, plus a fifth set for the pedalboard. All the drawbar settings are special, and if you use the same ones all the time, it will become annoying after a while.

"A lot of young players make the mistake of approaching the Hammond B3 like a piano or keyboard and rely on a bassist to provide the low notes and walking lines. You can't play it like that because with the organ, you *are* the bass. I use one foot (the left), and sometimes I have to go up under the right leg. It might feel kind of strange, but I've gotten used to doing that.

There are various ranges of pedalboards available, but in general you have about 25 bass pedals down there. What I normally do is play within a couple of octaves, and maybe a little above, because I want to make sure that I'm playing the bottom. If you're playing standards, legit playing, it sounds better when you're playing pure foot. But when you're playing a complex number, you'd be better off playing bass with both your left hand (on the lower manual) and foot. When you're playing jazz, you want that fluency so it doesn't sound too abrupt. It sounds good when you hear that

'felt' sound, with a little bit of thump or crunch. The foot pedals give me the definition of the bass that you can hear and feel. You don't want it to disappear, especially if you have a drummer or a horn player on stage with you.

"And you've got to have the right shoes. If you play with shoes, you don't want a big, thick sole, because when you cut across the pedals it can stick. You're supposed to be able to slide across the pedals very smoothly and hit those notes. They even make some organ shoes designed just for that purpose, but I've never used them. Some great organists like Rhoda Scott, Shirley Scott and Sarah McLawler play the pedalboard barefoot.

"The Hammond has such a big, thick sound, it cuts through in most cases. You've got your single lines that you can play like a horn; then you've got full chords that you can play like an orchestra; then you have all the different sounds you can work with. You have so many scenes in there. In every drawbar you've got all kinds of tones, you've just got to find the ones that suit you.

"When you get old, you don't want to be moving around a Hammond B3 all the time, so I don't take mine on the road very often. But sometimes I perform in a place where the organ is just not up to par, and that hurts me, especially because during all the years I've been playing and recording in Rudy van Gelder's studio, the organ was great. The new portable Hammond SK2 dual-manual combo organ is really good, so I think I might have to start traveling with that more—put it in a case and take it with me. Therefore I'll have my sound with me all the time, and it will never change when I travel from one venue to another.

"All organs are different. Some have a clean sound, or a dirty sound with distortion. When it has distortion, it's great for rock and r&b, and a nice clean sound is great for jazz. The Hammond is not a perfect instrument, and that's why you hear noise and generator sounds in there sometimes. The organ actually cries when it has dirt in it, and it has to be cleaned. It can be like when you play half-valve on trumpet, as on the opening line of 'Cherry Pink And Apple Blossom White.' On my earlier records I used to use that and make it cry almost like a 'wah' sound, where the note gets squeezed out.

"Remember, with the Hammond B3 organ, you have all the elements: the sun, water, thunder, lightning, an earthquake, all those sounds built into one. And you've got the warmth of a blanket. It's like having all the forces of nature at your fingertips—you can actually feel that. And when you open up that Leslie and play, it just sings right out." **DB**

VISIT DR. LONNIE SMITH ONLINE AT DRLONNIESMITH.COM.

Finding Source Material In The Classical World

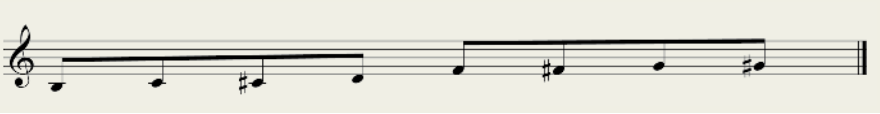
There was a time when many people considered jazz and classical music to be irreconcilable foes. The truth is, both these traditions have always had much to offer each other. Early jazz absorbed the harmonies of Ravel and Debussy, and the beboppers often cited the influence of Bartok, Hindemith, Stefan Wolpe, and Igor Stravinsky. Gunther Schuller coined the phrase "Third Stream" to denote an overt combining of the two traditions. Though plenty of critics maligned the Third Stream movement in its day, the perspective of time shows us that Schuller was prescient.

Many of today's jazz musicians find source material in the classical world. One of the great things about jazz is that it can be enriched by information from any corner. Let's examine the work of several classical titans and discuss how their thinking can broaden our minds.

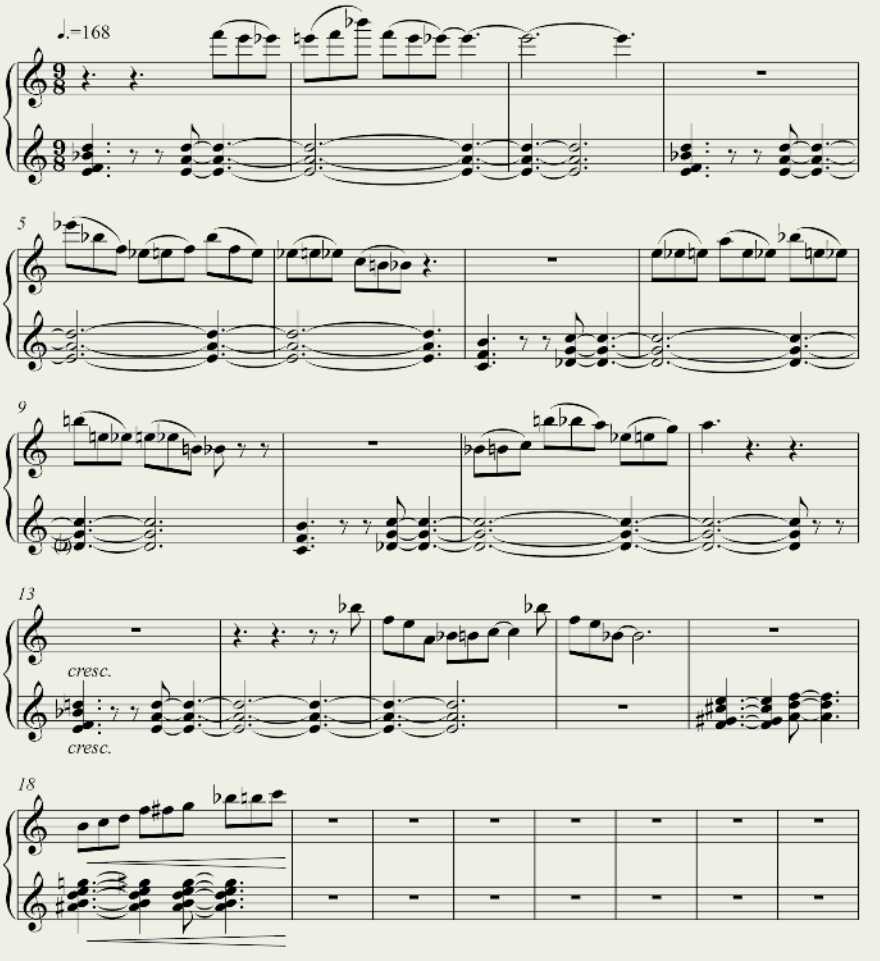
Oliver Messiaen created a harmonic system based on what he called the "seven modes of limited transposition." These scales are distinct from diatonic modes in that they all have a circularity that defies the more typical cadential behavior associated with standard harmony. Three of these modes are well known to jazz musicians: the whole-tone, diminished and augmented scales. Take Mode 5, however, which is less familiar (see Example 1). There are a number of wonderful shapes to be drawn from this scale, some of which can sound a bit like Thelonious Monk. If C is your tonic, you can look at this scale as two chromatic ropes of four notes separated by a minor third, one starting on B, the other on F. Try using this scale to write an up-tempo melody for sax with a contrapuntal line on trumpet. I've written a piece called "All The Previous Pages Are Gone" that is based on this scale for my upcoming Sunnyside release *Search*, excerpted here (see Example 2).

Messiaen took inspiration from non-Western music and created a rhythmic language that, like Carnatic music, uses additive structures that create an unearthly sense of levitation. Odd groups of phrases create a dynamic sense of pulse that brings drama in a wholly unpredictable way. Next time you improvise in 4/4 time, try dividing your phrasing into asymetrical patterns. For instance, a four-bar phrase of 32 notes could be divided as such: 2, 2, 3, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7. Alternately, create linked phrases without a time signature that keep expanding from a small cell, growing, contracting and growing further.

Example 1



Example 2



Gyorgy Ligeti created music of stunning originality. One of his piano etudes is dedicated to Bill Evans, while other works owe a debt to Pygmy and mbira music. His connection to the jazz world is quite visible to me. "Micropolyphony" is a term he coined where the musical parts are so dense and intertwined that no individual line is apparent and a cloud-like texture results. This process is more practical in large ensemble writing, or on piano, as its success depends on much information from a fast delivery system. What if in your next big band composition you were to write a quiet midrange five-note pattern that the woodwinds all play as quickly as possible with each instrument displacing the phrase by an eighth-note. The trombones and trumpets play slow, closely voiced chords with mutes and occasional sforzandos. Perhaps the trombones play four quarter-notes to a bar and the trumpets play five quarter-notes, creating a kind of "hocket." Meanwhile, the bass and drums could be laying down a simple funk groove. You might write 12 bars of material and ask the players to develop the sound in a like manner.

John Adams has accumulated an expansive body of work rich in lyricism. He is an ingenious orchestrator, but I think there is even more to digest in his approach to rhythm. Adams creates strong pulses that he disguises in subtle ways so that one feels a simultaneous sense of forward movement and circularity. He'll superimpose 4 over 3, throw in bars of odd times, create lines that move at differ-

ent speeds, and yet you still feel as if you are hurtling through space. A great rhythm section does the same thing, creating energy and drive while continually subverting expectation.

Morton Feldman wrote many long pieces based on tiny increments of material, developed very slowly, almost always pianissimo. I'll admit that some of his music makes me quiver with impatience, but two pieces especially inspire: *Rothko Chapel* and *Piece For Bass Clarinet And Percussion*. There is no clutter in this music—it shimmers with silence and mysterious introspection; the orchestration is singular. Another living master of this parsimonious ethos is Alvin Singleton, whose link to jazz is quite overt. "Do much with little" is Singleton's mantra. It is too easy to forget this elemental lesson. Even if you are writing purely tonal music, check out Feldman's radical approach.

Bach, the grandfather of all Western music, is almost too obvious to mention; however, there is no end to what arrangers and composers can learn from his genius. Much jazz music contains only one melodic line. Bach shows us how we can create multiple strands of melody that all connect like a huge jigsaw puzzle. Study his use of "figured bass," which has a correlation to jazz, as well as his two- and three-part inventions for piano.

Style is a tired word, and genre wars are over. Exposure to brilliant music of any stripe can allow us to overcome habitual behavior. Classical music can help our jazz lines, chord voicings, rhythms, forms and orchestration to become more intriguing and varied. Other living composers to add to your playbook are Terry Riley, Arvo Pärt, Per Nørgård, Gunther Schuller, Tania Leon, Derek Bermel and Elliott Carter. There is much to learn by stepping into their worlds. **DB**

Suggested Listening

- Oliver Messiaen: *Quartet For The End Of Time*, *O Sacrum Convivium*
- Gyorgy Ligeti: *Six Bagatelles*, *Chamber Concerto, Piano Etudes*
- John Adams: *Harmonielhehre*, *Naïve And Sentimental Music*, *The Dharma At Big Sur*
- Morton Feldman: *Rothko Chapel*, *Piece For Bass Clarinet And Percussion*
- Gunther Schuller & John Lewis: *Jazz Abstractions* ("Variants On A Theme By Thelonious Monk")
- Alvin Singleton: *Shadows*
- Carman Moore: *Concerto For Ornette*
- Alan Hovhaness: *Mysterious Mountain*
- Johann Sebastian Bach: virtually everything

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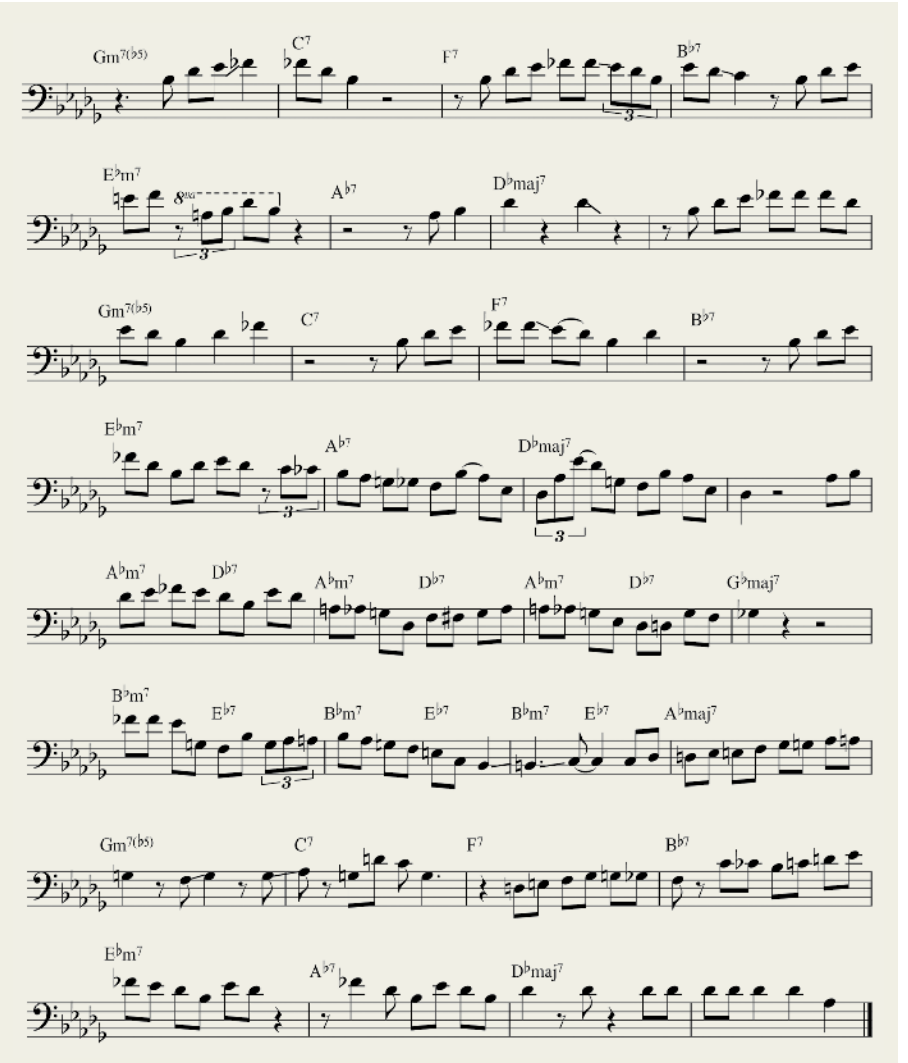
Charles Mingus' Dazzling Bass Solo On 'Dizzy Moods'

Charles Mingus is often cited as one of the most brilliant and original composers jazz has produced, and rightly so. But due to this, it is sometimes overlooked that he was also a virtuoso bassist and dazzling soloist. On the 1957 record *Mingus Three* (Blue Note), a rare example of Mingus in a piano trio setting, there are many examples of his bass prowess. Presented here is the one chorus he takes on his own composition "Dizzy Moods."

The song is a 32-bar AABA form in D♭, but it starts on the tritone of the key (Gm7♭5) and works its way through a cycle of fourths to arrive at the tonic. Mingus starts out playing B♭ blues licks, and does so for most of the first 13 measures, creating the illusion that we're in B♭ minor, the relative minor to D♭ (and Hampton Hawes' sparse piano comping doesn't contradict this). The A-natural in measure 5 furthers this, sounding like the leading tone to the B♭ root. The repetitive first phrase of the tune also uses this B♭ blues sound, so Mingus is relating his solo to the composition's melody.

But at the pickup to bar 14, Mingus changes his approach and gets more bebop-like, playing longer strings of eighth-notes with some added triplets and using more scalar lines with the addition of chromatic notes—starting with a descending line from C down to F with a couple of chromatic passing tones, and then a great intervallic lick descending down a sixth and up a ninth to come back down to the root on beat 1 of bar 16. The use of the G-natural in this lick not only gives the D♭maj7 a Lydian flavor, but




Charles Mingus

DOWNBEAT ARCHIVES

also harkens back to the Gm7♭5 that the tune commenced on (though this chord won't reappear for another eight bars).

The bridge consists of II-Vs leading first to the IV chord (G♭maj7) and then to the V (A♭maj7). Here Mingus continues his bebop approach, but he does start out with some B♭ blues, a curious choice against the A♭m7–D♭7. But in the next measure he's back to the chromaticism alluded to in the previous eight measures, only more exaggerated. The second half of measure 19 is particularly interesting. He plays root and ♭9 on the D♭7, and then the ♭5 and third, which are half-steps on either side of the root of the next chord (G♭maj7), the tone to which he resolves this line.

Mingus keeps up this approach through the remainder of the bridge, and even into the first half of the last eight. It's quite clever how his choice in this regard blurs the form, changing direction four measures before the bridge and then waiting four measures into the last A before he brings us back to the B♭ blues sound where he started. He then resolves this to the note D♭, the root on the D♭ chord, and repeats this tone for most of the rest of these two measures. This not only makes the key center clear, but also gives an air of finality to his solo, making his statement complete and letting the band know it's time to go on to Hampton Hawes' solo. **DB**

JIMI DURSO IS A GUITARIST AND BASSIST IN THE NEW YORK AREA. HE CAN BE REACHED AT JIMIDURSO.COM.

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Fishman has always been driven by the guiding principal that an effective amplification system should retain as much of the natural acoustic tone of the instrument as possible. Technologies like their blender system, which combined transducer output with a mini-condenser microphone signal, helped achieve a much fuller sound and minimize the harshness of the piezo. Further evolutions included under-saddle transducers, active buffering pre-amps and the acclaimed Aura Imaging system.

Fishman's amplifier line is designed with tone as the number-one priority. The Loudbox series currently features several models including the Mini, the 100 and the Performer. The Artist is the newest addition, replacing the Loudbox 100. In creating the Artist amplifier, Fishman was insistent on several criteria: performance, portability and flexibility. According to Chris DeMaria, director of marketing and artist relations for Fishman, "It's a performance amp with a lot of features and quality for the money and is a natural evolution of what we have been doing for the past several years."

The overall layout of the Loudbox Artist is reminiscent of the Mini, featuring the same two-tone color scheme and overall cabinet design, and there are notable advancements over the Loudbox 100. The power has been boosted up to 120 watts, and both channels now feature combo input jacks that allow for any combination of quarter-inch instruments or XLR microphones to be connected. Another major enhancement is the addition of a dual effects section, which provides the ability to apply two independent effects to either channel. Along with the standard low, mid and high tone controls, anti-feedback is also available via an adjustable notch filter.

The Loudbox Artist is surprisingly light and compact considering its power and functionality. I put the amp through its paces on several instruments including acoustic guitar, archtop guitar, mandolin, banjo, resonator guitar and even an oud. The amp sounded great on everything I plugged into it, and the 8-inch speaker and 1-inch tweeter really deliver. In addition, it is very simple to use with an easy-to-read angled control panel and clever indicator lights on the push button switches that provide instant feedback on their status. The tone section is straightforward, and the feedback filter is a definite blessing. The adjustable tweeter level control helped me dial in the perfect amount of high end. For condenser mics, 24 volts of phantom power is also available.

The new dual-effects option offers reverbs, echo, delay choruses, flange and slap echo with control over time and depth parameters. I thought the effects sounded really good without overly coloring the acoustic tone of my instruments. Also worth mentioning are the separate XLR DIs for each channel, the effects loop and foot switch, which controls both channel and effects B muting.

The new Loudbox Artist is a very solid product. Weighing in at only 25 pounds and with a street price of around $499, it will not break your bank or your back. *—Keith Baumann*

Ordering info: fishman.com

Audix DP-Quad

Ideal Drum Mic Combination

Audix, a highly respected manufacturer of precision vocal and instrument microphones for studio and live-sound applications, was the first company to introduce professional drum mic pack assortments to the market. With the introduction of the new DP-Quad Mic Pack, designed to capture the full depth and sound imaging of any drum kit or percussion setup, Audix provides yet another an all-in-one solution.

Company co-founder Cliff Castle explained that the main concept with the DP-Quad was "to give the drummer more control over their sound with the simplest array of the mics best suited to accomplish the job." Always onboard for "simple" and "best," I opened up the heavy-duty aluminum Haliburton-style travel case to see a fitted cradle for each of the D6 kick, i5 snare and two ADX51 condenser mics that make up the DP-Quad package. Custom-made mic stand adaptors and an adjustable flex clip called the DVICE rim mount for the i5 snare mic were included,

as well as windscreen heads for the ADX51 condensers and D6 kick. The enclosed demonstration DVD provided a quick, efficient look at the various miking techniques possible for live and studio applications.

Testing on a standard five-piece kit in my home studio, I set up the familiar D6 kick (known in the industry for excelling at "close miking") just inside the bass drum shell. The flexible DVICE rim mount for the i5 snare mic made it easy to set a variety of angles and proximal placements to the snare so I could get the desired depth of crack, pop or rim ambience. I then set the two ADX51 pre-polarized condensers vertically above the kit, spaced equidistant centering off the snare, to achieve an overhead stereo image of the whole drum kit to balance with the close isolation of the kick and snare.

The DP-Quad achieved exactly what I had hoped for in a simple and efficient drum mic setup. The D6 took on the husky lows and the attack of the beater to provide a well-rounded foundation to the drum mix. The i5 snare mic was versatile enough to reinforce the power of a hard crack or capture the dynamic subtlety of brush play. The two pencil cardioid ADX51s, with their 14mm gold sputtered diaphragms, when positioned correctly, captured the true essence, tonality and balance of the entire drum kit in a phase-coherent manner. Together, the four mics of the DP-Quad pack carried a sound integrity that was true and natural.

The Audix DP-Quad enables drummers and sound engineers to deliver essential dynamics of drum performance while revealing that critical balance of presence and ambience, whether onstage or in the studio. MSRP: $825. *—John LaMantia*

Ordering info: audixusa.com

Keilwerth SX90R Vintage Tenor Saxophone

Unpolished Expressiveness

Handmade in Germany, the Vintage model tenor saxophone from Julius Keilwerth is a high-precision, professional horn with modern keywork design, plenty of tonal enhancement features and a unique finish that gives it a distinguished appearance.

Based on Keilwerth's SX90R tenor sax, the Vintage is a visually striking instrument. The unpolished brass on the body is allowed to tarnish before a clear lacquer coat is added to preserve its vintage-looking characteristics, which include a deep, burnished color and visible solder marks. Each horn in the series ends up having its own distinctive identity based on its ability to "age" naturally before the lacquer effectively locks the cosmetics—flaws and all—into place. Smooth satin nickel plating is applied to the keys, and black finger pearls (without rims) and black pads (with metal resonators) contribute to the horn's smoky look, which is perfect for bandstands where jazz is being played.

The Vintage offers a large tonal palette, giving players a wide range of sonic colors to choose from. The bore of the instrument—which is the same as on Keilwerth's regular SX90R model—gives tenor players an incredibly large sound and presence. A bigger-than-usual bow section makes low-register playing easy at all dynamic levels, and a hydraulically formed neck allows for excellent intonation and immediate response. Like the SX90R, the Vintage has soldered-on tone hole rings that resemble the rolled tone holes of professional horns from the '40s and '50s, providing better security against air leaks, greater sound emission and much quieter mechanical action; the replaceable tone hole rings also go a long way toward promoting longer pad life.

Upon play-testing the Vintage, I found the notes spoke with ease from low B-flat up through high F-sharp (a high F-sharp key is included, but the commonly played altissimo fingering worked just as well). I experienced a noticeable difference in tone, however, in the different registers of the horn: bell tones were noticeably dark and mellow; midrange tones were smooth and rich in subtle noir overtones; and the higher palm-key notes opened up with a surprising brightness that sang effortlessly.

Intonation was nice and solid, with no need for any serious adjustment between octaves or any quirky notes that required me to "lip" up or down. However, using just the right amount of chops strength, I was able to bend pitches and growl in a highly stylized fashion. This flexibility and expressiveness made the instrument fun to blow and opened my mind to plenty of creative ideas that I could execute with great confidence.

Important features of the Vintage include a pivoted low–B-flat key that makes life a whole lot easier for the left-hand little finger; an extra F arm with an adjusting screw that provides increased security against air leaks in all registers played by the right hand; adjustable palm keys that allow you to set the angle and height you prefer; and a G-sharp pad cup-lifting mechanism that prevents sticking.

The SX90R Vintage comes with a hard wood shell case covered in a stylish tweed that looks like it came right out of the bebop era—a nice finishing touch. *—Ed Enright*

Ordering info: buffet-crampon.com

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HAMMER ACTION

Alesis has released the Cadenza, an 88-key hammer-action digital piano. The hammer-action keys equip players with a full range of musical expression. Users can play along with songs by connecting their MP3 players through the stereo auxiliary input. **More info:** alesis.com

ROAD MICS

Beyerdynamic's Touring Gear line boasts 25 different mics for live performance and features a new uniform and design, top specifications and an easy-to-understand classification system. The four categories of the Touring Gear series include the TG 30, TG 50, TG 70 and TG 90. **More info:** beyerdynamic.com

DRUM FREQUENCIES

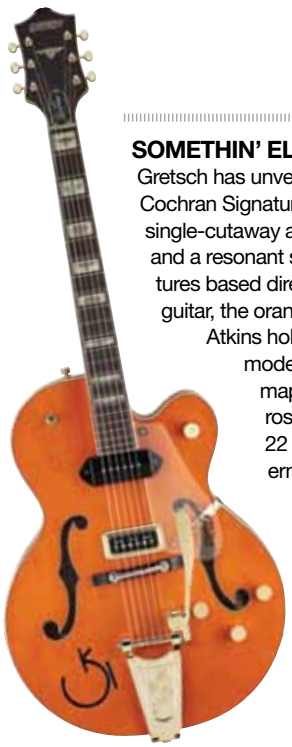
Tune-Bot, an electronic drum tuner from Overtone Labs, measures actual sonic frequencies to give a true indication of the drum's pitch. The Tune-Bot offers a variety of tuning options and can be used on or off the kit. **More info:** tune-bot.com

ALL IN ONE

PG Music has launched version 2011.5 of its Band-in-a-Box music accompaniment software for Mac. The new version adds 101 new jazz, rock, pop and country RealTracks. The software features improved timing resolution under Snow Leopard and Lion operating systems, smoother playing in waltzes, better pushes and more simple variations, and bigger soloists with more riffs. **More info:** pgmusic.com

GOOD AS GOLD

Schilke's recently introduced B-flat flugelhorn incorporates a new design and configuration. Produced with a gold brass bell and small-bore valve block, the new model offers a smooth, warm characteristic sound and controlled feel. It includes a third-valve trigger and two leadpipes, providing different tapers for small- and large-shank mouthpieces. **More info:** schilkemusic.com



SOMETHIN' ELSE

Gretsch has unveiled the G6120 Eddie Cochran Signature hollow-body guitar. The single-cutaway axe boasts a western motif and a resonant sound that combines features based directly on Cochran's main guitar, the orange Gretsch 6120 Chet Atkins hollow-body. The signature model includes a two-piece maple neck, 9.5-inch radius rosewood fingerboard with 22 standard frets and western-themed pearled inlays.

More info: gretschguitars.com

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David Murray
Plays Nat King Cole: En Español

MOTEMA 73

★★★

The North American pop charts have had a Good Neighbor Policy toward their South American sisters long before FDR's, going back to the tangos of the '20s. And it was in the early '40s that a catalog-destitute BMI climbed to its feet by looking south and flooding America with a fresh wave of lovely Latin tunes, now standards, refitted with English lyrics ("Amapola," "Perfidia," "Frenesi," "Besame Mucho," "Green Eyes," etc.). In 1958 and '62, Nat Cole took it a step further with two *Cole Español* albums of Latin songs, all rendered in phonetic Spanish and Portuguese with remarkable poise for a Yankee pianist. It's mostly from this songbook that saxophonist David Murray has built this worthy but not exceptional CD.

The prolific and sometimes audacious Murray, who never seems to have known an unrecorded concept album, plays this one with a relatively soft edge and for maximum reach, as if Cole were looking on and reminding him to remember his audience. It neither panders nor perplexes. Working with a tinsel-tight, not-quite big band and an 11-piece string section that stays largely in the shadows, Murray's orchestrations address the Cole material from scratch. They circumscribe the music within their melodic moments and a fairly structured and sub-orbital rigor, but still allow expansive breathing room for Murray to scale the tenor's falsetto heights and be generous to other soloists. You can hear Murray and Mario Morejon's macho trumpet pressing at the boundaries of "Tres Palabras," initially a soft ballad that swells in scope and intensity as the layers grow and Murray surfs the rising waves. Another ballad, "No Me Platiques," finds the saxophonist with only strings and rhythm, but able to sustain a remarkably lyrical and romantic integrity for eight minutes, notwithstanding passing interludes of double-time passion and a wonderfully expressive "yelp" at the 5:26 mark. It may be the most consistently absorbing music on the CD.

Roman Filiu takes a fetching alto interlude on an otherwise straightforward "Cachito," while Murray's broadest and most open-ended playing shakes up "Black Nat," the one Murray original not part of the original Cole songbook.

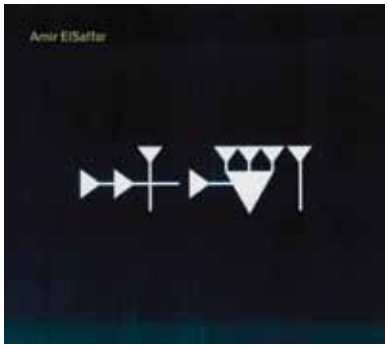
Cole's Spanish experiment added one unexpected title to his long medley of hits, "Quizaz" (a.k.a. "Perhaps"), which Murray gives us here at fairly leisurely length seasoned with restrained solos by himself and an unidentified trumpet (and repeated in a pointless "radio edit"). But mainly it introduces us to Daniel Melingo, who renders the lyrics here and on two others in a barroom croak so intimate you can almost smell the tequila wafting from the speakers. On "A Media Luz," Murray nicely mirrors Melingo's stubbly sensibility on bass clarinet. —*John McDonough*

Plays Nat King Cole En Español: El Bodeguero; Quizas, Quizas, Quizas; Tres Palabras; Piel Canela; No Me Platiques; Black Nat; Cachito; A Media Luz; Aqui Se Habla En Amor; El Chocho; Quizas, Quizas, Quizas. (75:20)
Personnel: Mario Morrejon, Franck Pedrosa, trumpets; Denia Cuni, trombone; David Murray, Roman Oreilly, Ariel Ruiz, reeds; Juanjo Mosaline (11), bandoneon; Jose Rivero, piano; Reiner Ruano, bass; Georvis Milan, drums; Abraham Rodriguez, congas; Daniel Melingo (2, 8, 10, 11), vocals.
Ordering info: motema.com

Amir ElSaffar Two Rivers Ensemble
Inana

PI RECORDINGS 41

★★★★½



This is serious. Also delightful, sensuous and colorful. But it's not frivolous. A work of cultural hybridization, *Inana* avoids the sensationalistic and touristic in favor of the sincere and investigatory, searching for common or at least consonant elements of the vocabularies of jazz and classical Arabic music, much the way a generation of Asian-American and Indo-Pak jazz musicians have.

ElSaffar is of course not alone in this pursuit, but to these ears his approach is unique. He has made a deep study of the Iraqi maquam, a complex and highly nuanced musical system, and he brings that knowledge into a new context with his Two Rivers Ensemble, with its mix of Arabic and jazz players. Most of the music is modal, emphasizing linear improvisation over harmonic intrigue. Some of the tracks, like the driving "Venus, The Morning Star," have subtle, odd meters, over which a bright unison theme is unfurled by two lutes (Tareq Abboushi's buzuq and Zafer Tawil's oud), Ole Mathisen's lithe tenor and the leader's trumpet. It's got a little post-bop Ornette Coleman quality, not as imitation but in its optimistic fanfare, and it opens up into an intense round of solos. "Dumuzi's Dream" starts with bassist Carlo DeRosa playing an ostinato of harmonics, Tawil joining on hand percussion with Nasheet Waits brilliantly matching on snare, before the piece's gorgeous melody is rolled out by the horns and oud. On "Infinite Variety," the texture of spiky lutes against the march-like line recalls Henry Threadgill.

ElSaffar sings and plays santour—hammered dulcimer—in addition to his main instrument, trumpet. On the horn he avoids a self-aggrandizing virtuosity, though he's impressive and versatile, with great dynamic control and a personal sound. The press material suggests that he is "one of very few microtonal trumpeters in the world," which is nonsense, as anyone who has heard Lester Bowie knows. But that doesn't matter, because the music is so strong that it makes such claims irrelevant. —*John Corbett*

Inana: Dumuzi's Dream; Venus, The Evening Star; Inana's Dance (I, II, III); Inana's Dance (IV); Lady Of Heaven; Infinite Variety; Journey To The Underworld; Venus, The Morning Star. (65:21)
Personnel: ElSaffar, trumpet, vocal, santour; Ole Mathisen, tenor and soprano saxophone; Zafer Tawil, oud, percussion; Tareq Abbourshi, buzuq; Carlo DeRosa, bass; Nasheet Waits, drums.
Ordering info: pirecordings.com

Charles Lloyd/ Maria Farantouri
Athens Concert

ECM 2205/06

★★★★

Investigating life's spiritual side has been on Charles Lloyd's to-do list ever since "Karma" impressed European crowds in 1966. Whether he's playing "Caroline, No," "Monk's Mood," or something as overt as the chant of "TM," the saxophonist points the bell of his horn toward the metaphysical.

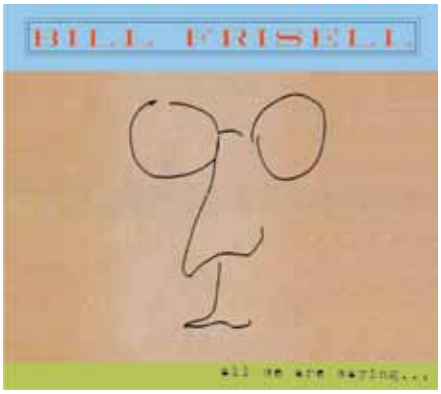
Connecting with Greek singer Maria Farantouri for a show at the Acropolis, the tenor player and his quartet bring a good deal of emotional thrust to the table as well. Lloyd's band—Jason Moran, Ruben Rogers, Eric Harland—has proven its ardor on a pair of previous ECM discs. And they do so with gently tempering glowing serenity with spiky expressionism.

Farantouri's contralto glides through this music with a sensuality that parallels Lloyd's ribbons of sound. A distinct confluence binds their voices, and as the quartet feathers them along with a steady flow of nuanced nudging, the bond between singer and saxophonist deepens. "Prayer" is a siren song coming from the Pearly Gates, and the ensemble's coordination creates a palpable hush. "Blow Wind" pines purposefully, with Lloyd's flutters and Moran's trills providing a glistening brocade around Farantouri.

Animation is also part of the plan. There are three sections to the "Greek Suite" that stress poems and tunes of Farantouri's culture. By the time the ensemble enters "Thalassaki mou," the dreamy turns into the demonstrative, and everyone from Harland to guest lyra player Socratis Sinopoulos enjoys a conclusionary flourish. The suites also give Lloyd a chance to employ his tarogato, which brings a wider textural palette to the program.

Long tones and billowing swirls of sound dominate the action on *Athens Concert*, and as they make their way towards the inevitable crescendos, the group trades bop joy for ecstatic gravitas. —*Jim Macnie*

Athens Concert: Kratissa Ti Zoi Mou; Dream Weaver; Blow Wind; Requiem Greek Suite, Part I; Hymnos stin Ayia Triada; Epano sto xero homa; Messa Stous paradissious kipous; Taxidi sta Kythera; Prayer; Vlefaro mou; Margaritarenia; Thalassaki Mou; Epirotiko Merolioi; Kaeomae kae Sigloiono; Mori kontoula lemonia; Tou hel' to kastron; Yanni mou. (42:03/45:08)
Personnel: Charles Lloyd, tenor saxophone, flute, tarogato; Maria Farantouri, voice; Jason Moran, piano; Reuben Rogers; bass; Eric Harland, drums; Socratis Sinopoulos, lyra; Takis Farazis, piano.
Ordering info: ecmrecords.com



Bill Frisell
All We Are Saying …

SAVOY JAZZ 17836

★★★★

This enchanting album radiates a feeling of inevitability, so familiar are the songs and so clear is the kinship between the electronically inspired Bill Frisell and John Lennon, with his love of tremolo and reverb, and the two musicians' peculiar affinity for utopian innocence and inky fear. Choosing material from Beatles and post-Beatles periods, Frisell shows uncanny empathy for the yearning of the family songs as well as the cosmic ones. The many-splendored strings of the ensemble—pedal steel, violin, acoustic and electric guitar, bass—tumble and flow as if only breathing, rather than paying close attention to nuance, which they certainly are. In places, the players seem to be having more fun grooving than making sure something fascinating is happening, but those moments are short. Overall, this is lovely stuff.

Though there is little jazz improvisation, the real improv here is in the subtly shifting timbre of the ensemble. Frisell is content to simply play the cushiony, sighing melody of "Imagine," with Jenny Scheinman's violin playing in a cello-ish range. The band captures the joyous clang of early Fab Four on "Please, Please Me," a jangling joy that resurfaces on "Nowhere Man." The group goes baroque for a moment on "In My Life" and gleefully polyphonic on "You've Got To Hide Your Love Away." "Come Together," with throbbing bass and distorted guitar, captures Lennon's neurotic energy to a tee, as does the dark dirge "Mother." The other mother song, "Julia," feels both wounded and warm. Frisell and Scheinman duet starkly on "Love." But when Frisell and pedal steel man Greg Leisz cascade down the payoff line of "Beautiful Boy," you feel how sympathetic Frisell is with Lennon's sense of the world. —*Paul de Barros*

All We Are Saying …: Across The Universe; Revolution; Nowhere Man; Imagine; Please, Please Me; You've Got To Hide Your Love Away; Hold On; In My Life; Come Together; Julia; Woman; Number 9 Dream; Love; Beautiful Boy; Mother; Give Peace A Chance. (68:02)
Personnel: Bill Frisell, guitar; Greg Leisz, steel guitar, acoustic guitars; Jenny Scheinman, violin; Tony Scherr, bass; Kenny Wollesen, drums.
Ordering info: savoyjazz.com

The Hot Box

CD / Critics	John McDonough	John Corbett	Jim Macnie	Paul de Barros
David Murray *Plays Nat King Cole*	★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★
Amir ElSaffar Two Rivers *Inana*	★★	★★★★½	★★★★	★★★
Lloyd/Farantouri *Athens Concert*	★½	★★★★	★★★★	★★★½
Bill Frisell *All We Are Saying...*	★★★	★★½	★★★★	★★★★

Critics' Comments

David Murray

Contrived concept turns out to be a total joy. The band has plenty of tonk and creak to pull out the rich textures of Murray's arrangements, which have a push-pull energy that recalls—in flashes—the flair that made *Home* and *Ming* two of the greatest records of the '80s. This isn't quite that strong, but it's pure, quality entertainment. —*John Corbett*

He's well known for bluster, yes, but don't forget how buoyant the saxophonist's music can be. This reminds me of the rather profound blend of rip-snorting solos, and catchy tunesmanship found on early gems such as *Home*. The Caribbean brings out his strengths. —*Jim Macnie*

Who knew Nat Cole made two records in Spanish? David Murray, apparently. The virtuosic reedman's esoteric reimagining of Cole's south-of-the border "exitos" with strings and horns is a bit scraggly around the edges, which feels wrong for a style rooted in precision, but Murray's tender solo on the ballad "No Me Platiques" ranks as one of his finest. The discovery of Tom Waits-ish Argentine vocalist Daniel Melingo, who sings several tunes, is worth the price of admission. —*Paul de Barros*

Amir ElSaffar Two Rivers Ensemble

A formal program piece with the intent to narrate the mischief of a Sumerian goddess. One need not feel provincial to find the lutes, chants and microtones emotionally alien, although some worthy ensembles and solos by ElSaffar and Mathisen manage to survive the ethnomusicology. —*John McDonough*

Fascinating stuff that will sweep you away. The trumpeter harks to his heritage to create music that parallels the mythology of the goddess Inana, whom he says was "headstrong." So is this suite. —*Jim Macnie*

There's a lot to like on this East-meets-West project of Iraqi modes and free-improvised jazz—the wide-open and jagged exchanges between ElSaffar's trumpet and Mathisen's tenor saxophone, bassist Carlo DeRosa's buoyant tone, and ElSaffar's enchanting voice—but as a fusion, it doesn't always hit on all cylinders, shining more brightly, in fact, when the musics are separate. Let's hear more. —*Paul de Barros*

Charles Lloyd/Maria Farantouri

A long, solemn stupor, evoking the sort of exotic but entombed beauty of a Gregorian chant. Stately overtures and codas bestride barren, minor-chord marathons. Farantouri's low contralto emotes a regal stillness, but not jazz. Lloyd seems beguiled by the whole Acropolis thing. But the music is largely trance inducing, sometimes pompous. —*John McDonough*

Extremely beautiful, unexpected pairing. Farantouri's voice is both earthy and ethereal, matched by Lloyd's searching horn; love the heavy northern Greek component and a couple of classics from Theodorakis. As always, Moran and crew are impeccable. *Athens Concert* might be too rich for a two-disc set, but if you're up for the epic journey, it's worth it. —*John Corbett*

Cheers to Charles Lloyd for this tasteful and intelligent bridging of traditional Greek music and jazz. Whether it blows your mind or just moves you will turn on your feelings about Farantouri, whose plummy, warrior-like alto obviously struck an earth mother chord in Lloyd, but who for me sounds merely very good. I like both of them best on simple, lemony folk songs, as opposed to the portentous tremolos and rubatos Lloyd so favors in his clichéd reverence for what's "ancient." —*Paul de Barros*

Bill Frisell

Little not to cozy up to hearing Frisell's big echoing sound slithering and sliding through the familiar and less familiar Lennon book. Music joins nostalgia and freshness, Liverpool and a hint of Nashville, commerce and integrity in a solidly safe audience pleaser in the best sense of the phrase. —*John McDonough*

All props to Bill Frisell, his great work over the years, but I'm afraid I don't get much from this CD. As a songbook project, it seems perfectly designed as transition music between segments on NPR—not that it's bad, but it lacks the great creative spark that made me love Frisell in the first place. —*John Corbett*

I love it for its jukebox approach. Others might assign over-elaborate ways to reharmonize the tunes, but Frisell knows a jewel when he hears it. He and his team simply bring lots of verve to the table. —*Jim Macnie*

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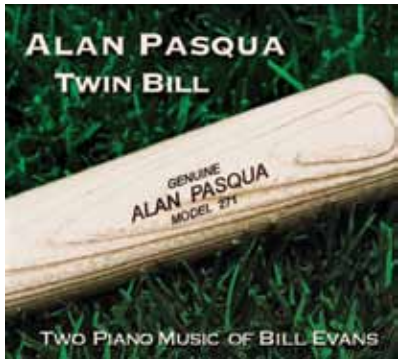
BFM JAZZ 302 062 411

★★★★



One of the more conceptually experimental efforts in the Bill Evans catalog was *Conversations With Myself*. The album was apparently conceived as a technological experiment, judging partly from the fact that the material included only one Evans composition, "N.Y.C.'s No Lark." The emphasis was on the opportunity to record two piano tracks, one layered over the other, to create a "solo/duo" effect. With *Twin Bill*, Alan Pasqua transforms this idea into an homage to Evans' contributions as a composer. Six of the 11 tracks were written by Evans; most of the rest were associated closely with him, including Miles Davis' "Nardis" and the Swedish folk song "Vindarna Sucka Uti Skogarna."

Pasqua's choices make the point that *Twin Bill* is mainly about Evans' writing. In following this path, Pasqua plays with almost no shifts in dynamics; aside from a few very slight crescendos and diminuendos, he sticks close to the *piano* level.

This approach is augmented by Pasqua's insights into Evans' rhythmic executions. Beginning with "Very Early," he implies rather than articulates movement, with irregular chord placements and lines, complete and fragmented, that create a swinging waltz feel without having to spell it out. He takes this further on "Nardis," where the accompaniment plays sparely behind the other the solo, jabbing a few times off the beat amid plenty of space, lengthening into triplets played with more sustain and slipping in and out of some walking bass.

In his improvisations, Pasqua keeps his focus on hallmarks of the Evans style. We recognize the device of triads lofting through the ritard at the end of "Interplay." The Evans aesthetic in covers is apparent on "Take Me Out To The Ballgame," especially in the elevated chord placements in the last bar to each first ending and in the playful key shift at the end. The standout here is "Turn Out The Stars," because Pasqua not only underscores the contours of the work but does so in the Evans spirit of bringing unexpected perspectives to the task. Pasqua outlines the changes through a pointillist technique, with each piano playing a gently swinging line at the top. They intertwine, one then another drops out, both stop and together they sketch the piece out in a fresh and insightful way. —*Bob Doerschuk*

Twin Bill: Two Piano Music Of Bill Evans: Very Early; Nardis; Time Remembered; Gloria's Step; Turn Out The Stars; Funkallero; Take Me Out To The Ballgame; Interplay; Walkin' Up; Vindarna Sucka Uti Skogarna; Grace. (60:57)
Personnel: Alan Pasqua, pianos.
Ordering info: bfmjazz.com

Andrew Cyrille & Haitian Fascination
Route De Frères

TUM RECORDS 027

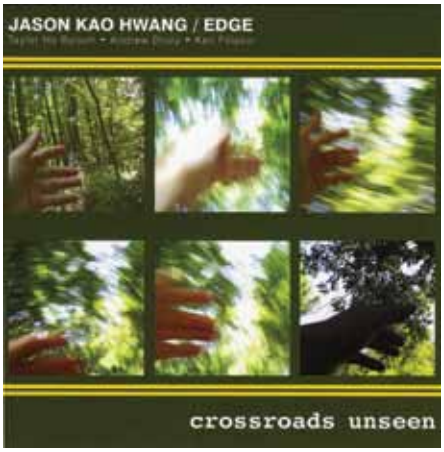
★★★★

Andrew Cyrille delivers an abundance of beauty and ebullience on *Route De Frères*, his transfixing homage to his homeland of Haiti. The disc gets a magnificent liftoff from Hamiet Bluiett's squawking baritone saxophone, paving the way for Haitian percussionist and singer Frisner Augustin's plaintive yet joyous singing on the transportive "Marinèt." Helping fuel the groove is Cyrille's spare drumming as it coalesces with Alix Pascal's spidery guitar and Lisle Atkinson's dancing bass lines.

From there, Cyrille and his cohorts alternate between eloquent rhapsodies and festive grooves. They hit a particularly high point on Cyrille's gorgeous "Hope Springs Eternal," showcasing Bluiett's mastery at delivering succinct yet sinewy melodies atop of Pascal's romantic guitar strumming and Atkinson's emphatic bass lines and mesmerizing arco counterpart. On the flipside is Atkinson's "C'mon Baby," on which Cyrille pounds out a dazzling, almost timbale-like solo after Bluiett's r&b-flavored Caribbean melody. They venture to the outer reaches with astounding results on Bluiett's "Sankofa" on which each musician displays his knack for textural design and group interplay.

Cyrille's three-part suite "Route De Frères," begins with a feet-friendly "Hills Of Anjubeau" and concludes with the scintillating "Manhattan Swing," which aptly evokes Cyrille's journey from the Caribbean to New York. Throughout, Cyrille and his Haitian Fascination exhibit such sanguinity that each song will elicit wide smiles. —*John Murph*

Route De Frères: Marinèt; Deblozay; Hope Springs Eternal; Isaura; Route De Frères, Part 1: Hills Of Anjubeau; Route De Frères, Part 2: Memories Of Port Au-Prince Afternoons; Route De Frères, Part 3: Manhattan Swing; C'mon Baby; Sankofa; Spirit Music; Mais (Percussion Duo); Ti Kawòl. (66:31)
Personnel: Andrew Cyrille, drums; Hamiet Bluiett, baritone saxophone; Alix Pascal, acoustic guitar; Lisle Atkinson, bass; Frisner Augustin, percussion and voice.
Ordering info: tumrecords.com



Jason Kao Hwang/ Spontaneous River
Symphony Of Souls
MULATTA RECORDS 022
★★★

Jason Kao Hwang/Edge
Crossroads Unseen
EUONYMUS RECORDS 002
★★★½

Personal and instrumental history intertwine on these two recordings. String player Jason Kao Hwang is a child of Chinese immigrants who grew up in the decidedly non-Asian environs of Waukegan, Ill. Mindful of a heritage of travel and forced confrontation with change, he has given the pieces he devised for his quartet Edge titles that intimate an awareness of the traces left by others' journeys. Spontaneous River was born in response to another violinist's journey from this earth; its first gig was a memorial for the late Leroy Jenkins. Like Jenkins, Hwang brings an appreciation for his instrument's heritage; he makes no attempt to divest it of its classical baggage, but simply sets that style side by side with others.

Although Hwang's writing for Edge is demanding and dynamic, full of challenging intervallic leaps and carefully timed pauses, what most stands out is the way they play together. Hwang's accompanists are all powerful players, but they never jostle for space, and when the music calls for unison discipline, they've got it in reserve. Taylor Ho Bynum and Andrew Drury punctuate the strings bowed contours with striking blowed 'n' bowed harmonies of their own. But when they cut loose, as on Bynum and Hwang's bravura turns on "The Path Around The House," one wishes for a whole album so loose and uninhibited.

Although he has played in large ensembles led by Anthony Braxton and William Parker, and thus has participated in a collective push against that which is generally held to be possible in such groups, the sound spectrum Hwang has selected for his own orchestra is self-consciously limited. Drums aside, Spontaneous River is a string ensemble, and Hwang's arrangements are full of the dramatic glisses and voluptuous shapes one can expect when bowed instruments predominate. Some passages eschew stated pulse in favor of complex pizzicato webs or splintered, Derek Bailey-like guitar playing, but these intricate constructions quickly resolve into bold, moody melodic statements. Drury often holds down a heavy backbeat, which enables the ensemble to swagger easily into the brief chaotic passages and then saunter out of them with surprising ease. But the overarching structure of Hwang's symphony is hard to grasp; a shorter, more clearly delineated composition would better showcase the music's qualities. *—Bill Meyer*

Symphony Of Souls: Movement One; Movement Two; Movement Three; Movement Four; Movement Five; Movement Six; Movement Seven; Movement Eight; Movement Nine; Movement Ten; Movement Eleven. (63:18)
Personnel: Jason Kao Hwang, violin; Andrew Drury, drums; Trina Basu, Sarah Bernstein, Charles Burnham, Julianne Carney, Mark Chung, Fung Chern Hwei, Rosi Hertlein, Gwen Laster, Marlene Rice, Dave Soldier, Curtis Stewart, Elektra Kur tis, Midori Yamamoto, Helen Yee, violin; Leanne Darling, Nicole Federici, Judith Insell, Eric Salazar, David Wallace, viola; Cristian Amigo, Bradley Farberman, James Keepnews, Don Minasi, David Ross, Tor Snyder, Hans Tammen, guitar; Martha Colby, Loren Dempster, Dniel Levin, Tomas Ulrich, Shanda Wooley, cello; Michael Bisio, Ken Filiano, Françoi Grillet, Clifton Jckson, Tom Zlabinger, James Ilgenfritz, string bass.

Crossroads Unseen: Elemental Determination; The Path Around The House Transients; Crossroads Unseen; One Day. (54:36)
Personnel: Jason Kao Hwang, violin, viola; Taylor Ho Bynum, cornet, flugelhorn; Andrew Drury, drums; Ken Filiano, bass.
Ordering info: jasonkaohwang.com

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The Nice Guy Trio
Sidewalks And Alleys/Waking Music
PORTO FRANCO RECORDS 032
★★★★

Darren Johnston's Gone to Chicago
The Big Lift
PORTO FRANCO RECORDS 031
★★★★

Over the last decade or so San Francisco trumpeter Darren Johnston has found ways to reanimate familiar forms and approaches in vehicles driven by composition and ones built around improvisation. These discs illustrate his sense of reinvention in two different yet equally satisfying settings. *Sidewalks And Alleys/Waking Music* is the second album by the Nice Guy Trio, his group with accordionist Rob Reich and bassist Daniel Fabricant, a compact outfit that craftily collides tango, Balkan folk, Italian film music, and swing into an elegant hybrid without a trace of arch dilettantism. Here the trio is joined by a string quartet, which creates a rewarding dichotomy. At times, they send the music toward the past, with lush accents connoting an old-fashioned sophistication, while at other moments they're integrated as individuals into a septet rather than a trio with a string quartet. The album is split into two suites. The first, by Reich, was inspired by exploring cities like San Francisco and New York by foot, with the attendant surprises and sense of propulsion, while the second is by Johnson, driven by the sensations felt as we awake. The solos are woven into the composed fabric, which gives the music a thrilling spark.

The Big Lift features a different band and a different side of Johnston's musical personality. The trumpeter has been making regular trips to Chicago to work with local players, and this record is his first to chronicle those collaborations. Featuring a trumpet-trombone frontline, this quintet serves up attractively brawny post-bop, playing loosey-goosey with Johnston's themes. On a wide-open piece like "Cut" the whole group floats over loose rubato patterns, with vibist Jason Adasiewicz layering resonant chords as a shape-shifting foundation. There's hard-charging free jazz on "Rubber Bullets," with bassist Nate McBride and drummer Frank Rosaly churning out roiling, propulsive rhythm as Johnston and trombonist Jeb Bishop engage in highly attuned back-and-forth stabs. —*Peter Margasak*

Sidewalks And Alleys/Waking Music: Caught In Thought; The Inside Job; Sidewalk Shadows; The Greedy March; Any Alleyway; The Falling Dream; I Can See Infinity From Here; The Waking Dream; Tiny Gods; Beyond The Paper Garden. (57:07)
Personnel: Rob Reich, accordion; Darren Johnston, trumpet; Daniel Fabricant, bass; Mads Tolling, violin; Anthony Blea, violin; Dina Maccabee, viola; Mark Summer, cello.

The Big Lift: The Big Lift; Cut; Rubber Bullets; Glass Ceiling, Paper Floor; Love Call; Two Ways of Running; The Rock Quarry; Black And Tan Fantasy. (51:54)
Personnel: Darren Johnson, trumpet; Job Bishop, trombone; Jason Adasiewicz, vibraphone; Nate McBride, bass; Frank Rosaly, drums.
Ordering info: portofrancorecords.com

Pilc Moutin Hoenig
Threedom
MOTÉNA 72
★★★★½

As a rule, the titles of jazz albums don't convey much about the music, apart from the blandest of facts (…*with Strings*, *Live at* …, or the like). *Threedom* is a notable exception, and not just because of the pun.

Where previously bassist François Moutin and drummer Ari Hoenig appeared as part of the Jean-Michel Pilc Trio, this album bills them as equals and finds them playing that way, pushing past their usual roles to achieve what can be described as, well, absolute threedom.

Thelonious Monk's "Think of One," for example, opens with Hoenig tapping the first two bars of melody on his toms; Moutin answers the phrase in thumb position while Pilc, damping the piano strings, provides a largely percussive line. As the tune plays out, the three pay as much attention to Monk's rhythmic themes as to the melody and changes. If Pilc occasionally seems to dominate, it's more a matter of volume than content; some of his loudest bits are the equivalent of a bop drummer dropping bombs.

Naturally, it's easier to hear how the three work off of the material and each other when they're playing other people's tunes, and it's a treat to hear them rethink "I'm Beginning To See The Light" as a sort of Monk funk, or turn the melody of "You And The Night And The Music" into a bass ostinato. But even the line between composition and improvisation isn't obvious, the daring and ingenuity of the playing always is. Moutin provides lines that function equally well as solo or accompaniment, Hoenig remains one of the most melodic drummers this side of Paul Motian, and neither keeps Pilc from showcasing his impeccable sense of color and line. —*J.D. Considine*

Threedom: Nardis; Think of One; Morning; A Foggy Day; You and the Night and the Music; Birth; Slow; Touch; Giant Steps; Afro Blue; The Grinch Dance; Dusk; Lily; Threedom; Hymn for Her; I'm Beginning to See the Light; Confirmation; Smile. (66:15)
Personnel: Jean-Michel Pilc, piano; François Moutin, bass; Ari Hoenig, drums.
Ordering info: motema.com

Emerging Turks

An article that ran early last year in The New York Times spotlighted an emerging jazz scene in Istanbul that is rich in young talent and new music. Recent recordings by these young Turks showcase a repertoire extending from conventional hard-bop to various hybrids.

At the center of this renaissance is pianist Selen Gülün, who studied at Berklee College of Music in the late 1990s and has taught a growing number of the city's musicians at Istanbul's Biligi University. Gülün's most recent trio album, ***Answers*** **(Pozitif Muzik Yapim PMY 027; 45:56 ★★★½)**, features intricate compositions performed over relatively spare accompaniment. Backed by drums and electric bass, Gülün's music is by turns distant and immediate—often in the span of a single track. Tunes like "Busy Lady" and "I Couldn't Say" begin slowly and gather steam en route to Gülün's technically flashy climaxes. "We are the Same" draws from jazz-rock, while "Love Takes Time" displays a more deliberate approach to the beat.

Ordering info: info@pozitif-ist.com

While Gülün has a greater profile, I prefer pianist Çagrı Sertel's ***Newborn*** **(PMY 029; 69:33 ★★★★)**. Though less original in scope, Newborn sounds less scripted. The tracks are longer, roomier, and have a bigger sound. Passages in "B Feeling" remind me of McCoy Tyner. Sertel's blend of synthesizers and voice on "Burning Circles," "Cloudy Weather" and "Values" recalls Pat Metheny. On the minus side, the purposely lush "Ballad for Rainy Tuesday" and "Missing" cast an arco bass as the lead instrument and emphasize a brand of chamber music that sounds out of place. In spite of its hiccups, *Newborn* is both catchy and intense.

Ordering info: info@pozitif-ist.com

Alp Ersönmez's ***Yazisiz*** **(PMY 031; 42:42 ★★★★)** reaches back to the jazz-rock of the late 1960s and early 1970s. Rather than the long, open-ended tracks that typified such fare, the seven compositions are tightly constructed. Miles Davis, Weather Report and Return to Forever are obvious influences, but there are undoubtedly others. The instruments include electric guitar, Fender Rhodes, synthesizer and trumpet. Ersönmez's electric bass provides a foundation on "SFG" and "Besik," and dances adroitly out front on "Burada Yarah Biri Var." "Karsi" is a mellow piano trio ballad. Fans of vintage jazz-rock will want this album.

Ordering info: info@pozitif-ist.com

Bassist Ozan Musluoglu's ***40th Day*** **(Equinox Music & Entertainment; 38:31 ★★★½)** not only boasts a New York lineup, but also an allegiance to bop. It features horn players Jeremy Pelt and JD Allen, pianist Danny Grissett and drummer Darrell Green. Like many sessions led by bassists, the album spotlights


Ozan Musluoglu

Musluoglu's roles as bandleader and composer. Yet Musluoglu reserves some solo space for himself, notably on "Enjoy Disappointments." While he doesn't play walking lines on every track, the music nonetheless takes its cue from standard-bearers like Art Blakey and Horace Silver (albeit without the latter's penchant for exotic syncopation and with far less stretching out). The soloists seem to grow more confident with each track. In addition to "Disappointments," the highlights include "Fake Promises" and "Panic."

Ordering info: equinox-music.com

Serdar Barçin's ***Barbun*** **(A.K. Muzik Yapim AK1011-2; 65:25 ★★½)** demonstrates his technical mastery on alto saxophone and flute. To a degree Barçin draws from mid-1970s jazz-rock, when labels such as CTI began releasing mellower fare that sometimes featured vocals. Barçin is an effective ballad player, who complements the vocalists who appear on several tracks. The album has its moments, though. The title song and also "Lay Lay" (which features a tenor player) could hold their own with jazz listeners. "Sene Sonu" and "Nibiru" showcase Barçin's flute playing. But too much of the album has a more commercial intent. It serves to dilute the good stuff.

Ordering info: akmuzik.com.tr

While Ersönmez and Musluoglu owe the largest debt to American jazz, the group Baba Zula's ***Gecekondu*** **(Essay AY CD29; 60:19 ★★★½)** serves up a gumbo of Middle Eastern instruments, voice and electronics. There's plenty of folky dance music, the kind with shouted choruses of "Hey!" "Worried Leaf" hints at reggae, while "Hope" reminds me somewhat of the Byrds' "Eight Miles High." This is the wild card in the deck, equal parts folkloric and psychedelic. **DB**

Ordering info: essayrecordings.com

Giovanni Falzone Quintet
Around Ornette
PARCO DELLA MUSICA MPR 032
★★★½

The Italian pianoless quintet led by trumpeter Giovanni Falzone pays a refreshing, entertaining, and somewhat irreverent tribute to Ornette Coleman dividing its homage between covers culled from the legendary alto sax's early Atlantic recordings and the leader's originals.

The lineup provides a first hint at Falzone's intents. The absence of an alto sax is a surprise whereas the inclusion of a clarinet and trombone not only broadens the tonal palette but also allows for more complex voicings and counterpoints. Also, Falzone's expansive tone—even when muted—could not be more different than Don Cherry's. The frequent references to New Orleans that culminate in the final piece (the rambunctious Nini Rota-meets-New Orleans "Bourbon Street") might also raise some eyebrows. Francesco Bearzatti's sprightly clarinet, the funk propelling "Blues Connotations," or the festive mood that inhabits some of the pieces all definitely evoke a musical imagery associated with the Crescent City.

The trumpeter's take on Coleman can indeed be viewed as iconoclastic. While the themes are not disguised, they are underpinned by unexpected rhythms (funk and a march for "Lonely Woman") or lead to unexpected developments: "Free" gets a cartoonish revamping that suggests Rome's chaotic traffic and "Congeniality" reaches a hilarious climax. Ironically, Falzone's originals are more serious by comparison, especially the direct and thoughtful dedication "Ornette." But by and large, the trumpeter's main achievement is to underscore the playfulness of Ornette Coleman's music—a feat worthy of praise. —*Alain Drouot*

Around Ornette: Blues Connotation; Fuga Mentale; Lonely Woman; Ornette; Congeniality; Free; King Of The Free; Bourbon Street. (60:41)
Personnel: Giovanni Falzone, trumpet; Francesco Bearzatti, tenor sax, clarinet; Beppe Caruso, trombone; Paolino Dalla Porta, bass; Zeno De Rossi, drums.
Ordering Info: auditorium.com

Side A
A New Margin
CLEAN FEED 235
★★★★

Last time I checked his website, Ken Vandermark had 18 different configurations going. Why so many? One obvious reason is that he thrives on variety, and the peripatetic Chicagoan accomplishes very different things playing solo, in the brutally amplified quartet Lean Left, and with his multi-national big band, the Resonance Ensemble. But another is that he is quite conscious of the way exchanging one player for another can so change a group that it's not the same anymore. He's played for a decade with Norwegian pianist Håvard Wiik in the trio Free Fall, which also includes bassist Ingebrigt Håker Flaten. Side A swaps Håker Flaten for drummer Chad Taylor, a New Yorker with Chicago roots, and with that change comes an entirely different sensibility. Free Fall is a chamber group, indebted to the exacting explorations of timbre and nuance laid out on Jimmy Giuffre's album of the same name; Side A is a composer's collective that gravitates to strong melodies and stronger rhythms. New man, new concept, new content—it's a new band.

With three composers each pursuing diverse concerns, Side A's debut CD never stays in one place for long, or even for a song. Vandermark's "Boxer" bridges the gap between Bach and Thelonious Monk, with Taylor's drumming issuing a Tony Williams-like undercurrent of dissent throughout. Wiik's "The Kreuzberg Variations" exemplifies the eclecticism of the Berlin neighborhood after which it is named by shifting from lighter-than-air improv to Philip Glass-like repetition to a full-bore blowout in just seven minutes. Taylor's "Trued Right" punctuates a stately, McCoy Tyner-esque theme with a Latin piano flourish underpinned by a lockstep beat. But even the most abrupt shifts never feel awkward. In an age when anyone with a computer can hear anything, it would be lazy not to deal with all that information out there. The trio makes its contrasting elements cohere into pieces as complex and challenging as 21st century life; this is what jazz sounds like right now. —*Bill Meyer*

A New Margin: Boxer; What It Is; Trued Right Fold; Arbborization; Enclitics; The Kreuzberg Variations; Cometing; Permancent Sleeve (Walling Hand); Giacometti. (59:56)
Personnel: Ken Vandermark, tenor saxophone, clarinet; Håvard Wiik, piano; Chad Taylor, drums.
Ordering info: cleanfeed-records.com

Westchester Jazz Orchestra
Maiden Voyage Suite
(SELF-RELEASE)
★★★½

For its latest outing the Westchester Jazz Orchestra offers up a creative and hip big band take on Herbie Hancock's 1965 classic *Maiden Voyage*. The WJO's artistic director/conductor Mike Holober, saxophonist Jay Brandford, lead trumpeter Tony Kadleck and Pete McGuinness wrote the arrangements. The WJO augments the original set list with three new compositions by Holober—a brief prologue, interlude and an epilogue. In addition to complimenting and commenting on Hancock's music, these new pieces quote the new arrangements, serving to unify the album.

The WJO's arrangements remain fairly faithful to the originals, but as one would expect from an adaptation of combo arrangements for a big band, there is quite a bit of new music to accommodate the larger ensemble. The charts generally expand upon the original tunes, as do the long background parts. McGuinness' arrangement of "Maiden Voyage" includes new countermelodies that answer and fill in the spaces between Hancock's original lines. His chart develops and builds slowly and is more compositionally interesting than the original. "Survival Of The Fittest," arranged by Holober, is split into two parts (part two is a feature for tenorman Jason Rigby, who systematically blows the house down), and while it's not as aggressive or free as the original, it recalls rather than imitates.

Maiden Voyage Suite is nearly flawless. The playing and writing is phenomenal, and except for the trumpets, which sometime sound like they were recorded in a stairwell, the engineering is excellent as well. The WJO, whose members play together as one, is just as adept at swinging hard as they are at roaring, cooing, or gliding over drummer Andy Watson's propulsive ride cymbal. —*Chris Robinson*

Maiden Voyage Suite: Prologue; Maiden Voyage; Eye of the Hurricane; Little One; Interlude; Survival of the Fittest–Part 1; Survival of the Fittest–Part 2; Dolphin Dance; Epilogue. (54:32)
Personnel: Jay Brandford, David Brandom, alto saxophone, soprano saxophone; Ralph Lalama, Jason Rigby, tenor saxophone; Ed Xiques, baritone saxophone; Tony Kadleck, Craig Johnson, Marvin Stamm, Jim Rotondi, trumpet, flugelhorn; Larry Dean Farrell, Keith O'Quinn, Bruce Eidem, George Flynn, trombone; Ted Rosenthal, piano; Harvie S, bass; Andy Watson, drums; Mike Holober, conductor.
Ordering info: westjazzorch.org

Shout Bamalama


Kenny Wayne Shepherd

COURTESY BIG HASSLE

Black Joe Lewis & The Honeybears: *Scandalous* (Lost Highway B0015215; 38:45 ★★★½) Lewis' blast furnace of an album explodes with ragged shards of Chicago and Mississippi blues, Memphis soul, classic funk and garage rock. The bandleader built up pressure singing and playing lead guitar in a wicked sweat and implored the rhythm section and horns to follow his example. A breakneck talking-blues with a touch of Magic Sam wail, "Memphis Ranch" concerns "ham glazing" at a brothel on the road. "I'm Gonna Leave You" lurches to a droning groove out of R.L. Burnside's Mississippi hill country. Crazy, man.

Ordering info: losthighway.com

Julius Pittman & The Revival: *Live Tonite* (EllerSoul 1101; 56:41 ★★★½) Southern soul with robust infusions of the blues is the forte of this eight-piece band in Richmond, Va., heard here at a local pub. A strong and unaffected singer, Pittman leads the charge on entertaining original songs and arrangements of Albert Collins' "A Good Fool Is Hard To Find" and Sam & Dave's "You Got Me Hummin'." With the sheer force of the horn section quelled, Pittman shows fortitude of character empathizing with the sad-hearted character in his ballad "Miss Lovin' You."

Ordering info: ellersoulrecords.com

Kenny Wayne Shepherd: *How I Go* (Roadrunner 1686; 59:53 ★★★½) Shepherd's mass-market blues-rock sounds genuine in its excitement. The 35-year-old Louisiana native is more than a focused guitar virtuoso, writing good songs and true to the original spirit of Albert King's "Oh, Pretty Woman" and, tougher yet, Bessie Smith's "Backwater Blues." Shepherd has a more than capable band vocalist in Noah Hunt.

Ordering info: roadrunnersrecords.com

Various Artists: *R&B Hipshakers, Vol. 2—Scratch That Itch* (Vampisoul 126; 52:45 ★★★½) Plucked from obscurity by radio DJ Mr. Fine Wine, 20 songs issued by King Records and its subsidiary Federal between 1956 and '68 are manna from heaven for the targeted audience—dance club revelers in Spain—and for fans of vintage r&b everywhere else. Well-known performers Otis Redding, Willie Dixon and Johnny Watson shout or twist in an inclusive mix with unrecognized singers like Mary Johnson, Lula Reed and Rudy Ray Moore (many years later affiliated with Big Daddy Kane). The label guitarist is Mickey Baker, a wonder of rock 'n' roll history.

Ordering info: vampisoul.com

C.J. Chenier: *Can't Sit Down* (World Village 468109; 45:17 ★★★) Chenier, an anachronism, stays true to his father's zydeco legacy on his latest dance party in the studio. His vocals and accordion continue to drip with top-line Louisiana hot sauce, keeping the good times rolling with energized adaptations of blues and Creole r&b classics.

Ordering info: worldvillagemusic.com

Alberta Hunter: *Downhearted Blues* (RockBeat 3024; 71:29 ★★★½) In her eighties, Hunter uses simple artistry and a room full of charm to seduce the NYC audience on one of her fabulous nights at the Cookery jazz club in 1981. Supported by string bassist Jimmy Lewis and pianist Gerald Cook, she shows her special way with the Great American Songbook and risqué blues first introduced by her in the 1920s. The album could only be improved upon if Doc Cheatham had stopped by and played Gabriel's horn.

Ordering info: rockbeatrecords.com

Various Artists: *Blues And The Alligator* (Gazell DVD 7006; 52:00 ★★★) Jim Downing's 1991 film, re-released, gives a good accounting of Bruce Iglauer's Chicago-based record label in its first 20 years. What really sticks in mind: Koko Taylor singing the national anthem at a White Sox game and slide guitarist Hound Dog Taylor in black-and-white performance. DB

Ordering info: gazell.com

Dave Valentin
Pure Imagination
HIGHNOTE 7221
★★★½

Bill O'Connell
Triple Play Plus Three
ZOHO 201113
★★★★

Having worked together for more than three decades, it's hardly a surprise to find pianist Bill O'Connell playing on an album by Dave Valentin, or vice-versa. What's interesting about their latest efforts is that despite some shared personnel and similarity of purpose, they offer strikingly different perspectives on New York's Latin Jazz scene.

O'Connell's album may bring in some big-name guests—Paquito D'Rivera on clarinet, Dave Samuels on vibes and, of course, Valentin on flutes—but the focus is on the rhythm section, which consists just of O'Connell and the gifted young conguero Richie Flores.

Working without trap set or bass is a nervy move, but smart, and not just because O'Connell has one of the strongest left hands in jazz. Take "Sweet Sophie Rose," which features D'Rivera. Although the changes, based on "Sweet Georgia Brown," encourage him to show off his bop side, the polyrhythmic interplay between O'Connell and Flores keeps the music from falling into boppish predictability. There's similar interplay with the other guests, but after listening to O'Connell and Flores work their way through the roiling, up-tempo "Speak Low," it's hard not to wish the album had more duets.

Flores also joins O'Connell on *Pure Imagination*, but there they work with a full rhythm section and conventional arrangements. Not that this is an impediment: From the swing-inflected romp through Charlie Chaplin's "Smile" to the dreamy crosscurrents of O'Connell's "See-Saw," there's a rhythmic sophistication to the playing that belies its fusion-smooth surfaces. Valentin's creamy tone and flawless articulation is in evidence throughout, though it shines brightest on the multi-tracked chorale that prefaces "When Sunny Gets Blue," and though O'Connell doesn't deliver the sort of fireworks found on his own disc, what he does play is perfectly suits to the music's up-market feel. —*J.D. Considine*

***Pure Imagination*:** Smile; Slip And Slide; Joy; Pure Imagination; Hummingbird; See Saw; When Sunny Gets Blue; Cat Man; Last Minute. (49:22)
Personnel: Dave Valentin, flute, alto flute, bass flute; Bill O'Connell, piano; Ruben Rodgriguez, bass; Robby Ameen, drums; Richie Flores, percussion.
Ordering info: jazzdepot.com

***Triple Play Plus Three*:** Sweet Sophie Rose; Bill's Blues; Crazy Samba; 'Round Midnight; Non-Sense; Lake Road; Cobblestones; Speak Low; Mr. EP; La Playa. (60:08)
Personnel: Bill O'Connell, piano; Richie Flores, congas; Paquito D'Rivera, clarinet (1, 4); Dave Samuels, vibraphone (2, 5, 7, 10); Dave Valentin, flute (tracks 3, 9), alto flute (track 6).
Ordering info: zohomusic.com

Houston Person
So Nice
HIGH NOTE 7229
★★★

Honey bear tenorist Houston Person compiles a dozen or so standards including seldom played Duke Ellington, Cole Porter and Stephen Sondheim tunes with his oakcask tone, summoning the ghosts of Ben Webster and Gene Ammons. He's picked pure melody devotees here, including veteran cornetist Warren Vaché and regular pianist John di Martino, folk not desperate to interpolate superfluous substitutions but burnish the premise of a song. Despite skippy, uncomplicated cuts avec horns—Shirley Scott's "Blues Everywhere" and forgotten bop pianist Elmo Hope's "So Nice"—it's on the quartet ballad "Kiss And Run" where we feel the weight of Houston's benign grace. Despite huge gloms of worldly tenderness in his approach, youthful defiance glimmers during "Close To You," which kicks off with a nice stroll alongside Drummond. Rippling double-time runs on "Star Eyes" and "Minor Inconvenience" reveal that Houston's bag is not all warm-air-through-the-horn. Rudy Van Gelder likes to add that magic soupçon of reverb and I confess to wanting a bit more dryness to Houston's tone here.

Lewis gets a somewhat military solo in on "Convenience," a rather unprepossessing head. Howard Alden's guitar leads into Houston's deep sigh on "Easy Living," where after a sudden scampering break from the leader, Di Martino takes time as it goes by.

"Everything I Love" includes Person's blues rips of yore and a deft solo from Alden. But the manifesto here may be the closer: after a relaxed "Small World" recitation from Di Martino, Houston states the melody to "Anyone Can Whistle," as if to underscore that anyone can do this, "any old time, e-a-s-y!" —*Michael Jackson*

So Nice: Blues Everywhere; All Too Soon; I Wished On The Moon; Kiss and Run; So Nice; I've Grown Accustomed To Her Face; Close To You; Star Eyes; Minor Inconvenience; Easy Living; Everything I Love; Stephen Sondheim Medley. (56.44)
Personnel: Houston Person, tenor saxophone; Warren Vaché, cornet, flugelhorn (1, 2, 3, 8); Mark Patterson, trombone (1, 5, 6, 8, 9); John Di Martino, piano; Howard Alden, guitar (1, 2, 9, 10, 11); Ray Drummond, bass; Lewis Nash, drums.
Ordering info: jazzdepot.com

Phil Woods/Bill Mays
Phil & Bill/Woods & Mays
PALMETTO 2150
★★★½

In the hands of seasoned pros, duets can be a thing of beauty. That's what makes listening to saxophonist Phil Woods and pianist Bill Mays, two players who've crafted their sounds and become almost one with their instruments such a treat.

The contrasts are slight, from tune to tune, offered up most often in the tried-and-true formula of alternating uptempo numbers and ballads. No surprises there. What does is the way these two masters reinvent the music here. And while the more revealing stuff comes with the ballads, the more fanciful fare ain't too shabby, either. Starting off with the sunny "All This And Heaven Too" and Woods' "Blues For Lopez," we get a little bit of swing, a wee bit of bop, a feel for how Mays can shadow Woods, and how both can mimic each other in the art of deep listening. While Woods' alto tends towards the airy heights, Mays seems to prefer the good earth, his left-hand bass notes and rich chords the mainstays. Likewise with the sing-songy standard "Do I Love You?" a piece that straddles the fence between sentiment and soft-shoe.

With "Do I Love You?" we get a taste of what Mays and Woods can do on the slower songs, where exposition and feeling seem even more important. One of the marvels here is the way these two can play at such a crawl, as if to milk the music for all it's worth. Mays' intro to Gershwin's "How Long Has This Been Going On?" is like a separate piece until Woods enters to state the familiar theme. It's here, along with other balladic gems like the Woods' touching "Hank Jones" and the haunting "Danielle," that we can really hear their lives expressed musically: the tone choices, the patience, their mutual openness to one another. It's no wonder they end with a ballad, the lovely, telling "Our Waltz," a slow dance in its own right. —*John Ephland*

Phil & Bill/Woods & Mays: All This And Heaven Too; Blues For Lopez; Danielle; Do I Love You?; Hank Jones; I'm All Smiles; How Long Has This Been Going On?; The Best Thing For You Would Be Me; Our Waltz. (56:43)
Personnel: Phil Woods, alto saxophone; Bill Mays, piano.
Ordering info: palmetto-records.com

René Marie
Black Lace Freudian Slip
MOTÉMA 74
★★★½

One of the biggest challenges a jazz singer can undertake is to present a full album of new songs. Pop audiences can better digest a CD's worth of unknown material than jazz listeners; post-Beatles pop songs aren't measured against the qualities of the Great American Songbook or jazz standards with lyrics. Singer René Marie offers a program of mostly original tunes that are self-referential and something of a personal and artistic manifesto. Her improvisational style doesn't always outweigh her material's shortcomings, but she connects strongly when the song is worthy.

Marie has great musicality. Her blues and gospel feeling on the title cut is full of Joycean double entendres and clever turns of phrase. She speaks the lines as seductively as Eartha Kitt and lashes out the sassy refrains. She also has fine rhythmic instincts, as her scatting on "This For Joe" (an artist's affirmation and a jab at jazz imitators) and the boppish "Rufast Daliarg" exhibit. Marie will sing like a horn here and a drum there. Then she can turn in a folksy lament like the poignant "Wishes," or deliver the wistful ballad "Free For a Day."

The rhythm section of pianist Kevin Bales, bassist Rodney Jordan and drummer Quentin Baxter proves itself versatile. Their accompaniment is understated on "I Don't Dance," spooky and floating on "Fallin' Off a Log" and combative on the combustible "Rim Shot."

The album's wordy, stream-of-consciousness lyrics (Marie's and two Patty McKenny originals) diffuse impact. A savvy producer might have requested Marie to reconfigure a couple of complementary familiar numbers to her taste as a matter of providing guideposts for her audience. *—Kirk Silsbee*

Black Lace Freudian Slip: Black Lace Freudian Slip; This For Joe; Wishes; Thanks But I Don't Dance; Free For a Day; Ahn's Dream; Gosh, Look at the Time; Rim Shot; Fallin' Off a Log; Deep in the Mountains; Serenity Prayer; Rufast Daliarg; Tired. (63:06)
Personnel: René Marie, vocals; Kevin Bales, piano; Bill Kopper acoustic guitar (3); Lionel Young, electric guitar (10); Rodney Jordan, bass; Quentin Baxter, drums; Dexter Payne, harmonica (30); Michael A. Croan, vocals (10).
Ordering info: motema.com

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Joan Stiles
Three Musicians
OO-BLA-DEE MUSIC
★★★½

Sometimes, in music and all the arts, artistic freshness can be just a reductive gesture away. By taking a familiar conventional form and pulling out a piece we might have taken for granted, senses can be awakened, complacency dislodged. Such a goal and end effect is consciously undertaken with pianist Joan Stiles' intriguing bass-less trio project, with game and aptly sensitive saxophonist Joel Frahm and Matt Wilson making the conceit work. Nothing against the bedrock role of bass players, of course.

Paul Motian's famed trio with Joe Lovano and Bill Frisell is just one of many other important no-bass trio examples, and after some slight listening adjustment, we sense that Stiles is taking on a challenge, in part, by both freeing up and giving more responsibility to her left hand. More importantly than the pianist's workload, though, the album reflects the reality of the title—*Three Musicians*, working together with poetic productivity—and to underlying aesthetic motives on the leader's part.

On the session, the trio opens up with the half-shadowy cheer of "Everything's Coming Up Roses," swerves nicely through the standards "You Don't Know What Love Is" and "All the Things You Are," as well as a couple of lesser-trafficked Thelonious Monk tunes ("Introspection" and "Nutty"). Stiles and Frahm go into drum-less duo mode at times, as on the meditative relief of Billy Strayhorn's darkly gorgeous "Blood Count" and a quick, fast fix of Mary Lou Williams' "O.W.." Stiles' originals range from the deceptively "straight"-sounding but metrically tricky funky/groovy "West End Boogie" to the final swinging and cannily bop-tapping "Bepocity" to close.

For all the pure musical pleasures to be had in listening to this refreshingly different-sounding date, a certain conceptualist underpinning takes it away from just the usual music-for-music's-sake proposition. Stiles borrows the album title from Picasso's cubist-era painting and she supplies her own collaged cover art, in homage to the artist, whose Cubist manifesto was another case of shaking up expectations through reinvention.

Stiles has also worked up some cultural cross-stitching, mixing up standards and the classic rock stuff of Cream and The Beatles in her vertical medleys "In The Sunshine Of My Funny Valentine's Love" and "Brother, Can You Spare a Dime?/Can't Buy Me Love," to partly clever and partly campy ends. —*Josef Woodard*

Three Musicians: Everything's Coming Up Roses; In The Sunshine Of My Funny Valentine's Love; West End Boogie; You Don't Know What Love Is; Lucky to be Me; All the Things You Are: Blood Count: O.W.; Introspection; Nutty; Brother, Can You Spare a Dime?/Can't Buy Me Love; Bebopicity. (51:00)
Personnel: Joan Stiles, piano; Joel Frahm, tenor and soprano saxophone; Matt Wilson, drums.
Ordering info: joanstilesmusic.com

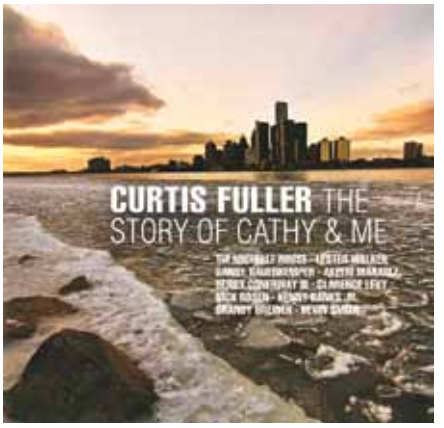
George Benson
Guitar Man
CONCORD JAZZ 33092
★★½

Nowadays when George Benson concentrates on guitar, it's a cause for celebration. *Guitar Man* has all the hallmarks of a "return to jazz" comeback, because it finds him fronting a team that includes pianist Joe Sample, drummer Harvey Mason and young bassist Ben Williams. Under the production of John Burk and Dave Garfield, *Guitar Man* shines with the lacquered pop veneer that Tommy LiPuma gave mid-'70s crossover classics, *Breezin'* and *In Flight*.

Benson's exquisite playing comes off a tad too professional and less personal on many occasions here. But it's a delight hearing him delve into John Coltrane's "Naima" atop of Mason's roiling drums and Garfield's passionate piano and keyboard accompaniment. Benson also gives a pleasing revisit to Ronnie Foster's "Fingerlero," on which his blazing improvisation enlivens a stomping groove, marked by Sample's pristine piano and Mason and percussionist Lenny Castro's percolating rhythms. *Guitar Man* isn't completely a guitar-only affair though. Benson turns in agreeable vocal renditions of Stevie Wonder's "My Cherie Amour" and of jazz standards, "My One and Only Love" and "Since I Fell For You."

But for all of *Guitar Man* calculated moves and expert playing, it lacks heat and unpredictability. The discreet interaction prevents it from being quickly lumped in the smooth jazz category. Yet it does exhibit a botox aesthetic in that for its unblemished, exterior beauty and perfection, it's ultimately faceless. —*John Murph*

Guitar Man: Tenderly; I Want To Hold Your Hand; My Cherie Amour; Naima; Tequila; Don't Know Why; The Lady In My Life; My One And Only Love; Paper Moon; Danny Boy; Since I Fell For You; Fingerlero. (42:56)
Personnel: George Benson, guitar, vocals (3, 6, 11); David Garfield, piano, keyboards; Paul Jackson Jr., rhythm guitar (2); Ray Fuller, rhythm guitar (2); Freddie Washington, bass (2); Oscar Seaton Jr., drums (2); Charles Bisharat, violin, viola (2); Dan Higgins, flute, alto flute, clarinet (2); Ben Williams, bass (3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 12); Harvey Mason, drums (3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 12); Joe Sample, piano (5, 8, 9, 12); Lenny Castro, percussionist (3, 5, 6, 12).
Ordering info: concordmusicgroup.com



Curtis Fuller
The Story Of Cathy & Me
CHALLENGE RECORDS 73309
★★★½

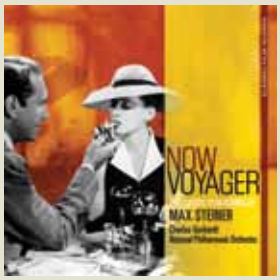
Curtis Fuller's *The Story Of Cathy & Me* is a poignant love letter to his recently deceased wife. This intimate album mixes cleverly sequenced originals and standards to outline the story of their lives together. Interspersed throughout the album are four interludes on which Fuller tells about meeting his wife, their children, his wife succumbing to cancer, and life after her death. Along with these interludes, on which tenor saxophonist Akeem Marable and pianist Kenny Banks provide the accompaniment, Fuller plays on five of the album's 15 tracks. His exuberance on "Little Dreams" suits the tune's lighthearted nature, he comes swinging on "I Asked And She Said Yes," and his solo on "The Right To Love" is tender.

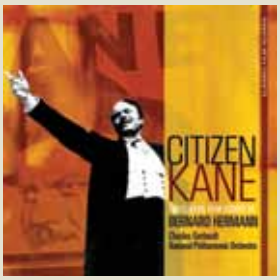
Fuller's band members do most of the storytelling. Trumpeter Lester Walker turns in several excellent hard-bop solos, and his lyrical balladry on "Too Late Now" is lovely. Marable teams up with Banks for a bittersweet "The First Time Ever I Saw Your Face," and singer Michelle Rouse delivers soulful and elegant performances. "Life Was Good, What Went Wrong" is full of nervous energy, and features tenor saxophonist Daniel Bauerkemper's cries and Nick Rosen's driving piano solo.

The album's concept is so strong that Fuller's presence is felt even when he's not directly on each track. The album concludes with his spoken interlude, on which he ruminates over the nature of death and says, "I've had the love of my life, you get yours."

—*Chris Robinson*

The Story Of Cathy & Me: Interlude 1: My Name is Curtis DuBois Fuller; Little Dreams; The First Time Ever I Saw Your Face; I Asked And She Said Yes; The Right To Love; My Lady's Tears; Interlude 2: My Children; Sweetness; Look What I Got; Interlude 3: Cancer, A Horrible Experience; Life Was Good, What Went Wrong; Love Was Everything When Love Was You and Me; Too Late Now; Spring Will Be A Little Late This Year; Interlude 4: My Wish For Cathy And My Friends. (64:13)
Personnel: Curtis Fuller, trombone (2, 4, 5, 9, 11); Lester Walker, trumpet (2, 4, 8, 11–13); Daniel Bauerkemper, tenor saxophone (2, 4, 6, 11) ; Akeem Marable, tenor saxophone (1, 3, 7–10, 14, 15); Nick Rosen, piano (2, 4, 6, 8, 11–13); Kenny Banks Jr., piano (1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 10, 14, 15); Brandy Brewer, bass (2, 6, 9, 11–14); Kevin Smith, bass; (4, 5, 8); Henry Conerway III, drums (2, 4–6, 8, 9, 11–14); Clarence Levy, percussion (4, 8, 11); Michelle Rouse, vocals (5, 12).
Ordering info: challenge.nl





Golden Age Film Scores Still Astound

Can it stand on its own? That has always been the big question when listening to music written for movies, television and the stage. With the advent of soundtrack recordings available at the retail level more than 50 years ago, a new category was created. These titles, written for the screen from its earliest days of sound movies (the second set in a series rollout from Sony Masterworks) answer "yes" to that big question. Remastered from the original analog tapes, this set comes from Charles Gerhardt's well-received 1970s Classic Film Score series for RCA's Red Seal label. Among the greatest composers for film were artists who heard and created music for its own sake. Along with David Raksin, who conducts his music for the films *Laura, Forever Amber* and *The Bad And The Beautiful*, we get to hear works by Milos Rosa, Franz Waxman, Bernard Herrmann, Erich Wolfgang Korngold, Alfred Newman and Max Steiner.

The one recording that stands apart, thematically, from the rest is ***Elizabeth And Essex*** **(Sony Masterworks 88697 81266; 47:48 ★★★½),** with music by Korngold. And, oddly enough, despite the fact that we're talking about Elizabethan England and other more historic times, the music, which also includes selections from *The Prince And The Pauper* and *The Sea Wolf*, sounds contemporarily romantic, not unlike the remaining stories in this set. Korngold's more formal approach, while a bit stodgy, is still full of life, keeping up with the action and intrigue in the films themselves.

There's a complete set of recordings dedicated to Bette Davis with ***Classic Film Scores For Bette Davis*** **(88697 81272; 40:58 ★★★★)**. Here we get to listen to more of Korngold, but also Steiner, Waxman and Newman for such films as *All About Eve*, *Jezebel* and *Dark Victory*. Some of the material is repeated elsewhere in this set, but it is telling that Davis alone gets the nod for her own disc here, her movies from this period somehow inspiring the music made and capturing the essence of the romantic, tragic and oftentimes melodramatic stories that made for box-office hits. This one might be the best choice for those who want some variety, since it samples everything here.

Lush orchestration was the order of the day back then, with full orchestras blasting away in primary colors, the delivery interspersed with the occasional quiet moment or with material written in concerto form to highlight a particular instrument, or personality. Of the music here, three stand out for their depth as well as breadth, offering definitive takes on the composers in question: ***David Raksin Conducts His Great Film Scores*** **(88697 81268; 46:52 ★★★★½)**, ***Citizen Kane*** **(88697 81264; 52:16 ★★★★½)** and Rosa's ***Spellbound*** **(88697 81269; 54:15 ★★★★)**. In each case, the selections include memorable themes, but also major sections of that particular film's work. Raksin, whose works sound the most modern, conducts music from three of his scores, while Rosa's *Red House* and *The Lost Weekend* similarly receive extended treatments, along with selections from *The Thief Of Bagdad*, *Double Indemnity*, *Spellbound* and *The Jungle Book*. Herrmann's classic score for *Citizen Kane*, evoking the brooding mystery and suspense of that film, shares extended play with his scores from, among others, *Hangover Square*, *Beneath The 12-Mile Reef* and *White Witch Doctor*. In these films, Raksin, Herrmann and Rosa could be found utilizing certain instrumentation, like the harp, saxophone or exotic percussion, to help create a scene for the listener.

Waxman and Steiner are heard in a good number of selections with ***Sunset Boulevard*** **(88697 81265; 53:42 ★★★★½)** and ***Now Voyager*** **(88697 81270; 53:00 ★★★★)**, respectively. Again, it is Bette Davis as the central female character for such films as *Now Voyager*, but other stars were featured as well, ranging from such action movies as *King Kong* and *The Big Sleep* to *The Charge Of The Light Brigade* and *The Fountainhead*. With Gloria Swanson leading the charge for *Sunset Boulevard*, we get drama in spades with selections from Waxman's scores for this movie as well as *A Place In The Sun*, *Taras Bulba*, *The Philadelphia Story* and *Prince Valiant*. One of the most memorable themes, though, comes from his "The Creation Of The Female Monster," from *The Bride Of Frankenstein*. Nowhere else do we hear that sweet combination of tenderness mixed with horror that is evoked by Waxman's unforgettable, haunting melody. **DB**

Ordering info: sonymasterworks.com

Eldar Djangirov
Three Stories
SONY MUSIC ENTERTAINMENT/
MASTERWORKS JAZZ 88697 54862
★★★

As soon as this album kicks off with "I Should Care," a long-forgotten TV commercial pops to mind—the old Pantene ad in which a gorgeous model pleads, unconvincingly, "Don't hate me because I'm beautiful." The parallel is that chops are to Eldar Djangirov what beauty was to this knockout from the 1980s. Specifically, they are as much an impediment as an asset to intimate understanding.

Eldar—presumably he still goes primarily by his first name—plays the Oscar Peterson card on that opening track, with impossibly crisp runs, spirals, two-handed unisons and other displays that establish right at the top that his command of the instrument is beyond staggering. This is all free tempo, so when he kicks into the tune over a growling bass line, the result is probably the most volcanic rendering any Sammy Cahn song has ever received.

Right after this, we're into Bach's "Prelude In C# Major," played *presto*, with literalism at the top, followed by improvisations within and somewhat beyond the Baroque canon. These are genuinely thrilling and not at all irreverent, though the intention continues to be to confirm beyond doubt how astonishing the player he is.

But there's much more to Eldar than heavy artillery. He brings some interesting ideas to "Darn That Dream," keeping the tune constantly off balance in a free-tempo reading based on prickly but intriguing modernistic, classically inspired harmonies. He also dissects "In Walked Bud" as a launching pad for head-spinning, rhythmically emphatic explorations that never lose touch with the elemental motif. "Embraceable You" is written material presented with surging rubato, allowing plenty of room for runs into and back down from the stratosphere; these breathe drama into the tune and focus the listener on the elegance of the material. The same is true, improbably, of Eldar's treatment of Bach's "Air On A G String," transformed into something far beyond the composer's era yet reanimated by romantic coloring.

The obvious tour de force here is a 14-minute interpretation of "Rhapsody In Blue," which also begins with fidelity to the text and inevitably widens into long extemporizations. These include plenty of thundering two-handed passages, rocketing runs and neck-snapping changes in volume. The point is made and made again that Eldar is a virtuoso by any measure. What remains now is for him to bring that into service in a way that leads to the challenge of bringing the written work as much or more into the light. —*Bob Doershuk*

***Three Stories*:** I Should Care; Prelude In C# Major; Darn That Dream; Windows; Etude Op. 2, No. 1; In Walked Bud; Three Stories; So Damn Lucky; Embraceable You; Russian Lullaby; Air on a G String; Impromptu; Rhapsody in Blue; Donna Lee. (75:49)
Personnel: Eldar Djangirov, piano.
Ordering info: sonymasterworks.com

Greg Ward
Greg Ward's Phonic Juggernaut
THIRSTY EAR 57199
★★★

Alto saxophonist Greg Ward takes a step forward by tackling the trio format, which forces him to constantly generate ideas and to sustain some interest over the course of an hour. The patience he demonstrates throughout helps him maintain his staying power. He makes a conscious effort to prevent virtuosity from getting in the way and therefore impairing his thoughtfulness.

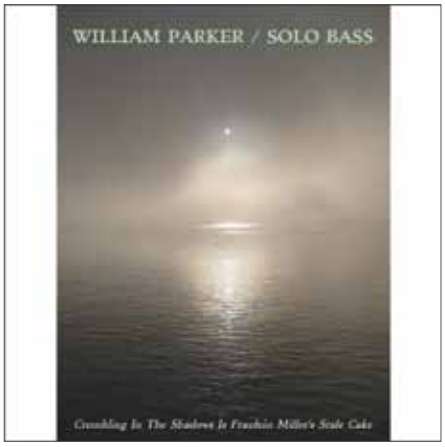
Ward's compositions are generally tuneful and effective. From an improvisational standpoint, he is mostly concerned in maintaining a melodic yet angular approach even if, occasionally, he breaks into wails. In that sense, he clearly follows into Ornette Coleman's footsteps.

Drummer Damion Reid's bombastic performance offers quite a contrast but becomes rather tiresome when the ploy becomes too systematic. Moreover, the recording gives the drums a cavernous sound that underlines this dichotomy. The other issue is that it tends to draw too much attention to the drums and eclipses the fine contributions of Joe Sanders who constantly shifts between the walking bass and repeated motifs. However, Reid gives up on the onslaught to let Ward deliver a mournful and emotional tribute to the late Fred Anderson on "Velvet Lounge Shut-In."

The only piece Ward did not pen is the closer, Chicago singer/songwriter Andrew Bird's "Sectionate City." As tuneful as it is, it does not fall out of place but Ward uses it to experiment, which could be an indication of where he is going. More importantly, with the help of bass overdubs and other devices, the trio finally manages to achieve some real cohesiveness.

—*Alain Drouot*

Greg Ward's Phonic Juggernaut: Above Ground; Leanin' In; Velvet Lounge Shut-In; Phonic Juggernaut; Things Ain't In Book 3; U.S. 4; Sectionate City. (60:47)
Personnel: Greg Ward, alto saxophone; Joe Sanders, bass; Damion Reid, drums.
Ordering info: thirstyear.com



William Parker
Crumbling In The Shadows Is Fraulein Miller's Stale Cake
CENTERING 1005–1007
★★★½

There's no way around it; solo bass albums are tough nuts to crack. William Parker offers no sugar to help the medicine go down on *Crumbling In The Shadows Is Fraulein Miller's Stale Cake*. It comprises three CDs of unaccompanied bass playing, two of which were recorded during one day in a studio in 2010, the last a reissue of his out-of-print 1994 release *Testimony*. That latter record is roughly recorded. The more recent material is recorded with an unenhanced richness that lets wood, strings, and fingers tell the whole story. Many of *Crumbling's* performances are circuitous; there's none of the user-friendly succinctness that is in some of Parker's recent ensemble projects. Neither does he dilute the purity of his intent by employing extra instruments or overdubbing.

That last point may be the hardest to believe, unless you know that Parker has mastered using more than one bow. Around the time that he made *Testimony* he sometimes wielded as many as four, and there are moments where at least two are in action. He's also persuasive playing arco and pizzicato simultaneously, establishing his technical prowess and the beautiful sonorities that his instrument can provide. Parker takes his time with each idea, exploring "Equador/Resolution's" low, pungent melody and "Double Mystery's" savage tone clashes with a patience that brings the listener to the music's emotional center.

This set comes with a 48-page booklet devoted to poems and stories that celebrate spiritually informed transcendence in the face of adversity. The music draws on the same well of mysticism. —*Bill Meyer*

Crumbling In The Shadows Is Fraulein Miller's Stale Cake: Stained Glass Sky With Dancing Light; Crumbling In The Shadows Is Fraulein Miller's Stale Cake; Equador/Resolution; Night Density; Double Mystery; Green Mountains; Philadelphia Clay; Velocity; Pointed Acceptance; Sonic Animation; Testimony; Light #3; Dedication; The Second Set. (65:43/62:22/78:27)
Personnel: William Parker, bass.
Ordering info: aumfidelity.com

Chico Hamilton
Revelation
JOYOUS SHOUT! 10015
★★★

The impression that emits from the peculiar cover art to this moderately interesting music is not, at first glance, a happy one: The saintly presence of Chico Hamilton's face hanging in the heavens suggests a posthumous commemoration, not the cheerful 90th birthday celebration Hamilton enjoyed in September.

This collection delivers 22 relatively small-scale pieces, none exceeding five minutes, with most written by Hamilton and a few others by members of his standing sextet. There's no special thematic binding or familiar material, save for two jazz standards, but the saxophone-flute front line offers variety of color and the playing is engaging. And Hamilton is able to generate a powerful but discreet undertow of movement, preferring that to any bravura solo showcases. "Evanly" has a nice bossa nova shuffle, while "Paul Ain't Home" swings hard.

Oddly, it's the two standards that are the ringers. One would expect "Savoy" and "Don't Mean A Thing" to be the familiar touchstones of some straightahead, unbuttoned jamming. Alas, both tunes are numbed by drab vocal choruses from the band. "Savoy" interpolates the old Count Basie band's "Broadway" into the final chorus, reprising the first tune the original Hamilton trio recorded in 1953.

Hamilton likes stop-time devices and long fuses. The meandering a cappella intros create a certain tension over what's to come, but don't always deliver much of a pop ("EHH"). And sometimes no pop at all ("Phyllis"). On the other hand, what seem like slumbering ballad moods have a way of springing to life after you've given up on them. No need to give up on Hamilton, though, who always built his voice around the kind of subtleties befitting an artist, not an athlete. —*John McDonough*

Revelation: Brushes; Evanly; No Way L.A.; Song For Lynne; Paul Ain't Home, Evan's Along; P&E; Stompin' At The Savoy; Two Minutes To Twelve; Don't Go Away; Every Time I Smile; Gena; Midnight On Montrose Ave.; Dilemma; EHH; You're Not Alone; Do With What, Do What With; It Don't Mean a Thing; Phyllis; Black Eyed Peas; Foot Prints In The Sand; EP. (77:52)
Personnel: Evan Schwam, saxophone; Mayu Sacki, flutes; Nick Demopoulos, guitar; Paul Ramsey, bass; Chico Hamilton, Jeremy Carlstedt (2, 4, 5, 8, 10, 12, 16, 17, 20), percussion, drums.
Ordering info: joyousshout.com

Historical | BY SHAUN BRADY

Commercial Montgomery


Wes Montgomery
CHUCK STEWART

You really can't blame Wes Montgomery for taking a headlong dive into the uncharted territory of jazz-pop fusion. The pioneering guitarist was a critical darling and a musician's musician, but as many who've chalked up those sorts of accolades have discovered, neither does much to put food on the table.

Of course, Montgomery also had no idea that he would only live another year-and-a-half beyond the two-year span covered in ***Movin': The Complete Verve Recordings*** **(Verve/Hip-O Select 70469; 78:23/77:07/75:11/74:51/74:27 ★★★½)**. He therefore couldn't know that these sessions, which pair his stunning fretwork with facile easy-listening backgrounds, would live on as a missed opportunity to capture a master at the height of his powers.

When his longtime label Riverside went belly-up in 1964, Montgomery's manager paired him with producer Creed Taylor at Verve, who aimed to transform the guitarist from underappreciated genius to AM radio hit-maker. The gambit worked, to the benefit of Montgomery's bank account and the detriment of his music.

Not that *Movin'* doesn't offer moments of greatness; Montgomery was too instinctive an innovator to get lost amid the lush glibness of Taylor's pop arrangements. Still, the highlight of the five-disc set is undeniably *Smokin' At The Half Note*, which foregoes the light-orchestral trappings and teams Montgomery with Wynton Kelly's trio featuring Paul Chambers and Jimmy Cobb.

Most of the original album's smokin' was actually done in Rudy Van Gelder's studio rather than the titular nightclub and its inhospitable acoustics. Still, even on the studio tracks, Montgomery responds to his stellar sidemen with some of his most electrifying runs, including a high-wire run through his classic "Four On Six" and his unsurpassed solo on "Unit 7." Another half-dozen tracks from the live recordings, later issued on the posthumous *Willow Weep For Me,* are included here sans Claus Ogerman's unnecessary overdubs, though those tracks are placed at the end of disc five.

For the most part, though, Montgomery is left on his own to play freely against forgettable sonic backdrops. His first two Verve releases, *Movin' Wes* and *Bumpin'*, featured brass arrangements by Johnny Pate and strings by Don Sebesky, respectively. The best one could say about both men's work is that it's unobtrusive, staying for the most part out of the way of Montgomery's fluid wizardry.

Sebesky had Montgomery record with a rhythm section and then added the strings after the fact. On the title track, they engage in a pizzicato call-and-response with the guitarist's brisk bursts; on "Con Alma" their giddiness overwhelms, filling every empty space.

Following *Smokin' At The Half Note*, Taylor ratcheted up his efforts to score a hit single, leading to a trio of albums named for contemporary pop hits, the title tunes of which were radio-friendly quickies that asked Montgomery to do little more than state their melodies in his patented octave playing: *Goin' Out Of My Head*, with busy but inconsequential big band charts by Oliver Nelson; *Tequila*, with treacly strings provided by Ogerman; and *California Dreaming*, with Latin-by-way-of-Herb-Alpert arrangements by Sebesky. The latter's cover, picturing a barefoot blonde perched on a seaside rock, is interchangeable with dozens of other bachelor pad albums of the day, and the same goes for much of the music within, all too easily relegated to background pleasantness.

Montgomery's Verve tenure ended on a high note, pairing him with another crossover virtuoso: organist Jimmy Smith. *The Dynamic Duo* and its later-released sequel, *Further Adventures Of Jimmy Smith And Wes Montgomery*, consisting of outtakes from the same session, give the blazing pair plenty of room to move, even amid Nelson's brash settings.

His untimely death in 1968 makes Montgomery a prime candidate for what-if fantasizing, and if much of the material he has to work with on this set is unmemorable, his own integrity tends to shine through. He even finds a way to sound inspired on "Chim Chim Cheree." There also hints of what might have been—Herbie Hancock's name is among the wasted all-star band on *Goin' Out Of My Head*, pointing to a possible meeting with a younger generation with a better grasp on the changing musical landscape. **DB**

Ordering info: hip-oselect.com

Jeff Coffin & The Mu'tet
Live!
EAR UP
★★★½

Across two CDs of live music from SPACE in Evanston, Ill., and Momo's in Austin, saxophonist Jeff Coffin and his Mu'tet kick butt with eight tunes of funk, soul and rock, some New Orleans flavors thrown in for fun. The usual backbeat is consistently upended with a slew of tricky time signatures (e.g., Coffin's driving, circus-y "The Mad Hatter Rides Again" and his lanky, second-line-ish blues "Move Your Rug"). On hand are some other well-knowns: drummer Jeff Stipe (Trey Anastasio, Greg Osby, Phil Lesh), keyboardists Chris Walters and Kofi Burbridge (Derek Trucks), trumpeter Bill Fanning (Fleck, Maria Schneider), guitarist Mike Seal and electric bassist Felix Pastorius.

Everyone gets in on the act in this all-original program. And while it is live music--which does make for a different vibe—there are times when *Live!* has a tendency to drift into the background/party music world, with multiple solos on every track that at times make the proceedings drag on, the tunes perhaps in need of tuneups, so to speak. That said, one of the features to *Live!* that helps to keep everything fresh is the instrumental variety, including spots for Pastorius—who can play his axe like a guitarist—and both Burbridge and/or Coffin when they haul out their flutes for the languorous funk of "Al's Greens" and uptempo cooker "The Evil Boweevil." The spice of Burbridge's electric keyboard work on "Tag" and "Tall Lanky," Fanning's "space" trumpet (is that a wah-wah trumpet "Al's Greens"?) and Coffin's "electrosax" (adding guitar effects) and double-sax wailing ("The Evil Boweevil") add surprises.

And, in the midst of all this electricity, Walter's acoustic piano pops on the mysterious, frenetic Coffin/Pastorius piece "L'Esperance," Coffin's soprano adding a bit of the snake charmer to what becomes a jam-band hoedown in 11. Here, the song's length of well over 18 minutes works because of the contrasts: It's not all balls-to-the-wall but a tune infused with not a little nuance and interludes, not to mention a great Stipe drum solo to go with this whirling dervish of a song. The most intriguing piece is the lustrous, jazzy "Turiya," featuring Burbridge's colorful acoustic piano, Coffin's burly tenor, his flutey flute and more room to breathe than you could imagine. The melody line is long and sinewy, but also delicate. The swing is easy with a feel that creeps toward the otherworldly. Heads up, Mu'tet: Your maturity is showing.

—John Ephland

Live!: Tag; Al's Greens; The Evil Boweevil; Turiya; The Mad Hatter Rides Again; Move Your Rug; L'Esperance; Tall & Lanky. (48:15/55:28)
Personnel: Jeff Coffin, saxophones, electrosax, flute; Jeff Stipe, drums; Felix Pastorius, electric bass; Kofi Burbridge, piano, keyboards, flute (1–5, 8); Bill Fanning, trumpet, space trumpet; Mike Seal (6, 7), Rob Block (8), guitar; Chris Walters, piano, keyboards (6, 7); Joe Caploe, percussion (8); Leonice Shinneman, kanjira (8).
Ordering info: earuprecords.com

Enoch Smith Jr.
Misfits
MUSIC4MYPEOPLEENT
★★★½

Pianist Enoch Smith Jr. discovered music in Pentecostal Church and still performs for services in New Jersey and Manhattan. Self taught, he was accepted at Berklee and initially felt out of his depth, contributing to his concept of the "Misfit." Smith's chops are nothing to scoff at though, as illustrated on the authoritative take on "Caravan," which features swinging bass from Noah Jackson and lively stick work from Sangmin Lee, and the disarming dance "She Moves Me." But Smith has a broader vision and a programmatic sense of form realized through eight originals that feature his thoughtful lyrics.

The eponymous theme featuring the vocals of Sarah Elizabeth Smith appears in two versions, its reprise half way through the record is, a propos, an uneasy fit, underscoring Smith's eagerness to stay on message. The slow build of version two recalls Esperanza Spalding, though on "I Want You" Charles sets out more like Michael Jackson, before, with strings added unnecessarily, the mix gets heady. "Wise Man" is a lovely tribute to Ellis Marsalis' musicianship and values with call and response between Charles' phrases and Smith's piano plus a solo from Jackson.

Among the covers are a jazzily intense remake of Rev. Paul Jones' gospel song "I Won't Complain;" a stop/start, almost Stevie Wonderesque rejuvenation of Paul McCartney's "Blackbird" sung by Saunders Sermons, and a bouncy, soulful remake of Sade's "Love Is Stronger Than Pride." Smith's 7-year-old daughter Simone does a fine job finishing the album with a heartwarming "Alright" during which she cops on to one of Daddio's vocal mannerisms.

Soulful and melodious, this is an original album full of ideas. *—Michael Jackson*

Misfits: A Misfit's Theme; Wise Man; Hush; Side Door; Caravan; Blackbird; A Misfit's Theme 2; I Want You; Bring It On Home; She Moves Me; I Won't Complain; Love Is Stronger; Alright. (51:33).
Personnel: Enoch Smith Jr., piano; Sangmin Lee, drums; Noah Jackson, bass; Sarah Elizabeth Charles, vocals; Mavis "Swan" Poole, vocals (11); Saunders Sermons, vocals (6).
Ordering info: enochsmithjr.com

Jeff Gauthier Goatette
Open Source
CRYPTOGRAMOPHONE 145
★★★★

There's a whole bunch of fun going on with this CD. And it seems to cry out for visuals; like the music was written for the stage and/or screen. It might have something to do with violinist/leader Jeff Gauthier's orchestration along with the writing. Even though this is a sextet, the accumulated sonic punch feels more like a small orchestra.

Consider the variety of instruments. Along with the brothers Cline (guitarist Nels and drummer Alex) and bassist Joel Hamilton, Gauthier's violin is joined by trumpeter John Fumo and keyboardist David Witham. And, except for Hamilton and drummer Cline, everyone here participates in their own dalliances with "effects," Nels also playing classical guitar along with Witham on acoustic piano and accordion. The net affect is that each of the seven cuts here contrasts with whatever came before or follows. In the case of Gauthier's opening and closing tunes, the appropriately titled "40 Lashes (With Mascara)" and "Open Source," there's a fire in the house and solemn, atmospheric, burning embers at the end, respectively. What happens in between includes all manner of musical expression, from the more stately, orchestral (Witham's dreamy "From A Rainy Night") to some rambunctious free playing to something that might fly at the circus to more dalliances, this time with an assortment of swing, rock and free playing (Ornette Coleman's "Joy Of A Toy"). The music can seem a bit stiff at times on some of the heads, and during the more free moments there is a sense that the gang's getting distracted.

As for the playing, Nels is typically outrageous but also very melodic at times, while his brother's added percussion sometimes makes you think there are two drummers in the house. Gauthier plays like a Janus-like classical/Broadway-jazzer, equally at ease with the more outside moments. *—John Ephland*

Open Source: 40 Lashes (With Mascara); From A Rainy Night; Seashells And Balloons; Prelude To A Bite; Things Past; Joy Of A Toy; Open Source. (58:52)
Personnel: Jeff Gauthier, violin, electric violin, effects; John Fumo, trumpet, effects; Nels Cline, electric guitar, classical guitar, effects; David Witham, piano, keyboards, accordion, effects; Joel Hamilton, bass; Alex Cline, drums, percussion.
Ordering info: jgoat.com

Uri Caine Trio
Siren
WINTER & WINTER 910 177
★★½

Uri Caine and his trio perform with abundant energy and a lot of interactivity. These musicians have developed a collective spirit beyond what many groups have attained. Yet the longer the music plays, the more it begins to feel like even that admirable telepathy isn't enough on its own to stand one album out on its own.

Part of this stems from arrangement, as on "Parshish," the first track. The head seems to be written in alternating sections of 7/8 and 9/8, or something close to it. Caine, bassist John Hébert and drummer Ben Perowsky hit the accents in their arrangement together, but they do it so breezily that there's not much drama behind it all.

Drama, of course, can be a distraction. In this case, though, the looseness of their execution dulls its impact. Caine is certainly a solid pianist, yet there are times when some of what he strives after might have been better realized if there was a little more fire and precision at key moments. Splashy chords and abbreviated single lines are characteristic of his solos; a little less splash, more finely etched voicings and runs that go just a bit beyond his somewhat fragmented bits might have imparted a sense of direction, the absence of which can make some of his explorations feel a little tentative.

This element defines the group's overall direction. On "Interloper," everyone seems to be ruminating independently, certainly aware of and responsive to what the others are doing yet never concerned with any movement toward a peak moment or pivot point in the composition. Aside from some repeated accents now and then, it all feels like movement for the sake of movement, with no sharpening of focus as an end to a verse and chorus draws near. Here, and on most of the other cuts, it's about the moment, not about the anticipation of some resolution to come.

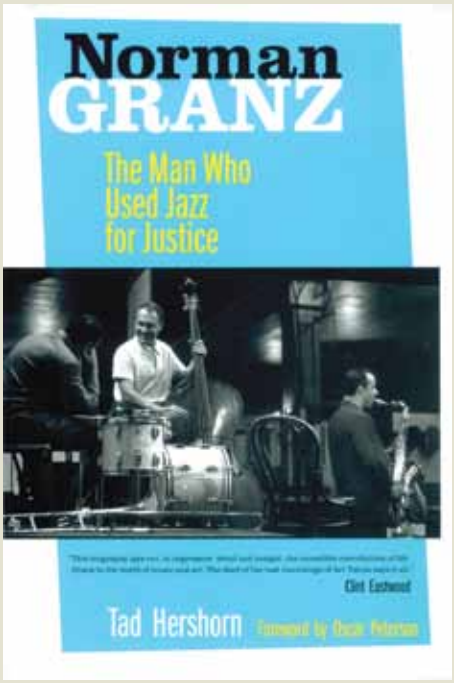
This is enough to deliver listenable and even impressive performances, though when a single cover is offered the de-emphasis on its structure is a bit disappointing. They don't have to play "Green Dolphin Street" literally, but the material is blurred until certain familiar bits emerge long enough to serve almost as mile markers—"We're just a few bars from the bridge!" That's fine too, but once again the trio functions only in the present. They swing pretty hard, yet their course isn't evident until they hit a wall toward the end, after which a mist envelops the last vestiges of the evaporating theme.

Sometimes the titles cue listeners on what to expect. "Smelly," unfortunately, heralds an intentionally messy execution, with washy pedaling behind little scampers and clusters. Even in the midst of relatively transparent chord changes, Caine spills blotchy low-register stains, like ink onto a lead sheet. It leads to a comically strutting finale, which crumbles after a few seconds into another blur.

"Manual Defile" similarly forecasts what follows, but here the pun on "Manuel" nods toward a Latin vibe that percolates delightfully in 10/8. An element of humor seems to stimulate the group toward a working balance between their loose execution and more focused purpose. They make it work; the fact that they come very close to that accomplishment through the rest of *Siren* makes it worth savoring as a whole. —*Bob Doerschuk*

Siren: Tarshish; Interloper; Siren; Crossbow; Smelly; Succubus; Green Dolphin Street; Foolish Me; Calibrated Thickness; Hazy Lazy Crazy; Free Lunch; Manual Defile. (75:49)
Personnel: Uri Caine, piano; John Hébert, bass; Ben Perowski, drums.
Ordering info: winterandwinter.com

Freedom Fighter



Norman Granz, who died 10 years ago, was one of the most influential non-musicians in the history of jazz. He created a touring jam group of musical titans that helped usher in an era of concertized jazz; he formed two record companies, Verve and Pablo, with which he released some of the most lasting artifacts of the genre; and he propelled Ella Fitzgerald to stardom.

These accomplishments and the stories behind Granz's controversial success form the meat of Tad Hershorn's exhaustively researched comprehensive biography ***Norman Granz: The Man Who Used Jazz For Justice*** **(University of California Press)**. Granz's life—from his schooldays in Los Angeles to his retirement in Europe—is all there, but instead of framing the book on how Granz changed jazz, Hershorn widens the lens; he bases the work on how Granz became an unintentional crusader in the struggle for equal rights.

Hershorn writes that Granz first experienced racism as a child of immigrants in Los Angeles, where he was confronted with anti-Semitism. As he grew older, equality may have been in the back of his mind when he flouted conventions of the day by hanging out with black musicians. But Granz's fight, Hershorn writes, wasn't born of righteous indignation or empathy, he just wanted black musicians and jazz listeners to be afforded the same privileges as their white counterparts.

When the impresario formed Jazz at the Philharmonic in the early 1940s and started bringing organized jam sessions to Los Angeles clubs, he inserted non-discrimination clauses in performance contracts. Venue owners looking to host JATP had to effectively desegregate their club every night of the week to appease Granz. Even the most steadfast segregationalists tended to give in to the promoter's demands once they saw how much business his concerts brought in the doors.

This early quest for equality extended east once Granz began taking JATP on the road and booking the band in concert halls. He eventually suggested that Duke Ellington and other bandleaders include non-discrimination provisions in their contracts, but they were squeamish at the idea of alienating customers. Equality, for the time being, was a fight he fought alone.

Bringing jazz to concert halls presented a non-racial problem for Granz as well. The music, some owners said, was not proper for these hallowed auditoriums—especially with the raucous crowd these concerts attracted. But even if Granz was excluded from a few symphonic venues, he still played in these spaces more often than not, helping pave the way for touring bands like the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra.

By choosing to turn on his recording equipment during these early shows, he opened a door to an aspect of his career that would come to define him. His work with Fitzgerald's songbook albums at Verve and Ellington's late-in-life recordings for Pablo Records are cemented into the essential jazz cannon.

While Granz eventually became known as a record producer, he didn't stress perfection in the studio. In the book, Granz talks about his recording technique, saying, "I don't hold with people that review in the 83rd bar the third trumpet player made a mistake. I don't accept that. That's ridiculous! You can keep recording forever until you get a perfectly sterile record. I wasn't selling perfection."

The story is told through a combination of personal interviews with Granz, never-published ephemera from his estate and interviews with musicians, historians and friends. Hershorn explains his difficulty in producing this work and how reticent Granz was to tell his life story. There are times this is obvious. The book provides a few glimpses of Granz's well-known rage and stubbornness, but he never fully comes to the page. His frequent spats with artists and critics are sometimes given cursory explication.

Even with a few pulled punches, Hershorn has come up with a thorough case study of a man who changed jazz forever. The music and many of its most treasured musicians are forever indebted to the work of Norman Granz. **DB**

Ordering info: ucpress.edu

Oscar Peñas
From Now On

BROOKLYN JAZZ UNDERGROUND 027

★★★½

Based in Brooklyn by way of Barcelona and Boston (where he studied at Berklee and the New England Conservatory), Peñas is a guitarist with a classy, mahogany hued aesthetic. Aptly called "Continuum" the opening track runs ten minutes long and floats without resolution—save for occasional pauses—perhaps a soundtrack for the ever present hum and bustle of NYC, as depicted in cover and booklet photos.

Whirlpool-like and hypnotic, the track features smoldering, tasteful tenor from Dan Blake, percussion flavors from Richie Barshay and virtuosic runs from six string bassist Moto Fukushima (a name that springs to the lips readily since unfortunate recent events in Japan).

The two lilting choros reveal Penas' enthusiasm for Brazilian traditions and it is clear the nylon strings are his default. Barshay lightens the mix on "Choro n.1 (Corpo)" with pandeiro. The title track features accordionist Gil Goldstein, his instrument resonating like a sitar and adding a hint of mystery. Flamenco rhythms and a Pat Metheny riff underpin the leader's solo, everything kept on simmer, before the Three Blind Mice bass riff vamps to fade. Is "Samuel Smith" a paen to my favorite beer?

It's tango fusion may be a bit exotic for the Northern English origins of the Sam Smith brewery, but the dark strains in the music are decidedly oatmeal stout and various effects conjured before the tango returns suggest wind over the bleak Yorkshire moors. The plaintive "Encuentro" features lovely, driving soprano from Blake. The guitarist's eight originals hang together well, bathed in a warm resonance and dusky intensity, the musicians impeccably groomed for the session.

—Michael Jackson

From Now On: Continuum, Choro n.1 (Guinga), From Now On, Samuel Smith, Encuentro, Choro n.2 (Corpo), Julia, Adéu. (45.53)
Personnel: Oscar Peñas, nylon string guitar, electric guitar; Dan Blake, tenor saxophone, soprano saxophone; Moto Fukushima, six string electric bass; Richie Barshay, drums and percussion, pandeiro; Gil Goldstein, accordion, piano; Franco Pinna, bombo legüero.
Ordering info: bjurecords.com

Lol Coxhill/Barre Phillips/ JT Bates
The Rock On The Hill
NATO 4099
★★½

Lol Coxhill
Instant Replay
NATO 25-32
★★★★

Soprano saxophonist Lol Coxhill has long been one of the pillars of the British improvised music scene and at 79 he does not show any sign of slowing down. *The Rock On The Hill* is a live performance recorded last year in Paris that features the saxophonist in a new group comprised of Barre Phillips on bass and JT Bates on drums. It is an introspective work with a focus on textures and colors.

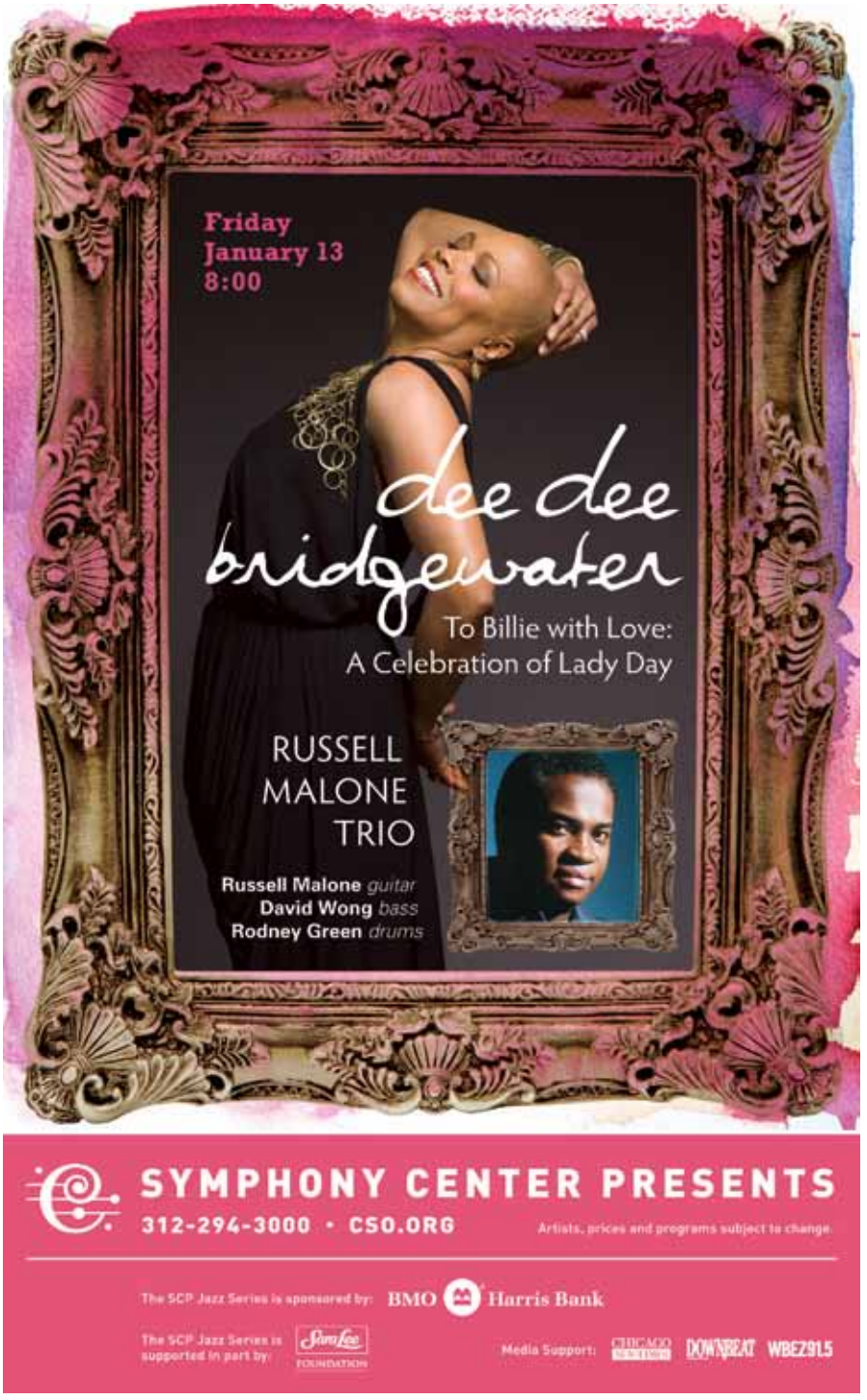
Coxhill's tone and control are intact and Phillips is an overlooked master who bows, plucks, and strums with equal facility—not to mention his impressive polyphonics. Among such illustrious elders, the young Bates rises to the occasion leaving not a single part of his drum kit untouched even though he can be overly busy on occasions. To a certain degree, the major driving force behind this date is Phillips whose contributions help define the overall mood which tends to be fairly somber. As a result, the pieces presented in a continuum remain too dry and fail to make a real impact despite some unquestionable strengths.

There is no shortage of humor on *Instant Replay*, an ingredient whose lack thereof begets *The Rock On The Hill*. Originally released as a double-LP, it captures Coxhill circa 1981-82 in the company of a slew of European improvisers, including a sizable French contingent, in mostly live duo and trio settings. It provides a composite profile of the saxophonist as well as a more faithful representation of his mischievous and jovial nature.

The program runs the gamut from radical statements to a classic organ groove to a medley of old French folk songs performed with a village marching band—a patchwork that betrays many of his musical influences and interests. His sinuous and undulating lines and splendid legato phrasing grace most of the performances. Whether he buzzes around trombonist Paul Rutherford or shadows Annick Nozati's utterances, Coxhill is nothing short of spectacular. Among the numerous other highlights, there are some outstanding dialogues. His exchange with Louis Sclavis evokes the inner beauty of a bucolic landscape whereas Tony Coe appears to be the perfect partner for a frenetic dance. The delightful and iconoclastic treatments of "Embraceable You" or "Caravan" are much more than guilty pleasures. This marvelous snapshot is a great opportunity to admire Coxhill's ability to adapt to each of the protagonists' idiosyncrasies. —*Alain Drouot*

The Rock On The Hill: Rivers Bend; Anything so Natural; Scratch; Ergo Somme; The World is a Grain of Sand; Tarentelle for Nelly; Full of Butterflies. (45:51)
Personnel: Lol Coxhill, soprano sax; Barre Phillips, bass; JT Bates, drums.
Ordering info: natomusic.fr

Instant Replay: A1; A2; A3; B1; B2; Embraceable You; B3; Caravan; C1; C2; C3; D1; D2; D3 Pot Pourri. (76:47)
Personnel: Lol Coxhill, soprano sax, vocals (5, 6), sopranino sax (14); Joëlle Léandre, bass (1, 13); Christian Rollet, drums (2); Bagad de Kemperlé (3); Paul Rutherford, trombone (4); Annick Nozati, vocals (5, 6); Sven-Åke Johansson, percussion, voice, accordion (5, 6); Louis Sclavis, bass clarinet, sopranox sax (7); Misha Mengelberg, piano (8, 9); Emmanuel Bex, organ, piano (10); Xavier Jouvelet, drums (10); Raymond Boni, guitar (11); Jacques Berrocal, cornet, dustpan, voice, Rkan-Dun trumpet (12); Tony Coe, clarinet (13); La Chantenaysienne (14).
Ordering info: natomusic.fr



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Blindfold Test | BY TED PANKEN

Eric Reed

Pianist Eric Reed has been a fixture on the jazz scene since 1990, when he began a long tenure with Wynton Marsalis. Reed also has recorded with Bob Belden and Clark Terry. Reed's 20th album as a leader was 2011's *Something Beautiful* (WJ3). This is his first Blindfold Test.

Cyrus Chestnut Trio

"Lover" (from *Journeys*, Jazz Legacy Productions, 2010) (Chestnut, piano; Dezron Douglas, bass; Neal Smith, drums)

This is a tricky tune with a long form, like "Just One Of Those Things" or "I Get A Kick Out Of You." You don't want to play too many choruses at this tempo—otherwise it's 20 minutes. Is that Cyrus? The way he plays bebop lines is not entirely steeped in the tradition, technique- or feel-wise, but it's his interpretation of the vocabulary. He still has some of the Bradley's ghost in his sound. He gets a great piano sound, even-keeled and focused. Is Winard Harper on drums? No? The bass drum is too loud; the idea is for it to be feathered. Maybe it's the mix. 2 stars. Sometimes it's OK just to swing on something, but for a tried-and-true Tin Pan Alley piece, I'd like to hear something different arrangement-wise. Cyrus is more inventive than that.

Greg Reitan

"Antibes" (from *Antibes*, Sunnyside, 2010) (Reitan, piano; Jack Daro, bass; Dean Koba, drums)

A lot of Keith there. That whole '70s, folky kind of free love vibe, the chords [*laughs*]. Kevin Hays? Larry Goldings? The pianist is making all the changes. Is the drummer Rodney Green? Billy Drummond? Whoever it is, he's extremely mature, doing all the right stuff. It's swinging and feels great. I wish more drummers, especially younger ones, would realize if you remove a consistent groove or forward motion—that danceable quality—it becomes something else. 3½ stars. The drummer gets 10.

Mulgrew Miller Trio

"Farewell To Dogma" (from *Live At The Kennedy Center, Volume Two*, MaxJazz, 2007) (Miller, piano; Derrick Hodge, bass; Rodney Green, drums)

Is this a standard? It sounds familiar. Oh, watch out, now. Play that piano, son! Somebody who likes Mulgrew Miller. I don't think that's Mulgrew's sound, though. His sound is a little more muted—more velvety, not as edgy. Also, Mulgrew's not as notey. [*after solo intro*] Is it Mulgrew? That was incredible. The recording sounds compressed, and this isn't my favorite feel for Mulgrew—I like to hear him get into some burning uptempo stuff. This is a tricky groove, a straight-eighth thing that's become a jazz style and can get generic. I've played a lot of grooves like this with Herlin Riley or Al Foster, who go into their arsenal, and create something specific. 3½ stars—5 for the intro, 2 for the performance.

Aaron Diehl Trio

"Conception" (from *Live At The Players*, Aaron Diehl, 2010) (Diehl, piano; David Wong, bass; Quincy Davis, drums)

Great piano sound. Especially for live. Nice bass sound. Marcus Roberts? No. It sounded like him until that reference to "Conception." Until then, I thought it was a loop of four 8-bars. It's probably someone who checked Marcus out. Aaron Diehl? Nobody else sounds that much like Marcus Roberts. Even when I was in Wynton's band and making my first records, I didn't sound that much like him, even though Wynton wanted me to. That's David Wong. MVP. He brings it. Quincy Davis? It's a working group. Aaron has some Ahmad and John Lewis, too. When he gets out of Marcus' backyard and starts to pursue those other influences, he'll be a force to be reckoned with. 2½ stars.

Brad Mehldau

"Into The City" (from *Highway Rider*, Nonesuch, 2010) (Mehldau, piano; Larry Grenadier, bass; Jeff Ballard, drums)

Sounds like 24/8. I'm sure it's a smaller grouping, but that's how I hear it. Well, it's 6 bars of 4. So maybe it's just 4/4. Or a long 6. [*counting*] It's 6. It's got a lot of energy. Nobody's dropping beats; they all know where they are. The hardest thing about a piece like this is keeping the form. The improvisation less so, because it's modal for the most part, with no real sequence of moving chords—one massive loop. 3 stars. Not a clue who it is. I liked the piano playing—the approach, the command of the instrument, the comfort level.

Herbie Hancock

"Solitude" (from *River: The Joni Letters*, Verve, 2007) (Hancock, piano; Dave Holland, bass; Vinnie Colaiuta, drums)

Deconstructed Ellington. Was that some little interlude that he came out of and then went back into the tune? Maybe there's a verse I don't know. I'm ambivalent. Some things I'm like, "Why bother?" Other things you say, "That's interesting." It's very pretty. 2½ stars, including a half-star for the reharmonization. [after] I appreciate Herbie's willingness to search and explore all the options, but I often feel unfulfilled, waiting for something to happen. That's his milieu—he's made a whole career out of doing that, so God bless him.

Cecil Taylor

"Part 2" (from *The Willisau Concert*, Intakt, 2002) (Taylor, piano)

Love that piano sound. Sounds like a Bösendorfer, which I normally don't like. What? What?! What are you doing? Cecil Taylor? Look, the brother can play the piano. It's unique, it's creative, it's improvised—but it doesn't bring to mind anything that resembles jazz from Jelly Roll Morton on, in feel or vocabulary. It's not doing a thing for me. There's no doubt about his ability to get around the piano, his execution, the sound he's putting out—and it's his thing. 3 stars for pianism; no jazz stars. **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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