

OCTOBER 2020—ISSUE 222

YOUR FREE GUIDE TO THE NYC JAZZ SCENE

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THE NEW YORK JAZZ RECORD



**REGINA
CARTER**
ELECTORAL COLLAGE

**DIGITAL
ONLY
EDITION**

**GARY
SMULYAN**

**JOSH
SINTON**

**MWATA
BOWDEN**

**KENNY
KIRKLAND**

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Ornette Coleman helped pioneer the musical concept of “Time, No Changes”. That phrase seems tragically apt these days as weeks and months blend together and the hope for a real return to normalcy seems distant and illusory.

But, for perspective, we think back to October 2016, four years/48 months/208 weeks/ almost 1,500 days ago. At the time, a transformative presidential election was in its final stages but not how many thought it would transpire. Instead of a groundbreaking first female president and a hope for a continuation of progress, the United States regressed. Think of all that has happened in the time since that month...and shudder. The last four years have seen this country abandon its allies, abrogate its responsibilities and present a dark, apocalyptic image to the world. Truths once held to be self-evident, enshrined in our Declaration of Independence as protection against a tyrannical king and bought with the bloodshed of patriots, are now once more assailed by a despot, one who is being supported from within by a new generation of Royalists, now motivated by greed and personal benefit to be accrued by promoting divisiveness and fomenting hatred. And add to this a once-in-a-lifetime health crisis and change – almost exclusively for the worst – has been the feature of recent time. But there are those who have been fighting, whether from the beginning or drawn to the battle because of newly acquired awareness.

In a month, the most consequential presidential election of our time – and perhaps in our country’s history – will take place. There is no luxury of apathy and inaction, for feeling like things cannot get any worse. They can and most certainly will if we do not remember the fathers and mothers of this country and vote to make America America again.

On The Cover: Regina Carter (photo by Manolo Rochera / courtesy of the artist)

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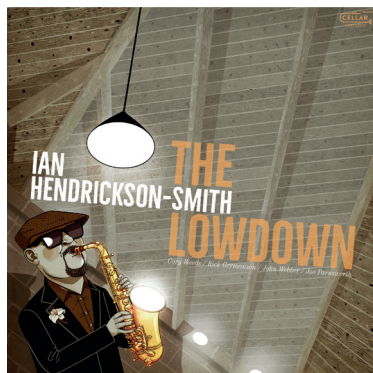
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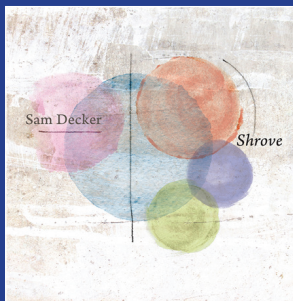
NOAH HAIDU
DOCTONE

SSC 1595

AVAILABLE 10/02/20

Pianist Noah Haidu has etched out an uncompromising identity as a pianist and composer by balancing cutting edge songwriting with stirring improvisations. On his new Sunnyside release **Doctone**, Haidu reaches a new level of self-expression while exploring the work of one of his major influences, the late Kenny Kirkland.

Haidu's choices of collaborators added perspective to this passion project. Billy Hart is a relentlessly creative and vital drummer who both Haidu and Kirkland worked with early on in their development. Bassist Todd Coolman propels the band forward with a fluid, effervescent beat; tenorist Gary Thomas brings his remarkable language to Kirkland's compositions; while contributions by saxophonist Jon Irabagon and percussionist Daniel Sadownick stretch the tonal palette. The masterful yet gritty alto/soprano saxophonist Steve Wilson seems to "breathe" the music rather than play it.



SAM DECKER
SHROVE

SSC 1591

AVAILABLE 7/17/20

The Illinois-bred, Brooklyn-based Decker focused the past six years on developing music that blended his fascination with folk-inflected sounds of composers like Stravinsky, Bartok and Shostakovich with the color and power of improvised music. The outcome is his first release that fits squarely in the jazz realm of composition meeting improvisation, namely, **Shrove**. Decker wanted to find a way to create simple pieces, without many of the complex rhythmic and harmonic trappings of contemporary jazz, that gave the improvisers freedom within an aesthetic.

Decker and clarinetist Michael Sachs began playing Decker's pieces together as he experimented with different instrumentations. Over time an ensemble emerged as a brilliant rhythm section of bassist Aryeh Kobrinsky and drummer Nathan Ellman-Bell were assembled. Eventually Dov Manski was added on piano, who has a fantastic harmonic sense and a mindful approach to ensemble playing that Decker knew would provide for more orchestral possibilities without taking up too much space.



Sunnyside

www.sunnysiderecords.com

As New York City returns to 'normal', phase by phase, and jazz performances have moved from solo live-streams to artists interacting from remote locations (only marginally successful, at best), to combos playing together in a (mostly empty) club, one key ingredient is still missing: us, the live audience. Thankfully in these deficient times we have groups like the **Billy Hart Quartet** (comprised of the drummer/leader, tenor saxophonist Mark Turner, pianist Ethan Iverson and bassist Ben Street), an exceptionally simpatico combo quite capable of generating that sorely missed X-factor, in spite of the empty chairs. They were the first to live-stream at the Village Vanguard and they followed up with two numinous sets at The Jazz Gallery (Sep. 10th). Performing all original material—Hart's "South Hampton", "Song for Balkis", "Ohnedaruth", "Duchess", "Amethyst", "Teule's Redemption" and "Irah"; Iverson's "Showdown" and "Neon"; Turner's "Sonnet for Stevie" and "Nigeria"—the quartet took its cues from Hart who, without ever overplaying, added just the right drum touches in those places they were most effective. Turner and Iverson, each highly disciplined and imaginative, provided the twin poles of improvisatory exploration: Turner cool but intense, deploying the quicksilver logic of a speed chess master; Iverson abstract but ebullient, working out ideas with similarly steely logic (and humor), editing himself in transit, pruning and shaping his thoughts to form crystalline statements.

—Tom Greenland



Billy Hart Quartet @ The Jazz Gallery

One of the perks of being a NYC-based jazz writer is knowing that, sooner or later, some young musician will roll into town and surprise you with their talent and originality. The Festival of New Trumpet Music—online because of the pandemic—dedicated its "Emerging Voices" program (Sep. 12th) to such young talents. Hosted by trumpeter **Bria Skonberg**, it presented prerecorded remote group sessions to which each musician added their part, starting with a 'click track' provided by drummer Darrian Douglas. The three invitees were **Lessie Vonner**, **Brandon Woody** and **Summer Camargo**, each interviewed and spotlighted on an original tune with the house band (pianist Chris Pattishall, bassist Endea Owens, Douglas). Skonberg began with her arrangement of "Limehouse Blues", showing herself a 'queen' in the tradition of New Orleans trumpet kings. Venner, a soft-spoken but thoughtful stylist, played her song "Waltz for Jim". Woody played "We Oh-ta BEHN-Gah", dedicated to the Mbuti former slave once exhibited at the Bronx Zoo monkey house; unlike the others, he performed with his own band in the same studio, so the music had more mojo from the get-go, his assertive legato tone redolent of Woody Shaw. The four horns joined for "Centerpiece", Camargo making a cameo before being featured on "Girl in the Jeep", showing via precocious chops and expressivity why she deserved the anchor leg of this musical relay race. All the "brass beasts" (Skonberg's term) rejoined for "Una Mas". (TG)

It had been 192 days since this reviewer's last in-person concert. Though there were previous options, nothing felt quite right. Then, with museums and gyms finally reopening, it was time to break the seal on live music and there could be no better way to reacquaint oneself with the pure joy of that experience than **Matt Wilson**. Few musicians today (or ever) exude greater spirit than the drummer, the privilege of playing palpable in every snare hit and cymbal crash. But first one had to find him. Giant Step Arts presented Wilson, tenor saxophonist Jeff Lederer and bassist Mimi Jones in Central Park (Sep. 19th) so it was a bit of a jazz treasure map: past the solo saxophonist; bear left at the vocal duo; and then the Shakespeare statue/X marks the spot. There was no amplification yet the park was remarkably hushed, so much so that bass solos were perfectly audible from a (social) distance. The benches were full of dedicated listeners and many more stopped on their strolls to take in the show for a bit. The trio played tunes by Wilson ("Dewey's Spirit", "Wind Spirits"), Tony Williams ("Pee Wee") and Jones ("Leap"), plus a contrafact of "Just Friends" Wilson dedicated to COVID-19 fatality Lee Konitz. To have a tableau larger than a computer screen and to feel natural dynamics rather than experience computer glitches was glorious. At the end of the first set, a young boy passing with his mother ran into the midst of the trio and jitterbug-waltzed with abandon. He was dancing for all of us.

—Andrey Henkin



Jeff Lederer/Mimi Jones/Matt Wilson @ Central Park

"We've both played all over the world but just playing a few blocks away from home feels like a grand outing in this time." So did reedplayer **Ned Rothenberg** introduce his duo concert with pianist **Sylvie Courvoisier** at Soapbox Gallery (Sep. 3rd). Six months into lockdown, the venue had their presentation down to a science, highly professional and intimate execution of the technical aspects with good sound and four camera angles. Another selling-point to the show was that this was the first time the pair had played as such, a fine opportunity for the juxtaposition of Courvoisier's sharpness and Rothenberg's rounded corners on bass clarinet, clarinet, alto saxophone or shakuhachi. The set began with Courvoisier's "South Side Blues", Rothenberg on bass clarinet, dramatic swells leading into a dirgey theme. Rothenberg premiered his "Bob and Weave", Third Stream jazz broken into shards of unaccompanied clarinet. Another Rothenberg premiere, this one untitled and its composer on alto, was a pastoral scene yet with some prickly bushes and a lovely quiet portion reminiscent of Rothenberg's duets with Evan Parker (with whom Courvoisier has also partnered). Solo piano and alto pieces, the former woodsy and mystical, the latter a circular breathing feature, bookended a song with Rothenberg on shakuhachi that was no less than a sacrament. Two more Courvoisier pieces and one by Rothenberg (dedicated to Irving Stone) closed out the hour. Someday we will see this pairing in person. (AH)

Masked and socially distanced, **Houston Person** with the Emmet Cohen Trio took to the Birdland Theater stage (Sep. 15th) for a live-streamed set that found the intergenerational quartet digging into the four Bs of mainstream jazz repertory— bebop, ballads, bossas and blues. They got things started with Person's "Why Not", a medtempo groove showcasing the tenor saxophonist's warm, soulful sound, ably accompanied by the trio of Cohen (piano), Yasushi Nakamura (bass) and Evan Sherman (drums), the former two both soloing lyrically before Person and Cohen engaged in a series of four-bar exchanges with the latter. The trio was featured on Cohen's hip arrangement of the traditional Jewish prayer "Hatzi Kaddish", the pianist moving between classically and liturgically-tinged passages along with some fiery bebop and stride piano interpolations. Person returned to the stage for an inspired reading of the Richard Rodgers-Lorenz Hart standard "Isn't It Romantic", spinning out inventive, melodically appealing lines. The group then segued right into a buoyant rendering of the Benny Carter-Sammy Cahn bossa nova "Only Trust Your Heart" and a stirring rendition of the Lady Day-linked ballad "Maybe You'll Be There". They swung hard on a lively version of "Lester Leaps In" with Sherman showing his stuff with an energetic solo. After Person noted, "We haven't played a blues yet", the band closed out in classic form doing just that, getting down on what he called "some kind of blues". —*Russ Musto*



Houston Person @ Birdland

The Labor Day (Sep. 7th) edition of the long-running Monday Night series Live From Emmet's Place took on an added holiday spirit as host **Emmet Cohen** had tenor saxophonist Tivon Pennicott join his group with bassist Russell Hall and drummer Kyle Poole for a live-streamed show, in conjunction with Jazz at Lincoln Center, dubbed "Celebrating Sonny Rollins at 90". The 2019 Cole Porter Fellowship recipient kicked things off with a couple of trio outings, beginning with "Time On My Hands", which Rollins recorded early in his career. They followed with a mashup of the Ahmad Jamal-associated classic "Poinciana" and Cedar Walton's "Ugetsu". Pennicott then joined the festivities, getting started with a solo recitation of the melody of "Moritat (Mack The Knife)", taking his time stretching out on the changes with the trio's fine backing. Next the quartet fell into classic bebop mode, swinging mightily on "Without A Song", another Rollins staple, Pennicott quoting "Rockin' In Rhythm" and "It Could Happen To You" à la Sonny. Noting his appreciation of Rollins' ballad playing, Pennicott took a turn on "Everything Happens To Me" before the band transitioned into a freewheeling take of Rollins' "Pent Up House". Cohen noted the enduring relevance of Rollins' "Freedom Suite", dedicating his compelling arrangement of the masterwork to Breonna Taylor, George Floyd and other slain Black Americans. Joe Saylor sat in for Poole on "St. Thomas", then alternated with him to end the show with one more Rollins classic, "Oleo". (RM)

Arts for Art (AFA) engages in a people's culture and its sub-group, Artists for a Free World (AFW), was founded as an avant jazz second-line for the Women's March. Recently, breaking out of months of lockdown, AFW began hosting outdoor concerts of protest music at Clemente Soto Velez Cultural Center. Bassist/poet **Larry Roland** is a link between the revolutionary New Thing of the earliest '70s and today's downtown rads, so his set (Sep. 12th) was rife with dissent. After a greeting by AFA administrator Patricia Nicholson Parker reminding the crowd to vote, Roland, reedplayer J.D. Parran and drummer Jackson Krall cast a tapestry of percussion, which climaxed into a tenor saxophone improvisation. By the time the rhythm section tore into this, the atmosphere was electric. When the dynamics dropped down to pianissimo, Roland took the microphone, releasing a brand of spoken word dripping with the stern intonation of Archie Shepp at Newport. "In the flickering dim of this unemployed time...battling a racist virus with no reparations for a vaccine." Krall floated over his kit with mallets as Parran enchanted on bass kalimba and native flutes, breathing raw restlessness. "...holding the American Dream hostage," Roland emoted, "strapping stock prices on keloid backs." The other sets, too, produced aural empowerment: duo of drummer Whit Dickey and trombone wizard Steve Swell and trio of soprano saxophonist Sam Newsome, bassist Hilliard Greene and drummer Reggie Nicholson. —*John Pietaro*



Larry Roland @ Clemente Soto Velez Cultural Center

After having their initially planned show rained out, members of the **FIDO** quartet regrouped on Labor Day under perfect weather conditions in late summer's Greenwich Village. Washington Square Park (Sep. 7th) was breathing and alive. Gwenolee Zürcher of the sponsoring Zürcher Gallery greeted the audience members before bandleader Maryanne de Prophetis offered a moving acknowledgement to the emotional pain of recent months. A thankful audience, hungry for live performance as a repellent to the long stagnancy, soon filled chairs and nearby park benches. The music began with de Prophetis singing long tones while soft droning grew within Ron Horton's trumpet and Shoko Nagai's accordion. The two developed their lines into improvisational forays, Horton improvising rapidly but with constant awareness of dynamics and Nagai painting an aural sunset, one part Arabesque to two parts noir. De Prophetis' vocalizations at times brought to mind Native American plainchant, interspersed with spoken word ("My lovely sister weeping...row with freedom, row") and compelling melismatic singing. Drummer Satoshi Takeishi crafted wondrously musical batterie of a detuned frame drum atop a snare stand and a small cymbal, later adding a log drum and dumbek to his palette. With the music rising, Takeishi crashed and careened against triple-tongued free trumpet, accordion chord-clusters and primal shouts, fists raised high, seemingly grasping at the last vestiges of a hard summer none are soon to forget. (JP)

WHAT'S NEWS

Savage Ticket has launched a video contest for musicians and fans to share how they fell in love with jazz, to be judged by Al Di Meola, Dorthaan Kirk and Karrin Allyson. The grand prize is \$2,500 and 100 participants will be rewarded with \$100. Additionally, Savage Ticket will make a \$50,000 donation to The Jazz Foundation of America's COVID-19 Musicians in order to support artists in need. For more information and to submit entries from Oct. 1st-31st, visit savageticket.com/jazz-official-rules.

The 2020 **Vision Festival**, "Healing Soul" will take place live (limited capacity) and online Oct. 8th-12th at La Plaza at Clemente Soto Velez Cultural Center featuring performances by Oliver Lake, Andrew Cyrille, Amina Claudine Myers, William Parker and others. For the complete schedule and to buy tickets for in-person or virtual attendance, visit artsforart.org/healingsoul.html.

The 2020 **Jazz Gallery All-Stars** will perform a live-streamed concert from Washington, DC's Kennedy Center on Oct. 8th at 8 pm. The band will be Miguel Zenón (alto saxophone), Melissa Aldana (tenor saxophone), Joel Ross (vibraphone), Charles Altura (guitar), Aaron Parks (piano), Ben Williams (bass), Kendrick Scott (drums) and guest Renee Neufville (voice). For more information and to buy tickets, visit kennedy-center.org/whats-on/on-stage/jazz-gallery-all-stars-73512.

The 2020 **European Jazz Network Award** for Adventurous Programming has been given to Porgy & Bess (Vienna, Austria) and Victoria - Nasjonal jazzscene (Oslo, Norway) while JazzDanmark was given the Award for Music & Community. For more information, visit europejazz.net.

Copenhagen, Denmark's **Jazzhus Montmartre**, open since 2010, when it was revived after a 15-year absence, has closed its doors due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The **Alternative Guitar Summit 2020** will take place online from Oct. 10th-12th with masterclasses, performances and Q&As by Lionel Loueke, David Tronzo, Sheryl Bailey, Adam Rogers, Tim Miller, Joel Harrison, Gilad Hekselman and guest Anupam Shobhakar. For more information and to register, visit alternativeguitarsummitcamp.com/ags-online-2.

The **Louis Armstrong House Museum** has named Regina Bain as its new Executive Director.

Dizzy's Club is the latest pandemic-shuttered NYC venue to begin offering live-streamed events, starting Oct. 1st with Catherine Russell Trio and continuing each Thursday. For more information, visit jazz.org/livefromdizzys.

Ann Arbor, Michigan's **EdgeFest's** 24th edition will be virtual, with concerts on Oct. 23rd, Nov. 20th, Dec. 18th, Jan. 22nd, Feb. 19th and Mar. 26th, hosted on the Kerrytown Concert House website. For more information, visit kerrytownconcerthouse.com/edgefest.

Pianist **James Carney**, who was also the curator of the long-running Conceptions series in various Brooklyn locations, has opened Piano Works, a workshop and showroom in Industry City in Sunset Park, Brooklyn. In addition to sales and repairs, Carney eventually hopes to use the space for concerts and workshops. For more information, visit jamescarney.net/pianoworks.

City Winery has unveiled its Signature Series, fine wines with label artwork designed by acclaimed artists, with the debut collection Portraits in Jazz by William Horberg, benefiting the Creative Music Studio. For more information, visit citywinery.com/newyork/wine-shop/signature-series.html.

Winners of the 2020 **Unsigned Only Music Competition** have been announced. In the jazz category, first place went to saxophonist Adam Hutcheson (U.S.) and second to pianist Hildemaro Alvarez (Venezuela). For more information, visit unsignedonly.com.

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GARY SMULYAN

BY MARILYN LESTER

Gary Smulyan, one of the premier masters of the baritone saxophone in the world of jazz today, has not only been a leader, but also has worked with a host of legendary musicians in a career spanning decades, including membership in the Woody Herman Orchestra, Charli Persip Superband, Mingus Big Band, Carnegie Hall Jazz Band, Joe Lovano Nonet and Mel Lewis Jazz Orchestra/Vanguard Jazz Orchestra. His close collaboration with arranger Mark Masters, begun around 20 years ago, has produced a catalogue of excellence in music, the latest being the just-released Night Talk: The Alec Wilder Songbook featuring Gary Smulyan (Capri), transformations of nine tracks of Wilder's songbook staples into lushly creative jazz standards. In this interview, we ask him about that process, working with Masters, his relationship with the baritone saxophone and more.

The New York City Jazz Record: *Night Talk* was recorded in one very short studio session. How was producing a level of excellence accomplished in such a brief time?

Gary Smulyan: Short sessions are not untypical for jazz recordings. You have to work with the time slot you're given. In this case we did have a concert of the music beforehand and a run-through, so there were a couple of passes. Also, with this ensemble there was a high level of musicianship involved; we've worked with each other before and know each other's styles, which helped us be spontaneous, blend each of our sounds in the moment and capture the performance as you hear it. Any recording, actually, is a snapshot; it's about capturing the music at a very specific point in time, whenever that is.

TNYCJR: You have great esteem for Mark Masters. What makes his work so special?

GS: Mark is a remarkably unique individual, with a very individualistic concept of arranging his music. His is a definite, specific and extremely personal sound; you just can't put Mark into a box. He's also pretty flexible and comfortable working with a variety of styles and concepts. In our working relationship when we pick the tunes, he'll send me an initial arrangement based on what I want to play. I'll take a look at the harmonies and maybe I'll re-harmonize a few things and send the music back, but I mostly don't give him any instructions. I just give him carte blanche to arrange. Mark knows my sound and he knows my concept and how I play, so the result of this brief back-and-forth is a perfect balance to get to the final arrangement.

Because of the COVID lockdown and everyone in quarantine, Mark has been writing a lot. So, we have another couple of projects in the works we're hoping to record next year. I wish Mark were more well known especially on the East Coast and I'd like to try to make that happen. He's such a gifted musician.

TNYCJR: Why do you think Mark isn't as well known as he should be?

GS: Part of it is that he's not a bandleader. He's a West-Coast-based arranger that works from home, so he's not out front of a group or touring. As a leader there are a lot of non-musical things beside the music you have to deal with. Mark certainly has the repertoire and the knowledge to do that, but he's happy to be doing what he's doing. It's the most meaningful and purest pursuit for him. His arranging evokes his deepest feelings, so he has no need to get out and put himself forward.

TNYCJR: Why Alec Wilder? Who chose him and the specific tunes of Wilder's catalog for this recording?

GS: Alec Wilder is also very hard to put in a box. He wrote American Songbook standards just as songwriters like Cole Porter did, but also all types of classical music, children's music and more. Jazz musicians have always loved Wilder because the musical forms are interesting, the harmonies are interesting and there's always something surprising in the music. Basically, it was Mark's idea to record Wilder, with some influence from saxophonist Gary Foster. Mark was interested in arranging the baritone in and around Wilder's tunes, especially the lesser-known standards, and in creating something you wouldn't usually expect a baritone to play. Our focus was on producing beautiful melodies and beautiful harmonies and Wilder's music very much lent itself to that.

TNYCJR: What's your favorite track on the album?

GS: That's a hard one to answer, but I'll say "Ellen" and "I'll Be Around". When I was younger, I really loved to play fast, but the older I get I appreciate ballads more and more.

TNYCJR: Let's talk about your tone. You excel at beautiful melodies and harmonies.

GS: Actually, I wasn't initially interested in the baritone. I was studying the alto sax and intended to make that my instrument. I idolized Phil Woods and did everything I could to be Phil Woods, from wearing the same leather hat to having my mouthpiece on the same angle! When I was in my senior year in college, I got the opportunity to join Woody Herman's Young Thundering Herd but they didn't need an alto player. They had Joe Lovano and some other great players like bassist Marc Johnson and drummer John Riley. It was an opportunity I couldn't let pass. So they needed a bari player. I didn't own a bari and had no idea what it was even supposed to sound like. I had to dive deep into the whole lore of the instrument and learn what it was all about from scratch. As a youngster I never would have believed this was going to be my direction

in music and all because of one fateful phone call. The lesson is there are things that are life-altering that could happen to you just by saying yes and being receptive. So, I think that's also a key to making a good sound, being open and trying new things. And as you mature, the tone changes because you bring more to it. I feel that it's such an honor and humbling and even surreal beyond belief that I'm even allowed to do what I do. I have such gratitude. I really feel that.

TNYCJR: I presume in your initial studies of the baritone, you studied the work of other players?

GS: Absolutely. Gerry Mulligan, of course... Pepper Adams...many others. But Pepper had a very big influence on me. When he died, I recorded an album with eight pieces he composed. He was known more for hardbop than being a melodist, like Mulligan, but his work was seminal and certainly helped shape my playing. I think for young musicians it's a big part of learning to find somebody's playing you love and try to imitate that. Having that foundation is the way your own sound can emerge and develop and become dynamic. Even Charlie Parker had his heroes when he was young and starting out.

TNYCJR: You're a big fan of contrafacts and your own album, *Our Contrafacts* [SteepleChase, 2019], has also been recently released. Tell us a bit about that pursuit.

GS: That's a rabbit hole I jumped down without intending to go there. Contrafacts had intrigued me for years, especially the obscure ones. Quite a few years ago on the *Hidden Treasures* [Reservoir, 2005] album, with Christian McBride and Billy Drummond, we explored contrafacts. Along the way I came across a book about contrafacts written in 1970 by a pianist and psychiatrist named Maurice Markewich. It's long out of print but is kind of my bible. Eventually I recorded *Alternate Contrafacts* [SteepleChase, 2017] some years later, with bass and drums again, this time David Wong and Rodney Green, and it just seemed right to finally compose our own contrafact, which we did for *Our Contrafacts*. The fact is you can copyright a melody but not a chord progression. That's why there have been so many contrafacts over many years. For every known contrafact there are plenty more that drifted into obscurity.

TNYCJR: Most of the titles are puns/hints about the original, underlying tune, such as "Miles Tones" and "Tritonious Monk".

GS: You got that—that's terrific! That was part of the fun.

TNYCJR: Your upcoming concert of *The Mark Masters Ensemble, Night Talk: The Alec Wilder Songbook featuring Gary Smulyan* will be live-streamed later this month.

GS: It's part of the William Paterson University Jazz Room Series at Home. We couldn't do a live performance, of course, because of COVID, so this will be a kind of record release party and the first time the music is being officially pushed out. ❖

For more information, visit garysmulyan.com. The Wilder project live-streams on Oct. 25th at wpunj.edu/wppresents/jazz-room-series

Recommended Listening:

- Mel Lewis Sextet — *The Lost Art* (Musicmasters, 1989)
- Gary Smulyan Nonet — *Saxophone Mosaic* (Criss Cross, 1993)
- Gary Smulyan — *Hidden Treasures* (Reservoir, 2005)
- Gary Smulyan/George Cables — *Two For Thad: Remembering Thad Jones* (Edition Longplay, 2015)
- Mark Masters Ensemble — *Night Talk: The Alec Wilder Songbook (featuring Gary Smulyan)* (Capri, 2018)
- Gary Smulyan — *Our Contrafacts* (SteepleChase, 2019)



JOSH SINTON

BY JOHN SHARPE

Brooklyn-based baritone saxophonist and bass clarinetist Josh Sinton is a man who thinks deeply about what he does and follows his own path. That's as evident in talking to him as it is in listening to the adventurous music that is the result. While studying at the New England Conservatory (NEC) in Boston he met soprano saxophonist Steve Lacy, whose compositions provided the repertoire for his group Ideal Bread, which first put Sinton on the critical radar. Since then he's worked with Darcy James Argue, Nate Wooley and Anthony Braxton while leading diverse projects under his own name, the most recent of which he's issued on his own freshly inaugurated label.

His love of jazz came courtesy of an older friend he'd hang out with after school. Sinton details the exact moment, on hearing "Ballade", an October 1950 duet between Charlie Parker and Coleman Hawkins. "Parker comes in and it's kind of thrilling and terrifying. He's not just playing double time, but quadruple time through parts of it. But he's so relaxed. I just put my book down and my eyes started going wider and wider until they were the size of saucers. I felt like I could actually hear it for the first time. The speed of it was daunting. I still have a deep and abiding love for that particular track."

From there his father's record collection helped fuel a fascination leading to study at the University of Chicago, supplemented by practical lessons at the AACM school from the likes of Mwata Bowden, Steve Berry, Vandy Harris, Ed Wilkerson and Ernest Dawkins. "I realized that they're all, for the lack of a better term, bebop babies. To a person, everyone of them, that was their fundamental." Processing how this related to their novel approaches to structuring musical thought came from attending shows, the AACM 25th Anniversary concerts being a defining experience.

After playing for dance and theater and in jam sessions around town, Sinton decided to undertake further study to address technical shortcomings, this time at NEC where he encountered Lacy. "He arrived in my final year. Without realizing it I was very primed for what he taught. I wanted the music I made to be representative of my entire life, so here was somebody who had found a way to synthesize those things. There wasn't a break between having a conversation with him using words and having a conversation with him playing 'Pannonica'. It was the same thing."

But the origin of the Lacy repertory band Ideal Bread was somewhat counterintuitive. "I sounded terrible playing Steve's music." Consequently Sinton convened understanding colleagues Kirk Knuffke (cornet), Reuben Radding (bass) and Tomas Fujiwara (drums) as a way of finding his place in that body of work. His success is vouchsafed by the three albums the outfit ultimately released. "Looking back, it was my own kind of personal doctoral thesis on Steve Lacy." Since then Sinton has issued a mixture of solo and small ensemble albums, which culminated in the outstanding pair of *Slow Learner* (2017) by Musicianer

and *Making Bones* (2018) by the Predicate Trio (with Tom Rainey and Christopher Hoffman), both released on Iluso Records.

In spite of his artistic track record, Sinton struggles to find opportunities to perform for a paying audience. That was the catalyst for a series of solo baritone saxophone videos under the title "Stone Cold Classics of 21st Century Saxophone Repertoire". While this sort of activity has been forced on many by COVID-19, Sinton began prior to the pandemic. "I decided to string together the music that right now means most to me. Sometimes for an emotional reason, the Steve Lacy étude that's on there. Other reasons, like the technical thing, David Lang's 'Press Release' piece I've been working on forever. I enjoy the idea of trying to play counterpoint on a monophonic instrument." Other videos present pieces by Anthony Braxton and Tim Berne, as well as from less expected sources, such as Dan Penn's soul hit for Aretha Franklin "Do Right Woman, Do Right Man". Paradoxically, the sophisticated production values meant the project has been on hiatus during the lockdown.

But that has not prevented Sinton from pulling together a new release, *cérémonie/musique* on his own Form is Possibility Recordings, by a trio completed by guitarist Todd Neufeld and electric bassist Giacomo Meregá under the moniker What Happens In A Year (a live release event will be held at Industry City in Brooklyn on Oct. 18th; check Sinton's website for more information). Sinton's original concept was to create music that was very quiet, contained silence as an intrinsic structural element and used very fast tempos when possible. "I tried to think of people I could do that with and I knew both Todd and Giacomo. My initial idea was that I would just go in and personally play using those three criteria. I had a hunch from having heard them play that they would respond in sympathetic ways that would work well. And that I would record the first couple of sessions and from that generate some compositions for us to play. But after the second one, I was like I don't need to write anything for this group. We are exactly where I wanted to be."

Future plans include more from the Predicate Trio. "I out of the blue got this small but generous commission from a group called The Jazz Coalition, so I'm reconvening the Predicate Trio for that. As much as I enjoyed the last record, there are issues, concepts and some dimensions that I didn't work hard enough to develop and really clarify." While Sinton wields the bass clarinet as a passport to more work, his love of the baritone saxophone came as an epiphany. "I was 25, living in Chicago, struggling with playing the alto saxophone, woke up in my apartment and the first thought that came to my mind went something like: yeah, I should be playing baritone saxophone. I have an unabashed, unreserved, unreasonable and irrational love of the instrument. I don't understand it, it just means the world to me. If I have a calling in this life it is to play baritone saxophone." ❖

For more information, visit joshinton.com

Recommended Listening:

- "ho-lus-'Bo-lus – *Altogether...All At Once* (s/r, 2005)
- Nate Wooley Quintet – *(Put Your) Hands Together* (Clean Feed, 2010)
- Ideal Bread – *Beating The Teens* (Cuneiform, 2013)
- Musicianer (Josh Sinton/Jason Ajemian/Chad Taylor) – *Slowlearner* (Iluso, 2017)
- Josh Sinton's What Happens in a Year – *cérémonie musique* (Form is Possibility, 2018)
- Josh Sinton's Predicate Trio – *making bones, taking draughts, bearing unstable millstones pridefully, idiotically, prosaically* (Iluso, 2018)

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REGINA CARTER

ELECTORAL COLLAGE

BY JORDANNAH ELIZABETH



JEFF DUNN / COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

Music has been an encompassing presence in Regina Carter's life since she was two years old. Her journey has been colored by the bowing of the violin, which she began playing at the age of four, and has allowed her to create a lifelong soundtrack to her unique journey. Carter is accomplished and has had a lengthy, successful recording career, which stands as a testament for her talent and love for people and collaboration. Throughout her career, she has been open to performing diverse genres as her musical talents have spanned across R&B, avant chamber music, funk and reimagined arrangements of traditional African music.

Her music has taken her all over the world but Carter, as of late, has taken on a duty and responsibility to use the platform she has earned from the fruits of her hard work and philanthropy to inspire people to engage with one another and their communities in America in a way that promotes unity. Her new album, *Swing States: Harmony in the Battleground* (Tiger Turn Productions-eOne) has a very specific purpose: to encourage as many people as possible to vote.

The Regina Carter Freedom Band consists of John Daversa (trumpet and flugelhorn), *The Late Show with Stephen Colbert* bandleader Jon Batiste (piano), Kabir Sehgal (bass and percussion), Alexis Cuadrado (bass), Harvey Mason (drums) and guest tenor saxophonist Brian Gorrell. The aim for this album and all-star musical lineup may have initially been to make a clear and well-executed message of voting but, in the preparation for the release of the album, the world was afflicted with the COVID-19 pandemic and an international outcry of protests and demonstrations in the wake of the killing of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor and many other Black people slain at the hands of the police. Carter's concerns emerged long before the protests as she discovered the large numbers of people who did not vote in the 2016 election. "Voting is a civic duty and an extremely important responsibility, even more so now as we are living in surreal times...we have become a divided country of Red vs. Blue, Us vs. Them or Not Our Kind and that pot is starting to boil," says Carter.

Another coincidence, if not a predetermined synchronicity in regards to the timing of the release of *Swing States*, Carter's hometown of Detroit, Michigan is submerged in recent controversy as 72% of Detroit's absentee voting precincts did not match the number of ballots that had been cast for the primary election. There were a record number to the fear of being in tightly packed voting locations amid the pandemic. The city is doing its best to be prepared for the upcoming presidential election but, because of these unprecedented times, the future, in so many ways, is unpredictable and therefore, practically unreliable. But this should not deter the American people from voting.

In a broader sense, "Many Americans are concerned about voting in November amid the coronavirus pandemic and worries over the U.S. Postal Service's capacity to deliver ballots on time. Democrats, however, are more concerned than Republicans about

the ease of voting and the broader integrity of the election. Public attitudes about several voting-related policy proposals—from automatically registering all eligible citizens to vote to expanding the availability of 'no excuse' early and absentee voting—also differ sharply by partisan affiliation," writes John Gramlich for the Pew Research Center. The research shows people are in need of harmony and Carter is taking it upon herself to help lead our country into a new era of more positive partisan relationships, predicting the need to communicate togetherness with her listeners and musical community through this album as the proverbial battleground that exists within the realm of voting via racism, discrimination, prison industrialization and immigration.

In fact, the origin of the project began with a conversation and collaboration at the Mexican border. Carter worked with album's executive producer Sehgal on Arturo O'Farrill's collaborative project, *Fandango at the Wall: A Soundtrack for the United States, Mexico and Beyond* (which premiered on HBO on Sep. 25th).

"Kabir and I were talking and he asked what my next project was going to be. I had something completely different in mind that I was working on but [Kabir] and I were having a political discussion and he asked me if I voted. I said, "Of course." I was expressing my dismay that so many African Americans didn't vote. Being an African American woman, it took so much for us to get that right. Kabir asked me if I was interested in making an album on the topic of voting and I thought it was a great idea. That conversation lasted for about a year before we ended up in the studio," said Carter.

The album is made up of songs she selected, offering official (and some unofficial) songs of the election "swing states". She chose to represent her Michigan, a swing state with 16 pivotal electoral votes, by including Marvin Gaye-William Stevenson-Iby Jo Hunter's "Dancing in the Streets." Other songs that are included on the album are Eddie Khoury-Ronnie Bonner's "Pennsylvania", William T. Purdy-Charles D. Rosa-J.S. Hubbard's "On Wisconsin", Stephen Foster's "Swanee River" (Florida), John Denver-Mike Taylor's "Rocky Mountain High" (Colorado), Jimmie Davis-Charles Mitchell's "You Are My Sunshine" (Louisiana) and Daniel E. Kelley-Brewster M. Higley's "Home on the Range" (Kansas).

The opening monologue lends insight into Carter's childhood memories of the discrimination African Americans faced within the democratic system of the U.S. She speaks candidly about growing up in a diverse neighborhood with children of many different backgrounds whose lineage was from countries like Greece, Poland and Mexico. She recalled living in peace with other families until it became an election season. This was the time when people's differences became a hindrance to harmony and Carter wants for others to be able to vote but also respect one another's differences even when voting preferences don't align. She understands that her right to vote comes from the years of protests and demonstrations that her parents,

grandparents and great grandmother participated in and the sacrifices that many were forced to endure to gain the right of suffrage.

Black women were legally granted the right to vote 100 years ago when the 19th Amendment prohibited the government from using sex as a criterion for voting rights. But, Black women were disenfranchised and mostly unable to vote for another 50 years due to the dual impact of "othering" and discrimination. "The 19th Amendment did not eliminate the state laws that operated to keep Black Americans from the polls via poll taxes and literacy tests—nor did the 19th Amendment address violence or lynching. Some African-American women will vote with the 19th Amendment... But many Black women faced the beginning of a new movement for voting rights in the summer of 1920 and it's a struggle they will wage alone..." said historian Martha S. Jones to TIME Magazine in 2020.

It is true that voting numbers of African Americans were quite low during the 2016 elections, but in contrast, it has been Black women who have been leaders in grassroots voting initiatives and record numbers of Black women are being voted into office, including Senator (now Vice Presidential nominee) Kamala Harris. No matter what the platform looks like or how prominent it is, Black women are creating spaces for not only the Black community, but anyone who has interest or passion on the subject of voting to be able to share their voice and do the work that needs to be done in order to work towards a fair and equitable future for all.

Of course, the conversation of voter discrimination and disenfranchisement should not be overshadowed but Carter wants to spread a message of encouragement to the American people. The swing states are key elements in the structure of elections and to pay homage to them shows that the Regina Carter Freedom Band wants to hone in on information voters should know and understand. Offering a level of education about the importance of swing states just by creating music that can cause listeners to learn more about the voting process makes Carter's work a civic offering along with being a piece of creative art.

"Do I consider myself an activist? In a way, I guess I am, through my music and through volunteering and giving money to organizations. I'm not out protesting but there are several ways to be involved. So yeah, I do consider myself an activist." ❖

For more information, visit reginacarter.com

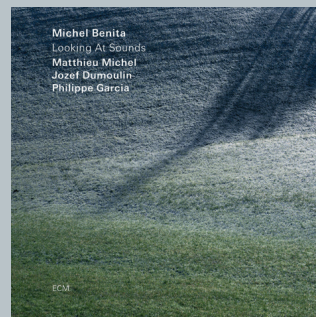
Recommended Listening:

- String Trio of New York—*Intermobility* (Arabesque, 1992)
- Quartette Indigo—*Afrika! Afrika!* (Savant, 1997)
- Regina Carter—*Rhythms of the Heart* (Verve, 1998)
- Kenny Barron/Regina Carter—*Freefall* (Verve, 2000)
- Regina Carter—*Reverse Thread* (eOne, 2008)
- Regina Carter—*Swing States: Harmony in the Battleground* (Tiger Turn-eOne, 2019)



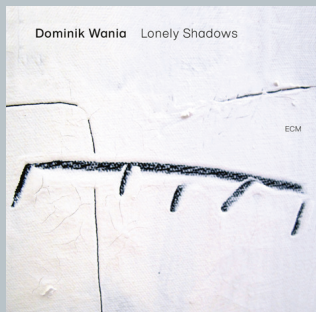
Terje Rypdal
Conspiracy
September 11

Terje Rypdal electric guitar
Ståle Storløkken keyboards
Endre Hareide Hallre electric basses
Pål Thowsen drums, percussion



Michel Benita Quartet
Looking at Sounds
September 25

Michel Benita double bass, laptop
Mathieu Michel flugelhorn
Jozef Dumoulin Fender Rhodes, electronics
Philippe Garcia drums, electronics



Dominik Wania
Lonely Shadows
September 18

Dominik Wania piano



Matthieu Bordenave
La traversée
September 18

Matthieu Bordenave tenor sax
Patrice Moret double bass
Florian Weber piano



Anja Lechner
François Couturier
Lontano
October 16

Anja Lechner violoncello
François Couturier piano



Keith Jarrett
Budapest Concert
October 30

Keith Jarrett piano

ECM

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MWATA BOWDEN

BY KURT GOTTSCHALK

It's hard to say which is more noteworthy, that last year Chicago saxophonist Mwata Bowden put out a remarkable record of innovative and eminently listenable jazz compositions that went almost entirely unnoticed or, that at 71, it was his debut as a leader. Whichever focus one picks, the mitigating factors aren't hard to uncover. For the former, his *1 Foot In 1 Foot Out* was released by Asian Improv (a small operation nevertheless instrumental in documenting the work coming out of Chicago's Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians [AACM] for more than 20 years, dating back at least to the 1999 release of *Power Trio Live at Unity Temple* with Bowden joined by bassist [and label president] Tatsu Aoki and drummer Afifi Phillard) and a tour to support the new album was necessarily curtailed by the coronavirus pandemic.

As for the latter point, it's perhaps a more delicate subject, but Bowden is forthright when asked why it's taken so long for him to release a record under his own name. After all, he was a key member of Ed Wilkerson's famed 8 Bold Souls in the '90s, during which time he also served as the AACM's chairman, overlapping with his beginning as a lecturer in the Music Department at the University of Chicago. And as one of the most lyrical saxophonists in a scene rife with fervent horns, he certainly had opportunity and audience, at least on a local level.

So what took him so long? "That's a hard one for me to answer," Bowden said. "I came up as an AACM member. That collective really perpetuated individuality and ownership of your stuff. That's been my lesson but it's been one thing I just haven't done. I've always thought, 'OK, Mwata, that's good but you're not ready to put your own stuff out yet.'

Sometimes as an artist you doubt yourself too much." It took a long time, but it was worth the wait. *1 Foot In 1 Foot Out* features three more under-heralded players of what is sometimes called the AACM's second generation: saxophonist Ari Brown (a fellow Bold Soul and frequent playing partner of Bowden), bassist Harrison Bankhead, perhaps best known for his work with saxophonist Fred Anderson; and drummer Avreeayl Ra, whose credits extend from Sun Ra and Pharoah Sanders to Anderson and Kidd Jordan to Joshua Abrams, Nicole Mitchell and Dave Rempis. The band is completed by the younger trumpeter Leon Q. Allen (Common, Drake, Wynton Marsalis, Tito Puente, Jr.) and Bowden's son Discopoet Khari B providing verses that sometimes call the Last Poets to mind.

Like Bowden's other two children, Khari, the eldest, attended the AACM School of Music and kept playing saxophone in college until his horn was stolen. Drawing on the influence of his mother, poet Judi Bowden, he turned his performing to poetry and was soon working with another AACM saxophonist, Ernest Dawkins. It was in a Dawkins band that Bowden first heard his son laying down rhymes. "He had incorporated the performance element in his poetry, he was like a soloist," the elder Bowden recalled. "It was to my surprise that that's what my son was doing and I didn't know it until I heard it." Khari was the last addition to the *1 Foot In 1 Foot Out* lineup and provides a crucial through-line to his father's compositions, notably on the confident New Orleans bounce of opener "Praising Mama Ann", written for the singer and longtime AACM member Ann Ward, and Windy City jazzology of "Chi-town/47th Street Stroll", in which he bears witness convincingly to a history that precedes him.

That wisdom, no doubt, came at least in part from his father, who is retiring from teaching jazz performance and history at the University of Chicago in the spring, after 26 years in the classroom. As a lecturer, he strives to "give the students a taste of the Chicago experience," he said with typical humility. In fact, for the last quarter-century he's taught jazz history, theory and improvisation, leading one class that focuses on developments from the '20s-60s, another that covers the '60s-90s and one that introduces

newer techniques such as graphic notation and, in a phrase he uses often, moving "beyond the five lines and four spaces" of the traditional score, working to instill a spirit of experimentation and individuality—the driving forces of the AACM.

"Nothing ever comes out of doing nothing," he said, reciting a phrase that sounds classroom-worn. "You have to experiment for the music to move on." Discussing his imminent retirement, Bowden dropped another line: "I've done what I need to do there and now it's time to do nothing much," he said with a laugh, but it's not likely as cut and dried as that. He's got a new record and is readying a live date from 2016 for release. "I listened to it a couple years later and I thought, hmmm, and I listened to it a couple more years later and I thought, hey, this might really work," he said. "That's been me being overly critical of my own work."

With records in line for the first time and a new baritone horn he bought in the fall, Bowden is itching to get both in front of an audience. "I was fired up about my new instrument then I've been here," he said. "March, April... I was excited and then this set in, it took away all of that. I have not made any plans beyond this COVID period. I have not been eager, even with my new CD out." But as soon as the opportunity arises, Bowden, a new bari and a box of CDs, will be taking to the stage. "Time is the one thing we cannot get back," he said, "so we have to make the best of it." ❖

For more information, visit mwatabowden.com

Recommended Listening:

- Douglas Ewart & Inventions/Clarinet Choir—*Red Hills* (Arawak, 1983)
- 8 Bold Souls (feat. Edward Wilkerson, Jr.)—*Sideshow* (Arabesque, 1991)
- Power Trio—*At Unity Temple* (Asian Improv, 1997)
- Tatsu Aoki, Mwata Bowden, Paul Kim, Hide Yoshihashi, Patti Adachi, Robbie Hunsinger—*The MIYUMI Project* (Southport, 1999)
- Nicole Mitchell & an_ARCHE NewMusic Ensemble—*Arc Of O* (Rogue Art, 2010)
- Mwata Bowden—*1 Foot In 1 Foot Out* (Asian Improv, 2019)

LEST WE FORGET



KENNY KIRKLAND

BY ALEX HENDERSON

As a sideman for trumpeter Wynton Marsalis, pianist Kenny Kirkland played a role in the straightahead bop revival of the '80s. But he was an eclectic, versatile musician also remembered for his work in fusion groups to his years backing pop-rock superstar Sting.

Born in Brooklyn in 1955, Kirkland (who would have turned 65 in September) made his presence felt in the late '70s through associations with well-known fusioners Polish violinist Michał Urbaniak and Czech bassist Miroslav Vitouš but took a more straightahead approach when, in the '80s, he played on albums by Marsalis and his older brother, tenor saxophonist Branford. The former, more than most, was responsible for the rise of players journalists dubbed the Young Lions: traditionalists in their 20s setting out to recreate the jazz of the '50s-60s. But while Wynton saw himself as strictly a traditionalist, Branford made no secret of his interest in rock, R&B and hip-hop and Kirkland shared that outlook, appearing on his funky Buckshot

LeFonque project. It was that work, in fact, which led to his association with Sting, who employed Kirkland on hit albums like 1985's *The Dream of the Blue Turtles*, 1987's *Nothing Like the Sun* and 1991's *The Soul Cages*.

In 1991, Kirkland recorded his first and only studio album as a leader on GRP produced by trombonist Delfeayo Marsalis (Wynton and Branford's younger brother). Kirkland spent most of the '90s as a sideman, working with alto saxophonist Kenny Garrett, drummer Jeff "Tain" Watts, trumpeters Terence Blanchard and Arturo Sandoval and others. Kirkland was only 43 when he died of congestive heart failure on Nov. 12th, 1998.

Kirkland's legacy is the subject of pianist Noah Haidu's *Doctone* (Sunnyside), a multimedia tribute that includes a CD, a film directed by Jeffrey Chuang and a book. In a trio with bassist Todd Coolman and veteran drummer Billy Hart, Haidu interprets pieces Kirkland wrote for his 1991 album as well as for albums that featured him as a sideman. Haidu also features guest saxophonists like Steve Wilson, Gary Thomas and Jon Irabagon. Haidu, who will pay tribute to Kirkland in a live-streamed concert with bassist Buster Williams and drummer Billy Hart this month, stresses that diversity was one of the amazing things about Kirkland. "If you listened to his most experimental work with Miroslav Vitouš," Haidu explains, "it's really hard to tell that it's the same player a couple of years later on Wynton Marsalis' *Think of One*. I've found a few commonalities, but without years of study, I would definitely not

know it's the same player. Then, you can go and listen to his work with Sting on *Nothing Like the Sun* and you would never guess that he's a jazz player because he played keyboard with a funk or R & B simplicity."

"Chronologically, Kenny was the first jazz pianist who I really listened to," Haidu recalls. "I heard jazz around the house because my dad loved it, but I was a fan of Prince and The Police up until age 13. When I found Kenny on Sting's first solo album in my early teens, it made that language relevant to me because I heard this tremendous jazz piano being played in the context of songs that were accessible to me at that age."

Haidu stresses that Kirkland will continue to be remembered for his broad-minded approach: "Some [jazz] players wouldn't be involved with commercial genres, but Kenny didn't have any prejudice." ❖

Noah Haidu's *Kirkland project* live-streams Oct. 2nd at bkcm.org.

Recommended Listening:

- Michał Urbaniak—*Urbaniak* (Inner City, 1977)
- Miroslav Vitouš—*Miroslav Vitouš Group* (ECM, 1980)
- Wynton Marsalis—*Black Codes (From The Underground)* (Columbia, 1985)
- Kenny Kirkland—*Eponymous* (GRP-Verve, 1991)
- Robert Hurst (feat. Kenny Kirkland & Elvin Jones)—*One For Namesake* (DIW-Columbia, 1993)
- Branford Marsalis—*Requiem* (Columbia, 1998)

TIDAL WAVES MUSIC

BY GEORGE GRELLA

The long, slow (supposed) death of the record business is, on the ground, in the midst of a long, slow revival, fueled by the return of vinyl LPs as the recorded medium of choice for music fans. This renaissance has been driven in great part by small, independent, specialty labels that proliferate in what has turned out to be fertile niches.

One of these newer labels is Tidal Wave, based in Belgium. It launched in October 2016 and produces archival releases, bringing forth recordings never before released (some not initially recorded for release) and reviving albums and musicians who have been lost to time. And, unusual for the current moment, Tidal Wave does not release music digitally. It's something you can hold in your hands or nothing at all.

"We pretty much do a lot of exclusive editions, colored vinyl," explains Phil Merckx, a partner in the label and principal manager. "We sell in record shops, by subscription services, through our online shop." For the stores, their "worldwide, exclusive distributor" is Light in the Attic Records, a label that itself is a leader in reissuing archival material. "Once in a while we do a few hundred CDs, because it's in the contract, but 99% of the time it's vinyl. Out of the 60 something releases so far, that's maybe two issued on CD."

For Record Store Day last August, Tidal Wave issued *Thelonious Monk: Palais des Beaux-Arts 1963*. The album, a never-before-heard concert from Monk's Quartet, with Charlie Rouse, John Ore and Frankie

Dunlop, is a collaborative release with the Flemish Radio and Television (VRT) and Bozar (Centre for Fine Arts Brussels) and produced with the imprimatur of the Thelonious Monk Estate. The provenance, from the vaults of VRT, promises more to come, but that possible future is currently on pause. "That was the first time we were able to work with an untapped archive, something that had never been released in any format," Merckx says. "Hopefully there's more of that, it's a national pride thing, national broadcasts, it's a big deal, man. And they have so much stuff! TV, radio, since about 1929 or something—80 years of TV and radio that they're digitalizing one day at a time." But, with COVID-19, a planned visit to the archives has fallen through.

Prior to the Monk, Tidal Wave's discography still tapped into some truly hidden and unknown gems. The first record was *A Very Rare Evening*, a live date from Nina Simone. "We got our first break through working with the legendary Gene Perla of PM Records," Merckx says, "[on] a really intimate album of a late '60s European session that wasn't available on the market since 1979. It got a lot of good press and surely put us on the map. Doing a Nina Simone record as your first release is everything a start-up label can dream of. Really humbled that we were involved in that one and to have reissued the 1974 solo debut album *Some Shapes To Come* by Steve Grossman, who sadly passed this August."

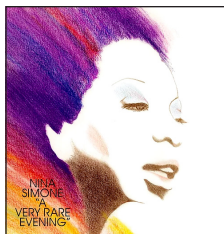
Merckx described how they "acquire our licenses mostly through email and phone contact but we've had the odd letter and fax...as you well realize these people come from another era. Most are in their late 70s, our oldest licensor is Byron Pope and at 86 he still does yoga daily. An example to us youth!" The label goes beyond jazz but stays within the universe of African-American

music, with albums of soul and funk, in the extended sense. It's all stuff Merckx heard growing up with a father who was a fan. "Currently," Merckx says, "we're working on getting some private-pressed soul and P-Funk records released into the world. As well as expanding our African music section with Afrobeat from Nigeria, Zambia and South Africa." For jazz, coming up will be a reissue of Chicago-based drummer Frank Derrick and his orchestra, *Total Experience*. Merckx describes the album as "a rare sought-after private press record from 1974...[Derrick] played with a lot of greats from Cab Calloway to Eartha Kitt." Most recently, Tidal Waves has put out an album and a 45" from little known soul-jazz saxophonist Quinn Harris, his *Statements*, released in 1975, and apparently quickly forgotten and the A/B sides of "Protect Me From Myself" and "I'll Always Love You," in editions of 500 black vinyl (and 100 clear vinyl) and 250 copies total, respectively.

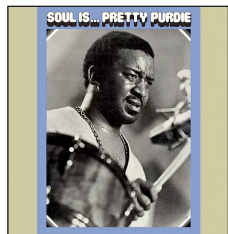
How this stuff turns up is part of the label's special quality; "Besides being collectors ourselves, we have a vast network of fellow collector friends, DJs, diggers and dealers and all-around music freaks to find interesting releases," Merckx says. He adds that, "Matt Sullivan at Light in the Attic has been a good friend and inspiration and also Eothen Alapatt from Now Again Records has been a great supporter and collaborator."

Even after 60 releases and a peek into the VRT vaults, Merckx is humble. "Our goals," he says, "are just to be able to release interesting records and unearth stuff that has gone under the radar. Having fun in the process while doing this is also a must for us...it's a passion and not just a job!" ❖

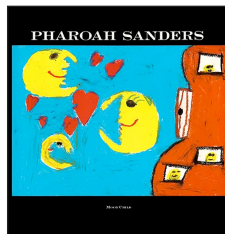
For more information, visit tidalwavesmusic.com



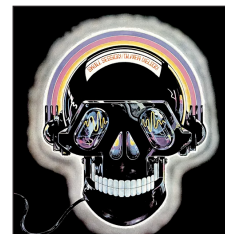
A Very Rare Evening
Nina Simone



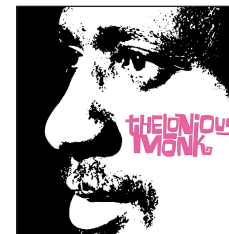
Soul Is...Pretty Purdie
Bernard "Pretty" Purdie



Moon Child
Pharoah Sanders



Skull Session
Oliver Nelson



Palais Des Beaux-Arts 1963
Thelonious Monk

VOXNEWS

AFRICAN DREAMS

BY SUZANNE LORGE

Miriam Makeba is probably the most influential jazz singer you don't know. Born in South Africa in the early '30s, she rose to prominence in the U.S. in the '60s, performing with Nina Simone, Dizzy Gillespie and Harry Belafonte after achieving early success in her own country. Throughout her life she fought against racial injustice, working alongside her husband, Civil Rights activist Stokely Carmichael, later becoming a U.N. Goodwill Ambassador. And, according to singer Somi, Makeba was the first African performing artist ever to achieve huge global commercial success. So why isn't she a household name like Ella Fitzgerald or Sarah Vaughan? When the pandemic struck in March, Somi was just about to address this hole in the public awareness with the debut of *Dreaming Zenzile*, her theatrical musical about Makeba's life. There was to be a month at The Repertory Theatre of St. Louis, followed by a month at the McCarter Theatre at Princeton University, all suddenly on hold. The resultant pause, however unplanned, gave Somi a moment to catch her breath; she'd been touring extensively following the release of two albums for Sony/Okeh in as many years, *The Lagos Music Salon* and *Petite Afrique*, inspired by her

time spent living in Africa and among African ex-pats. (Somi was born in Illinois to a Rwandan father and a Ugandan mother.) So, itching for the next thing, she birthed another album, *Holy Room: Live At Alte Oper With Frankfurt Radio Big Band* (Salon Africana), a recording of her first big band gig ever. The two-disc release contains 11 tracks—almost all originals from Somi's earlier albums and each an exploration of what she calls the "in between", or the space that bridges her different cultural identities. Tunes like "Black Enough", with its driving pulse and high-powered vocals, and "Two Dollar Day", a viscerally emotive piano-voice duet, demonstrate her wide-ranging skills as both composer and vocalist. Enhanced by conductor John Beasley's pithy large ensemble arrangements, Somi's songs go a long way to forwarding her timely insights. Like Makeba, she has something to say and the vocal chops to make herself heard.

Last April, saxophonist Oran Etkin launched his Open Arms project—a new single recorded on location somewhere around the globe to be released each month throughout 2020. These singles, featuring Etkin's collaborations with local musicians from far-flung places, isn't so much about crafting worldly hybridizations (although he does this) but about sharing the delight of music-making. Each musician brings their undiluted, uncompromised musical expression to the table. Etkin himself brings an astonishing versatility as a reedplayer and improvisational composer; his ability

to verbalize intelligibly through the musical instruments in his hands is uncanny. In June he dropped the single "Nhema Musasa" (translated, "Building A New Home"), a preview of his upcoming *Open Arms Zimbabwe* album. On this teaser, Etkin riffs on the bass clarinet alongside percussionist Musekiwa Chingodza, who sings the tune's traditional Shona melody as he thumbs the mbira. The joyousness in this dialogue is infectious—in the background school children dance along while strolling down the street. Etkin's music, written in unabashed appreciation of disparate vocal and instrumental traditions, usually has this effect on people.

Saxophonist Dave Liebman (one of Etkin's former profs) takes center stage on *The Rise Up: Stories of Strife, Struggle and Inspiration* (Dünya), a three-part composition for jazz orchestra and chorus by Turkey's Mehmet Sanlikol. This work, based on Turkish and Sephardic Jewish history, melds big band orchestrations with Middle Eastern wind, string and percussion instruments; vocals span a smooth devotional arc from Sanlikol's searing solo prayer on "Spain" to a Byzantine choral Kyrie on "A Confrontation in Anatolia". Enchanting performances in service to compelling narratives.

Singers Buika, Luciana Souza, Letizia Gambi and Aimée Allen join pianist Fahir Atakoğlu on *For Love* (Far & Here). Each unique singer on this release wrote lyrics in her original language—Spanish, Portuguese, Italian and English—for the Turkish-American composer's intriguing melodies. ❖

CHARLI PERSIP

BY ANDREY HENKIN

© JACK VARTOOGIAN/FRONTROWPHOTOS



Charli Persip, legendary drummer active since the mid '50s with a discography numbering in the hundreds as a sideman yet still finding time to lead bands, died Aug. 23rd at 91.

Persip (who changed his name from Charlie in the '80s) was born on Jul. 26th, 1929 in Morristown, NJ. He was self-taught as a drummer, picking things up in his high school marching band and then later the stage band. After graduation, he played around the Newark area in various R&B bands before getting his first real jazz job with Dizzy Gillespie in 1954, both in the trumpeter's orchestra and smaller bands. It was from Gillespie that he learned an important lesson, one which he used for the title of his 2003 book *How Not to Play Drums: Not for Drummers Only*. As he told our George Kanzler in a 2009 interview, "When I got in his band I knew all the arrangements; I loved that band and I thought I played my ass off. Dizzy pulled me aside and said, 'You seem to know the arrangements pretty well and be doing a great job but now that you know what to play you gotta learn what not to play.'"

From there Persip would go on to work with an encyclopedia's worth of jazz stars: Modern Jazz Sextet, Hal McKusick, Quincy Jones, Lee Morgan, Jimmy Cleveland, Joe Newman, Sonny Stitt, Benny Golson, Kenny Dorham, Candido, Harry "Sweets" Edison, Melba Liston, Jerome Richardson, Randy Weston, Dinah Washington, Gene Quill, George Russell, Curtis Fuller, Ernie Wilkins, Bob Brookmeyer, Leo Wright, Johnny Griffin, David "Fathead" Newman, Al Cohn, Red Garland, Slide Hampton, Clark Terry, Oliver Nelson, Cecil Payne, Don Ellis, Cannonball Adderley, Dizzy Reece, Roland Kirk, Mal Waldron, Ron Carter, Art Farmer, Milt Jackson, Kenny Burrell, Sonny Rollins, Bill Barron, Erroll Garner, George Benson, Archie Shepp, Albert Dailey, Frank Foster, Mary Osborne, Craig Harris, Sherman Irby, Makanda Ken McIntyre and many others.

In between all those sessions, Persip made several of his own dates for Liberty, Bethlehem, Stash and Soul Note and led his Supersound Big Band for decades, which as he recalled to Kanzler, "started out as trumpeter Gerry La Furn's rehearsal band in the late '70s and I became the drummer in 1979. The idea was to make it the resident band at Manhattan Plaza, but things didn't work out and when Gerry wanted to keep the band together he asked me, since I had the bigger name at the time, to be the leader. So the first album we made was as co-leaders... I took the band over and made some personnel changes and Frank Foster gave me seven arrangements, then fired me from his Loud Minority band because he felt I should have my own band." Asked about the goal of the band, Persip stated simply, "To play music starting from the bebop era and into whatever the music is now and hopefully something into the future."



LARRY BLUTH (1941 - Aug. 26th, 2020) The pianist, part of the Lennie Tristano lineage, having studied with Tristano's student Sal Mosca, made three records for Zinnia in the '90s, all trio dates with bassist Don Messina and drummer Bill Chittin. Bluth died Aug. 26th at 79.



MARK COLBY (Mar. 18th, 1949 - Aug. 31st, 2020) The saxophonist had releases on Tappan Zee, Best, River North, Corridor and Hallway to go along with sideman credits under Dr. John, Maynard Ferguson, Bob James, Mongo Santamaria, Ramsey Lewis, Chuck Mangione, Frank Mantooth, Rob Parton and others, plus numerous pop and rock credits. Colby died Aug. 31st at 71.



STEVE GROSSMAN (Jan. 18th, 1951 - Aug. 13th, 2020) The prominent member of the post-John Coltrane class of saxophonists worked with Miles Davis (1969-70, appearing on *Big Fun*, *Jack Johnson*, *Black Beauty* and *Live Evil*), Elvin Jones (1971-76, partnering with fellow/peer saxophonist Dave Liebman and appearing on *Merry-Go-Round*, *Mr. Jones*, *Live at The Lighthouse*, *The Prime Element*, *Mr. Thunder*, *New Agenda* and *The Main Force*), Terumasa Hino, Chick Corea, Teruo Nakamura, Stone Alliance, Dizzy Reece, Masabumi Kikuchi, Ray Mantilla, René Urtreger, Gil Evans, Johnny Griffin, Cedar Walton and others to go along with leader dates since the mid '70s on PM, Horo, Owl, Musica, Atlantic, Red, Sound Design, DIW, Timeless, Dreyfus and Musidisc. Grossman died Aug. 13th at 69.



PETER KING (Aug. 11th, 1940 - Aug. 23rd, 2020) The British saxophonist came up in the Johnny Dankworth and Tubby Hayes Orchestras of the early '60s, had credits with Georgie Fame, Quincy Jones, Maynard Ferguson, Stan Tracey, Philly Joe Jones, Mike Carr, Hal Singer, John Stevens, Charlie Watts, Guy Barker, Joe Temperley, George Coleman, Don Weller, Annie Ross, Duško Gojković and others plus his own dates for Spotlite, KPM, Miles Music, Ronnie Scott's Jazz House, Blue Silver and Bull's Head. King died Aug. 23rd at 80.



RONNIE KOLE (1931 - Aug. 27th, 2020) The pianist was a New Orleans stalwart (though hailing from Chicago), playing that city's traditional jazz on albums made for Mark, Paula and Viko and ones he self-released, plus presidents and popes. Kole died Aug. 27th at 89.



LARRY NOVAK (May 18th, 1933 - Aug. 2nd, 2020) The pianist (and father of drummer Gary) recorded with Joe Morello, Charlie Shavers, Louie Bellson, Terry Gibbs/Buddy DeFranco/Herb Ellis, Von Freeman/Frank Catalano and others to go along with a 2014 leader date for Delmark. Novak died Aug. 2nd at 87.



ITARU OKI (Sep. 10th, 1941 - Aug. 25th, 2020) The Japanese trumpeter was active in his country's avant garde scene since the late '60s, releasing albums on Jazz Creators, Toshiba, Trio, Nadjé, Offbeat, FMP, Paddle Wheel, Volcanic, What'sNew, Ohrai, PJJ, Art/Com, his own Fudebushow Kikaku, Improvising Beings and NoBusiness alongside work in the bands of Noel McGhie, Noah Howard, Alan Silva, Michel Pilz, François Tusques, Abdelhaï Bennani, Tchangodei, Linda Sharrock and others. Oki died Aug. 25th at 78.



STEVE SAMPLE, JR. (1930 - Aug. 22nd, 2020) The educator is best known for his arrangement of "Yea Alabama", the fight song for the football team of the University of Alabama (where he worked for over three decades, helping to found the university's jazz studies department and leading the concert and marching bands), plus directing the Stan Kenton Summer Jazz Band Camps and his book *An Approach to Mainstream Jazz and Pop Harmony*. Sample died Aug. 22nd at 90.



JÜRGEN SCHADEBERG (Mar. 18th, 1931 - Aug. 29th, 2020) The German photographer was a chronicler, upon his emigration to South Africa after World War II, of the fight against the Apartheid state by such figures as Nelson Mandela and also documented the country's Black cultural scene for decades, including such performers as Miriam Makeba, Hugh Masekela, Dollar Brand and Jonas Gwangwa for *DRUM!* magazine. Schadeberg died Aug. 29th at 89.



JOE SEGAL (Apr. 24th, 1926 - Aug. 10th, 2020) The promoter, Chicago jazz champion and 2015 NEA Jazz Master presented jazz in the Windy City starting in the late '40s at a variety of locales, from universities to hotels to clubs, including his Jazz Showcase, site of recordings by Ira Sullivan, Lou Donaldson, Gene Ammons/Dexter Gordon, Kenny Burrell, Sonny Stitt and others, and additionally wrote liner notes for local labels like Argo and Delmark. Segal died Aug. 10th at 94.



HAL SINGER (Oct. 8th, 1919 - Aug. 18th, 2020) The saxophonist had records for Savoy and Prestige in the '50s and, after a permanent move to Paris, dates for Black And Blue, Polydor, Futura, Le Chant Du Monde, The Sun, Pastoral, JSP, Carrere and other labels (some collaborations with folks like Milton Buckner and Manu Dibango), plus guest spots with Buck Clayton, Champion Jack Dupree, Jef Gilson, Eddie "Cleanhead" Vinson, Al Grey, Kippie Moeketsi, Philly Joe Jones and others in addition to a collaboration with Russian fellow saxophonist Vladimir Chekasin on the soundtrack to the 1990 film *Taxi Blues*, in which he also appeared. Singer died Aug. 18th at 100.



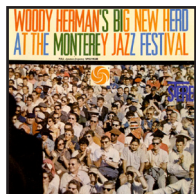
DUANE TATRO (May 18th, 1927 - Aug. 9th, 2020) The composer was known for extensive television work in the '60s-80s but got his start with the 1954-55 Contemporary album *Duane Tatro's Jazz For Moderns*, his music played by Stu Williamson, Joe Eager, Vincent DeRosa, Lennie Niehaus, Bill Holman, Jimmy Giuffre, Bob Gordon, Ralph Pena and Shelly Manne, plus writing tunes recorded by Joe Maini, Niehaus, Red Norvo and Art Pepper. Tatro died Aug. 9th at 93.



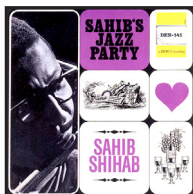
CHIP WHITE (Dec. 21st, 1946 - Aug. 5th, 2020) The drummer released his series of *Dedications* albums (*Double Dedication*, *More Dedications*, *Personal Dedications & Percussive Tributes* and *Family Dedications And More*) on his Dark Colors label between 2008-14 after working as a sideman since the '70s for James Moody, Enrico Rava, Igor Yahilevich, John Shaw, Claudio Roditi, Klaus Ignatzek, Houston Person, Claudio Roditi and Teddy Edwards, plus an earlier leader date *Harlem Sunset* (Postcards, 1994). White died Aug. 5th at 75. ❖

ON THIS DAY

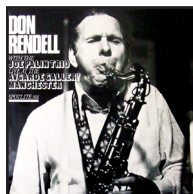
by Andrey Henkin



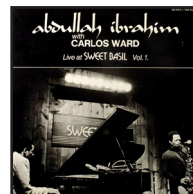
At The Monterey Jazz Festival
Woody Herman (Atlantic)
October 3rd, 1959



Sahib's Jazz Party
Sahib Shihab (Debut)
October 3rd, 1963



Live At The Avgarde Gallery Manchester
Don Rendell (Spotlite)
October 3rd, 1972



Live at Sweet Basil Vol. 1
Abdullah Ibrahim (Ekapa)
October 3rd, 1983



Amsterdam, October 1998
Georg Graewe (Random Acoustics)
October 3rd, 1998

Woody Herman's Big New Herd played both the Saturday afternoon and evening sets at the second annual Monterey Jazz Festival, excerpts of which make up this LP. Things open with Herman's Jimmy Giuffre-penned hit "Four Brothers", though just tenor saxophonist Zoot Sims remains from the original recording band. Other stars in this group are Richie Kamuca, Urbie Green, Conte Candoli, Charlie Byrd, Victor Feldman and Mel Lewis. Herman only wrote one of the six charts, the dedicatory "Monterey Apple Tree".

Sahib Shihab (né Edmund Gregory, alto, soprano, baritone saxophones, flute) was so busy on both sides of the Atlantic (he left for Europe in the late '50s and later was bi-continental) he had little time for records as a leader, just a handful from the late '50s-early '70s. This was made during his Danish sojourn with a local band of Allan Botschinsky, Ole Molin, Niels-Henning Ørsted Pedersen, Alex Riel and Bjarne Rostvold. Apart from Henry Mancini-Johnny Mercer's "Charade", the music is all Shihab, including three-part "Conversations".

British tenor/soprano saxophonist/clarinetist/flutist Don Rendell came up in the '50s with Johnny Dankworth, first worked as a leader in the middle of that decade and, in the '60s, had a significant co-led quintet with trumpeter Ian Carr. This concert came almost four years after the dissolution of the latter group, one of many dates Rendell led through the end of the century. It is the only document of him with pianist Joe Palin's trio and/or guest trumpeter Pete Martin, a set of four Rendell tunes and Vernon Duke's "I Can't Get Started".

South African pianist Abdullah Ibrahim (aka Dollar Brand) hasn't worked with horn players that often in his seven-decade career but when he did, alto saxophonist Carlos Ward was usually involved, whether in the African Space Program big band (1973), smaller groups in the '70s-80s or this duo concert from the defunct NYC club. One of only a few Ibrahim duos with saxophonists, the album was released on Ibrahim's wife's label and is a wide-ranging set of his songs plus the theme from Todd Matshikiza's King Kong. There is no second volume.

There is far more connecting Chicago and Germany than the traditional sausages to be found in the former's Lincoln Square neighborhood. For example, about a year before this live set, German Peter Brötzmann formed his Chicago Tentet, which included bassist Kent Kessler and drummer Hamid Drake. Both are at the Stedelijk Museum in a band led by Bochum pianist Georg Graewe with Hamburg alto saxophonist/clarinetist Frank Gratkowski. The 54-minute improv "Passing Scopes II" is a follow-up to a song found on the band's 1997 debut.

BIRTHDAYS

October 1
†André Paquinet 1926-2014
Dave Holland b.1946
Mark Helias b.1950
Tony Dumas b.1955
Fred Lonberg-Holm b.1962

October 2
†Wally Rose 1913-97
†Phil Urso 1925-2008
†Howard Roberts 1929-92
†Ronnie Ross 1933-91
Peter A. Schmid b.1959
Django Bates b.1960

October 3
†Edgar Battle 1907-77
†Buddy Banks 1909-91
†Von Freeman 1922-2012
George Wein b.1925
Charles Downs b.1943
Mike Clark b.1946
Michael Bowie b.1961
Carsten Dahl b.1967

October 4
†Noel Chiboust 1909-94
†Marvin Ash 1914-74
†Walter Bishop 1927-98
†Leon Thomas 1937-99
Mark Levine b.1938
Steve Swallow b.1940
Eddie Gomez b.1944
Robert Hurst b.1964
Mat Maneri b.1969

October 5
†Jimmy Blanton 1918-42
†Bill Dixon 1925-2010
†Donald Ayler 1942-2007
Clifton Anderson b.1957
Tord Gustavsen b.1970

October 6
Norman Simmons b.1929
Steve Elmer b.1941
Masahiko Satoh b.1941
Mark Whitfield b.1966

October 7
†Papa Jo Jones 1911-85
†Alvin Stoller 1925-92
†Larry Young 1940-78
Aaron Parks b.1983

October 8
†JC Heard 1917-88
†Pepper Adams 1930-86
John Betsch b.1945
Steven Bernstein b.1961
Ted Kooshian b.1961

October 9
†Elmer Snowden 1900-73
†Bebo Valdes 1918-2013
†Yusef Lateef 1920-2013
Abdullah Ibrahim b.1934
Chucho Valdés b.1941
Satoko Fujii b.1958
Kenny Garrett b.1960
Jeff Albert b.1970
Amy Cervini b.1977

October 10
†Harry "Sweets" Edison 1915-99
†Thelonious Monk 1917-82
†Monk Montgomery 1921-82
†Julius Watkins 1921-77
†Oscar Brown Jr. 1926-2005
Junior Mance b.1928
†Ed Blackwell 1929-92
Cecil Bridgewater b.1942
Scott Reeves b.1950
Pam Fleming b.1957

October 11
†Curtis Amy 1919-2002
†Art Blakey 1919-90
†Billy Higgins 1936-2001
†Lester Bowie 1941-99
†Fred Hopkins 1947-99
Federico Ughi b.1972

October 12
†Mel Rhyne 1936-2013
Ed Cherry b.1957
Michael Mossman b.1959
Harry Allen b.1966

October 13
†Art Tatum 1909-56
Terry Gibbs b.1924
†Ray Brown 1926-2002
†Tommy Whittle 1926-2013
†Lee Konitz 1927-2020
†Johnny Lytle 1932-95
Pharoah Sanders b.1940
Joachim Badenhorst b.1981

October 14
Duško Gojković b.1931
†Fritz Pauer 1943-2012
†Garrison Fewell 1953-2015
Kazumi Watanabe b.1953

October 15
†Freddy Cole 1931-2020
†Joe Roccisano 1939-97
Palle Danielsson b.1946
Bo Stief b.1946
Bill Charlap b.1966
Reid Anderson b.1970

October 16
Ray Anderson b.1952
Tim Berne b.1954
†Roy Hargrove 1969-2018

October 17
†Cozy Cole 1906-81
†Barney Kessel 1923-2004
†Sathima Bea Benjamin 1936-2013
Joseph Bowie b.1953
Howard Alden b.1958
Manuel Valera b.1980

October 18
†Anita O'Day 1919-2006
†Bent Jaedig 1935-2004
†JC Moses 1936-77
Wynton Marsalis b.1961
Bill Stewart b.1966
Myron Walden b.1972
Esperanza Spalding b.1984

October 19
†Red Richards 1912-98
Eddie Daniels b.1941
Ronnie Burrage b.1959
Tim Garland b.1966

October 20
†Jelly Roll Morton 1890-51
†Johnny Best 1913-2003
†Ray Linn 1920-96
†Willie Jones 1929-1991
†Eddie Harris 1934-96
Dado Moroni b.1962
Mark O'Leary b.1969

October 21
†Don Byas 1912-72
†Dizzy Gillespie 1917-93
†Don Elliott 1926-84
Bobby Few b.1935
Jerry Bergonzi b.1947
Marc Johnson b.1953
Fred Hersch b.1955
David Weiss b.1964

October 22
†Giorgio Gaslini 1929-2014
†Tyrone Hill 1948-2007
Jane Bunnett b.1955
Hans Glawischnig b.1970

October 23
†Sonny Criss 1927-77
†Fats Sadi 1927-2009
†Gary McFarland 1933-71
Ernie Watts b.1945
Tristan Honsinger b.1949
Dianne Reeves b.1956

October 24
†Louis Barbarin 1902-97
†Jimmie Powell 1914-94
Odean Pope b.1938
Jay Anderson b.1955
Rick Margitza b.1961

October 25
†Don Banks 1923-80
†Jimmy Heath 1926-2020
Terumasa Hino b.1942
Robin Eubanks b.1955

October 26
†Charlie Barnet 1913-91
†Warne Marsh 1927-87
Eddie Henderson b.1940
Vijay Iyer b.1971

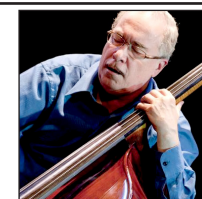
October 27
†Sonny Dallas 1931-2007
Barre Phillips b.1934
Philip Catherine b.1942
Arild Andersen b.1945
Nick Stephens b.1946
Ken Filiano b.1952
David Hazeltine b.1958
Amanda Monaco b.1973

October 28
†Chico O'Farrill 1921-2001
Cleo Laine b.1927
Andy Bey b.1939
Jay Clayton b.1941
Glen Moore b.1941
†Elton Dean 1945-2006
Michel Pilz b.1945
Richard Bona b.1967
Kurt Rosenwinkel b.1970

October 29
†Hadda Brooks 1916-2002
†Neil Hefti 1922-2008
†Zoot Sims 1925-85
†Pim Jacobs 1934-96
Siggi Busch b.1943
Emilio Solla b.1962
Mats Gustafsson b.1964
Josh Sinton b.1971

October 30
†Teo Macero 1925-2008
†Bobby Jones 1928-80
†Clifford Brown 1930-56
Trilok Gurtu b.1951

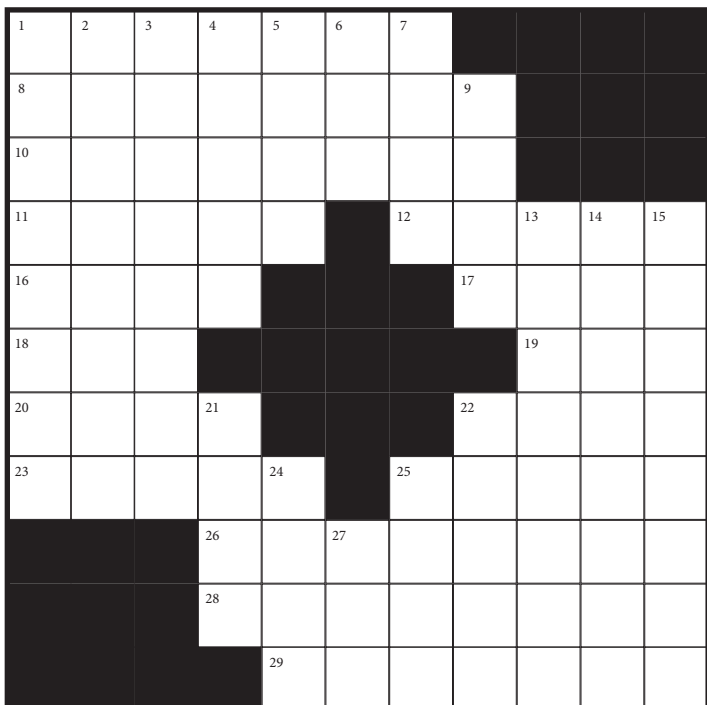
October 31
†Toshiyuki Miyama 1921-2016
†Illinois Jacquet 1922-2004
†Ted Nash 1922-2011
†Bob Graettinger 1923-57
†Ray Crane 1930-94
†Booker Ervin 1930-70
Les Tomkins b.1930
Johnny Williams b.1936
†John Guerin 1939-2004
Reimer Von Essen b.1940
†Sherman Ferguson 1944-2006
David Parlato b.1945
†Bob Belden 1956-2015
Vincent Gardner b.1972



EDDIE GOMEZ
October 4th, 1944

Puerto Rican-born bassist Eddie Gomez has had one of the more eclectic careers in jazz history. He was a part of the Newport Youth band in 1959 at age 15. By 19 he was recording with Montego Joe. This was followed by work with Giuseppe Logan, Paul Bley, Gerry Mulligan, Bill Evans, Phil Seamen, Lee Konitz, Jack DeJohnette, Jeremy Steig, Hugh Masekela, Larry Willis, Bob Moses, Jack Wilkins, Ray Mantilla, Ralph Towner, Chick Corea, Joanne Brackeen, Mick Goodrick, John Scofield, Charles Mingus, Albert Mangelsdorff, Ira Sullivan, Dave Liebman, Terumasa Hino, Mike Nock, Paquito D'Rivera, Tom Harrell and dozens of others plus many albums as a leader. —AH

CROSSWORD



ACROSS

1. Pesky 2008 Jason Adasiewicz Cuneiform album?
8. Pat Martino's debut for Prestige
10. AKA Ray Brown on a Joyce Collins Jazzland LP
11. If a jazz quartet is an ancient Greek temple, the bass and drums are these
12. 1992 Miroslav Vitous/Jan Garbarek ECM album
16. German synthesizer player Thomas
17. Parts of a big band (abbr.)
18. Jack Nimitz "rank" (abbr.)
19. Saxophonist Konitz
20. Ran Blake aesthetic
22. Like Simon Nabatov or Valery Ponomarev
23. Notes of a CMaj13 chord
25. Clarinetist Bob
26. AKA Louis Hayes on a Pepper Adams/Donald Byrd Bethlehem LP
28. Piano for the road?
29. Adrian Rollini instrument

DOWN

1. AKA Helen Ward on a Lee Castle Musicraft 10"
2. What you'll find on the cover of Teddy Charles' *On Campus*
3. Complement to melodic
4. French drummer Cornebert
5. Romanian saxophonist Alexandru
6. Pianist Yul Anderson's record label
7. Vocalist Dobbs of the Dutch Swing College Band
9. Australian percussionist John Sangster wrote a song for these Tolkien creatures
13. Big band partner to Thad Jones
14. 2012 Pulse Guru album
15. AKA Steve Lacy on a Joe Lee Wilson Sun LP
21. Swiss trumpeter Martin
22. Brooklyn club run by Ohad Talmor
24. Nickname of English broadcaster
25. Dutch pianist Arnold
27. 2016 Kenny Warren Prom Night album

By Andrey Henkin

visit nycjazzrecord.com for answers

ALBUM REVIEWS



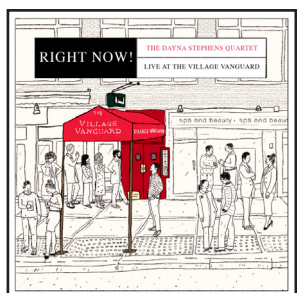
Doctone
Noah Haidu (Sunnyside)
by Donald Elfman

Pianist Noah Haidu has made the first album dedicated to the compositions of the late Kenny Kirkland, whom he calls “the most unique composer and pianist of his generation.” He adds, “Because he died young and avoided the spotlight, his brilliant compositions have been overlooked for too long.” The *Doctone* project includes an original book by Haidu and documentary by Jeffrey Chuang, released on Sep. 28th, 2020, which would have been Kirkland’s 65th birthday.

Doctone finds Haidu, a fine pianist in his own right, leading a group of veterans in an emotionally gripping and diversely expressive set of 11 compositions both accessible and artistically challenging. The opening “Doctor of Tone” is one of lyrical longing, a brief prelude setting the tone for what is to come—intelligent and melancholy at the untimely loss of this artist. “Midnight Silence” is a gorgeous celebration of the majesty of Kirkland’s sense of harmony as well as this group’s ease in switching harmonies and tempos while presenting expressive solo and group statements. Haidu is fluid and thoughtful backed deftly by bassist Todd Coolman and drummer Billy Hart and guest Steve Wilson offers a powerful and gritty solo on soprano saxophone.

The riches in Kirkland’s music abound here: “Blasphemy” is a gorgeous and dark exploration with eerie keyboard sonics and lush tenor of Jon Irabagon; there’s quirky funk in “Steepian Faith”, which ultimately leads back to a solid groove; “Dienda” unfolds its mysterious shapes and colors in two parts with the obscurities leading to an almost churchy ¾ chorus; “Mr. J.C.” is Mr. Coltrane with the rich and unique tenor of Gary Thomas and an impassioned solo by the leader; “The Tonality of Atonement” is quiet and thoughtful while suggesting otherness; “Chambers of Tain” and “Fuchsia” are rhythmically audacious with some fiery work by Hart on the former and Thomas on the latter. Finally the album closes with the delicately sad yet also hopeful “Chance”, a beautiful return to the trio. And thus is Kirkland’s brief but shining life and career brilliantly celebrated.

For more information, visit sunnysiderecords.com. This project live-streams Oct. 2nd at bkcm.org.



Right Now (Live at the Village Vanguard)
Dayna Stephens (Contagious Music)
by Phil Freeman

Recording a live album at the Village Vanguard is a venerable tradition. Doing it places an artist, particularly a saxophonist, in the music’s uppermost echelon alongside John Coltrane, Dexter Gordon, Sonny Rollins, Joe Lovano, Chris Potter, Joshua Redman and many others. Dayna Stephens, an underpraised saxophonist, has recorded this double disc—

just over 100 minutes of music in all – with an excellent quartet behind him: Aaron Parks (piano), Ben Street (bass) and Gregory Hutchinson (drums).

The album begins with “Smoking Gun”, a variation on Thelonious Monk’s “Evidence” led by bouncing bass. The piece has a light, skipping rhythm, which transforms the twists, turns and pauses of Monk’s melody into something to be navigated like a particularly challenging Formula 1 racetrack. Stephens has a quick, precise style on the tenor, notes emerging with deceptive casualness. For the second track, “Tarifa”, he switches to soprano, on which he has a squawking tone like a surly bird. Later in the set, on “Radio Active EarWorm”, Stephens plays the Electronic Wind Instrument, which sounds like a synth and gives the track a feel somewhere between ‘70s fusion and Quiet Storm R&B. If Street had opted for an electric bass, this piece could absolutely have been an outtake from an early Stanley Clarke solo album.

His bandmates are perfectly chosen. Parks has a powerful chording style that transitions easily into a melodic, Vince Guaraldi-esque solo voice. Street is confident, happy to provide the foundation for a vamping piece like “Tarifa” or swing hard on “Loosy Goosy” and his tone gleams like polished mahogany. Hutchinson is hard-hitting, managing to stay out of his own way, never going so over the top with his soloing, even when striking sharp notes on the snare’s rim, that he seems like he’s angling to be the leader. He’s just being the best possible drummer for this quartet. It would be great to get back to the Village Vanguard and see a band this good on its stage. Until then, this two-CD set will have to suffice.

For more information, visit daynastephens.net. This project live-streams Oct. 2nd-3rd at villagevanguard.com.



Broome (Jazz Edit) | Broome (Saxophone Edit)
Andreas Schulz (feat. Paul Engelmann)
(One Music Prod.)
by Anna Steegmann

Germans Andreas Schulz (drums) and Paul Engelmann (alto saxophone) have worked together for eight years as a duo, in large ensembles, jazz quartets and international big bands. They have remarkable chemistry and a unique sound. *Broome* is a project of six albums based on six compositions by Schulz. *Jazz Edit* and *Saxophone Edit* are available now, *Piano Edit* will be released later this year followed by three releases in 2021.

Schulz was inspired to create *Broome* in 2019 while living in New York and L.A. *Jazz Edit* features nine tracks. The listener might detect their influences: the ‘60s work of John Coltrane and Ornette Coleman. Schulz and Engelmann seem to improvise freely, then suddenly, mysteriously, melodies manifest. The first track, “Ytr.Cbs. Manhattan”, is captivating. Drums and saxophone create such a rich sound, they almost become one instrument. “200021” evokes a day of rapidly changing weather; the drums suggesting thunder, gushing rain, the saxophone rays of sunshine breaking through. “505051” seduces with its exquisite tender opening and melancholy tone, then picks up pace to a gentle crescendo.

Saxophone Edit showcases 14 tracks of Engelmann’s solo work, imaginative like a movie soundtrack, remarkable for its artistic density and intonation, truly gripping. Whether slow, tender and melancholy as in “Ytr.Cbs(Alternate Take)”; starting slow in a low range and ending in a whirlwind of improvisational flights

as in “200021”; or featuring a higher range and joyful playful exploration in “TMS”, the music never forces itself on the listener. Instead it builds and intrigues until the listener has to stop everything to listen closely.

Schulz doesn’t believe in overthinking jazz. He likes to record the first moment of playing a new tune with Engelmann. He believes that the first note is fresh, smooth and important. *Jazz Edit* and *Saxophone Edit* feature first takes, post-produced takes and alternate takes of most tracks. The latter are never second best, often brilliant new interpretations of the leitmotif.

For more information, visit onemusic-label.com. This project live-streams Oct. 14th at MondoNYC on YouTube.

“His natural swing and taste allow him to revisit well-throttled standards with gusto and originality...”

A welcome debut by an artist who definitely deserves wider exposure and appreciation.”

—The New York City Jazz Record

watjazz.com

RECOMMENDED

- Lina Allemano’s Ohrenschmaus – *Rats and Mice* (Lumo)
- J.D. Allen – *Toys/Die Dreaming* (Savant)
- Golpe! + Masa Kamaguchi – *Totem* (Robalo)
- Jimmy Heath – *Love Letters* (Verve)
- Daniel Humair/Samuel Blaser/Heiri Känzig – *1291* (OutNote)
- Bruno Råberg/Jason Robinson/Bob Weiner – *The Urgency of Now* (Creative Nation Music)
- Eric Revis – *Slipknots Through A Looking Glass* (Pyroclastic)
- Maria Scheider Orchestra – *Data Lords* (ArtistShare)
- Triage (Dave Rempis/Jason Ajemian/Tim Daisy) – *Live at the Velvet Lounge* (Aerophonic)
- Matt Wilson – *Hug!* (Palmetto)

Laurence Donohue-Greene, Managing Editor

NEW RELEASES

- Susan Alcorn Quintet – *Pederal* (Relative Pitch)
- Anteloper – *Tour Beats Vol. 1* (International Anthem)
- DUX Orchestra – *duck walks dog (with mixed results)* (NoBusiness)
- London Jazz Composers Orchestra – *That Time* (Not Two)
- Billy Martin – *Guilty* (Amulet)
- Merzbow/Mats Gustafsson/Balázs Pandi – *Cuts Open* (RareNoise)
- Hedvig Mollestad – *Ekhidna* (Rune Grammofon)
- TOC & Dave Rempis – *Closed For Safety Reasons* (Circum-Disc)
- Cat Toren’s Human Kind – *Scintillating Beauty* (Panoramic)
- Alan Wakeman – *The Octet Broadcasts (1969 and 1979)* (Gearbox)

Andrey Henkin, Editorial Director



Little Big II: Dreams of a Mechanical Man

Aaron Parks (Ropeadope)

Pistils

Rajiv Jayaweera (earshift music)

Spirit Science

Tom Guarna (Destiny)

by Marco Cangiano

Aaron Parks is a much in-demand pianist with a rapidly growing and varied discography, both as a leader or in a group, under various labels, including the iconic ECM. His style has absorbed all the great jazz pianists of the last 50 years but it is also close to certain impressionism à la Ravel, mainly in his trio and solo outings where his rubato is more discernible. His most characteristic qualities are a relaxed and unhurried approach, whereby considerable technical prowess is always at the service of the music; capacity to make sound simple even the most arcane metric and chord sequence; and constant emphasis of the melody over other considerations. On top of this, he has developed a remarkable ability to transmit his vision not only to his partners in his own projects but also in groups where he is merely a member. This is evident from the three CDs considered here, which in spite of the apparent differences in instrumentation and inspiration, reveal a coherence in their approach and style reflecting in no little part Parks' presence.

Dreams of a Mechanical Man is the second CD by Parks' Little Big quartet and showcases his more eclectic side, including the use of electric keyboards. In this sense, this CD may mark a departure from his more intimate and impressionistic ECM recordings but, in reality, there is a continuity and consistency reflecting his own musical persona. While Parks credits Pat Metheny, philosophers Carl Jung and George Gurdjiff and band Blonde Redhead among his sources of inspirations, his music escapes any categorization and evolves unhurriedly in its originality. Take "Solace", for instance: a piano solo intro leads to a folk-inspired song delivered in unison by piano and Greg Tuhoey's guitar, with David Ginyard's bass and Tommy Crane's drums coloring around the folksy melody. Parks' impressionism comes out in the title track whereas "The Ongoing Pulse", after the initial bells and chimes, brings another song-like tune with Parks and Tuhoey shining throughout. The tightness of the group—they have been touring intensely for the last two years—is evident in "Is Anything Okay?" and "Where Now?", two spontaneous and rather spacey improvisations in which they can stretch out while listening to and relying on one another. The same qualities emerge in "Storyteller". "My Mistake" has instead a dark blues feeling reflecting a piano pattern over which guitar screams. "Unknown" wraps up with a dreamy atmosphere and beautiful solo and vocal intervention by Parks a CD so full of music it will take a few listens to absorb fully.

Pistils is Rajiv Jayaweera's debut album. A New-York-based drummer of Sri Lankan origins raised in Australia, Jayaweera finds inspiration in his family history but also present-day New York. His is a delicate approach, almost intimate, as evident in the two versions of the title track—the first one benefitting from Lara Bello singing in an undecipherable language and the second relying on Chris Cheek's fluid tenor saxophone. Jayaweera does not take any solos, except for a brief temple drum introduction and an interlude in "Ellstandissa". But the relentless, shifting and yet almost understated pulse is certainly at the center of his project. Subtlety is the defining quality of Jayaweera's approach to percussion and is reminiscent of Paul Motian. The musicians could not be more sympathetic to Jayaweera's vision. Of note are Cheek's numerous

and enjoyable solos along with his blending and conversing with Hugh Stuckey's guitar. Parks displays his personal approach as he seems particularly at ease with the material; "Galadari" and "The Elephant", which denote a jazzier flavor, could have been composed by Parks himself to the extent that rather complex rhythmic figurations are delivered with utter fluidity and simplicity. A very promising debut.

Finally, Tom Guarna's *Spirit Science* is possibly the more mainstream album of the three, but this should not detract from its very high quality. Guarna is a well established Brooklyn-based guitar player with a very melodic approach. He seems to have found a kindred spirit in Parks given his interest in seeking simple melodies with an emphasis on the song form. The nine originals take inspiration from sacred geometry or spirit science but, in spite of the stated programmatic approach, it is an overall melodious quality that dominates. Guarna's partners share his vision and provide empathic contributions. Ben Wendel's tenor saxophone, at times sounding like Jan Garbarek, is particularly inspired, alongside Parks' keyboards. The use of the Rhodes piano and synth adds depth and broadens considerably the group's palette while providing a counter balance to Guarna and Wendel's more assertive attacks, as in the opening "Trion Re" and "Metatron's Cube". It is also remarkable how well Parks' approach to acoustic piano transposes onto keyboards—listen for instance to his synth solo in "Platonic Solids". Joe Martin's bass and Justin Faulkner's drums are very congenial and excel in "Genesis" and the title track. Medium to up-tempo prevail, except for "Reflection (for Kofi Burbridge)", with bassoon (Wendel) in evidence; "Source", where heartfelt guitar and saxophone solos are accompanied by exquisite piano arpeggios; and closing "Lullaby for Lena", Guarna's rescue dog. A very enjoyable recording.

For more information, visit ropeadope.com, earshift.com and destinyrecordsmusic.com. Parks live-streams with Dayna Stephens Oct 2nd-3rd at villagevanguard.com.



Night Devoid of Stars
(featuring Noah Preminger & Frank Carlberg)
Daniel Hersog Jazz Orchestra (Cellar Music)
by Ken Dryden

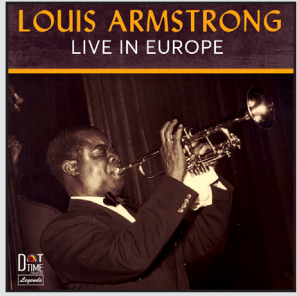
Composing for large jazz ensembles is especially challenging in the modern era yet the jazz world is better off having ambitious young composers like Daniel Hersog, who are up to facing the many obstacles. Driven in part by the tumultuous events in large cities over the past couple of years, Hersog created a provocative, diverse suite to convey his impressions without the all too often "in your face" commentary. What is apparent after the first few hearings is that not only did he recruit top-notch musicians to perform the piece but also they believed in the music and put their own stamp on it, whether in individual solos or the ensembles. While pianist Frank Carlberg and tenor saxophonist Noah Preminger are billed as the featured soloists, the rest of the multi-generational band add to the colors within each track, in addition to superb solos.

"Cloud Break" is a brisk opener, which blends hope with touches of danger on the horizon, accented by Brad Turner's spirited trumpet and emotional tenor. "Motion" was inspired by Keith Jarrett and though Carlberg has an engaging feature with the rhythm section, Preminger's twisting, sometimes gritty line provides a

playful contrast to the pianist. Carlberg's poignant solo introduction to the ballad "Makeshift Memorial" sets up a lush, heartfelt theme, putting the spotlight on Hersog's gift for writing for brass and reeds, with Preminger's piercing solo as its centerpiece. The title track is full of fury with its darting piano, ominous horns and vocal-like tenor, as Hersog brilliantly tells his story without lyrics. The sole standard, a dark setting of Jerome Kern's "Smoke Gets In Your Eyes", has a mournful air that Carlberg conveys through dissonance, though the rich ensemble background adds to its appeal.

For more information, visit cellarlive.com. Frank Carlberg live-streams Oct. 15th at soapboxgallery.org.

UNEARTHED GEM



LOUIS ARMSTRONG
LIVE IN EUROPE

Live in Europe
Louis Armstrong (Dot Time)
by Scott Yanow

For the fourth Louis Armstrong CD released by Dot Time, two versions of Armstrong's All-Stars are featured. Other than a pair of Velma Middleton vocal pieces, all of the music had been available only as a radio broadcast and/or held in the hands of collectors.

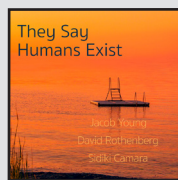
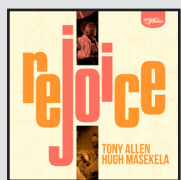
In 1947, Armstrong broke up his long-running big band and took a chance by organizing his All-Stars, a flexible sextet that played swing and Dixieland standards along with jazz versions of some current pop tunes. It was a huge success, freeing Armstrong from having to meet the payroll of his big band and allowing him to play as expansively as he wanted. Satchmo flourished in that setting, his popularity grew to an unprecedented level and he toured the world for the next 20 years.

Live in Europe has two different versions of the All-Stars. First Armstrong is in Nice on Feb. 22nd-23rd, 1948, leading his group with trombonist Jack Teagarden, clarinetist Barney Bigard, pianist Earl Hines, bassist Arvell Shaw and drummer Big Sid Catlett. Due to the Musicians Union recording strike of 1948, that unit did not have an opportunity to make any studio recordings until 1949. A presentation made in French is followed by a truncated "Muskrat Ramble", a routine "Rockin' Chair" and a feature for Bigard on "Rose Room". At that point the music picks up with jammed versions of "Royal Garden Blues", "Panama", "Mahogany Stomp", "Them There Eyes" and dramatic renditions of "On The Sunny Side Of The Street" and "Black And Blue". The leader, Teagarden and Bigard are all in excellent form even if Hines (who had recently joined the group) is underutilized.

The second half of this CD is a West Berlin concert from Oct. 12th, 1952 and is more of a tight show. By then trombonist Trummy Young was Armstrong's main foil, clarinetist Bob McCracken was a short-term replacement for Bigard and the rhythm section was comprised of pianist Marty Napoleon, Shaw and drummer Cozy Cole. Best are their versions of "Way Down Yonder In New Orleans", "A Kiss To Build A Dream On" and Young's showcase on "Coquette". Fans of Louis Armstrong's All-Stars will want this fine collection.

For more information, visit dottimerecords.com

GLOBE UNITY



Africa Today
Etuk Ubong (Night Dreamer)
Rejoice
Tony Allen/Hugh Masekela (World Circuit)
They Say Humans Exist
Jacob Young/David Rothenberg/Sidiki Camara
(Oslo Session)
by Tom Greenland

60 years ago, 17 sub-Saharan African countries gained independence. Because jazz owes so much of its rhythms, textures and spirit to pan-African cultural influences, it is only fitting to honor these national victories, ones that champion those same qualities of freedom and individuality so essential to jazz.

Nigerian trumpeter Etuk Ubong, raised in Lagos, combines highlife, Afrobeat, Ekombi (a regional style from Akwa Ibom, his birth state) and jazz to concoct a familiar yet fully original hybrid. The music on *Africa Today*, recorded direct-to-disc in Haarlem with Dutch musicians and others from Nigeria, Mali and the UK, spills out of the vinyl grooves like a torrential flood. The five-horn front line plays lively unisons, syncopated chorales and call-and-response figures, digging into extended riff sections with a loose-is-tight attitude; the three-man percussion team hits even harder while organ player Jack Stephens Oliver joins the deluge or else fills the cracks. Like Fela Kuti, Ubong's (English) lyrics are politically charged, speaking to current problems in Africa, though his rapping/singing sounds less acerbic, more optimistic. One might wish for more of his sweet sounding, birdlike improvisations, but here feel and flow take priority over exploration.

Rejoice arose from a 2010 London recording session led by Nigerian drummer Tony Oladipo Allen and South African trumpeter Hugh Ramapolo Masekela that was exhumed, overdubbed and released ten years later, two years after the latter had passed. A liaison of legends—Allen, director of Kuti's band in the '70s, chief architect of Afrobeat rhythm; Masekela, at the forefront of South African jazz for over 60 years—the session is fun and funky, exuding the pared-down but highly propulsive energy of early Meters recordings. Based around polyrhythmic thrusts and sunny song readings (all co-credited to the leaders) followed by extended inventive flugelhorn solos lined with melodic sequences colored by long digital delay effects, the tracks are thickened with sprinklings of tenor saxophone, keyboards and vibraphone. Two tracks ("Jabulani" and "We've Landed") nod towards *On the Corner*-era Miles Davis.

They Say Humans Exist is an intimate session recorded in the woods near Oslo. Norwegian guitarist Jacob Young, clarinetist/flutist David Rothenberg and Malian percussionist/multi-instrumentalist Sidiki Camara achieve a sinuous balance of roles over nine short varied tracks. Guitar, often muted or disguised by electronic effects, is subtle and ethereal. Flutes and clarinets have a keening, feral quality, the hoots and drones of a nocturnal forest. Hand drums, bells and blocks furnish rhythmic momentum, but equally redolent is n'goni and balafon (Malian harp and marimba, respectively), adding a distinctive timbre to "Thank You My People/Kaou Barikada", "Calling People to the Music/Ayou Wele", "The North/Koron Fe" and the title track.

For more information, visit nightdreamer.co.uk, worldcircuit.co.uk and oslossessionrecordings.com.



The Choir Invisible
Charlotte Greve/Vinnie Sperrazza/Chris Tordini (Intakt)
by John Sharpe

The Choir Invisible, a phrase lifted from Monty Python's "Dead Parrot Sketch", but originating in a 19th Century poem by Mary Ann Evans (better known as George Elliot), provides the name of the closing track, the album and also the Brooklyn-based outfit responsible, which comprises German-transplant alto saxophonist Charlotte Greve, bassist Chris Tordini and drummer Vinnie Sperrazza. Together they triangulate a 38-minute program of nine charts, sourced from each of the principals.

Notwithstanding the diverse origins, the group takes a cooperative, near-orchestral approach in its use of its constituent talents. That's helped by the way in which they all muck in. Greve often lays down repeated motifs as part of the structural fabric while Sperrazza is one of the most tuneful of drummers, tonally organized to support and complement what everyone else is doing. While no molds are broken, everything sounds just right.

Solos tend to brevity, punctuating the pieces rather than giving them their *raison d'être*. With her clean, full tone, Greve flutters and yowls to color her coolly lyrical lines, which suggest more than a hint of Lee Konitz. Tordini alternates between theme carrier and nimble contrapuntal commentator while Sperrazza unobtrusively gives the music loft without ever needing to apply the afterburners. In fact, the constant conversation he maintains with the other two is one of the pleasures of this date.

Among the highlights is Greve's "Low", like all her compositions infused with a vague sadness, which nevertheless incorporates a perky countermelody, doubled by Tordini, who squeezes knotted asides into the flow. Later there's a feature for Greve notable for the high cries and wavering vulnerability with which she stretches her almost classical timbre. Sperrazza's concluding title cut is another peak, a thing of melancholy beauty, leavened by a lovely consolatory tinge.

The band presented much of the repertoire from the disc in a celebratory live-stream from Barbès (Aug. 21st, but still up on YouTube at the time of this writing), which emphasized the collective ethos all the more clearly. Apart from those numbers already mentioned, other memorable episodes included Tordini's "Zuppio", which blossomed first into a series of rippling patterns from Sperrazza and then later into another purposefully wiry solo for the author's pizzicato, both becoming subsumed by thorny interplay, enlivened by Greve's overblown flurries, before the final recapitulation.

Unsurprisingly they saved their theme tune to nearly the end, giving it a reverential reading, though one both animated and restrained. But it wasn't the last word. That went to a song not on the record, being a soulful cover of Cindy Walker-Eddy Arnold's "You Don't Know Me", a tune turned into a *Billboard* hit by Ray Charles in 1962, whose valedictory feel made for a tender close to the hour-long performance. While in her poem Evans likened *The Choir Invisible's* music to the gladness of the world, this threesome's take is rather more contemplative though, nonetheless, uplifting and inspiring.

For more information, visit intaktrec.ch



Birdsong
Champion Fulton (s/r)
by Dan Bilawsky

Bird has always been the word for Champion Fulton. The pianist-vocalist was, quite literally, ushered into existence with Charlie Parker serving as a soundtrack. She's been drawing inspiration from his work ever since so it's only fitting that, as the world recognizes the pioneering saxophonist's legacy with centennial celebrations of varied sorts, Fulton salutes him in style.

The arrival of this album, coming one day before Bird would've turned 100 (Aug. 29th, 2020) and the concert celebrating its release, recorded at Birdland (Sep. 1st), buttress Parker's strong position and broaden Fulton's standing as a supreme stylist and interpreter. Blending relaxed and romantic tides with athletic strides that seduce and swing, her music—pure Parker with personal touches—wins as it begins: in the case of the album, the starting point is a "Just Friends" that goes down nice and easy; and with the concert, it was a "Dearly Beloved" opening the door. In both instances, a magic lingers, or lingered, in the music.

The bulk of *Birdsong* came into play during the 60-minute performance. Whether sharing Jay McShann-related folklore about the origin of Parker's nickname, referencing dates on the Dial imprint, discussing an immortal marriage between horn and strings or simply noting that "Quasimodo" is built on the harmony of "Embraceable You", she managed to add volumes about the honoree in a most casually conversant manner.

With more than 15 years of bandstand bonding with bassist Hide Tanaka and drummer Fukushi Tainaka, a lifetime of experiences with her father, trumpeter Stephen Fulton (who sticks to flugelhorn for this project), and a strong rapport with tenor saxophonist Scott Hamilton, who was absent from the release show but appears on the majority of the album's tracks, Fulton is always in comfortable company. Whether sprinting through "All God's Chillun Got Rhythm", coolly exploring the contours of "Out of Nowhere" or touching on central meaning during "If I Should Lose You" and "My Old Flame", Fulton manages to charm and delight...like Bird in fine flight.

For more information, visit champion.net





Work
Ray Blue (Jazzheads)
by Kyle Oleksiuk

“Work is not a job.” “Work releases the inner child.” “Work is our spiritual connection with life.” “Work heals wounds.” “Work gives us our dignity and purpose.” The inner panel of saxophonist Ray Blue’s recent CD is crowded with these statements. They don’t describe work as people most often think of it—“work is not a job”—but they do describe the kind of communal labor that goes into raising a family, teaching, cooking, gardening and (surprise surprise) playing music.

Well, maybe not all music, but certainly this calm, confident album of ballads, most of which come from the American Songbook and from the traditional songbook of jazz standards. Blue is highly conversant with this pairing of traditions and at the virtual White Plains Jazzfest last month, after a skillful Zoom performance of “Our Very Own”, a ballad that could easily have appeared on *Work*, he briefly discussed the relationship between the two songbooks. Although the American Songbook technically does encompass jazz standards, along with other, usually lyrical popular songs from the early 20th Century, Blue rightly treats them as different things in the eyes of his students. “It’s important for students to be connected to the American Songbook, in addition to the jazz standards,” he said. He also mentioned that he likes to teach his students ballads because they require slow, difficult, careful playing, which counteracts the common music student’s desire to play quickly right off the bat.

Blue is certainly comfortable with the slow pace of the ballads he plays. At its few low points, that slow pace brings down the album—but on a 64-minute collection of songs it’s very possible to skip tracks and still have much more to hear. At its high points, though, *Work* is basically perfect. The opening title track (Blue’s composition, vaguely reminiscent of Sonny Rollins’ “St. Thomas”), is a beyond brilliant piece of music. If the album is your cup of tea, you should save it until the end, because although the rest of *Work* is great, it never repeats the incredible high of that first track. If the album isn’t your cup of tea, however, you’d still be severely depriving yourself by not listening to “Work”.

For more information, visit jazzheads.com



Just Coolin’
Art Blakey & The Jazz Messengers (Blue Note)
by Duck Baker

The appearance of a previously unreleased studio date from a short-lived edition of The Jazz Messengers led by drummer Art Blakey (born 101 years and dying 30 years ago this month) can only be great news for modern jazz fans and *Just Coolin’* does not disappoint. The lineup here is remembered for the two volumes of *Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers at the Jazz Corner of the World* that were recorded in April 1959 and it’s easy to

see why this session from the previous month was left on the shelf at the time, since most of the program was repeated on the live date. To give a little more context, The Messengers were a heavily recorded outfit throughout this period, both in the studio and on stage; this same lineup with Benny Golson instead of Hank Mobley on tenor saxophone was recorded about ten times during the last three months of 1958 and the subsequent editions in which Wayne Shorter replaced Mobley made dozens of records. Of course Mobley had played in the earliest Messenger lineups in 1954-56 and recorded with both Blakey and trumpeter Lee Morgan on plenty of other occasions, but the fact that we can now add to the discography of the Jazz Corner band is exciting, especially as the two tracks that did not get played on the live date have never been heard elsewhere. Those would be the tasty original by pianist Bobby Timmons, “Quick Trick”, and the way-up-tempo blues line “Jimerick”, of unknown provenance. These fit very well with the three Mobley numbers we know from the Birdland record (“Hipsippy Blues”, “M&M” and “Just Coolin’”) and the hip arrangement of the ‘30s pop song, “Close Your Eyes”, which usually gets a more overtly Latin-tinged treatment.

Since comparisons to the Jazz Corner performances are inevitable, let’s admit right away that no one is likely to claim that the studio versions are better. The band there feels much more in sync, as often happens on live dates, and this seems especially true of the rhythm section of bassist Jymie Merritt and Blakey (interestingly, most of the live versions are slightly slower than those on *Just Coolin’*). But Morgan sounds terrific on both dates and so does Mobley, apart from a few reed squeaks on the new release. Timmons did seem more settled in at Birdland, but the main difference is the deeper group feeling on the live tracks. Still, with two unheard tunes and plenty of great blowing from one of the great blowing bands, one can’t imagine many dissatisfied customers. What might have seemed like a fairly average release in 1959 sounds like much more than that in 2020, there’s just no getting around it.

For more information, visit bluenote.com



Once Upon A Time: The Lost 1965 New York Studio Sessions
Bob James (Resonance)
by Phil Freeman

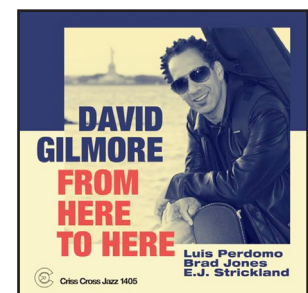
Pianist Bob James is probably best known for the six albums he released between 1974-78, which included frequently sampled jazz-funk pieces like “Nautilus”, “Westchester Lady”, “Take Me to the Mardi Gras” and “Angela”, the latter of which served as the theme to the popular sitcom *Taxi*. In the smooth jazz world, he’s also known as a founding member of Fourplay. But a decade before his commercial breakthrough, he was exploring more avant garde sounds, even releasing an album, *Explosions*, on the storied ESP-Disk’ label. Before that, 55 years ago, he recorded two trio sessions that have only just been unearthed. They were tracked in Columbia University’s Wollman Auditorium, with Resonance Records founder George Klabin serving as engineer.

The first four tunes, recorded on Jan. 20th, 1965 are with Larry Rockwell (bass) and Robert “Cleve” Pozar (drums). Two pieces, “Once Upon A Time” and “Variations”, are James originals while “Serenata” is by Leroy Anderson-Mitchell Parish and “Lateef Minor 7th” is by Joe Zawinul. Things are mostly melodic and

swinging to begin with; James has a heavy, dominant style, but never ventures too far out, on the first two tunes, anyway. About two minutes into “Lateef”, though, things slide off track into the realm of free playing and even sound sculpture. Pozar, who later played with Bill Dixon among others, strips the rhythm down to pointillist rattling and crashing, as electronic noises burst in without warning and someone, possibly Rockwell, shouts nonsense phrases in the background. This is adventurous music no one would identify with James, blindfolded or otherwise.

The second set, recorded nine months later on Oct. 9th, 1965 is with Bill Wood (bass) and Omar Clay (drums). The material is much more traditional: Sonny Rollins’ “Airegin”, Miles Davis’ “Solar”, Al Dubin-Victor Herbert’s “Indian Summer” and a blues so archetypal it’s not even credited. Here, James is heard in a hard-driving bop context and he makes the most of it, flying across the keys with Clay cracking the whip behind him. (“Indian Summer” is a simmering ballad.) There’s nothing revelatory here, but it’s nice enough.

For more information, visit resonancerecords.org



From Here to Here
David Gilmore (Criss Cross)
by Mark Keresman

Guitarist David Gilmore paid his dues as a member of the sadly underrated ‘90s fusion combo Lost Tribe and as part of the M-Base Collective. With those bands, he explored and reinvented the concept(s) of fusion. With *From Here to Here*, the first release from Criss Cross after founder Gerry Teekens’ death last October, he inhabits straight-up jazz territory, albeit in a postbop zip code.

The festivities begin with the briskly swinging “Focus Pocus”, Gilmore driving the piece with a surging theme, ably enabled by tight focus from his band of pianist Luis Perdomo, bassist Brad Jones and drummer E.J. Strickland. “Child of Time”, with its autumnally bright theme and sparse acoustic guitar picking, could be a radio hit, a leisurely tempo offset by Strickland’s storm-is-brewing cadences. “When and Then” has a playfully jagged, somewhat angular theme that evokes the glory days of proto-fusion outfits such as Mahavishnu Orchestra. Gilmore goes to town herein, exercising tension and slight distortion in his lengthy solo, with a few Carlos Santana-like high-note flourishes for good measure.

“The Long Game” is joyfully Thelonious Monk-flavored with its wry, angular theme and tantalizing unison playing from Gilmore and Perdomo. The former’s solo has a somewhat burred tone, wiry concentration and fluid, horn-like phrasing while the latter is a marvel of bop economy and crystalline swing. The swirling “Free Radicals” has a vaguely Latin-flavored rhythmic feel and Gilmore’s early solo is dramatic in a slightly rock-like manner, one of the few echoes of the great Lost Tribe days. Jones and Strickland are a force of nature, their respective axes pulsating with surging excitement that never becomes bombastic or gratuitous.

It’s not easy to put a broad stylistic tag on this set—it’s not really fusion although aspects of fusion are often felt. The important thing is this music has three things essential to a good jazz album: heart, brains and guts.

For more information, visit crisscrossjazz.com



Shuffle and Deal
Eddie Henderson (Smoke Sessions)
 by George Kanzler

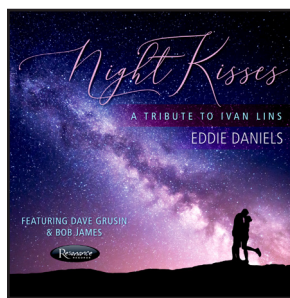
Trumpeter Eddie Henderson, who turns 80 this month, has been recording for five decades, beginning with Herbie Hancock in 1970, and has played with most of the giants of hardbop and 20th Century jazz, knee-deep in fusion in the '70s-80s but landing firmly in the hardbop/postbop mainstream over the last 30 years. This is the second album by his quintet with super-sideman pianist Kenny Barron, alto saxophonist Donald Harrison and drummer Mike Clark. New to the group this time around is bassist Gerald Cannon. The repertoire includes two pieces from Barron's book, one each from the leader and Harrison and a tune from both Henderson's wife Natsuko Henderson and his daughter Cava Menzies.

However, the four tracks that distinguish this date are ballad standards, all brought to fully burnished life by musicians to whom they obviously resonate deeply. Henderson has always been a swinging "cooker" – he's even a member of the band The Cookers – but his ballad prowess has grown steadily in recent years. Harold Arlen's "Over the Rainbow" is delicately limned by open trumpet in a quartet version also notable for Barron's logically lyrical solo. Richard Rodgers-Oscar

Hammerstein's "It Might As Well Be Spring" adds a rhapsodic alto solo to the proceedings while Billie Holiday's "God Bless The Child" finds Henderson with Harmon mute, alternating solos with alto and piano. The album closes with Charlie Chaplin's "Smile", a ruminative duet from open trumpet and piano.

The non-ballads provide plenty of variety, from the leader's shuffle title tune and Harrison's "Burnin'" to Barron's fleet "Flight Path" and tropically-themed "Cook's Bay", Menzies' quirky-tempoed blues "By Any Means" and Natsuko Henderson's boogaloo-inflected swinger "Boom" with forceful solos from trumpet and piano. What distinguishes this album from similar fare is both the variety of the repertoire and prominence of memorable ballad tracks.

For more information, visit smokesessionsrecords.com



Night Kisses (A Tribute to Ivan Lins)
Eddie Daniels (Resonance)
 by Pierre Giroux

Over the past few years, clarinetist/tenor saxophonist/flutist Eddie Daniels, who turns 79 this month, has immersed himself in the music of Brazil. In 2018, he recorded *Heart Of Brazil: The Music Of Egberto Gismonti* and he now directs his talents to the music of another

eminent Brazilian composer with *Night Kisses (A Tribute to Ivan Lins)*. Lins' compositions have found favour broadly in North America as they have been covered by many bold faced names in both jazz and popular music.

Daniels is supported by a couple of highly respected jazz pianists and Grammy winners in Bob James and Dave Grusin, the rhythm section of pianist Josh Nelson, bassist Kevin Axt and drummer Mauricio Zottarelli, plus the strings of the Harlem Quartet.

Opener "A Vos Do Povo" (The Voice Of The People) features flute sailing over the ensemble with a glittering edginess. The swirling rhythmic undercurrents of the number demonstrate an understanding of the Brazilian music traditions. Grusin teams with Daniels (tenor) to give a sympathetic and lyrical reading to "Mãos de Afeto" (Hands Of Affection).

The evocative harmonic coloration combined with the propulsive and changeable rhythms of Lins' compositions provide a sound garden which Daniels, now on clarinet, can explore in his broad and expressive style. "Pano de Fundo" (Backdrop) and "Vilas Içadas" (Hoisted Sails) are contrasting themes where Daniels' control of timbre, tone and fluidity are on full display. Another clarinet track is with James, "Lembra", an evocative and intimate theme with a bossa nova beat.

The final track in this session is "Ivante" wherein Daniels, Grusin and James bring their talents together. Driven by a simple samba beat the principals show a sense of a shared pursuit as the theme unfolds. By way of his clarinet, Daniels is equally focused on the melody and texture while both Grusin and James are paradigms of piano smarts and comportment.

For more information, visit resonancerecords.org

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Roof Rights | Available Light | Strange Unison
Mark Helias (Radio Legs Music)
 by George Grella

Bassist Mark Helias, who turns 70 this month, has been a major figure in modern jazz since the mid '70s when, fresh out of graduate school, he joined Anthony Braxton's ensemble. That in no small way led to the collaborative trio BassDrumBone with trombonist Ray Anderson and drummer Gerry Hemingway. Along with that group, Helias has been making music steadily in another trio setting, Open Loose, with tenor saxophonist Tony Malaby and drummer Tom Rainey.

Those last two groups make up a substantial part of his discography and *Strange Unison* is one of some 20 albums that Helias is either rereleasing or bringing to light for the first time, through his own Radio Legs Music label. The trio album was initially put out on CD in 2008 and it and the other two records under review here are all available digitally – remastered by Helias – via his Bandcamp page.

The other two releases are belated debuts; the solo disc *Available Light* was recorded, according to the album notes, “in the late 1990s” in Helias’ East Village recording studio while *Roof Rights*—a live set with the bassist leading a sextet—comes from the 2000 Wangaratta Jazz Festival in Australia. Malaby plays tenor in this band, along with alto saxophonist David Ades, trumpeter Scott Tinkler, trombonist James Greening and drummer Gerald Cleaver in for Rainey.

Though just scratching the surface of Helias’ musicianship, these three recordings do add up to a pretty deep look into his work. *Roof Rights* is an immediate stand-out for the size of the group and what it can do. The configuration came from adding three Aussie horn players to the core Open Loose trio and as Helias writes in the notes, “the conviction and accuracy achieved by the sextet”, after a couple hours of rehearsal, “is astounding”. It really is and Helias’ charts have a lot of say in the matter. His skillful contrapuntal writing makes this sound like a bigger group than it is; one is surprised to confirm that this is just six musicians, not a big band. There’s some freedom inside the music, but this is stuff with a clear harmonic and rhythmic profile. Ades adds a surprising texture, his alto sound has a bite similar to that of Henry Threadgill and the piano-less textures, Cleaver’s rolling drumming and the sense of soul and fun make this an unexpected response to Threadgill’s Sextett albums of the same general era. It’s only at the end, with the anticlimactic “End of the Middle/Bling Bang”, that the lack of group experience shows. This is more of a ballad number and it sounds like the band just doesn’t have the ensemble foundation needed to sustain the slower, softer mood. But everything else benefits from great energy, cohesion and the feeling that all are having a terrific time.

Helias’ thoughtful solo album opens with Don Cherry’s lovely “Arabian Nightingale” and, except for one other track, fellow bassist Oscar Pettiford’s “Laverne Walk”, all the tunes are originals. A lot of the music seems less about playing compositions than working through improvisational ideas and technical issues on the bass. Helias shows masterful arco on tracks like “Nocturnal” and his jeté bowing on “Ricochet” produces a rich sound and becomes a fascinating musical idea in and of itself. Beautifully recorded, an album of solo bass music may not be to everyone’s liking, but this is a fine example of the art.

Open Loose is a slightly mis-named band, especially compared to the very loose, rollicking BassDrumBone. This is a trio that plays not just together but connected through deliberate musical material.

Strange Unison is a winner—there’s a certain promise when musicians who can expand the edges come together for a more familiar aesthetic and it’s a real pleasure to hear these guys dig into slow blues (“Blue Light Down the Line”) and numbers that swing with a certain tightness, even as the pulse and meter shifts around, like “Johns and Marks”. Like *Roof Rights*, while Malaby takes most of the lead in expression, Helias is the navigator with a firm, clear, confident hand on the tiller. These albums show him as the kind of bassist anyone would like supporting their musical ideas.

For more information, visit markhelias.bandcamp.com



Worn, Kissed.
Mats Gustafsson (Underflow)
Live at The Underflow Record Store and Art Gallery
David Grubbs/Mats Gustafsson/Rob Mazurek
(Underflow)
Cuts Open
Merzbow/Mats Gustafsson/Balázs Pándi (RareNoise)
 by Kurt Gottschalk

In times like these, maybe what we need, whether we know it or not, is a soft and placid Mats Gustafsson. The relentless Swedish reedplayer, who turns 56 this month, has one of the most recognizable tones around today, largely but not entirely due to the sheer force of his blowing. But three recent records show a surprising—well, not quite softness, but a sort of pliability. The gentler side of Gustafsson, rest assured, still has a jagged edge. These albums—a solo and two trios—aren’t exactly easy listening, but are refreshing in a terrain he traipses less often.

Worn, Kissed. can be heard as an environmental record and, in fact, could best be heard in a space with other sounds: birds, foghorns, maybe a smoke alarm. Side One is occupied by “The Hypnagogic Puzzle”, referencing the state just before sleeping. 22 minutes of extended silences are interrupted by very brief passages of flute, electronics and deep inhalations. The little puzzles of pitch and pulsation, not even minuets, really, make for a fantastic suite of disorientation and consciousness subsumed. The flip goes a bit darker, with two pieces for baritone saxophone and more sparing use of electronics and named (like the first piece and the album itself) after paintings by the contemporary Swedish artist Edward Jarvis (b. 1964, the same year as Gustafsson). The album comes not just with a 48-page book of Jarvis’ paintings but a 500-piece jigsaw puzzle of one of them, housed in a handsome, gold-embossed black box, released in conjunction with a show of Jarvis’ paintings at the Underflow Record Store and Gallery in Athens.

Underflow is also responsible for a trio release by Gustafsson, guitarist David Grubbs and piccolo trumpeter Rob Mazurek (who also plays wooden flute and percussion), recorded in 2019 and titled simply *Live at The Underflow Record Store and Art Gallery*. Gustafsson again plays flute and baritone, along with a hybrid flutophone (a flute body with a saxophone mouthpiece) and he and Mazurek both employ live electronics. Guitar is amplified as well, but the session nevertheless turns out to be a fairly low-key set of four abstract improvisations: “City Stones Sleep”, “Goats and Hollers”, “Creep Mission” and “Not in a Hall of Mirrors”, ranging from 4:29-5:56 and 16:14-17:59. Extended solo passages serve to keep things on the quiet side while the group explorations have a pleasant way of wandering aimlessly but in sync. The simpler LP package here comes with a cover painting by Mazurek dedicated to late fellow trumpeter Bill Dixon and both Underflow titles are available for streaming in full on Bandcamp.

If there’s any time to expect Gustafsson raging with the throttle open, it’s in a meeting with Japanese noisemeister Merzbow. Backing by powerhouse Hungarian drummer Balázs Pándi would seem to seal the deal, which is what makes *Cuts Open* the biggest surprise of the three. It’s not that the four long tracks (filling four sides of a double-LP and also available on CD and download) are so easy to receive, but they don’t hit as hard, more a walk in complete darkness than freefall or rocket blast and indeed not as hard as on their 2013 session *Cuts* (also RareNoise). It’s easily the most unnerving of the three titles here, all the more so for its rounded edges.

For more information, visit underflowrecords.com and rarenoiserecords.com



Angels Around
Kurt Rosenwinkel Trio (Heartcore)
 by Tom Greenland

Angels Around is Kurt Rosenwinkel’s dozzenth album as a leader, the first for his own Berlin-based Heartcore label and a return—of sorts—to his roots: standards played in trio format. The guitarist’s followers may be reminded of his first release, 1996’s *East Coast Love Affair*, recorded live at Smalls, or 2009’s *Reflections*, both trio outings and, like the current album, focused on covers with one or two originals. What hasn’t changed is Rosenwinkel’s way with the Great American (jazz) Songbook—a canon including works of Thelonious Monk and Wayne Shorter alongside those of Jerome Kern and George Gershwin—as well as his startling ability to reveal deep roots in and affinity for the tenets of bebop while simultaneously espousing a highly personalized and perpetually contemporary vision. What has changed—and this is clearly heard on intervening recordings—is the shape and quality of his tone, which has moved from the dry clarity of the earlier efforts to an increasingly wet sound, less distinct perhaps, but full of character. Here his pick attack is often so buried under a filter of synthesizer and other signal processors that, when heard in the context of his seamlessly interpolated harmonic and melodic ideas, suggests a keyboardist rather than a guitarist.

With Italian bassist Dario Deidda and drummer Gregory Hutchinson (who appeared on *Reflections*), both strong yet tactful players, *Angels Around* contains consistently excellent guitar playing throughout, from the adroit intermixing of solo and background roles on the bossa nova-esque reading of Monk’s “Ugly Beauty” to the effusion of bop-laced lines on Paul Chambers’ “Ease It” and attractive harmonization of Charles Mingus’ “Self Portrait in Three Colors” (a prime instance of how easy it is to forget that Rosenwinkel is playing guitar, not keyboard). The uninspiringly titled original “Simple #2” is, in fact, one of the more inspired pieces, segueing from a “Smoke on the Water”-style heavy metal riff riddled with shredding pentatonic minor runs to a loping ‘alt-jazz’ waltz. Joe Henderson’s “Punjab” juxtaposes, again, an older jazz ethos with a newer jazz timbre and attitude. Bill Evans’ “Time Remembered”, a sort of ‘rock-bossa’, recalls Pat Metheny’s tone and lyricism. The title/final track, by Deidda, a prog-rock ballad, boasts a finely coiled, shape-shifting guitar solo reminiscent of Larry Carlton’s fiery melodic style.

For more information, visit heartcore-records.com



**The Capitol Transcriptions (1946-1949)
Peggy Lee (Capitol-UMe)
by Marilyn Lester**

In an enduringly successful career, spanning well over a half-century, singer-songwriter Peggy Lee proved herself a versatile artist worthy of legend status. The celebrations for Lee's centennial year (she was born on May 26th, 1920) have already included releases of *Ultimate Peggy Lee* and *Peggy Lee Decca Rarities*; they have now been joined by *The Capitol Transcriptions 1946-1949*, a curated collection of 72 tracks featuring 55 songs. This sliver of Lee's vast legacy of recorded work is a delightful window into the career on an icon in the making; by the end of her life she'd written over 250 songs and recorded more than 1,100 masters.

This compilation is taken from the body of masters created by Lee for Capitol's Transcription Library Service: 16-inch, 33-rpm discs made exclusively for radio airplay by subscribing stations. In them, a fresh-voiced, young Lee is radiant with the talent that would shortly ripen and mature into a more assured mastery of jazz and popular music. Most of the sessions were arranged by Henry J. "Heinie" Beau (with a few by Frank DeVol) who wrote with a keen ear to the stylistic expectations of radio audiences. The musical backing for most of the transcriptions consisted of pianist Buddy Cole's Four Of A Kind with Dave Barbour (guitar), Phil Stephens (bass) and Tommy Romersa (drums). In 1949 the small group makeup was Barbour and George Van Eps (guitars), Phil Stephens (bass), Hal Schaefer (piano) and Nick Fatool (drums). These sessions were arranged by Heinie Beau and are notable for beautifully crafted enhancements and solos by Barbour.

However, for two Summer 1946 sessions the musical backing was expanded by DeVol and His Orchestra with Barbour, Stephens or Fred Whiting, Cole, Romersa or John Cyr, Skeets Herfurt, Jerome Kasper, Jules Kinsler, Ron Perry, Ted Romersa, Paul McLarand, Joseph Palange and/or Leonard Mach (reeds); Abe Benike, Uan Rasey and Irv Shulkin (trumpets); George Faye, Si Zentner and/or Paul Weigand (trombones); Richard "Dick" Perissi (French horn); Victor Arno, Joseph Livoti, Joseph Quadri, Henry Sugar and/or Walter Edelstein and Ted Rosen (violins); Jacob Kaz, Paul Lowenkron and/or Elizabeth Sugar (violas); and Fred Goerner, Joseph Saxon and Julius Tannenbaum (vocals).

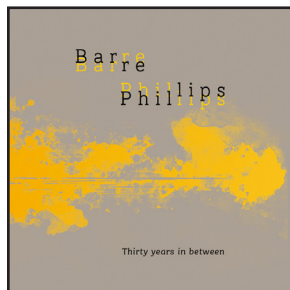
The collection is a tasty smorgasbord of tunes, with novelty songs, gospel and folk among a goodly number of standards. About half the tracks are A-list songbook fare still popular today, including "S Wonderful" (George and Ira Gershwin), "Come Rain or Come Shine" (Harold Arlen-Johnny Mercer) and "I Get a Kick Out of You" (Cole Porter), mostly arranged with a jaunty light swing. Many of the other numbers are popular songs of the day, which eventually drifted into relative obscurity, such as "The Best Man" (Roy Alfred-Fred Wise), "Just Like a Gypsy" (Norah Bayes-Seymour Simons) and "I've Had My Moments" (Walter Donaldson-Gus Kahn). Two of Lee's own works are represented, with "Don't Be So Mean To Baby" and "I Don't Know Enough About You", both co-written with then-husband Barbour.

While all of these tunes are pleasant to the ear, it's in a healthy handful-plus of numbers that Lee's promise of greatness really shines. Her abilities as a storyteller are particularly sharp in "A Cottage for Sale" (Larry Conley-Willard Robison) and "I've Got It Bad (And

That Ain't Good)" (Duke Ellington-Paul Francis Webster). She proves she can hold a torch and sing the blues with the best of them in "A Nightingale Can Sing the Blues" (Dick Charles-Lawrence W. Markes, Jr.) and "Lonesome Road" (Gene Austin-Nathaniel Shilkrat). Even the unusual choice of the traditional Irish folk standard "Molly Malone" is delivered as an impassioned story, as is the novelty tune "This Little Piggie" (Harold Lewis-Sam Coslow-Leslie Barton).

Lee can also turn a song on its head. The normally melancholy-happy song, "Blue Skies" (Irving Berlin) is infused with joy, despite its minor key, while the up-tune "I Only Have Eyes for You" (Al Dubin-Harry Warren) is given a melancholy edge. With "I Let a Song Go Out of My Heart" (Ellington-Henry Nemo-John Redmond), Lee proves to be one of the few interpreters of the Ellington songbook truly to understand how he wrote the blues into a great deal of his compositions. While there's light swing to be heard over the 55 songs, none can be considered truly jazzy. Lee does approach the idiom though, in a creative "Swing Low Sweet Chariot" (traditional). There's also a terrific novelty tune "All the Cats Join In" (Eddie Sauter-Alec Wilder-Ray Gilbert) that tips its swingin' hat to the jazz crowd.

For more information, visit udiscovermusic.com



**Thirty years in between
Barre Phillips (Victo)
by Andrey Henkin**

A few decades before what would become the art form known as jazz was birthed, another movement was applying the concepts of improvisation and individuality to the medium of painting. Impressionism, like jazz, was often done 'live', or in plein-air, and also favored 'standards', repeated subjects that would be approached differently because of the season or the available light.

The exemplar of Impressionism was Frenchman Claude Monet (1840-1926) and while series like the *Water Lilies*, *Haystacks* and *London Parliament* are most known, for this reviewer the peak of Monet's craft was his 30+ paintings of the Rouen Cathedral, done between 1892-94.

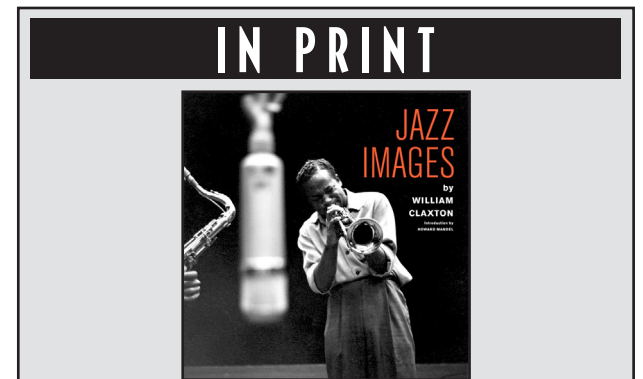
Fast-forward almost 75 years and across the channel to London in November 1968, where Barre Phillips (b. 1934) was recording what would become the first improvised solo bass album, *Journal Violone* (Opus One). What was initially not even Phillips' idea would become the totemic concept of his career. While Monet focused on his cathedral for only two years, Phillips would revisit the solo bass recital over the next half-century, season and available light replaced by age and accumulated experience.

In March 2017, Phillips, then 82, recorded what would be released as *End To End* on ECM the following year, a sort of bookend to the aforementioned *Journal Violone*, telling this reviewer at the time, "The solo albums, they're really a part of a recording history. And to me it's like [director] Robert Kramer told me one time at the end of his life, one or two months before he died, what I've done is all one film and I could dig that." Phillips did a tour of the project, one date of which was at the 35th Annual Festival International de Musique Actuelle de Victoriaville on May 17th, 2019. Victo, the in-house label of the festival, has now released that concert as *Ahoy!*, part of the two-disc set *Thirty Years in between*, partnering it with an earlier

solo Phillips Victo set, *Camouflage*, recorded in Vancouver 30 years (plus six days) earlier.

To speak of each independently is like viewing one of the cathedrals without knowing of its brethren. As Phillips said, these are a dream returned to and if there are the differences—each is a distinct facet of a larger gem—and details like recording quality or motifs, they still can and do function as a whole, taken in linearly or in an order of one's choosing. You cannot own a Rouen cathedral painting but you can and should have all of Phillips' solo recordings mounted in a place of honor within your musical museum.

For more information, visit victo.qc.ca



**Jazz Images by William Claxton
(Elemental Music)
by Russ Musto**

William Claxton (Oct. 12th, 1927 - Oct. 11th, 2008) described his aesthetic as "jazz for the eyes" and branded himself "a jazz photographer" as opposed to a "photographer of jazz", developing his vision in conjunction with the improvisatory nature of the music. And, as in jazz itself, where a piece is manifested within the framework of an arrangement, Claxton's images achieved their singularity as a result of the locale in which they were photographed.

A lifelong California resident, Claxton utilized his home state's sun-drenched atmosphere to create an impressive body of work, the lively brilliance in stark contrast to the enigmatic smoky darkness of iconic peers Roy DeCarava, Herman Leonard and Francis Wolff. As quoted in Howard Mandel's introduction to this 162-page volume of 164 photos depicting more than 65 different artists, Claxton once declared, "Being on the West Coast, I wanted to bring out the fact that musicians were living in a very health conscious environment. So I purposely put them on the beach or in the mountains or on the road in their convertibles."

What may be the most familiar of all the photos, culled from Claxton's tenure as house photographer for Pacific Jazz, is Chet Baker, grasping the sail of a boat with one hand, as he holds his trumpet in the other, blowing it out into the sea. Baker appears in myriad settings in 25 different pictures, including the earliest one, from a 1953 Pasadena Just Jazz concert as a member of the Charlie Parker Quintet. Other classic shots include a young Ornette Coleman (from *The Shape of Jazz to Come*), Thelonious Monk hanging off a cable car, Sonny Rollins beneath a Mojave Desert cactus arch and the Montgomery Brothers under the Golden Gate Bridge. There are plenty of West Coast concert, club and studio photos, among them a Clifford Brown-Max Roach record date and a Cannonball Adderley Quintet show at the Monterey Jazz Festival.

A 1959-60 cross-country trip yielded striking photos of Jackie McLean performing in *The Connection* in New York; Art Blakey and Lee Morgan playing a club in Philly; Charles Mingus and Eric Dolphy hanging in Newport; and the Ramsey Lewis Trio on a Chicago boulevard. All this and so much more here to hear with your eyes.

For more information, visit elemental-music.com/books



The Complete Alain Jean-Marie Biguine Reflections
Alain Jean-Marie (Frémeaux & Associés)
 by Alex Henderson

AfroCaribbean music has been influencing jazz for generations and one veteran who has found a great deal of inspiration is pianist Alain Jean-Marie, a native of Pointe-à-Pitre, Guadeloupe, who turns 75 this month. *The Complete Alain Jean-Marie Biguine Reflections*, a four-CD set, compiles all five albums Jean-Marie recorded for his ambitious *Biguine Reflections* series. Although this collection spans a 21-year period, 1992-2013, there isn't much variation in the lineups—Jean-Marie, who composed much of the material, leads trios with Eric Vinceno (bass) and Serge Marne or Jean-Claude Montredon (drums)—or the theme: hard-swinging postbop with AfroCaribbean influences, especially Creole biguine music. Nonetheless, there is a fair amount of variety: a festive, celebratory exuberance to uptempo tracks like “Soufrière”, “Bégonia”, “Enjoy Life” and “Chofé Bigin La” yet more introspection on “An Ti Kaz-La”, “Nathalie” and “Cécilia”.

“Sainte Marie” has a mood similar to trumpeter Kenny Dorham’s Brazilian-flavored standard “Blue Bossa” while the pianist’s improvisations on two different versions of “Haiti” (from *Biguine Reflections II* and *Biguine Reflections IV: Delirio*) recall pianist McCoy Tyner on John Coltrane’s 1960 recording of Richard Rodgers-Oscar Hammerstein’s “My Favorite Things”. “Doudou pa Pléré”, “Biguine Esperanza” and “Jean Claude” have a strong Latin influence while a funky, R&B-ish mood prevails on “Jumpin’” and “Antilope”. Jean-Marie sometimes incorporates elements of European classical music: “Fête a la Guadeloupe”, for example, has a similar feel to Ludwig van Beethoven’s “Bagatelle No. 25 in A minor”, a.k.a. “Für Elise”.

The song titles are in different languages: English, French, Creole, reflecting the multicultural outlook Jean-Marie brought to his recordings. Much of his inspiration has come from American jazz but his willingness to draw on his Caribbean background has been one of his strong points, especially mindful of parts of the Caribbean where French or Creole is spoken. Although a four-CD set like this isn't designed for listeners who have a more casual interest in the pianist's work, the performances are quite consistent. Hardcore followers will be glad to have all five of the *Biguine* albums together in the same collection.

For more information, visit fremaux.com



Speakin' Out
New Stories (with guest Ernie Watts) (Origin)
 by Jim Motavalli

New Stories is a Seattle-based trio that loves to work with guests. Marc Seales (piano), Doug Miller (bass) and John Bishop (drums) made six albums with the late bebop saxophonist Don Lanphere, another with singer Mark Murphy (Grammy-nominated *Song for the*

Geese) and four under their own name. Telling all kinds of new stories, they've worked with Tom Harrell, Nick Brignola, Slide Hampton, Jon Faddis and Larry Coryell. *Speakin' Out* recently celebrated its 20th anniversary, recorded with guest Ernie Watts in 1999. The West Coast saxophonist deserves the co-billing on the cover, because he really raises the temperature on this date.

Watts, who turns 75 this month, is a national treasure worth discovering. For two decades, he was buried in *The Tonight Show* band and spent 25 years as a relatively anonymous studio musician in L.A. Watts has been making up for lost time since the mid '80s, playing straight-ahead jazz with the fire of a much younger man. Listen to him negotiate the tricky head on Miller's title song and then rip off a high-energy solo with growls, upper-register cries and low-down whispers. Watts (who survived Buddy Rich tours) appears on five of the nine tracks. On Miller's “Apparitions” he's in a pensive mood and gives a master class in translating yearning to a reed instrument. Miller, great throughout, has a fine probing solo as well. “The Jordy Strut” (another Miller piece) is funky soul-jazz recalling Horace Silver and Cannonball Adderley. Remember when they said stuff like this was “selling out”? There's nothing at all wrong with the material that doesn't feature Watts, but he adds a lot. Pat Metheny's “In Her Family” shows off Seales' melodic, Bill Evans-influenced style. He's a fine pianist, with compositional chops showcased on “Blue” and “Highway Blues”. The former is also a strong showcase for both Seales and a burning Watts.

It's nice to see this album get a second trip 'round the park. It's meaty work, featuring a saxophone player who sounds glad to be back in his native element.

For more information, visit originarts.com



Sketches of Yugoslavia
Dusko Goykovich (Enja)
 by Mark Keresman

For a fellow from behind what used to be called The Iron Curtain, trumpeter/flugelhornist Dusko Goykovich has established himself as an international jazz star. Born 89 years ago this month in Bosnia-Herzegovina, he played in Dixieland combos and big bands, logging time with no less than Stan Getz, Oscar Pettiford, Duke Jordan and Sonny Rollins. From 1968-1973 he was a member of the Kenny Clarke/Francy Boland Big Band. And since the early '60s Goykovich has led two dozen albums. This one is unearthed from 1973-74, Goykovich with a quartet of Fritz Pauer (piano), Peter Trunk (bass) and Tony Inzalaco (drums), plus the brass and woodwinds section of the NDR Orchestra Hannover directed/arranged by Hans Hammerschmid.

Opener “Balkan Dance” reflects the influence of Gil Evans. There is a strong strain of melancholy, apt for the tumultuous history of that Eastern European region. The swing over which the melody rides reflects the potent dance rhythms of the region's folk music. Goykovich solos in a stirring fashion, his lusciously muted phrasing riding over the dynamic, dancing cadences. The melodramatic “Bosna Calling” has an undulating pulse over which Goykovich soars with a combination of easy grace and burning inspiration. Despite its somewhat flowery title, “Haze on the Danube” has more Detroit than Belgrade in its panoramic orchestration, rich with shades of the blues.

“Macedonia” begins with the faraway strains of piano. Trumpet is both exultant and elegant, the

melodic line robust yet with a tinge of wistfulness. Soon the emotive drift changes, becoming more dramatic, as if heralding a coming storm, Goykovich following suit. The track seems almost like a miniature symphony, going through hills and valleys, hushed lulls and passionate roars. “East of Montenegro” has a loping groove and compact, torrid trumpet.

One of the album's finest aspects is how orchestration is employed. Hammerschmid's arrangements are an intrinsic component to Goykovich's presentation, contributing to an overall tone of class and opulence without schmaltz or ostentation.

For more information, visit jazzrecords.com/enja

ON SCREEN

FEVER

The Music of Peggy Lee

Fever: The Music of Peggy Lee
 (PBS)
 by George Kanzler

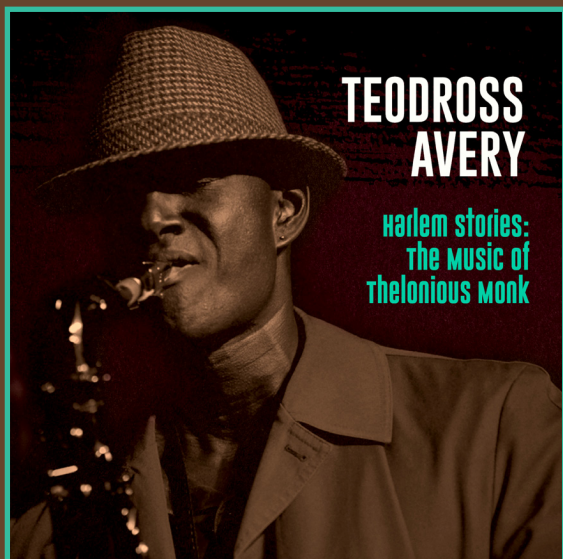
This affirmative documentary on singer Peggy Lee (1920-2002) is compiled from sources that include home movies, talking head interviews and generous clips of performance. The latter—almost all from her first quarter-century as a singer—save the hour-long film from being a complete hagiography. In between accolades from musicians, fellow singers, arrangers, conductors, songwriters and family members, we hear all of—or at least long snippets—a dozen and half songs from Lee, ranging from her first hit with Benny Goodman, “Why Don't You Do Right” from 1942, to a “Wind Beneath My Wings” from 1984.

The documentary is assembled as a loosely chronological biography, although most of the details are about her professional rather than personal life, with the notable exception of comments from her (now deceased) daughter and granddaughter and those home movies. Shaping it into parts are the verses of “Is That All There Is?”, circa 1970. Interestingly, although Lee did, as Margaret Whiting is seen saying, “write hit after hit after hit” (lyrics mostly), “Is That All There Is?”, positioned in the documentary as her signature song, was written by Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller of Coasters fame. And “Fever”, which gives it its title, was an R&B cover.

Lee “was one of those innovators who changed the face of popular music and even made songwriters who wrote those songs look and say ‘that's better than I thought it was’,” says Michael Feinstein. Billy May says, “she was a good musician, way ahead of the popular music of her time.” Nancy Sinatra says, “she was the epitome of technique and sexuality.”

But the proof is in the pudding and that is the many performances that affirm her position in the pantheon of American popular song. We see her doing her early hits with first husband Dave Barbour (and only one of four mentioned by name), including “It's A Good Day” and “I Don't Know Enough About You”. There's a striking, dispassionate, against the grain performance of “Lover”; sparkling duets with Mel Tormé, Andy Williams and Judy Garland; “Fever” with just bass and hand drums; and “I'm Gonna Go Fishin'”, her lyrics to a Duke Ellington melody.

For more information, visit peggylee.com/fever-the-music-of-peggy-lee-2020



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**Harlem stories:
The Music of
Thelonious Monk**

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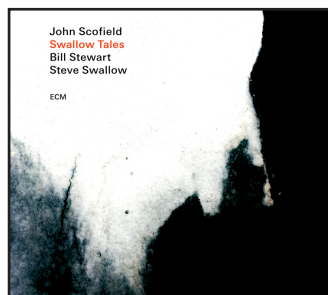
MARVIN BUGALU SMITH
DRUMS

ALLAKOI "MIC HOLDEN" PEETE
PERCUSSION

ROBIN D. G. KELLEY,
AUTHOR OF THELONIOUS MONK:
THE LIFE AND TIMES OF
AN AMERICAN ORIGINAL
LINER NOTES

**"MONK'S MUSIC IS TIMELESS,
YET IT'S RARELY BEEN
DELIVERED WITH THIS MUCH
SPIRIT AND FRESHNESS."
— JIM HYNES, GLIDE MAGAZINE**

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Swallow Tales
John Scofield (ECM)
by Marc Medwin

There are times when the old adage "less is more" holds true, or at least it works as a frame. According to guitarist John Scofield's notes, this set of nine Steve Swallow tunes was recorded in an afternoon, simply, with very little preparation. There was certainly no need to acquaint the bandmembers—bassist Swallow, who turns 80 this month, and drummer Bill Stewart—whose long association last bore recorded fruit on *Country for Old Men* (Impulse, 2016), an absolute hoot of an album whose whimsical openness of spirit was matched by a depth of exploration typical of all three of these veterans. They return in similar form to pay deeply smiling homage to a giant fortunately still with us.

The trio plays as easily as they let loose completely and the abandon and control in such extraordinary symbiosis is largely due to Scofield's boundary-busting influence. He guides the achingly iridescent "She was Young" from a wistful ballad, far different from its more orchestral version on *Home* (ECM, 1979) toward eventual catharsis. After Swallow's poignantly minimal solo and after Stewart has switched from brushes to sticks and back, Scofield's sly wit rears its head with a series of what the academic might be forced to label ascending superbends, like Chuck Berry on "Deep Feeling", whose slightly distorted grit propels the group into a funky frenzy as loose as it is vibrant. Scofield's shifts in sonic body and heft are as subtle as his articulatory arsenal is immense. Swallow and Stewart groove, sway and syncopate each moment to breaking point, stretching time only to slide it back into place with the effortlessness of breath and persuasiveness of speech. Scofield's diads and chords, emerging from him with similar finesse, push the tune's harmonies beyond themselves to the point that the music is far enough 'inside' to be 'outside'.

This version of "Awful Coffee", so different from the rendering with Carla Bley's big band (*Appearing Nightly*, WATT Works, 2006) takes a similar tack, including Swallow's best soloing on the album. Each organ-like tone he plays is both foundational and a jumping-off place for the subtle magic Scofield and Stewart lay down behind him. Yet, nothing prepares for the loosening of rhythmic structure and final dissonance that hits with the invigorating whoosh of a cold shower.

What we are given is a kind of career retrospective as viewed through the lens of an afternoon shared by old friends who, despite Scofield's acknowledgement of Swallow's continued mentorship, have long bypassed the teacher-student barrier. Tracks from throughout the illustrious bassist's career, such as a revisitation of the uplifting "Eiderdown", are revitalized, imbued with the wisdom of experience and camaraderie. The midtempo track is especially welcome as it gives Stewart a chance to stretch and if a drummer other than he can be found in whose every phrase melody and rhythmic intrigue exist in such happy conjunction, please point the way. Each accent, cymbal tick and facile roll offer, in glorious microcosm, everything fantastic about this group and album. Scofield fans need not hesitate and anyone wanting an introduction to Swallow's angular, sometimes quirky and always beautiful compositions won't find a better one.

For more information, visit ecmrecords.com



Memories of a Tunicate
Peter Brötzmann/Fred Lonberg-Holm (Relative Pitch)
Znachki Stilyag
Ballister (Aerophonic)
The Avondale Addition
Stirrup + 6 (Cuneiform)
by Steven Loewy

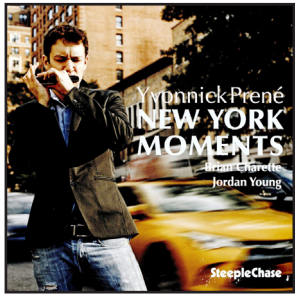
Fred Lonberg-Holm, who turns 58 this month, has built a reputation as a consummate cellist yet refers to himself as the "anti-cellist", stretching the capabilities of the instrument. The recordings below present him in different contexts with small groups.

Memories of a Tunicate is his third duo recording with reedplayer Peter Brötzmann. Those who have closely followed the German over the years will notice a more nuanced, less harsh mien than on his early recordings, a function of maturity or perhaps of an ever-ending quest for a perfect sound. Lonberg-Holm is a great foil, easily matching the intensity of the saxophonist with amplified, twisted sounds that grate and ingratiate while never losing a step. When he solos, as on "Octacnemidae", the marvelous way he stretches and twists notes are impressive and when matched with Brötzmann's blowing, there is eerie synchronicity between the two. For example, on "Pyrosomes", gentle clarinet eventually leads to wild sounds with Lonberg-Holm keeping up the pace with stretched, sinewy lines while tempestuous "Aplousobranchia" matches the two in a machine-gun-like explosion.

Znachki Stilyag, recorded at the DOM Cultural Center in Moscow, is the ninth recording in ten years from Ballister: Lonberg-Holm, Dave Rempis (tenor and alto saxophones) and Paal Nilssen-Love (drums). With Rempis, you know there will be fireworks and while that is true here, there is also more variety than we have come to expect. Lengthy opener "Fuck the Money Changers" clocks in at almost 40 minutes and fills up most of the set; based on the intensity, the "money changers" never had a chance. Rempis scorches on tenor with his partners as full contributors, providing splendid thrusting support. Along the journey, the tempo lets up, an opportunity for a more tempered mode. The busy "Hotel Mary Poppins" exposes a more hardbop side of Rempis, accentuating his attractive tone, but he still manages to slash away, crushing percussion and hardcore cello never yielding an inch. Closer "Old Worms" is as intense as it gets, Rempis delivering his singular screeches and wails, Nilssen-Love cranking up the heat and Lonberg-Holm adding untold power through distorted electronics. These "old worms" still have a lot of life left in them!

The Avondale Addition is Stirrup, a Chicago-based trio led by Fred Lonberg-Holm, with Nick Macri (bass) and Charles Rumback (drums), joined by a stellar sextet of Jen Clare Paulson (viola), Zoots Houston (electronics), Keefe Jackson and Mars Williams (reeds), Russ Johnson (trumpet) and Peter Maunu (guitar/violin) adding considerable depth. Lonberg-Holm composed most of the pieces but left his cello at home to direct and sculpt, using his "lightbox operator", which utilizes signs and lights. The playing is tight and the songs, especially those with strong melodic elements, generally accessible. There is lyrical exposition, exciting juxtaposition, lots of power tempered by long flowing lines and strong solos from Paulson, Jackson, Williams and Johnson. Macri and Rumback anchor the jazzy in-and-out rhythms and the improvisations move effortlessly, sometimes collectively, sometimes hard and fast, at other times supple and enchanting, resulting in a strong contender for Best Album of 2020.

For more information, visit relativepitchrecords.com, aerophonicrecords.com and cuneiformrecords.com



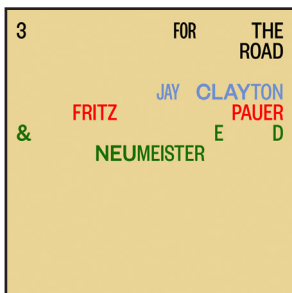
New York Moments
Yvonnick Prené (SteepleChase)
by Ken Dryden

Harmonica has long been a niche instrument in jazz, with the late virtuoso Toots Thielemans setting the standard for players who followed. While a few others have made somewhat of an impact on the instrument, no one has come close to becoming the dominant player since Thielemans died. The arrival of Yvonnick Prené a few years ago brought forth a musician who is not only a skilled instrumentalist, but also someone able to take it in new directions as well. Joined by the versatile organ player Brian Charette and skilled drummer Jordan Young, Prené has a respect for his elder's contributions but is finding his own paths as an arranger and composer.

Harmonica typically hasn't been heard in a trio with organ and drums, though it is a setting worthy of further exploration. While Prené chose a pair of jazz standards for the session, he also wrote a diverse group of songs for this trio. "Ready, Steady, Blow" is pure fun, a brisk bop tune with Prené overdubbing a second line in spots to provide a bit of harmony while he and Charette play engaging solos fueled by Young. "New Yorker" has a funky urban vibe that lends itself to both harmonica and organ.

The late Bill Evans' "Very Early" is recognized as one of his landmark compositions, which Thielemans, who played with Evans, covered in an Evans medley with Kenny Werner. This gem is a springboard for Prené's improvising, marked by his sunny, playful tone, Charette taking chances in his solo. The latter contributed "Air On A Sunny String", a rapid-fire reworking of Sonny Rollins' bop classic "Airegin" with some of Prené's most impressive playing on the date, including a quick detour into Dizzy Gillespie's "Dizzy Atmosphere". The leader's bop chops are also highlighted in an easygoing rendition of Miles Davis' 1947 work "Milestones", with Charette's constantly shifting palette providing a perfect backdrop. Prené wraps the date with "Bad April Fool", a lively original that acknowledges his roots in blues.

For more information, visit steeplechase.dk



3 For The Road
Jay Clayton/Fritz Pauer/Ed Neumeister (Meisteromusic)
by George Kanzler

In his notes, trombonist Ed Neumeister cites the "magic in music, especially improvisatory music...when everybody totally trusts each other so the individuals merge into a separate living organism." Collaborating here with Neumeister are vocalist Jay Clayton (turning 79 this month) and Austrian pianist Fritz Pauer, who died in 2012, a decade after this recording was made.

Those notes suggest that free improvisation is at the heart of this trio meeting, but two of the nine tracks are popular standards and two others are built around

poems by e e cummings. Three others have individual songwriter credits. So even counting the two with poems, only four tracks can be categorized as "free improvisations". They include "Fun", incorporating electronic sounds and percussive scat, and "Yak'n", pitting open trombone and wordless vowel scatting with deep, descending piano passages culminating in an ecstatic, rising wordless vocal. Neumeister's "Gobbler's Nob" is a ballad in contrast to the two standards, crooned wordlessly by Clayton and the trombonist before and after a rhapsodic solo from Pauer.

The two largely improvisatory pieces with poems and two standards are the most memorable and arresting tracks. Clayton clicks and taps out a chirpy rhythm before singing, in a cubist fashion, cummings' poem: "love is a place / & through this place of / love move / (with brightness of peace) / all places // yes is a world / & in this world of / yes live / (skillfully curled) / all worlds". She conveys hints of birdsong on the other cummings: "may i be gay / like every lark / who lifts his life / from all the dark / who wings his why / beyond because / and sings an if / of day to yes". Henry Mancini-Leslie Bricusse's "Two for the Road" is given a clear, clean lyrical vocal, Neumeister on plunger mute. And Jimmy Van Heusen-Johnny Burke standard "It Could Happen To You" combines another "classic pop-jazz" vocal with sly variations on the word "it" as well as improvised solos from all, including scat from Clayton.

For more information, visit meisteromusic.bandcamp.com



Tenacity (with Norbotten Big Band)
Django Bates (Lost Marble)
by Pierre Giroux

While 2020 is proving to be a most challenging year for most, pianist Django Bates, in true gritty British fashion, has made 2020 into a celebration: he turns 60 this month; will have been a performer for 40 years; and with *Tenacity*, released on his birthday, also acknowledges the Charlie Parker centennial.

He augments his trio Belovéd (bassist Petter Eldh and drummer Peter Bruun) with Sweden's Norbotten Big Band. They deliver a reimagining of four Parker original bebop compositions, as well as a couple of popular standards closely associated with Parker. Bates adds four originals to complete the release.

One of the more interesting and important constructs of bebop was the use of contrafacts, new songs using the chord changes of popular songs. In doing so beboppers avoided the payment of royalties to the original composers of the material.

The first example is "Ah Leu Cha", a new melody overlaid on the familiar harmonic structure of "Honeysuckle Rose" while the bridge uses the chord changes of "I Got Rhythm". The full orchestra lays out the theme in an uptempo style, eventually giving way to a very contemplative trio exploration. "Donna Lee" is based on the chord changes of "Indiana", the orchestra using that structure to engage in a very complex and abstract interpretation, with a series of kaleidoscopic harmonies and stop-and-start tempos, making for a very elastic sound. As for "Confirmation" Parker wrote the number without any chord changes associated with popular songs. Bates and the orchestra deconstruct this bebop theme and create a complex harmonic configuration filled with emotional coloring and dynamic shading.

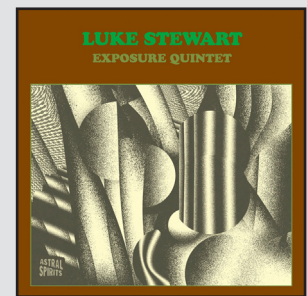
Parker's attachment to popular music is exemplified

by ballads "Laura" and "Star Eyes". The former is interpreted through a lush orchestral arrangement not straying far from the beautiful underlying melody while the latter is more flamboyant, with George Shearing Quintet-like voicings sprinkled early in the piece and then a long solo interlude from Eldh demonstrating both his versatility and propulsiveness.

The final title track is an original and the arrangement an oblique soundscape filled with multi-layered harmonies, changing chord patterns and repeating phrases. Charlie Parker, ever the modernist, would have appreciated this birthday gift.

For more information, visit djangobates.co.uk

DROP THE NEEDLE



Exposure Quintet
Luke Stewart (Astral Spirits)
by George Grella

This double-LP from a group led by bassist Luke Stewart demonstrates to the listener just how good it is when it gets to the final track on the very last side, "The Scene". Previous tracks, from the opening "Awakening the Masters" through the two parts of "Harp and Concrete Silhouette" (Stewart composed all the music), explore the kind of muscular freedom and fiercely hypnotic, loping groove that one hears in the small groups anchored by bassist William Parker and drummer Hamid Drake. And like that pair, Stewart and drummer Avreeayl Ra switch from laying down the time and rhythms to free contrapuntal response to the horn players, all the while maintaining their own integrity as a rhythm section.

"The Scene", then, opens coda-like, with static tremolos from the horns over arco bass. There's been plenty of free interplay up to now, but this sounds open, spontaneously free, with no ground or pattern or riff as a guide. The character is so different that the first response is discomfiture, a "what is this doing here?" feeling. But the playing is so fine that, within a couple of minutes, the feelings that have come out from the preceding music return and the album becomes that much more substantial an experience.

Exposure Quintet is quite an experience too, the kind of album that demands and rewards concentration. Stewart is still a relatively new—and protean and highly active—presence on the scene. He's part of two of the most exciting contemporary ensembles, Irreversible Entanglements and Heroes Are Gang Leaders, as well as his own duos and other collaborations. He's a terrific ensemble player in those situations and here he's just a bit more prominent, the leader without being the lead voice.

There's both fire and serenity to his playing and that's amplified by the meaty, brawny playing of reedplayers Edward Wilkerson, Jr. and Ken Vandermark. Pianist Jim Baker at times gets swamped by the personalities herein, but nothing but strength comes to the fore here. This is concentrated, intense music-making.

For more information, visit astralspiritsrecords.com. Stewart live-steam Oct. 3rd at roulette.org.



The Octet Broadcasts (1969 and 1979)

Alan Wakeman (Gearbox)

That Time

London Jazz Composers Orchestra (Not Two)

by Andrey Henkin

As befits two countries having, to quote Winston Churchill, a “special relationship”, British jazz musicians have been among the most accepted within the American jazz world going back decades, whether it be transplants like Marian McPartland, Victor Feldman or Dave Holland or visitors such as Tubby Hayes, Evan Parker or Shabaka Hutchings. And while many British jazz players are known entities to American listeners, whether the style is bebop or free improvisation, the history of English jazz is so rich that some names have not quite made it into the household.

One is tenor/alto/soprano saxophonist and clarinetist Alan Wakeman, who turns 73 this month. His discography is typical of the peripatetic UK jazzier in the '70s-80s: Graham Collier, Barry Guy, John Dankworth, Mike Westbrook, Soft Machine, Don Rendell, Stan Tracey, his money gig being singer/songwriter and actor David Essex. He never recorded as a leader, if one exempts the band Triton, which released a single album on Collier's Mosaic imprint in 1978. So it was surprising to learn that Wakeman had led bands during his formative years. *The Octet Broadcasts 1969 and 1979* presents two largish ensembles from about a decade

apart, playing Wakeman charts broadcast on BBC Radio.

Wakeman was barely 22 when the first session was made, what is now his earliest known recording. But any nerves would have been assuaged by the assembled: Alan Skidmore (tenor saxophone, flute, gongs), Mike Osborne (alto saxophone, clarinet, tambourine), Paul Rutherford (trombone, Chinese gong), Paul Nieman (trombone, Chinese gong), John Taylor (piano, castanets), Lindsay Cooper (bass, sleigh bells) and Paul Lytton (drums), most stars in the British jazz firmament by this time and many future fellow sideman in bands mentioned above. The three Wakeman pieces are typical of British jazz of the time, meaning an atypical mélange of classical expositions, cinematic surges, American postbop and free squalls, squarely in the school of Wakeman's former music school teacher Westbrook. Wakeman, in a tenor approach mixing early John Surman and Peter Brötzmann, is only featured on the intro to “Merry-Go-Round”, the rest of the band playing percussion. And, for this reviewer, any chance to hear more Osborne (check out his solo on “Forever”) is alone worth the price of admission. The second band has some overlap as well as more British jazz royalty: Wakeman, Skidmore and Art Themen (tenor and saxophone), Henry Lowther (trumpet), Rutherford (trombone), Gordon Beck (piano), Chris Laurence (bass) and Nigel Morris (drums). The music is an abbreviated version of a two-hour, ten-part suite (which one hopes will surface some day) written on the subject of chess; tunes presented here include “Chaturanga”, the Indian precursor to chess, and songs named for various playing strategies. While elements of the earlier set's aesthetic are present, the subject matter and Wakeman's explorations of Eastern music (plus a Bach chorale as an intro to “Kingside Breakthrough”) expand the vision for what is, unsurprisingly, a more mature and introspective performance.

Wakeman appears on half of another welcome archival set, *That Time* by Guy's London Jazz Composers Orchestra (LJCO), two pieces each from 1972 and 1980. Given that previously we only had LCJO's debut (*Ode*, Incus, 1972) from its beginnings, the chance to hear the band several months later in performance from the Berliner Jazztage and Donaueschingen Musiktage is fascinating, while the 1980 live and studio dates offer a chance for comparison with *Stringer* (FMP, 1980).

There are participants appearing on the Wakeman Octets and, again, others from various realms of British jazz of the periods. In 1972, the band, quite similar to that on *Ode*, is conductor Buxton Orr; trumpeters Kenny Wheeler, Harry Beckett, Mark Charig and Dave Holdsworth; trombonists Rutherford, Nieman and Mike Gibbs; tuba player Dick Hart; saxophonists Osborne, Wakeman, Trevor Watts, Evan Parker, Dave White and John Warren; guitarist Derek Bailey; pianist Howard Riley; bassists Guy, Laurence and Jeff Clyne; and drummers Lytton and Tony Oxley. The 1980 group is trumpeters Wheeler, Beckett, Charig and Dave Spence; trombonists Rutherford, Nieman and Alan Tomlinson; tuba player Melvyn Poore; saxophonists Watts, Parker, Brötzmann, Larry Stabbins and Tony Coe; pianist Riley; violinist Philipp Wachsmann; bassists Guy and Peter Kowald; and drummers Oxley and John Stevens. If those lineups don't add milk to your tea, the release is also unusual within the LCJO discography for including, alongside Guy's “Statements III” from 1972, pieces by the participants: Wheeler's “Watts Parker Beckett to me Mr Riley?” (1972) and Rutherford's “Quasimode III” and Riley's “Appolysian” (both 1980). The LCJO is right there with the Globe Unity Orchestra in terms of its significance and influence and it is wonderful to be able to fill in the timeline of the group's development.

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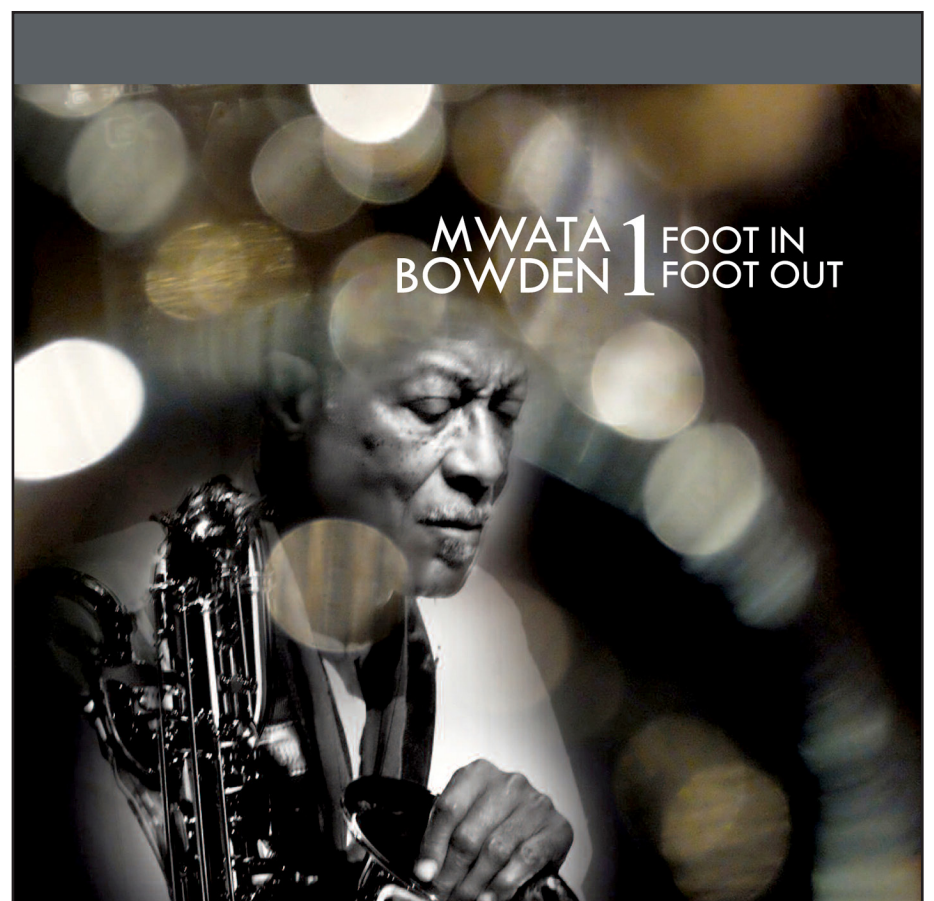
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Moped
Max Nagl Trio (Jazzwerkstatt)
by Steven Loewy

Austrian saxophonist Max Nagl, who turns 60 this month, has been releasing diverse recordings for years and his latest is no different, an infectious blend of free jazz, punk and rock-inflected influences across an addictive mélange of delectable vignettes. Averaging less than three minutes apiece, Nagl's songs offer enough action to satisfy the most attention-addled ears. By combining solid melodies with varied instrumentation and sudden changes in genre and velocity, Nagl keeps listeners engaged.

Opener "So Grand" harkens back to Carsten Meinert's seminal, recently reissued *C.M. Musictrain* in its essential melodic sound. The title track features fluttering saxophone juxtaposed against hardcore guitar ruminations played by the leader. The tunes are generally danceable and accessible, but the changes are rapid: hardbop alto phrases can morph to falsetto screams, with the hard-pounding drums of Herbert Pirker underpinning spirals of crushing sound.

Nagl lowers the volume and the speed on "Stein", lovely backing from the keyboards of Clemens Wenger providing an attractive throw-back feel. In contrast, "Bleistift" offers a light funky groove. The repetitive phrases of upbeat "Amalienbad" offer a touch of Klezmer while "Klepto" is off to the races with forward-thrusting percussion and pounding drums lighting a fire under soaring saxophone. Contrast that with the electric piano sounds of "Syrup", which, while not quite titular, is mostly a gentle rumination from alto and keyboards.

The results are eclectic, fun and often exquisite, sometimes understated and at other times muscular and whimsical. With good melodies, fine writing and a seemingly unlimited imagination, Nagl's modest yet totally inventive collection is a fine addition to his continually evolving, unpredictable and difficult-to-pigeonhole oeuvre.

For more information, visit jazzwerkstatt.at



Wareika Hill (Rastaman Vibrations)
Monty Alexander (s/r)
Harlem Stories: The Music of Thelonious Monk
Teodross Avery (WJ3)
Monktime
DSC (JazzAvenue1)
by George Kanzler

The music of Thelonious Monk, who would have turned 103 this month, provides the repertoire for these albums, each presenting a distinct approach and instrumentation: saxophonist Teodross Avery presents two bands in the tradition of Monk's classic quartets; pianist Monty Alexander imagines Monk in a reggae/Rastafarian tradition, replete with electric guitars, basses, keyboards and drums/percussion; DSC (Leon Lee Dorsey, bass; Greg Skaff, guitar; Mike Clark, drums) distills Monk down to bass, guitar and drums.

The albums feature a score-plus of Monk originals, with only four overlaps, only one appearing on all: "Monk's Dream". The different approaches to it

demonstrate the band's and leader's conceptions of and appreciations for Monk's music. Like many of Monk's tunes, "Monk's Dream" is in the standard 32 bar, AABA song form, yet utterly distinctive when heard. Avery's first band gives it a reading akin to those of Monk's classic quartet, pianist Anthony Wonsey opening with eight bars leading into the theme from Avery's tenor lead, the rhythm jauntily syncopated for the first 16 bars (AA), then in swinging 4/4 for the bridge (B) and back to syncopated for the final A section. Solos, over a mid-swing tempo familiar from Monk recordings, are from Wonsey, Avery and bassist Corcoran Holt. Alexander introduces it with the final two bars of the A section over a churning reggae rhythm section, then plays the 32 bar form over a reggae beat at a slower tempo than Avery, soloing over both reggae and 4/4 rhythm passages. DSC establish a similar tempo to Alexander, guitar soloing over echoey cymbals, a final theme statement at a more deliberate pace. Both Avery and Skaff approach their solos with muscular drive in the jazz modern mainstream. So to a large extent does Wonsey, whose solo nods to Monkian chords while remaining resolutely in the mainstream. However, Alexander, while not mimicking Monk's singular touch, conjures up a definite feel of Monk phrasing and conception in his solo.

It's not surprising to learn—from his liner notes to *Wareika Hill*—that Alexander saw Monk during his heyday at The Five Spot in Manhattan, playing and dancing with his quartet. Alexander, the only musician on these albums old enough to have seen Monk in his prime, captures the spirit of that era of Monk in his spare, Monk-ish piano, in solos enhanced by the novel reggae immersions. Alexander's solos often evolve like Monk's, incrementally veering into improvisation from repetitions of the core melody, as on "Nutty" and "Well You Needn't". Alexander honors the Monk tradition in including tenor saxophonists on most of his 11 Monk tunes, primarily Wayne Escoffery but also Ron Blake, notably on "Bye Ya" along with guitarist John Scofield. And Joe Lovano guests on the only non-reggae track, a "Green Chimneys" with a quartet and extra hand percussionist.

Avery's *Harlem Stories* effectively uses the template of Monk quartets with heroic tenor saxophonists (John Coltrane, Sonny Rollins, Charlie Rouse) in a consistently engaging way. The quartet with Wonsey and drummer Willie Jones III is more straightahead postbop, a tribute akin to the Sphere quartet of the '80s. Their "Ruby, My Dear" and "Evidence" demonstrate how resonant Monk's music can be in a contemporary context. The other quartet—with pianist D.D. Jackson and drummer Marvin 'Bugalu' Smith—is more Monk-centric. Jackson, like Monk, is an eccentric pianist, outside the mainstream approach to the instrument. He isn't particularly Monk-like, although he does favor dissonances and odd note combinations and clusters, like his percussive runs on "In Walked Bud". Combined with (Sun Ra veteran) Smith's off-kilter feel, the sound of this second Avery quartet is as utterly distinctive as Monk's quartets. Their "Ugly Beauty" pushes Monk's only waltz in the direction of swing, unlike DCS' demure, brushes at ballad tempo, version. Their unmitigated triumph, however, is "Boo Boo's Birthday", Monk's truncated (21-bar, AAB form) dedication to his daughter Barbara. They attack it with a fervent ardor that makes you want to hit the repeat button as soon as it ends.

DSC's *Monktime* reminds us that Monk's music doesn't need a piano to prosper. It includes three memorable Monk tunes not on the other two albums: "Monk's Mood", a chance for Dorsey to shine; "Blue Monk", one of Monk's most memorable blues; and "Little Rootie Tootie", wherein Skaff shows off his locomotive skills.

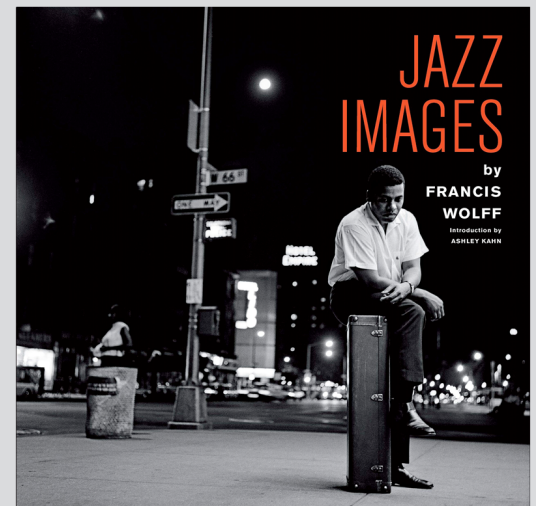
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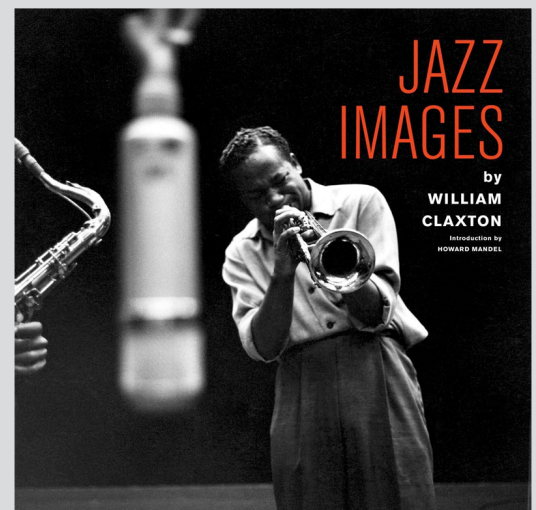
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BOXED SET



The Complete 1975 Toronto Recordings
Paul Desmond (Mosaic)
by Scott Yanow

In a word association game, the name Paul Desmond would always be followed by that of Dave Brubeck. The former was the alto saxophonist in the latter's quartet during 1951-67, had been part of the earlier Brubeck Octet and enjoyed occasional reunions with the pianist during the decade up until he passed away in 1977 at the age of 53. Both his first and his final gigs were with Brubeck. Besides adding a great deal of warmth and wit to Brubeck's music, Desmond gave him his greatest hit, "Take Five".

After the classic Dave Brubeck Quartet broke up, Desmond was less active but still played brilliantly whenever he led his own occasional record dates, guested with others or toured with his former boss. He only led one significant group of his own during his final decade, a quartet with three Canadians: guitarist Ed Bickert, bassist Don Thompson and drummer Jerry Fuller. If one does not count the 1974 CTI album *Pure Desmond* (which had

Bickert, bassist Ron Carter and drummer Connie Kay), a bootleg CD of a later festival performance from 1976 and three songs that were filmed in late 1975, the quartet's entire musical legacy until now was captured on three albums, all from 1975: *Like Someone In Love* (Telarc), *Paul Desmond* (Artists House) and *Live* (A&M Horizon).

Mosaic's latest limited-edition boxed set has seven CDs by the Desmond Quartet. In addition to the 19 pieces from the aforementioned trio of albums, there are 32 previously unreleased performances. The music was recorded live by Thompson at Toronto's Bourbon Street during the group's engagements of 45 years ago, Mar. 25th-29th and Oct. 26th-31st, 1975.

To the casual observer, seven CDs of music by a quartet may seem a bit excessive, but in reality every note played by Desmond was special. He had a beautiful floating tone and sounded unlike anyone else. Desmond was one of the very few alto saxophonists of his generation (along with Lee Konitz and Art Pepper) who did not sound like a close relative of Charlie Parker. Desmond's thoughtful style was also quite original, with one idea leading logically to the next no matter how long the solo. Somehow every note fit, even when he was using his wit to quote other songs, and he always sounded relaxed, even when the tempo was fast.

In his own groups, whether it was his recordings with Jim Hall or live performances, Desmond always used a guitarist rather than a pianist (a recorded live set with the Modern Jazz Quartet was a rare exception) and he much preferred having a drummer who kept steady time than one who was an overly stimulating accompanist waiting for his solos.

Bickert was a melodic guitarist with a clear tone and a style that was complementary to Desmond's. Thompson gets to solo on nearly every number but he keeps his improvisations concise and never loses the momentum of the performance. Fuller proved to be a quietly supportive drummer; he does not get a single solo but does his job well.

Since this music is taken from 11 different nights, there are some repeats of titles with Mercer Ellington-Ted Persons' "Things Ain't What They Used To Be" being heard four times, but the solos of Desmond and Bickert are quite different during each version.

The final seven performances by the quartet from Oct. 30th-31st are a bit different because Bickert had to return home when his father passed away. Valve trombonist Rob McConnell, who otherwise never recorded with Desmond, is in his place. He fits in well with the group but Desmond's solos are briefer than on the other dates and some of the musical magic is missing.

The "new" material on the Mosaic release is on the same level as the three previous released albums, the recording quality is excellent and Desmond sounds consistently inspired by his sidemen. Whether performing Gerry Mulligan's "Line For Lyons", Johnny Mandel-Johnny Mercer's "Emily", "Wave", Brooks Bowman's "East Of The Sun", Duke Ellington's "Just Squeeze Me", Victor Schertzinger-Johnny Mercer's "Tangerine" or "Take Five", Desmond is heard at the top of his game throughout this wonderful set. This is one of the top reissues of 2020 and, since it is a limited-edition release, do not hesitate to pick one up very soon.

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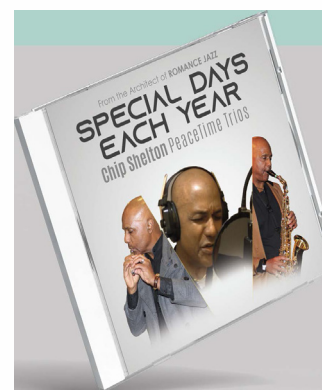
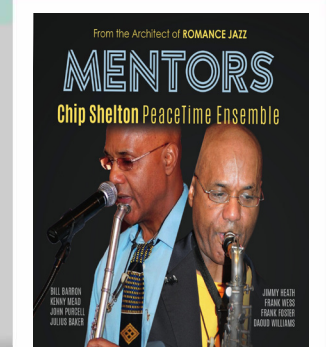


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