

JANUARY 2021—ISSUE 225

YOUR FREE GUIDE TO THE NYC JAZZ SCENE

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THE NEW YORK JAZZ RECORD

**DIGITAL
ONLY
EDITION**

**JOHN
LEWIS**
*MODERN JAZZ
QUARTERMASTER*

**IN MEMORIAM
CÁNDIDO
CAMERO**

**SPECIAL FEATURE
BEST OF
2020**

**ETHAN
IVERSON**

**AYELET
ROSE
GOTTLIEB**

**DOUG
CARN**

**LEM
WINCHESTER**

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THE NEW YORK CITY JAZZ RECORD

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If there is a theme to 2020, a single word that encapsulates the year, it would be loss. Apart from the obvious and tragic loss of so many people from COVID-19, we as a country suffered other losses: a loss of innocence, thinking that disease was a problem only in what we thought of as “less-developed places”; a loss of confidence, whether it be in institutions from the health care system to the post office, or within ourselves, faced with an invisible threat; a loss of civility, unable to understand those different than ourselves; a loss of community, born of isolation and communication behind screen names and avatars; a loss of experience, simple yet absolutely vital pleasures like concerts and dinner parties and human contact; and a loss of truth, that no longer could something mean something incontrovertibly, without spin or politics or belief subverting it. It then is appropriate that much of this issue focuses on loss (pgs. 10-21): our monthly obituaries, including the long list of those lost in the past year; an In Memoriam spread to the legendary percussionist Cándido; and a special section of CD Reviews given over to those gone silent in 2020.

From all this loss must come introspection, lest no progress be made. How did we get here and who is the “we” that got “us” here? Does the future hold more loss and division or will nobler impulses possibly prevail? Just as no one could have predicted events of the past 12 months – from pandemics to police violence to protests to political theater – so too are the next 12 months not yet known to us. But we can assert some control over the outcome. There is hope. And that hope is the best part of us as a society. To reinforce that, we offer our Best Of 2020 in jazz as a small sign that the past year wasn’t all tragedy and hate and fear but also celebration, creativity and inspiration. And if that could happen alongside everything else in 2020, then the future may not be so bleak after all.

On The Cover: John Lewis (photo by Alan Nahigian)

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JOHN LEWIS

MODERN JAZZ QUARTERMASTER

BY ALEX HENDERSON

ALAN NAHIGIAN



As co-founder and musical director of the Modern Jazz Quartet (MJQ), pianist/composer John Lewis played a vital role in the Third Stream movement, fusing jazz and European classical music. But Lewis was a versatile musician capable of playing everything from blues to bop to Brazilian jazz.

Lewis, born in La Grange, Illinois on May 3rd, 1920, celebrating his centennial last year, was greatly influenced by the pianism of Duke Ellington, Count Basie and Earl "Fatha" Hines. But it was with the arrival of bebop in the mid '40s that Lewis became well known in the jazz world. Becoming a sideman for the trailblazing alto saxophonist Charlie "Bird" Parker during the '40s was great exposure and playing in the rhythm section of trumpeter Dizzy Gillespie's big band only added to his prestige.

Lewis' affinity for classical music asserted itself on trumpeter Miles Davis' seminal *Birth of the Cool* sessions of 1948-50. With that album, Davis wrote the book on cool jazz, which was known for its subtlety and restraint and sometimes incorporated classical elements. And when the MJQ started in 1952, classical became an even stronger influence on Lewis.

The MJQ had one lineup change early on. Throughout most of its history, the group consisted of Lewis, vibraphonist Milt Jackson, bassist Percy Heath and drummer Connie Kay. Highly distinctive, the MJQ combined bop and cool jazz with elements of classical chamber and baroque music. And the MJQ's huge catalogue underscores the fact that Lewis enjoyed a wide variety of music. The outfit never had a problem playing Ellington and Thelonious Monk pieces, Tin Pan Alley standards or blues grooves.

Lewis is among the latest class of musicians inducted (posthumously) into the Ertegun Jazz Hall of Fame, an obvious choice as most of MJQ's albums were recorded for Atlantic, where the group worked extensively with producer Nesuhi Ertegun. The MJQ lasted for 45 years, making them one of the longest-running groups in jazz history. And during all those years, Lewis worked on building their catalogue as well as his own.

Trumpeter Wynton Marsalis, Artistic Director of Jazz at Lincoln Center, explains, "John Lewis kept his band together for such a long time. He has a stellar body of music. He experimented with all kinds of music and also published the music of Ornette Coleman, let's not forget that. And we miss him, obviously, because of his rigor, his scholarship, his intelligence and the depth of his soul. John was a bluesman at the bottom of it all. John could play the blues. He was a bluesman."

Tenor saxophonist/flutist Lew Tabackin, who recorded an album of duets with Lewis, *Duo* (Eastworld, 1981), stresses that Lewis expected jazz musicians to be treated with as much respect as classical musicians.

"John tried to elevate the appreciation and respect for jazz musicians," the 80-year-old Tabackin explains. "The classical establishment treats musicians a certain way and one of John's passions and purposes was to elevate the situation for jazz musicians. John, in his own way, was trying to raise the respectability of jazz

performance and the MJQ was a big factor in that. John had kind of a vibe of a European gentleman with his tastes and his sophistication. Put it this way: John used to piss off a certain impresario because he demanded certain situations, a certain class of air travel. He tried to raise the bar, which trickled down, to some extent, on how other musicians are treated."

Because of the classical elements in his playing, some jazz musicians accused Lewis of not swinging. But Tabackin, who was also featured on French guitarist Christian Escoudé's Lewis tribute, *Saint-Germain-Des-Prés: The Music of John Lewis*, in 2013, vehemently disagrees. "People used to criticize John and say he didn't swing, which was ludicrous," Tabackin says. "John had a wonderful time feeling and sense of swing, which was so apparent to me when I played with him in 1981. And his accompaniment was beautiful. But John never overdid anything. He never overplayed. When you played with John Lewis, you tried not to overplay or be overly aggressive. The analogy would be to classic Lester Young and a less-is-more mentality. It's what you don't play, sometimes, that creates the energy. John didn't overplay to get the message across; he could do it in a few notes."

Marsalis agrees, pointing out that Lewis, "played with the lyricism of Lester Young... Lester was also someone who was looking for melodic nuggets and then he would develop those melodies. Lester was always about being very direct with his melodies and the meaning of those melodies." The trumpeter adds, "John was very economical, and he would get right to the point like a great writer—like an [Ernest] Hemingway... And John was also a student of Duke Ellington's arranging. John loved classical forms, and he loved commedia dell'arte."

According to Marsalis, "John was a great arranger for the Modern Jazz Quartet because he understood the music, from New Orleans music to what was called bebop, which is what he played as a young man in Dizzy Gillespie's rhythm section. That later became the Modern Jazz Quartet."

Vocalist Nancy Harrow also remembers Lewis as a master of subtlety. She joined forces with him in 1981 on the Finesse release, *The John Lewis Album for Nancy Harrow*, which he produced. That album, in fact, featured half of the MJQ with Kay also appearing.

Harrow, now 80, remembers, "John's gifts as composer, arranger and player are well known. I knew him as a teacher and close friend as well as accompanist and recording partner. He was a minimalist; his economy was notable. He didn't waste any notes. I think the effort to choose just the right notes at the right time with propulsion was what showed in his face as he played. It was compressed energy and it took great strength to keep it in check."

Like Tabackin, Harrow strongly disputes the claim that Lewis didn't swing.

"I think his contribution to jazz was conceptual: the power of understatement," Harrow observes. "The MJQ personified that quality in how they dressed, how they comported themselves, but most of all in the

structure of the music, which always felt like constrained power because it was so delicate and at the same time, swinging so intensely."

Lewis was making his mark as a composer as early as 1949, when he wrote "Rouge" for *The Birth of the Cool*. After that, Lewis was a prolific composer for the MJQ as well as his own albums. Lewis' affinity for European classical music was evident in many of his well-known compositions, including "Django" (written for guitarist Django Reinhardt), "Versailles", "Fontessa", "The Golden Striker" and "Vendome".

Marsalis and the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra celebrated Lewis' legacy on their 2013 Blue Engine date, *The Music of John Lewis*, which featured big band arrangements of his compositions. Marsalis had a close friendship with Lewis, whom he met in the early '80s and often sought his musical advice.

Marsalis recalls, "I would go to his house all the time. I loved John. He taught me a lot about playing. John told me, 'Stop playing all this extra stuff before you play melodies. Play the melody first and make sure you know what the melody is.' We rehearsed a lot. I would go to his house a lot and just talk and hang. I was always joking with him, clowning and playing around."

Marsalis notes that after composing his extended suite *All Rise*, he was anxious to get Lewis' feedback.

"John Lewis was so great in so many ways," Marsalis explains. "He was a believer in music; he would listen to other people's music. He was very serious when you talked to him about things and he was very considerate in how he would comment on things. He would listen and then, he talked with study and authority. He gave me the respect of very careful listening. I played so many pieces for him and got his opinion. I respected his opinion so much."

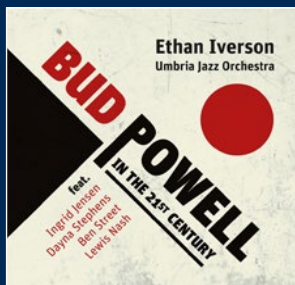
Lewis was 80 when he died of prostate cancer on Mar. 29th, 2001. Looking back on Lewis' life, Tabackin remembers him for their friendship as well as their collaboration as musicians.

"My album with John in 1981 was very important to me and we got to be friends after that," Tabackin recalls. "We had many wonderful dinners at his place. He was fantastic to be around; he was quite a sophisticated person. John Lewis' world was a great world and he contributed so much to the music." ❖

An Ertegun Jazz Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony for Lewis takes place in early 2021.

Recommended Listening:

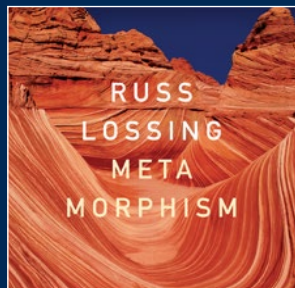
- Modern Jazz Quartet—*Django* (Prestige, 1953-55)
- John Lewis—*Grand Encounter: 2 Degrees East / Three Degrees West* (Pacific Jazz, 1956)
- John Lewis—*The Wonderful World of Jazz* (Atlantic, 1960)
- Modern Jazz Quartet—*The Last Concert* (Atlantic, 1974)
- John Lewis/Lew Tabackin—*Duo* (Eastworld, 1981)
- John Lewis—*Evolution/Evolution II* (Atlantic, 1999-2000)



ETHAN IVERSON
BUD POWELL IN THE
21ST CENTURY

SSC 1619
AVAILABLE 1/29/21

Powell's brilliant original compositions are essential, infinitely listenable but also strangely tricky. Unlike Monk, Parker and Gillespie, the composer neglected to perform them much after their original recordings, so they never became a part of the jazz lingua franca. Pianist and historian Ethan Iverson provides a fantastic validation of Powell's compositional genius on his new recording, *Bud Powell in the 21st Century*, a reworking of a number of Powell's pieces for big band.



RUSS LOSSING
METAMORPHISM

SSC 1607
AVAILABLE 1/8/21

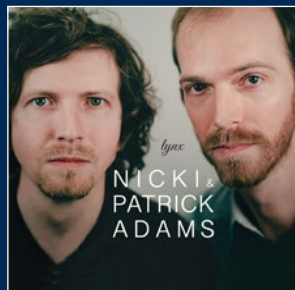
Lossing's latest recording, *Metamorphism*, is an extension of his continually evolving compositional identity. Here he presents eight original compositions, each written with its own particular strategy for interplay among a stalwart ensemble of longtime collaborators. It is only with musicians with whom he has established a deeply felt musical connection that this music could actually be realized.



GUI DUVIGNAU
3, 5, 8

SSC 1605
AVAILABLE 1/22/21

When the opportunity to record came about, Duvignau wanted to form a unit of open minded and flexibly expressive players. He invited his trio mates, Santiago Leibson and Jeff Hirshfield, and added Billy Drewes. Duvignau also brought in German guitarist and fellow Berklee alum Elias Meister to bring a blues-inflected energy into the quintet's mix.



NICKI & PATRICK
LYNX

SSC 1602
AVAILABLE 1/15/21

Brothers Nicki and Patrick Adams have a natural bond that most musicians can never approximate with their peers. The two perform together in a number of configurations, leading their own ensembles, and collaborating with bands of many different styles. They also have collaborated with many of jazz's finest, including Francisco Mela, Robin Eubanks, Corey Wilcox and Mike King.



Sunnyside

www.sunnysiderecords.com

Ohad Talmor's performance space in Brooklyn's Prospect Heights SEEDS hosted an intimate concert of the saxophonist's trio with guitarist Miles Okazaki, drummer Dan Weiss and guest vibraphonist Joel Ross (Dec. 13th). Intimate because there were only four watching, including three upstairs neighbors. Talmor bases many of his compositions on the *tala* rhythmic structures of Hindustani music, long-form cycles that would daunt uninitiated improvisers. Fortunately, Weiss is an accomplished tabla player and Okazaki has navigated similarly complex rhythms with Steve Coleman and on his own albums. So when Talmor called originals like "Shymal Chakradar", which switches between 12-, 14-, 15- and 16-beat phrases (a chart that even he admits is "really hard"), or Monk's "Misterioso", which he retrofitted to a 28-beat pattern, the band was undaunted. In fact, it sounded like they relished the challenge. Their serious expressions, along with an undercurrent of aggression in the delivery of some songs, suggested another layer, however, an index of the frustrations musicians have endured under quarantine. Ross, despite his unfamiliarity with Talmor's music, remained a calm spot in the center of the storm: temperate at first, he led the band to its first transcendent moment on John Coltrane's "After the Rain" and then, following Okazaki's fiery foray on "Rupak Tukra Ari Chand", reached yet another, more extroverted plateau, infusing the small square brick room with (the sound of) his vibes. —Tom Greenland



TOM GREENLAND

Ross/Okazaki/Weiss/Talmor @ SEEDS

There are certain artists with whom you simply can't go wrong. Six gathered on stage at 92nd Street Y (Dec. 6th) to honor jazz icon Billie Holiday, delivering an impeccable virtual concert of the diva's music. Jazz is in very good hands with these mostly young talents: pianist **Emmet Cohen** and his trio of bassist **Yasushi Nakamura** and drummer **Kyle Poole**; tenor saxophone marvel **Tivon Pennicott**; and vocalist **Veronica Swift**. Like a cherry on a very rich jazz sundae, veteran vocalist **Catherine Russell** captivated with her well-honed talent and rich, honey-laden delivery. She was especially in the zone with a flawless, syncopated, swinging jazz-blues "Love Me or Leave Me". Dueting with Swift, the two delivered "Nobody's Business If I Do" with mutual excellence and stylistic similarity, not surprising as they both grew up with jazz musician fathers and jazz vocalist mothers. Cohen and Pennicott share a similar sensibility, rare to see in such abundance on the same stage; each has the capacity to tap into a transcendent universal energy. Both are direct, clean players whose creative ideas follow an intelligent through-line from their respective instruments into the ethers—and astoundingly they make it look easy. The arrangement of "Lover Man" for the band featured Pennicott, whose tone was as superlative as his flexibility and innovative improvisation. Cohen on "Time on My Hands" was no less transporting. The spirit of Lady Day must have been looking on with tremendous satisfaction. —Marilyn Lester



ROD MORATA/MICHAEL PRIEST PHOTOGRAPHY

Cohen/Russell/Swift/Pennicott @ 92Y

This year, the **Jazz Foundation of America's** annual benefit (Dec. 10th) for its musicians' emergency fund sounded a note of urgency, citing the hardships suffered by musicians due to COVID-19. Alas, the quarantine precluded a live show, so the two-hour gala consisted of pre-taped performances from Brooklyn Bowl, L.A.'s Vibrato Grill and a New Orleans sidewalk. Titled "Birdcalls" in honor of Charlie Parker (born a hundred years ago in Kansas City), the event showcased some of today's finest alto saxophonists—Gary Bartz, Jaleel Shaw, Antonio Hart, Vincent Herring, Miguel Zenón, Erena Terakubo—plus a cameo vocalese by Sheila Jordan and a funky blues by the Rebirth Brass Band with its dancing entourage, all covering Parker's repertoire. In between tunes, Jordan, Barry Harris, Sonny Rollins and others related personal anecdotes about Parker. Although many alto players first struggle to learn Parker's language, later struggling to avoid sounding too much like him, this night the performers seemed happy to acknowledge his influence by quoting from his solos and improvising in his style and spirit. The MVP award probably belongs to Bartz, who was routinely tasteful and soulful in renditions of "Koko", "Just Friends" and "K.C. Blues", though Zenón merits honorable mention for his "Everything Happens to Me". Noting Parker's importance, Rollins described him as a "freedom fighter", an example to other Black artists: "Here's a man who's not going to be an entertainer, he's going to be a musician." (TG)

Many virtual concerts this month looked like *Groundhog Day* meets *White Christmas*, with all those streamed benefits now moving on to whip up holiday cheer. Cutely named, hour-long **Holiday In (Because Baby, It's COVID Outside)** (Dec. 4th), offered Broadway meets jazz on behalf of The Actors Fund and California-based nonprofit Jazz at the Ballroom (JATB). The concert was loaded with great talent, but also with a lot of fat that could have been trimmed to produce a sleeker, more professional-looking product. Mainly, there was too much gab. Kind-of-silly performer shtick and the patter of co-hosts Frank DiLella and JATB Executive Director Suzanne Waldowski Roche was distracting and ultimately counter-productive. Trumpeter/singer Benny Benack III bookended the concert, setting the mood with his bright, cheerful intro and then making us very merry with a playout over credits of his charming "My Girlfriend Is An Elf". In between, sparkly moments were provided by mostly A-list talent, such as a sadly under-used Tony DeSare, a jolly Wycliffe Gordon and more. Trouble is, no one was identified verbally or on screen—a major faux pas. The highlight was Broadway triple threat Tony Yazbeck, who, singing and tapping to "We Need a Little Christmas", miraculously transmitted as much energy onscreen as he does in person. And then there was singer-saxophonist Adrian Cunningham, creating his own brand of magic with a Santa hat toss to "Kissin' by the Mistletoe" with his sextet. (ML)

The second (Dec. 12th) evening of a scheduled month-long of Saturday night live performances at the Blue Note by **Eddie Palmieri** found the NEA Jazz Master pianist in remarkably good spirits, joking with the crowd about his upcoming Dec. 15th 84th birthday, despite the cancellation of the final two dates of his residency due to the reenacted city ban on indoor dining with “incidental” music. Palmieri, leading his Latin Jazz Sextet with trumpeter Jonathan Powell, alto saxophonist Louis Fouché, bassist Luques Curtis, timbalero-drummer Camilo Molina and conguero Little Johnny Rivero, got things started reaching back into his hit-laden songbook for ‘60s classic “Azucar”. The horns played the well-known melody over Molina’s insistent block and bell cadence, which got the pianist up from his seat to lead the audience in a clave-clapping accompaniment to Curtis’ solo. He then let loose with a multifaceted solo himself, brimming with signature dissonant accents preceding a climactic closing conga solo. The set continued with a cha-cha grooved take on “Old Devil Moon”, dedicated to Palmieri’s late brother Charlie, a setting for impassioned statements from Powell and Fouché. A laidback reading of Cal Tjader’s “Samba Do Sueno”, oozing with sensuality, followed. The energy level then slowly kicked back up with a 40-minute outing on “Noble Cruise”, Palmieri’s homage to Monk, which allowed ample time for each of the band members to show off their considerable solo power. —*Russ Musto*



Eddie Palmieri Latin Jazz Sextet @ Blue Note

Celebrating its fifth anniversary as a working unit, bassist **Christian McBride**’s New Jawn came back to the Village Vanguard, where it made its debut, for a live-streamed show (Dec. 8th). The intrepid Ornette-Coleman-inspired pianoless quartet with trumpeter Josh Evans, tenor saxophonist Marcus Strickland and drummer Nasheet Waits kicked things off with McBride’s aptly-titled “Walkin’ Funny”. The funky opus had horns blowing with unbridled daring over a loping bassline and omnidirectional drumming before the leader took over, soulfully improvising at length. The band then launched an incendiary reading of Larry Young’s “Obsequious”, a wild seesawing excursion on which Waits let fly a torrent of rhythms, earning McBride’s designation as “our energy source”. The music continued with Evans’ plaintive lament “Ballad Of Ernie Washington”, on which he conjured the melancholic strop of “Don’t Explain” and Strickland that of “Round Midnight”. The saxophonist’s “The Middle Man”, a strident freebopping outing, had the band burning blue hot, ending with Waits soloing clamorously behind the riffing frontline. McBride had the band improvise freely on what he called “A Prayer/ Improv For 2020”, on which they reflected on the year’s challenging timeline, beginning ominously with a portentous bowed bass prelude. The group soared on Wayne Shorter’s “Sightseeing”, then closed on a happy note with the Ornette Coleman calypso “The Good Life”. (RM)

Celebrating his 60th birthday and in honor of his 30-year musical partnership with drummer Whit Dickey, pianist **Matthew Shipp** presented a duo concert as part of Arts for Art’s On_Line Salon series (Dec. 10th). Shipp embarked on wandering, compelling improvisations, which sang of Igor Stravinsky as much as McCoy Tyner, strained through pointillistic intrigue. The foray spun out slowly, over streams of tightly demarcated 8th- and 16th-note patterns. With such drive one can’t help but align these sounds with Minimalism, but Shipp simultaneously carries a late Romantic-era pathos. While the structure was free and filled with an array of colors, it was the music’s drama that maintained the attentive ear; as he’s wont to do, Shipp delivered an improvisatory fantasia. Throughout, Dickey commented on four drums, two cymbals and hi-hat, offering lines as stripped-down as the Arts for Art drumkit. Never deemed a ‘time’ player, he moved in and around Shipp consistently, melodically, only kicking in counter-rhythms at one stress point. The music seemed to cry out for considerably more contrapuntal drumming, perhaps drastic dynamics, a musical challenge to Shipp’s dual-hand propulsion. By all accounts, the pianist would have eaten that up. The singular work developed into a Monk-like strain with the pair engaging in moments of refreshing interplay, but it tended to miss the height expected (or at least hoped for by your reviewer), one sufficiently celebratory of such a special affair. —*John Pietaro*



Matthew Shipp @ Arts for Art

During the pandemic, pianist **Andy Wasserman** has been presenting regular live-stream concerts with one ear toward the therapeutic, healing qualities of music. His latest (Dec. 13th) was dedicated to northern Pole Stars; for astronomy-leaning jazzbos, these are currently Polaris and Polaris Australis. Wasserman produced forays into the bright, the glimmering, the burning, the clouded-over, icy and distant, with use of falling phrases over shifting, widely gripped harmonies as well as blues-drenched, ringing major sevenths, ninths and elevenths. But this was far from what we used to call ‘new age’ music. “Togetherness”, a slow, meandering work, conjured thoughts of Bill Evans and Herbie Hancock. While feelings of unity can be subjective, the rolling complexities in Wasserman’s works are beautifully, almost mystically woven together. More so, much of the pianist’s repertoire is built on his mastery of George Russell’s Lydian Chromatic Concept of Tonal Organization (indeed, Wasserman was certified by Russell to teach it). “Ataraxia” offered the most profound modal quality, leaving the listener with that odd feeling of hollowness that arises with such tonalities. This piece also carried a motive nothing short of haunting in its reach for simplicity. Other works incorporated lonesome, roving basslines opposite right-hand postmodern jazz, one inspired by Eric Dolphy’s iconic postcard to Russell proclaiming that he’s working on “the new concept, but with an outward-bound feeling.” (JP)

WHAT'S NEWS

In very sad local news we really hope will not become a regular occurrence, the **Jazz Standard** has announced its closure after over 20 years of operation, due to a loss of revenue from New York City’s forced closure of performance venues and inability to renegotiate with its landlords. For more information, visit jazzstandard.com.

The Grammy Awards have announced the latest class of its Hall Of Fame Welcomes, which includes vocalist **Billie Holiday**, and its 2021 Special Merit Awards Honorees, which includes vibraphonist/bandleader **Lionel Hampton**. For more information, visit grammy.com.

To celebrate the 20th anniversary of the premiere of **Ken Burns’ Jazz**, PBS will rebroadcast the film in its entirety on Thursdays at 9 pm, starting Jan. 7th. For more information and local listings, visit pbs/jazz.org.

The **Apollo Theater** has named Charles Phillips as its Chairman of the Board. Phillips has been on the Board of Directors since 2015, recently served as Vice-Chairman and has just made a \$1 million donation to the theater’s Emergency Fund, which was created “to ensure the iconic non-profit’s continued financial stability amid its closure due to COVID-19.” For more information, visit apollotheater.org.

Jazz WaHi has announced its **Jazz Composition Competition 2021**. First prize is a \$750 commission, plus ensemble remuneration, to compose a jazz work to be premiered at the fourth Annual Washington Heights Jazz Festival on Nov. 6th, 2021. The deadline for the competition, open to residents of the greater NYC area, is Jan. 15th, 2021. For more information and to apply, visit jazzwahi.org/jazz-fest.

Issue Project Room has announced its 2021 season artists-in-residence, who will present commissioned works during the upcoming season: JJJJerome Ellis, Austin Sley Julian and Joanna Mattrey. For more information, visit issueprojectroom.org.

Alto saxophonist **Lakecia Benjamin**, selected as one of our Musicians of the Year for 2020 (see pgs. 22-23), has signed a clothing endorsement with Adidas Sportswear.

Painting With John, an unscripted series written, directed by and starring **John Lurie** (co-founder of The Lounge Lizards), will premiere on HBO Max on Jan. 22nd and run for six episodes. For more information, visit itsh.bo/dotcom.

Danny Jonokuchi and The Revisionists were named winners of the inaugural **Count Basie Great American Swing Contest** with its version of “One O’Clock Jump”, as judged by Stefon Harris, Branford Marsalis and Christian McBride. For more information, visit countbasie.com.

Submit news to info@nycjazzrecord.com

GIANCARLO BELFIORE / COURTESY OF THE ARTIST



ETHAN IVERSON

BY TYRAN GRILLO

The career of musical polymath Ethan Iverson has taken the pianist – and his pen – around the world and then some, in both the geographic and creative senses. Since striking oil in collaboration with bassist Reid Anderson and drummer Dave King as *The Bad Plus*, Iverson has simultaneously broadened his palette and focused his sound throughout a range of far-thinking endeavors. Among those is his landmark *Bud Powell in the 21st Century*, a big band project recorded December 2018 at the Umbria Jazz Festival and released at the end of this month on Sunnyside Records. You can continue to track his various trajectories in his web archive, [DO THE M@TH](#).

The New York City Jazz Record: Who is Ethan Iverson now that he wasn't 15 years ago?

Ethan Iverson: I always had a plan to keep studying. When *The Bad Plus* had our surprise breakout success in 2003, I didn't feel like it was automatically the endpoint. Playing with that band was incredible, but all along I was also thinking about other ways to make a contribution.

One of the reasons I started writing about the music was to let *Bad Plus* fans know about this great tradition. When you're the new flavor, it can be seductive to feel like you've got it all figured out, but everybody stands on the shoulders of those who preceded them.

TNYCJR: When you speak of tradition, do you see that as a monolithic term or is it always evolving?

EI: Someone once said that it's important for an artist to be able to hold two contradictory thoughts in the mind at the same time. On the one hand, yes, tradition, but on the other hand you have to be in the moment; there's always the present day, or even looking to build a better future. Both things are true. At the very least, it doesn't seem to work to say, "I only deal with the tradition." Neither does it work to say, "I am only new." Nobody I admire says that only one of those viewpoints is correct.

TNYCJR: How does your thinking in that regard connect to Bud Powell?

EI: He's someone that I keep on learning from. In fact, this project happened two years ago, but just this morning I was practicing and thinking about Bud Powell. He's an inexhaustible source of inspiration.

There's room to find inspiration from almost anything. One of my mentors is the choreographer Mark Morris. He goes out all the time to see varied shows. He is always listening to and talking about different forms of music. Despite being schooled in high, conceptual art, you might just as easily find him watching and enjoying the most banal TV show imaginable. He is inflamed by all of it creatively, from high to low. And that, I think, is a pretty good model.

TNYCJR: How did the Powell project come about?

EI: It was a commission by the Umbria Jazz Festival, marrying an American quintet with an Italian big band. I was delighted when Carlos Pagnotta and Enzo Capua at Umbria first approached me. Manuele Morbidini, who directed the big band, prepared the musicians so well before I got there that I actually cut a rehearsal. The band was ready. When it came time to look for a label, Sunnyside founder François Zalacain is a bit of an old-school bebopper and really liked the project.

TNYCJR: How does the sound you achieved at Umbria differ from what you've done before?

EI: Post-*Bad Plus*, I've been doing quite a bit of larger-canvas pieces. I wrote a piano concerto for the American Composers Orchestra. I curated a celebration of Thelonious Monk for his centennial at Duke University. For Mark Morris, I did *Pepperland*, an evening-length piece connected to The Beatles. There's been quite a lot of formal composition in the last five years, but *Bud Powell in the 21st Century* is the first of these projects that's coming out commercially for everyone to hear.

Speaking of tradition versus being in the present day, when I think of the tribute projects I admire, there's quite a bit of original composition. Ornette Coleman, even when playing standards, always started with an original melody. So, there's original composition in this project—the very first track is completely original—but there's also Powell's music, which in and of itself is very difficult.

TNYCJR: Can you unpack "difficult" for us a little?

EI: With Powell, it's hard to get all the details exactly right, because they're quite specific, fast and complicated. I swore to myself that we would get those details right—such that if Bud was there, even if he didn't like the whole thing, at least he couldn't look at me and say, "You didn't even play my melodies right, man."

TNYCJR: How would you describe your relationship to Powell's music?

EI: I like knowing the text. When *The Bad Plus* played *The Rite of Spring*, I played it just like Stravinsky wrote it. If I play Tadd Dameron with [drummer Albert] "Tootie" Heath, I learn Dameron's original voicings. At one point I transcribed Black Sabbath's "Iron Man" for *The Bad Plus*. My brain gets really excited by the details. I like to sit there and ask myself what really happened here. I can dive in, think about those details, transcribe and appreciate the subtleties.

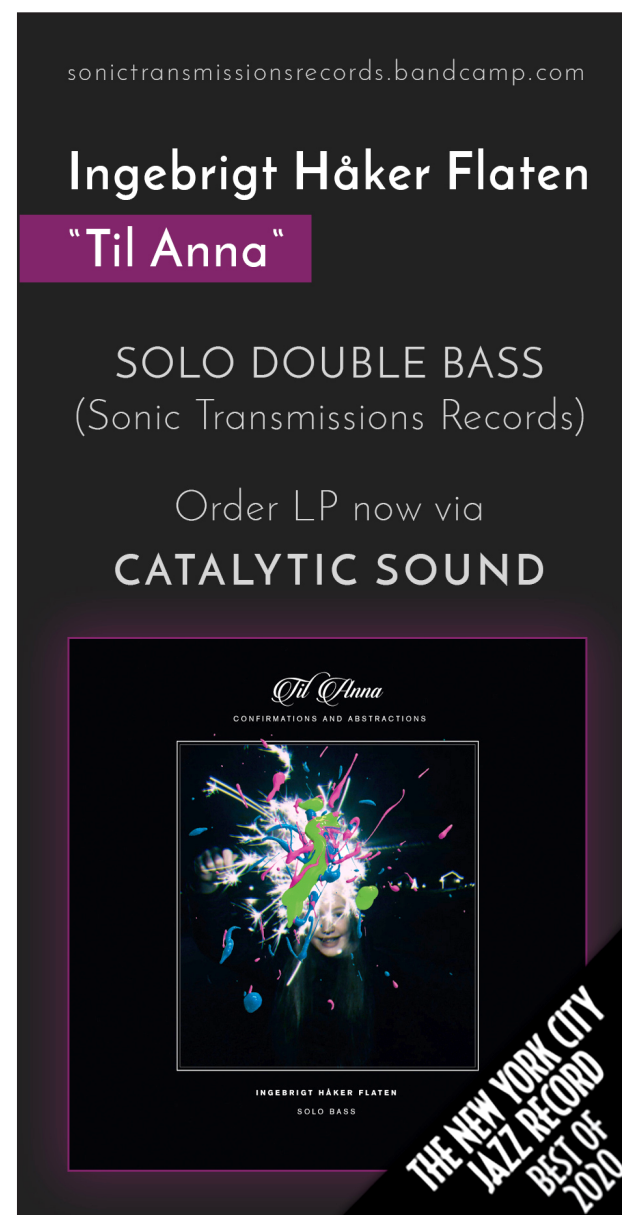
There's also this other side of creativity. I'm confident everything I do has a personal sound, that it sounds like me and part of that sound is wild and

woolly. The fantastical or surreal comes in pretty naturally with Bud. At the end of the day, Bud Powell was an avant garde musician. Had the project been dedicated to the music of Dizzy Gillespie or Benny Golson, it might have been harder to find a way in to do something personal. But there's a surreal glint in Bud Powell's eye, so that's a fit for me as well.

TNYCJR: What sorts of extra-musical inspirational forces do you find creep into your music?

EI: When I interface with literature, movies, or television, it helps me see that parameters of genre are

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 31)



JULIE GAUTHIER / COURTESY OF THE ARTIST



AYELET ROSE GOTTLIEB

BY ELLIOTT SIMON

Universal connections across love, loss, mysticism and motherhood are themes that permeate vocalist/composer Ayelet Rose Gottlieb's work. Song-cycles filled with new spaces and old places host her multi-genre yet globally spiritual music. As Gottlieb explains, "I was exposed to a lot of different kinds of music from a very young age and that opened the door for me, so my palette for inspirations is large because I have all these sounds really living inside me. I love working in song-cycle form and a lot of my work has to do with natural elements. When I compose I don't feel like it's me composing, I feel like I'm receiving something from an external source and it's feeding into my music and that's what I call the witchy part of me."

Using this approach she has revealed "Who has seen the Wind?" (*Pneuma*, Songlines, 2017), frankly portrayed Biblical eroticism (*Mayim Rabim*, Tzadik, 2004), showcased motherhood within a tribute to saxophonist and mentor Arnie Lawrence (*I Carry Your Heart*, Ride Symbol, 2016), explored grief from both Jewish and Buddhist perspectives (*Shiv'a*, 482 Music, 2011) and provided John Zorn's *Masada: Book of Angels* with a stunning quartet of womxn's a cappella voices (*Mycale, Masada: Book of Angels, Vols. 13 & 25*, Tzadik, 2010 & 2015).

Gottlieb's current release, *13 Lunar Meditations: Summoning The Witches*, is an astounding compendium of lunar-inspired poetry set to her unique blend of transcultural conceptual jazz. Joining her are vocalist Jay Clayton, a ten-voice Choeur Luna conducted by DB Boyko, guest voices that include vocalist Sofia Rei chastising "Luna" over bassist Stephane Diamantakiou's exquisite accompaniment, Turkish violinist Eylem Basaldi, guitarist Aram Bajakian and drummer Ivan Bamford. The juxtaposition of the moon to a womxn's life cycle is exquisite. Opener "Lotte and the Moon" references birth and the wonder in a child's lunar discovery while the deliciously pop-infused "Venus and the Moon," is set to the playful poetry of Australian Bes Davies. Menstrual and lunar cycles connect on the powerful "Dissipating Discus" and poet Gem Salsberg's erudite "Traveler Woman" is a fantastic Clayton/Gottlieb effort. The potent trilogy "Moon Over Gaza" includes the title poem from Naomi Shihab Nye, Gottlieb's own "Almost Summer" and "I Come from There and I Remember" from Mahmoud Darwish. Gottlieb discusses how the pieces came together, "I mention Gheed who disappeared and I mention Razan who was red cross medic and was killed. Naomi wrote from the perspective of the moon just kind of overlooking Gaza and her bleeding heart and reflecting on the general sorrows of humans. Jay is singing from the perspective of the moon, she's singing Naomi's poem, I'm singing my own poem and Aram...has rock and roll in his blood...so I asked him to play a solo and recite Mahmoud Darwish's poem at the same time. Aram himself is of Armenian descent so he has in his family stories of genocide...and it was also an interesting thing because we had two Turkish

musicians in the band and all of that dynamic was part of that beautiful healing group of people...Aram just killed it, he did such a great job with that."

Early on Gottlieb became a part of Lawrence's The International Center for Creative Music in Jerusalem. As with his New School of Jazz and Contemporary Music, it stressed that performers should be teachers and that remains a key influence on Gottlieb, "He had that embodied thing, the way that he taught swing or jazz, he would bring it into our bodies, he would make us walk it...that was my biggest school of my life of course. I mean he changed everything for me having him there made a huge difference not just for me I think for my whole generation of Israeli musicians."

As such, Gottlieb created Orchard of Pomegranates as a platform for teaching, discussion, listening sessions and a safe-space for musical adventure and connectedness. Online, it has gained in reach and significance during these times of musical isolation as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Participant/faculty such as Clayton, Theo Bleckmann, Fay Victor, Sofia Rei, Clarice Assad and Katie Bull foster a relaxed but intensive atmosphere of holistic learning and performance.

For Gottlieb, genres are tools not borders and she has this to say about them: "I don't get them on a primal level. I understand them intellectually but I try to live a bit borderless and being an Israeli I feel like there's a lot of binary when it comes to identity, to Judaism to Israel and Palestine. There's all this binary attitude and my road is off of that. People sometimes like to understand things so they like to define them but for me I'm curious about the parts that are below and are around the definitions where the liquid gold is flowing. If I write in relation to a topic like the moon or the wind, that's my thread and then I can take that and I can hang on that thread anything I want to...and look at it from a lot of angles and a lot of colors and textures and compositional techniques."

Gottlieb continues to be at the forefront of a womxn's jazz revolution, which, through intercultural exchange and world music egalitarianism, is decisively breaking through musical and societal borders. She states that "... my music has to do with things that really matter to me and I'll talk about them in ways that are art...Womxn's life experiences for years have been considered mundane and uninteresting and maybe unimportant and the fact that there are more womxn present on the scene brings forth those supposedly mundane experiences that are actually not mundane, they're super important and they are part of the human experience and they're not as talked about in art. There isn't that much talk about menstruation, Why would you want to talk about that?... But at the same time it is such a present part of our lives and it's the source of all of life so why wouldn't we talk about it? Why wouldn't we give it a moment?...the same for motherhood, it's mundane, you cook and you clean and you wipe bums and you do all this stuff, but it is all part of the texture of life." ❖

For more information, visit ayeletrose.com. A talk on 13 Lunar Conversations live-streams Jan. 12th at ayeletrose.com.

Recommended Listening:

- Ayelet Rose Gottlieb – *Internal-External* (Genevieve, 2002)
- Ayelet Rose Gottlieb – *Upto Here | From Here* (ObliqSound/arogole music, 2005)
- Mycale – *Book of Angels, Vol. 13* (Tzadik, 2010)
- Ayelet Rose Gottlieb & Anat Fort – *Two More Dreams* (s/r, 2015)
- Pneuma – *Who Has Seen the Wind* (Songlines, 2017)
- Ayelet Rose Gottlieb – *13 Lunar Meditations: Summoning The Witches* (s/r, 2018)

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DOUG CARN

BY ANDERS GRIFFEN

Doug Carn is a multi-faceted musician best known as a unique organ player, lyricist and composer. He has performed all around the world, including at Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center, and he was the face of the Black Jazz record label in the '70s. His four much-sought after classic albums released by Black Jazz from 1971-74 were among the most successful for the label (he added a 5th title released in 2001 when the label was briefly under new ownership). He also worked with, among many others, Nat Adderley, Shirley Horn, Lou Donaldson, Freddie Hubbard, Stanley Turrentine and Earth, Wind & Fire, appearing on the latter's first two albums.

In December 2020 he appeared on *Volume 5 of Jazz Is Dead* with Adrian Younge and Ali Shaheed Muhammad. The "Jazz Is Dead" name may be somewhat controversial, but Carn doesn't see it as the music is dead, otherwise they wouldn't be hiring jazz musicians to participate. He is excited about the release: "The way they made the album, I would never make an album that way. I said, well, I'll try to go along with 'em and listen to 'em, you know? Because I think about, and play with, and work on what I do, you know, but they just want to go in there with their natural ability and do something spontaneous. I went along and it turned out better than I expected. I remember being young myself, and trying to tell another generation to look at the situation a little different, they didn't want to do it. I said, well, look, I'm not gonna be the same way. These kids are clean cut, they stay out of trouble, they got an idea, so I'm gonna pay attention to them and help them if I can."

Born in New York, Carn grew up in St. Augustine, Florida, surrounded by books and music. His mother,

an accomplished pianist and organ player who accompanied services in church, was the music director for the public school system. She also did a couple of gigs with Dizzy Gillespie and was a tremendous influence on her son. The young Carn started performing as early as 8 or 9 when he put together a band for a talent show, but he made his first professional appearances at the age of 12 performing at dances, proms and club dates and held a regular gig at the Edgewood Lounge throughout high school. He was learning all the time, reading and listening.

"After the cowboy show or whatever movie, like *Gunsmoke* and *Paladin*, I'd read the credits. I'd see names like Max Steiner or Norman Dello Joio. You could tell they knew what they were doing, they didn't have but nine or ten pieces. Aaron Copland did a few westerns and I knew he wasn't just an ordinary guy."

After high school Carn attended Jacksonville University and Georgia State College studying oboe and composition. Copland was an Artist-in-Residence at the former. Carn credits a one-on-one conversation with the composer for helping him develop into a fluent arranger. Meanwhile, it was during these years in the mid '60s that he heard all of the great organ players when they traveled to Atlanta to perform at the Bird Cage—Jack McDuff, Jimmy McGriff, Lonnie Smith, Groove Holmes, Shirley Scott, all of them; except Jimmy Smith performed at Paschal's La Carrousel. Carn ended up working those venues and quickly established himself as an organ player with his own voice. He released *The Doug Carn Trio* on the Savoy label. It was also in Atlanta that he met Sarah Jean Perkins, who became Jean Carn when they married. They became musical partners. As he tells it, after the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., the artists dispersed and they were among many from the Atlanta scene that moved to Los Angeles. Once there, they lived at the Landmark Hotel where their neighbors included Janis Joplin and members of the bands Mandrill, The Chambers Brothers and Earth, Wind & Fire. That is how Doug and Jean Carn came to appear on the first two Earth, Wind & Fire records. Nobody knew how far that band would go, but Carn was focused on his own path.

Preparing to realize his vision, he asked who was the best in town and was referred to drummer Michael Carvin. Carn established a powerful rapport with Carvin and bassist Henry Franklin as they worked for about a year before recording what became the classic album, *Infant Eyes*. Already a veteran performer and well-studied composer, Carn didn't realize how well prepared he was for success while still a young man. He used his ingenuity to conceive of a progressive jazz record with his wife's voice as a focal point, writing original lyrics to music by John Coltrane, Bobby Hutcherson and Horace Silver. The recording was intended to be a demo, but it was so fully conceived that Black Jazz was more than happy to issue it as it was. He continued to develop his concept, composing more of his own music and released new albums in consecutive years for the label, each release building on the success of the last one.

The label was more than happy to have him represent Black Jazz as his albums sold well and were in regular radio rotation. Also, Carn was a self-described Black militant interested in the Black cultural revolution and the label itself was conceived to cash in on that movement and that ethos, so Carn fit their plans perfectly. "I motivated a lot of people through my work, but it didn't have nothing to do with a particular record company; I was just doing my thing like the boys that did their thing and inspired me."

Doug and Jean Carn split up by the time of their third Black Jazz album, *Revelation*, and Jean changed her name to Carne and went on to personal success charting a number of R&B hits. After that, Carn worked primarily as a sideman, taught at Jacksonville University and worked with the restoration commission back in St. Augustine, Florida. In 1997 he appeared with fellow organ players Dr. Lonnie Smith, Reuben Wilson and Joey DeFrancesco on *Bongo Bop* by the Essence All Stars. In the 2000s he recorded and performed with Curtis Fuller, Cindy Blackman and Wallace Roney. In 2015 his album *My Spirit* revisited some of the material originally released by Black Jazz.

In 2010 Doug and Jean Carn(e) started performing together again, appearing at Lincoln Center and Ronnie

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LEST WE FORGET



LEM WINCHESTER

BY JOHN PIETARO

The jazz pantheon is built as much on legend as star power. Lem Winchester, a vibraphonist unjustifiably absent from most historical documents, cast a shadowy oeuvre through a mythic tale. In a career spanning just three years, Winchester magically touched the music of leading figures including Oliver Nelson, Ramsey Lewis, Benny Golson, Jack McDuff, Shirley Scott, Roy Haynes, Hank Jones, Art Taylor, Tommy Flanagan, Toots Thielemans, Frank Wess and more, only to die in an ironic accident.

Born Mar. 19th, 1928 in Philadelphia, Winchester and his family moved to Wilmington, Delaware shortly thereafter. A multi-instrumentalist, he was noted for playing various saxophones as well as piano and vibraphone before focusing on the latter. As Ira Gitler wrote in a later album liner note, in 1957 Leonard Feather received a tape of Winchester and a local trio, leading him to feature the unknown vibraphonist at the following summer's Newport Jazz Festival.

One can imagine the impact the national spotlight may have on a fledgling artist, but Winchester had been a colleague of both Sonny Rollins and Clifford Brown and watched his friends graduate into jazz royalty.

Winchester had pursued a career as a police officer instead of a musician yet maintained a busy musical life, careful to cut the gig in time to walk his midnight-shift beat. Wilmington pianist George Lindamood wrote of Winchester regularly wearing a sport jacket over his police uniform, barely concealing the bulge of his service revolver. A certain Officer Shipp, a co-worker of Winchester's, also spent time in area jazz clubs; his young son Matthew, who'd grow to be an icon in his own right, recently joked about Winchester's "strange sense of humor". Likewise, Wilmington drummer John Chowning wrote of the vibraphonist's impression of Charles Mingus. Winchester told Chowning "It was like shaking hands with ten miles of bad road." Priceless.

After his momentous performance at Newport and the release of the *New Faces at Newport* album (MetroJazz, 1958, a split LP with Randy Weston), Winchester led a record date with the Ramsey Lewis Trio (*Perform A Tribute to Clifford Brown*, Argo, 1958). The following year he recorded *Winchester Special* with Benny Golson, Tommy Flanagan, Wendell Marshall and Art Taylor for New Jazz.

The vibraphonist continued to manage full-time civil service with an increasingly busy music career

until finally leaving the Wilmington Police Department in 1960. He bought a hearse to carry his band and its equipment and they recorded three albums that year alone for the Prestige family of labels. Winchester was also hired as a featured side musician for six more dates in 1960 and 1961 and was seen as an important vibraphonist within a crowded category during the instrument's height.

Among Winchester's most relevant credits is Oliver Nelson's *Nocturne* (1960). "In a Sentimental Mood" showcases Winchester's grasp of the blues, not simply as form but heritage. His improvisations glide over the instrument's bars, blurring blue thirds and sevenths with a certain ease, with Nelson emoting darkly. Winchester's light touch—he trimmed the rattan mallet handles for a closer grip—was akin to a winter breeze drizzling ice. Though he used softer mallets in pursuit of Milt Jackson's sound, Winchester kept his instrument's vibrato motor set to a more traditional "fast" setting. Jackson slowed his down to achieve that hypnotic quality, but Winchester captured the depth, the warmth purely by way of mallet grip and rebound. In retrospect, his playing is more like a woodwind, powered by lightly controlled breathing, sounding eternal.

In contrast, Winchester's was a painfully brief career. 60 years ago this month, on Jan. 13th, 1961 while on tour, he stopped at an Indianapolis bar, requesting

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 31)

TAO FORMS

BY GEORGE GRELLA

Tao Forms is drummer Whit Dickey's new record label, but it's not solely his, nor, if you checked out its releases, would it seem new. In every aspect, it looks and sounds like the natural development of music making for Dickey and the circle of creative New York City jazz musicians in which he belongs.

The idea for the label came out of a meal. "Me, [pianist] Matthew Shipp and Steven Joerg [head of AUM Fidelity] met in an East Village restaurant," in May 2019, as Dickey related over a recent phone call. They "decided this was the thing to do, we're at our creative height."

"Matthew really wanted to record," Dickey explains, "and ESP-Disk's [a principal issuer of Shipp's music] schedule was too tight." So Shipp's desire turned into Tao Forms initial release, the solo piano disc *The Piano Equations*, recorded late in 2019 and released in May 2020. That the album was a consensus best-of-the-year release is unusual for the first release by a new label but, again, Dickey, Shipp and Joerg have been leaders on the scene for decades and consolidating a new label under Dickey's imprint seems like an easy, natural step.

As was the second release, *Expanding Light*, from the trio of Dickey, alto saxophonist Rob Brown and bassist Brandon Lopez. "The trio was something I wanted to do," Dickey explains, but goes on to point out that the focus of the label is not on him, it's not an

ego-driven, vanity project in any way. The name of the brand sort of gives it away.

"There's no aesthetic," Dickey says when asked what concept may be behind the music on the label, "that's why it's called Tao Forms. It's just a present thing," meaning the musicians he admires are the focus, not himself. The only criteria are that he wants the label to be all acoustic music.

The strong first two releases were followed in November by the excellent disc, *Now Then*, from drummer Tani Tabbal's trio with alto saxophonist Adam Siegel and bassist Michael Bisio (the latter is frequently found in groups with Dickey and Shipp). This month, Dickey and Shipp accompany tenor saxophonist Ivo Perelman on the new release *Garden of Jewels*.

Although that's only four albums so far, taken together they clearly demonstrate both Dickey's "there's no aesthetic" aesthetic and the equally clear and important commitment to the free side of jazz and Dickey's own music-making experience. The lead voice on each album is the leader; in the case of Tabbal and Perelman, that means the drummer's light, soulful, intense rhythms and Perelman's bearish, melancholy introspection. Dickey and Shipp are active accompanists for the latter, but it's Perelman's disc while Dickey's Trio disc balances the drummer's sense of space and understatement with the bassist's active hands and Brown's typical open-throated energy. Like the focus on postbop so typical of Blue Note in the '60s, Tao Forms seems set to document the two or three generations of free jazz playing clustered around Shipp and his various ensemble-mates. But that doesn't mean the label is set on that sole path.

Four new albums in less than a year is a good start, but Dickey points out that the label has a substantial slate of releases prepared or in the works—Fall of 2022 is the next empty spot on their calendar.

Meanwhile, up next is another album from Shipp and one that Dickey is particularly excited about: "A James Brandon Lewis record," he says, "with [drummer] Chad Taylor, [bassist] William Parker, [cornet player] Kirk Knuffke and a cellist." Dickey is an admirer of the younger tenor player and is also glad to have the record to extend the musical and social reach of the label. He thinks of it as having "a new voice on the label."

There's more to expect from Dickey and Shipp too: they'll be playing with Parker on a release later this year that will be "doing something to commemorate *Circular Temple*," the classic 1992 album from the same players Shipp released on Quinton Records.

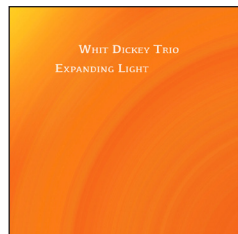
With Dickey and Shipp, the musical foundations, the drummer is thankful for Joerg's commitment and expertise. "Steven is the anchor," he points out. "He knows the music, he's got the connections, knows the social media." The music on Tao Forms speaks for itself, but Joerg does the work to make sure it's heard.

Still, Tao Forms didn't explode out of the head of Zeus, it just came out organically, from music-making and a meal. Its appearance, the music on it, the unassuming but strong presence the label has already established, all seem an extension of Dickey himself. "I'm an old guy, I'm 66," he says, "and I'm glad to be doing this for a while. It's been great and it keeps me young." ❖

For more information, visit taoforms.bandcamp.com



The Piano Equations
Matthew Shipp



Expanding Light
Whit Dickey



Now Then
Tani Tabbal



Garden of Jewels
Ivo Perelman

VOXNEWS

FACING CHANGE

BY SUZANNE LORGE

Out of the misery that was 2020, inspired ways of reaching jazz audiences have emerged. When the pandemic struck last March, Soapbox Gallery—the arty, minimalist concert space in downtown Brooklyn—responded swiftly to artists' need for high-quality live-streaming performance options. In the 10 months since, the organization has presented its share of premier jazz vocalists: **Claudia Acuña**, **Kendra Shank**, **Becca Stevens**, **Allegra Levy** and **Nicole Zuraitis** among them. Live streams from well-equipped rooms like this helped musicians to remain in touch with fans and provided a dignified platform for virtual album releases; eager as we are for in-person performances to return, we just might miss click-and-watch concerts if live-streamed events were to disappear entirely. This modern dilemma is still several months off, however. In the meantime, Soapbox Gallery this month will give us a virtual front-row seat for **Audrey Silver** (Jan. 8th), **Paul Jost** (Jan. 12th), **Roseanna Vitro** (Jan. 16th) and **Tessa Souter** (Jan. 26th).

Likewise, vocal jazz educators introduced tremendous innovation to online learning. Singer/composer **Ayelet Rose Gottlieb**, purveyor of the educational platform Orchard of Pomegranates, typically

hosts about two dozen singers during her online weekend intensives, each featuring back-to-back workshops on the finer points of improvisatory singing, with prominent guest lecturers like **Theo Bleckmann**, **Jen Shyu** and **Sara Serpa**. Gottlieb has held three of these crash courses in creativity so far, with the next slated for April 2021.

Award-winning singer **Alexis Cole** has adopted a tiered subscription model for her online teaching; through her website JazzVoice.com, singers can choose their level of involvement with the vibrant online community built around Cole's dynamic presence. From private lessons with elite vocalists like **Catherine Russell** and **Tierney Sutton** to master classes with industry veterans like **Sara Gazarek** and **Stephanie Nakasian**, Cole's clearinghouse for vocal education offers unprecedented access to jazz professionals across a spectrum of interests. (Disclosure: Cole has invited this writer to present a one-off class on music marketing.)

Here are some other exceptional vocal jazz web-based instruction this January. Pianist/singer/composer **Lauren Lee** will teach two master classes as part of her Sing Like A Horn! educational series, one on using triads and the other on developing syllables for soloing. Through California Jazz Conservatory's Jazzschool, New Jersey-based Vitro will teach a 10-week online course on how to scat with lyrics in the manner of Ella Fitzgerald and Sarah Vaughan, starting Jan. 14th. Free improv trailblazer **Jay Clayton**, too, will present a 10-week online class via CJC: on Jan. 11th she'll unveil "Singing the Jazz

Standards", a deep dive into the basics of improvising within the traditional jazz canon.

Back in 2015, Gottlieb asked Clayton to guest at The Stone on a moon-inspired song cycle she'd written. The subsequent album, *13 Lunar Meditations: Summoning the Witches* (s/r), shows just how adroitly these master improvisers practice what they teach. Listen to their duet, "Lotte and the Moon", the first track of the cycle and a lyrical, romping dialogue of closely intertwined free improv and spoken word. Later, on electrifying blues tune "Moon Over Gaza", the singers explore contrasting registers and rhythms. Finally, on the penultimate track, "Traveler Woman", Clayton recites the gripping text (by multi-media artist Gem Salsberg) in concert with Gottlieb's wild vocal interjections and moody backing chorus. Each track issues a different musical statement, one for each full moon of the year, but share a poetic through-line: mysterious pull of celestial bodies. The album drops on Jan. 12th, the first new moon of 2021.

Singer **Holli Ross** passed away in May 2020, just as The Royal Bopsters were finalizing their sophomore album, *Party of Four* (Motéma Music). The release paid tribute to vocalese pioneers like **Annie Ross**, who'd sung on the group's lauded 2017 eponymous Motéma debut. Annie (no relation to Holli) also passed away last year—in July, just a month after the death of beloved singer/pianist **Freddy Cole** (no relation to Alexis). It's in facing these losses that we discover a major flaw in the new pandemic-inspired wiring: no way to give a proper good-bye. ❖

IN MEMORIAM 2020

★DIED FROM COMPLICATIONS OF COVID-19

CLAUDE ABADIE
BOB ADAMS
WILLIAM ALGAR
MIGUEL ALGARIN
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LUCIEN BARBARIN
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AAD BOS
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JON CHRISTENSEN
LYN CHRISTIE
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RONALD JOHNSON
JYRKI KANGAS
MORY KANTÉ
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RYŌ KAWASAKI
PATRICK KELLY
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EDDIE NOBLE KING, JR.
RONNIE KOLE
TOSHINORI KONDO
LEE KONITZ★
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DAMIR KUKURUZOVIĆ★
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TONY ROMANDINI
WALLACE RONEY★
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HOLLI ROSS
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MOJMIR SEPE
PAUL SHELDEN★
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PIERRE SIM
HAL SINGER
DONALD SLATTERY
BILL SMITH
VIOLA SMITH
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DANTE STEPHENSEN
LORRAINE STERN
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ED STOUTE
BUDDY SULLIVAN
IRA SULLIVAN
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DUANE TATRO
RICHARD TEITELBAUM
ACE TESONE
BUBBHA THOMAS
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MCCOY TYNER
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VINCE WEBER
SUSAN WEINERT
RUTH WEISS
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JÜRGEN WUCHNER
ED XIQUES
TONY ZAMORA
WILLIAM ZICKOS
DAVE ZOLLER
BARRY ZWEIG

KALI Z. FASTEAU

BY ANDREY HENKIN



COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

Saxophonist, pianist, player of various world wind and reed instruments and percussionist Kali Z. Fasteau, who first gained notice with The Sea Ensemble, a collaborative duet with husband/reedplayer Donald Rafael Garrett, and then worked as a leader, mostly for her own Flying Note label from the mid '80s onwards, died Nov. 20th at 73.

Fasteau, née Zusaan Kali, was born Mar. 9th, 1947 in Newark, NJ into a musical family. As she told Clifford Allen for this gazette in 2017, "professional 'classical' musicians populated both sides of my lineage. This happenstance perhaps justified and propelled me to spontaneous composition, the opposite way of making music and avoiding 'Western' musical notation, song structures, specialization and hierarchical organization of music and musicians."

Her first credit was with Garrett in 1973 when both were in the band of Archie Shepp that performed at Festival Ljubljana in then-Yugoslavia. The next year they distilled their work into a duo, The Sea Ensemble, which released its debut on ESP-Disk', followed by a pair of later '70s albums for Red Records, on which Fasteau played sheng, cello, voice, clarinet, kalimba, davul, calabash, percussion, tambura, flute and other instruments. As she told Allen, with The Sea Ensemble "our carrying and playing bamboo flutes was a passport to hearts, hospitality, smiles and kinship everywhere, especially in non-European lands, and this blended with our strong drive to experience many cultures, musics, vibes and terrain." She lived overseas for over a decade in various African and European countries.

The pan-culturalism of The Sea Ensemble would go on to inform Fasteau's work as a leader, which started in 1986 with the establishment of her Flying Note imprint, the catalogue of which boasted over a dozen releases, most recently 2016's *Intuit*. She also made a single album for CIMP in 1997. Her collaborators on those sessions included Noah Howard, Kidd Jordan, Bobby Few, William Parker, Warren Smith, Rashied Ali, Louis Moholo-Moholo, Cindy Blackman, Michael T.A. Thompson and others. She could be heard performing regularly in New York City as part of Vision Festival-related programming and at Roulette, Spectrum, Greater Calvary Baptist Church and other venues. In 2018, she participated in the ESP-Disk' 55th Anniversary Celebration at Greenwich House Music School.

She summed up her aesthetic to Allen thusly: "I've always had strong tastes in music and visual art. I especially enjoy sculpting sound and the artistic freedom of accomplishing projects independently. I returned to America primarily to work with the many great musicians here who compose spontaneously with heart. By tuning ourselves and refining our skills, we develop sensitivity and intuition to receive and translate energy into beautiful music unique to the present moment."



CHRISTIAN AZZI (Dec. 1st, 1926 - Nov. 21st, 2020). The French pianist released an album in 2003 in tribute to saxophonist/clarinetist Sidney Bechet, with whom he had worked some 50 years earlier during Bechet's sojourn in Paris, appearing on albums for Vogue, Blue Note and Brunswick, to go along with recording credits under countryman Claude Luter's Orchestra and Crescent City Jazz Band and expatriates such as Mezz Mezzrow and Don Byas during the same period and then, decades later with the High Society Jazz Band and Watergate Seven. Azzi died Nov. 21st at 93.



ALLAN BOTSCHINSKY (Mar. 29th, 1940 - Nov. 26th, 2020) The Danish trumpeter was a member of Denmark's traditional jazz band Jazz Quintet '60 in the '60s and fusion supergroup Iron Office in the '70s and released several albums since the '60s on Danish Debut, RCA Victor, Storyville and M•A Music, the latter including an '80s duo with fellow Iron Officer Niels-Henning Ørsted Pedersen, but was better known for his many credits under Ib Glindemann, Erik Moseholm, Bent Axen, Oscar Pettiford, Bjarne Rostvold, Sahib Shihab, Danish Radio Jazz Group, Bent Jaedig, Rune Gustafsson, Rolf Billberg, Dexter Gordon, Karin Krog, Peter Herbolzheimer, George Gruntz, Ernie Wilkins, Joe Haider, Barbara Dennerlein, European Jazz Ensemble and many others. Botschinsky died Nov. 26th at 80.



MICHAEL BROOKS (1935 - Nov. 20th, 2020) The music historian, archivist and producer worked under John Hammond in the '70s, producing jazz reissues for CBS, and continued in that role as well as archivist for both CBS/Columbia and Sony Music since the mid '80s, winning six Grammy awards for his work, which included sets dedicated to Count Basie, Eddie Condon, Lester Young, Duke Ellington, Billie Holiday, Benny Carter, Louis Armstrong, Red Norvo, Coleman Hawkins, Teddy Wilson, Jack Teagarden, Stan Kenton, Woody Herman, Gene Krupa, Ella Fitzgerald, Glenn Miller, Benny Goodman, Artie Shaw, Erroll Garner, Charlie Christian, Earl Hines, Roy Eldridge and many other legendary figures. Brooks died Nov. 20th at 85.



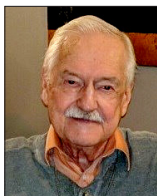
CÁNDIDO CAMERO (Apr. 22nd, 1921 - Nov. 7th, 2020) The legendary Cuban percussionist was instrumental in the development of the conga and bongó as complex rhythmic and melodic instruments, both in the traditional music of his homeland and then, after moving to New York in 1946, as part of the nascent AfroCuban jazz movement alongside Dizzy Gillespie, Machito and others, going on to make dozens of albums from the mid '50s onwards for ABC-Paramount, Roulette, Tico, Solid State, Blue Note, Polydor, Salsoul, Chesky and Latin Jazz USA, this to go along with hundreds of credits under and alongside Billy Taylor, Stan Kenton, Charlie Parker, Dinah Washington, Chico O'Farrill, Gillespie, Erroll Garner, Bennie Green, J.J. Johnson/Kai Winding, Ray Bryant, Gene Ammons, Kenny Burrell, George Shearing, Duke Ellington, Art Blakey, Ralph Sharon, Randy Weston, Woody Herman, Lionel Hampton, Sonny Rollins, Tony Bennett, Wynton Kelly, Illinois Jacquet, Donald Byrd, Wes Montgomery, Grant Green, Tico All-Stars, Elvin Jones, Bobby Hutcherson, Buddy Rich, David Amram, Gerry Mulligan, John Shaw, Beaver Harris, Dexter Gordon, The Conga Kings, Toots Thielemans, Graciela, Bobby Sanabria and many many others. Camero died Nov. 7th at 99. [An In Memoriam spread dedicated to Cándido is on pgs. 12-13]



OTHELLA DALLAS (Sep. 26th, 1925 - Nov. 28th, 2020) The dancer/singer's (and half-sister to Frank Strozier) career as the former from the early '40s onwards, both in the States and her adopted home of Basel, Switzerland, was interspersed with stints as the latter, performing with Sidney Bechet, Quincy Jones, Nat King Cole and Duke Ellington, the latter writing two tunes for her for the 1941 revue Jump for Joy then, decades later, releasing albums on Megaphone, Mons, Brambus and Yellow Tree Music. Dallas died Nov. 28th at 95.



HERMAN GREEN (1930 - Nov. 26th, 2020) The saxophonist and Memphis stalwart worked in both the jazz and blues worlds, the former including Phineas, Jr. and Calvin Newborn in the '40s, Lionel Hampton's Orchestra in the late '50s-early '60s, as a guest of the Memphis State University Jazz Band in the late '60s and participation in James Williams' Memphis Convention in the '90s. Green died Nov. 26th at 90.



CLIFF HOFF (1927 - Nov. 2nd, 2020) The saxophonist was a member of the orchestras of Glenn Miller, the Dorsey Brothers, Dick Meldonian, Ralph Flanagan and Gerry Mulligan/Bob Brookmeyer/Phil Sunkel in the '50s. Hoff died Nov. 2nd at 93.



PETER INGRAM (Nov. 14th, 1938 - Nov. 21st, 2020) The British drummer spent his adult life in North Carolina as a scientific researcher but had a parallel career in jazz, operating the Frog & Nightgown and Café Déjà Vu clubs in Raleigh, co-founding the educational group Preservation Jazz Company and leading Group Sax, making a handful of albums, one featuring Sir Roland Hanna. Ingram died Nov. 21st at 82.



PEDRO ITURRALDE (Jul. 3rd, 1929 - Nov. 1st, 2020) The Spanish saxophonist fused his country's Flamenco tradition with jazz on albums since the '60s for Hispavox, SABA, CBS and other labels, one featuring a young Paco De Lucía, and also worked with Elia Fleta, Juan Carlos Calderon and a number of Spain's folk, rock and funk acts. Iturralde died Nov. 1st 91.



EDDIE NOBLE KING, JR. (Mar. 26th, 1937 - Nov. 16th, 2020) The trombonist and New Orleans stalwart was a member of the Olympia Brass Band and Treme Brass Band, appearing on the HBO show *Treme* with the latter, and was a regular performer at Preservation Hall. King, Jr. died Nov. 16th at 83.



ANDREW WHITE (Sep. 6th, 1942 - Nov. 11th, 2020) The saxophonist/bassoonist/oboist/French horn player never played with John Coltrane but was an acknowledged expert on the subject, publishing *The Works of John Coltrane, Vols. 1 through 14: 701 transcriptions of John Coltrane's Improvisations*, to go along with dozens of albums of his own music since the '70s on his own Andrew's Music imprint in a career that saw him leading The "J.F.K." Quintet for two Riverside albums in the early '60s and having recording credits with Weather Report, McCoy Tyner, Elvin Jones, Hilton Felton, Beaver Harris and Julius Hemphill. White died Nov. 11th at 78.



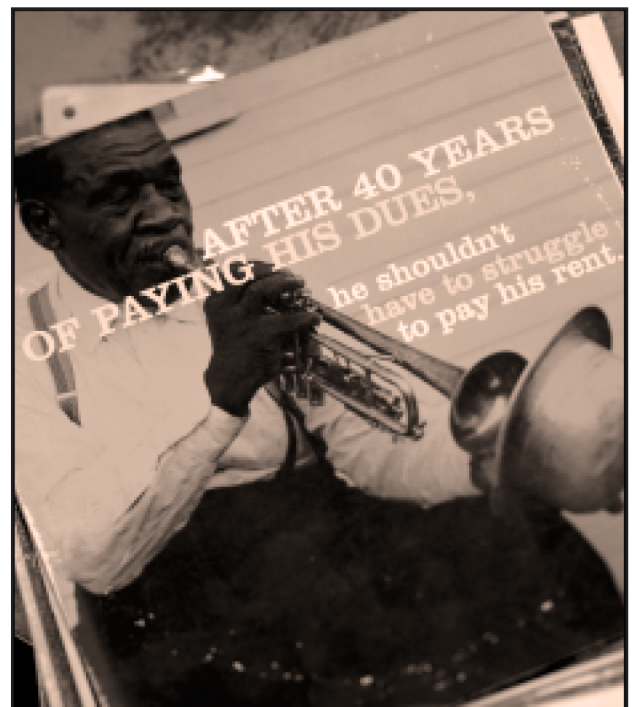
DAVE ZOLLER (1941 - Nov. 8th, 2020) The pianist, composer and arranger had a handful of leader albums starting in the late '90s, the most recent being a self-released tribute to Thelonious Monk (plus some as-yet-unreleased sessions), performance and or/writing credits with Thom Mason, Pete Peterson, Genie Grant and Al Hirt and composing-arranging-teaching work for North Texas State University's Lab Band during his many years as part of the program, mentoring three generations of alumni, and voluminous jingle work as an employee of TM Studios. Zoller died Nov. 8th at 79. ❖

THE MERCER STANDS BURNING
JOHN PIETARO

"These amazing poems are inspired by jazz and the Beats - Miles and Coltrane and the late Steve Dalachinsky, but Melville is very much alive in these pages, too."
RON KOLM

John Pietaro is a writer, poet and musician from Brooklyn NY. A denizen of downtown's underground, he's been known to thrive in the dark. These are Night Poems.

AtmospherePress.com JohnPietaro.com



Photography donated by Brian Wilder. Musician photos: © photography by Bradley Smith.

Today, many jazz musicians live in shelters or are homeless / We help them find affordable housing, and jobs to pay for it / Call 1-800-JFA-JAMS or visit jazzfoundation.org to help



Cándido was a great man. Cándido was a great artist. I am so happy that I can say that Cándido was and will always be my friend.

—SONNY ROLLINS, SAXOPHONE

Cándido—in very busy times way back—played with me on several appearances and a few recordings. He was a wonderful partner to play with and a very genuine guy just to hang out with. He gave us his presence for a long time, and we are all grateful.

—DICK HYMAN, PIANO

Cándido was a National Endowment of the Arts Jazz Master who changed the performance history of jazz conga playing. I had the opportunity to perform with him many times in my life in a variety of settings. It was always total enjoyment to see and hear him perform with his multiple congas. He would play melodies such as “Manteca” and would always add tremendous excitement to the rhythm section as well as for the listening audience.

While he was performing with the Billy Taylor Group in the early ‘50s, Cándido and Billy incorporated Afro-Latin concepts that Dizzy Gillespie utilized with his big band in the ‘40s.

He will be musically missed.

—JIMMY OWENS, TRUMPET

When you talk about percussion, particularly the evolution of conga playing, you’re talking about two periods—before Cándido and after Cándido. He was literally game-changing.

He was the first to develop coordinated independence as applied to the congas and bongó—being able to keep a steady rhythm with one hand while soloing with the other. He was the first to develop the techniques to play more than one conga simultaneously. He was the first conga player to perform solo pieces with no accompaniment. He adapted the conga drum to the swing feel in jazz so beautifully it became a template for all others to follow. He was the first to develop the techniques to play multiple percussion instruments played simultaneously, sounding like three or four players.

He was the first to tune multiple congas to specific pitches so he could play melodies on them, and he was an inventor as well. In 1950 he created the first device for a player to be able to play a cowbell with one’s foot. On top of that he was a bass player and played the Cuban tres (mandolin-like guitar). Every percussionist working today, in any context, owes a debt of gratitude to him.

—BOBBY SANABRIA, DRUMS/PERCUSSION

I met Cándido during a recording for an advertising campaign I was producing in 1989. On Nov. 28th, 1990, I presented the Carnegie Hall 100th Anniversary concert, under the direction of Chico O’Farrill for which we had Cándido billed as a very special guest. It took me five years to convince Cándido to be in the 2005 documentary I did, *Cándido: Hands of Fire*. During the last two decades, we produced several concerts as well as recordings with him. Cándido became part of our family as friend, grandfather, father, uncle, brother, you name it. His humbleness was much, much bigger than his fame and he will always occupy a very huge special room in our hearts.

—IVAN ACOSTA, WRITER-FILMMAKER

What a loss. Cándido was a Grand Master, a pioneer and an innovator. His music will live forever.

—DUDUKADA FONSECA, DRUMS/PERCUSSION

I had an association with Cándido when he recorded with me on my first and second albums, which were for Blue Note Records in 1956. Blue Note founder Alfred Lion actually recommended him for those sessions. I really appreciated his music and contributions. He was a brilliant percussionist and a very professional musician and made a great contribution to Latin jazz and Latin music.

—KENNY BURRELL, GUITAR

Cándido was the Monk of the AfroCuban world. He was not one for hyper-virtuosic displays of self aggrandizement. I watched him many times in the presence of other master congueros and with a couple of strokes of his fingers he always brought the house down in a way that the histrionics of those around him could not. It was not a lack of prowess. He had technique to spare. It was simply that the musicality of his playing came from a place deep within, free of competitiveness, liberated from a need to grandstand. This was displayed in every facet of his humanity. He was a gentleman with a comportment that also roared generosity, curiosity and deep love for the music.

With Cándido’s departure a guiding spirit for young musicians will be missing but for the ancestors, it will be a homecoming. I love you Cándido, now you and Baba Randy Weston can continue to make a joyful noise.

—ARTURO O’FARRILL, PIANO

Life is one rollercoaster ride full of ironies. But this one hit too close to home. A man that I always thought invincible, has transitioned. He was probably the coolest cat I’ve ever met. He was the epitome of a gentleman. He was sharper than a thumbtack. “El hombre que inventó la Elegancia”: I’ve never seen any man pull off wearing a Leopard Dolce & Gabbana suit better than him.

He used to call me the one and only. He gave me my first professional shot when I was 18. His life motto was “Stay away from bad advice, bad company and bad habits.” I used to visit him at his apartment on West End Avenue and listen to all the epic stories of him hanging with Chano Pozo or playing with Sammy Davis, Jr., Sinatra, Tony Bennett, Bird, Diz, Miles, Trane, Elvin, Celia Cruz, La Lupe, Cachao, Tom Jones, et al. He was the first conguero to be listed in the World Book Encyclopedia. He even played bass on an Art Blakey song (“Oscalypso”) because apparently Oscar Pettiford couldn’t play tumbao.

He was as innovative as they come. He was the first conguero to play two and three congas. He invented the mechanism to play the cowbell with a bass drum pedal 50 years before Latin Percussion’s Gajate Pedal. He told me he got the idea of playing three congas after being inspired by the tympanist at the philharmonic.

Three words come to mind when I think about him. Elegance, class and sophistication. He was part of my family. When I graduated from the New School he gifted me one of his sacred white congas, a pair of timbales and bongos with a hand written note: “Focus, study and perseverance always pays off.” Cándido was an incredible musician but an even more incredible human.

—AMAURY ACOSTA, DRUMS

I met Cándido for the first time at the Thelonious Monk International Jazz Competition in 2000 when I was one of the participants and he was one of the judges.

On the second night me and some of the other participants went to have dinner with him, Giovanni Hidalgo and Milton Cardona. It was an unforgettable evening, where Cándido shared with us his book of pictures, his stories. I was amazed by his professionalism.

After that I got to share time with him on different occasions, but maybe the one that I remember the most was when I got hired by my uncle Edy Martinez to play at a nursing home on the Upper West Side of Manhattan. Cándido was the special guest. I was the first musician to arrive to the gig and then Cándido arrived. He was by himself moving all three of his congas on the stands. Of course as soon as I saw him I brought his congas inside.

Another evening that I will not forget was at the NAMM Show in California. Latin Percussion organized a series of duet performances. It was a big surprise when they organized for me to play a duet with Cándido. I felt so honored and humbled to be playing a duet with the biggest conga legend! In the audience were the most important percussionists, including Giovanni Hidalgo and Johnny Dandy Rodriguez. My biggest honor was when Cándido asked me to tune his congas.

—SAMUEL TORRES, PERCUSSION

I was shocked by the sobering news of the passing of THE venerable reigning elder of African hand drum performance, Cándido Camero. We had talked on his pandemic-stifled birthday in April about looking forward to his 100th. Not only was he an iconic personal inspiration but I was also blessed to have been able to call him a friend, elder colleague and even mentor.

Always the consummate dapper and polite gentleman, Cándido’s innovative contributions to the world of music and humanity as a musician, composer, inventor and more over the past 75 plus years are innumerable and beyond what we could even begin to scratch the surface about here. Cándido’s humility with regards to his performance innovations was such that, prior to getting to know him and doing my own reflective research I, as a student of the craft myself, had often attributed many of them to others.

While some “Latin” music purists may have regarded his approach as more commercial than others, it was actually adaptable in ways that were more conducive to multiple genres than some more traditional styles. Cándido took the African drum and its sound to places others had not, along the way introducing and familiarizing new ears and audiences to the instrument and its sound.

Cándido to the end, much like his great friend, fellow NEA Jazz Master Randy Weston with whom he worked regularly since their meeting in the ‘50s, always honored their parents. They credited them with being the very source of their impressive existences. I once asked Cándido to what did he attribute his longevity in life and his impressive career? He responded: “I don’t drink, smoke, curse or talk politics!” I’ve been humbled, honored and thankful to have known and played with both of these creative musical icons and am grateful for the artistic gifts they’ve shared and left for us all. Thank you Cándido. As you play on with the multitude of luminaries you’re now reunited with in the Celestial “Jazz” Philharmonic. We’re still listening!

—NEIL CLARKE, PERCUSSION

We spoke a week and a half before he died and I miss him. The first experience that I had with Cándido was when I was a little kid, thanks to my grandfather who taught me to play and showed me an album of Cándido's from 1958 with him on the cover with one conga (*Candido In Indigo*, ABC Paramount). One of my favorite Cándido records is *Brujeras de Candido* (Tico) with Cachao and Chino López. That album's a classic and I used to practice with that vinyl album every day. Cándido, the Thousand Finger Man, was a pioneer since he came to America in 1946. And though he may have been the original "Mr. Clean"—he never drank or smoked—he was a true showman and an all-time original. He always worked with the dynamics of the music and the dynamics of life. Even in his 90s he was still kicking ass for sure.

I remember when we met to play in The Conga Kings group. He said, "You sound like a machine gun!" I would tune his congas because you have to help the elders. That was of course my honor. I have always said, "Lord, thanks for giving me this opportunity." Elders like Cándido are very much like a diamond, a precious ruby or emerald. He will be forever one the masters of the conga drums.

—GIOVANNI HIDALGO, PERCUSSION

In 1951 when I first got to spend time with Dizzy Gillespie, he told me that if I ever moved to NYC, I should spend some time with Cándido. "After Chano Pozo passed, Cándido kept that spirit alive," said Dizzy. "He's all about the music." In 1955, when I finally moved to NYC and was lucky enough to work with Charles Mingus at the Café Bohemia, Cándido was the featured artist when we took a break. Cándido was always generous and gracious to any young musician if he saw you were respectful and eager to learn. He always found the time to lend a helping hand, a smile and a word of encouragement to anybody, as long as you remembered to say please and thank you.

We became friends for life. We played at jazz festivals, folk and world music events, including one where Cándido was the featured artist with the Brooklyn Philharmonic and performed in my "En Memoria de Chano Pozo". It was wonderful in the role of conductor, seeing young musicians looking spellbound as Cándido seemed to effortlessly play his astounding solos, which were compositions that he created on the spot.

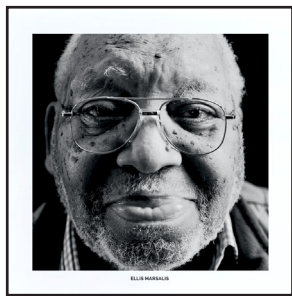
Playing with him for Mario Bauza's 100th birthday at the Apollo Theater as guests with Bobby Sanabria's big band was like being in heaven, without the drag of expiring! We played again with Bobby's Multiverse Big Band in 2017 at "Salsa Meets Jazz", a benefit for Puerto Rico after the hurricane. Backstage, all the guests watched in reverence as Cándido closed the show, raising his arms, like Moses parting the Red Sea. "Ladies and gentlemen," he said. "I have something very important to tell you. I am 97 years old and have terrible arthritis. But when I play my drums, I feel like I'm 20!" There was thunderous applause. "No, no please," said Cándido, shushing the audience with his arms until you could hear nothing in the room except for the ice machine quietly dropping a cube. He bowed his head as if in prayer and everyone remained silent. "Ladies and gentlemen, I want to thank my mother and my father." There was another pause and in the silence, you could feel everyone thinking, how could a 97-year-old man have parents able to even be alive, much less come down to Greenwich Village to hear their son? "Ladies and gentlemen," said Cándido, "Without them.....NO CÁNDIDO!!!" We didn't need to play an encore.

—DAVID AMRAM, VARIOUS INSTRUMENTS

CÁNDIDO CAMERO 1921-2020



© JACK VARIOOGIAN/FRONTROWPHOTOS



The New Orleans Collection: Ellis Marsalis (Newvelle)
by Ken Dryden

Until Ellis Marsalis was honored as an NEA Jazz Master (together with sons Branford, Wynton, Delfeayo and Jason) in 2011, fans often overlooked his many contributions as a composer and pianist, due to the patriarch's primary focus being on jazz education and the many plaudits that Wynton and Branford received with their prolific output. But his final recording, made just weeks prior to his death in April of 2020 at 85 from COVID-19, is the perfect swan song to his career.

Marsalis returns to several of his earlier compositions and finds new approaches to some old favorites, alternating between piano solos and duets with son Jason on vibraphone. The elder Marsalis played a wide range of styles during his lifetime so he isn't easily classified, though he had a gift for constructing creative solos that never overshadowed the melodic line.

Most of the solo ballads have a reflective mood, full of spaciousness and lush chords, starting with the delicate "E's Knowledge", which seems nostalgic without being maudlin. J. Fred Coots-Sam M. Lewis' World War II era standard "For All We Know" is even more poignant, with Marsalis' deliberate, almost hesitating exploration, communicating the meaning of its unheard lyric. Even more intriguing is the unusual medley that the pianist arranged: beginning with a brief snippet of Bernece Petkere's "Lullaby of the Leaves", Marsalis weaves his way indirectly into Richard Rodgers-Lorenz Hart's timeless "My Funny Valentine" before segueing into a moving setting of the spiritual "Nobody Knows The Trouble I've Seen", a luxurious performance which wraps all too quickly. He also revisits "Beautiful Old Ladies" by Harold Battiste, his old pal from the American Jazz Quintet, bringing out its subtle lyricism with hushed voicings.

The duets provide a striking contrast, especially the late James Black's driving "Magnolia Triangle" and the patriarch's funky "Discipline Meets The Family", the latter adding Jason's daughter Marley on percussion and piano. Father and son are of one mind in "Groove For Bags", a bluesy, laidback tribute to Milt Jackson. Newvelle Records has built a strong reputation with the high quality of its 180-gram limited edition LPs and this album, part of its recent *New Orleans* collection, is among its very best to date.

For more information, visit newvelle-records.com



Party of Four
The Royal Bopsters (Motéma Music)
by Dan Bilawsky

This hip and polished quartet is cut from the same cloth as vocalese groups of yore. But don't mistake this for a retro act. Thanks to skillful hands and voices, that cloth has now been embroidered with the entire history

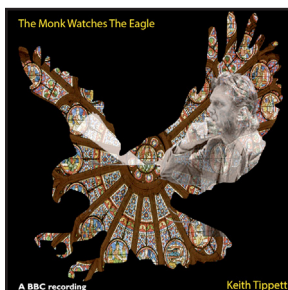
of the music. The Royal Bopsters' 2015 debut, where regal members Amy London, Holli Ross, Darmon Meader and Dylan Pramuk palled around with icons Mark Murphy, Bob Dorough, Jon Hendricks, Sheila Jordan and Annie Ross, made that clear enough. And this follow-up set, with Pete McGuinness filling the tenor seat vacated by Meader, further demonstrates a long and wide reach.

Backed by the classy trio of pianist Steve Schmidt, bassist Cameron Brown and drummer Steve Williams and boasting a guest list that includes Dorough, Jordan, percussionist Steven Kroon and bassist Christian McBride, these swinging singers rejoice in the company they keep and the splendor of the heavenly harmonies they create. Their noble bearing is clearly audible on the soigné "But Not for Me", acknowledging a Chet Baker scat trip in its soli, and the seriously swinging "My Shining Hour", where McGuinness makes his mark and everybody hammers home the truth.

The ten tracks between those end points offer all manner of wonders. "Lucky to Be Me", opening on the well-wrought song verse delivered by the core crew, finds Jordan in incredibly fine form. An a cappella "Day Dream" plays, appropriately enough, as an episode of woolgathering. The spicy "Cuando Te Ve" has McBride holding down the fort with a solid *tumbao*. And "Baby, You Should Know It", featuring Dorough in one of his last appearances on record, is the embodiment of blues-based wit.

While there's a celebratory sound to this album, its arrival proves bittersweet. Holli Ross, who valiantly battled cancer, passed away in May of 2020 at 62, right after the final masters were finished. Her artistry, stamped on the entire program, leaves a rich legacy and her absence now creates a void. *Party of Four* is, rightly, dedicated to this voice taken too soon.

For more information, visit motema.com



The Monk Watches The Eagle
Keith Tippett (Discus)
by Francesco Martinelli

Poignantly issued only months after the recent death of the great English pianist Keith Tippett in June of 2020 at 72, this is an extended, 40-minute cantata in seven movements for solo voice (Tippett's life and music partner Julie Tippetts), two saxophone quartets – Tippett's Mujician partner Paul Dunmall (soprano), Kevin Figes (alto), Ben Waghorn (tenor) and Chris Biscoe (baritone) and the Apollo Saxophone Quartet: Tim Redpath (soprano), Rob Buckland (alto), Andy Scott (tenor) and David Roach (baritone) – and the BBC Singers choir, magnificently recorded by the BBC during its premiere at the Norfolk and Norwich festival on May 14th, 2004 in the spacious acoustics of the Norwich cathedral.

Based on a text by Tippetts herself, the work was conducted by the composer and dedicated to his father, Patrick, a music-loving Bristol policeman; Tippett himself, in an uncharacteristic gesture for jazz, does not appear as an instrumentalist. He was very happy about the recording, but did not see it released in his lifetime: it took Discus Music's Martin Archer's dedication with the support of Julie Tippetts to make it available.

There's neither dabbling in composition here nor superficial "classics in jazz" fusionism. The atmospheres may recall more well known music by

Arvo Pärt or John Surman, but it's deeply original. It's a culmination of a creative path that flouted genre and style borders since Tippett's landmark Centipede band of 1971, not inspired by a rebellious streak but because Tippett's creativity cannot be contained in any single given genre and happily transcends them all.

The central and longest fourth movement is the keystone and perfect synthesis of the strengths of the piece, building up from the sound of a mbira through Julie Tippetts' solo vocalization to lovely choral melodies supported by the texture of the reeds. It's a majestic, rich recording repaying multiple listening.

For more information, visit discus-music.co.uk

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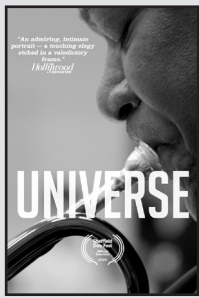
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"Sublime guitar lines that soar like birds of prey in the sky, daring harmonic innovations and immersive metric modulations to make your heart bleed with anguish, ecstasy and joy." – Petri Silas (The Finnish Music Quarterly)

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THE NEW YORK CITY JAZZ RECORD
BEST OF 2020
BEST TRIBUTE ALBUMS

ON SCREEN



Universe

A Film by Sam Osborn and Nick Capezera
by Kevin Canfield

Near the end of this laudable documentary, trumpeter Wallace Roney visits Woodlawn Cemetery in the Bronx, where he lays a trumpet on Miles Davis' grave. "I'll see you again," Roney says to his late mentor. "...I'm doing what you taught me." The scene would be powerful under normal circumstances, but it's all the more poignant given the tragic news that saddened the jazz community last spring. Roney was 59 when he died on Mar. 31st from complications related to COVID-19. Filmmakers Sam Osborn and Nick Capezera spent ample time with Roney in the preceding months. In *Universe*, they present an engrossing portrait of the trumpeter as he completes an ambitious project initiated a half-century ago.

In the mid '60s, Wayne Shorter, the saxophonist in Davis' Second Great Quintet, wrote a sprawling, complex orchestral work titled *The Universe Compositions*. Davis was fascinated by the music—"I asked for a tune and you gave me a fuckin' symphony", he's said to have told Shorter—but it went unrecorded and was then misplaced. Shortly before Davis died in 1991, he urged Shorter to locate the music. Another 15 years passed before the Library of Congress found the compositions. At that point Shorter asked Roney, Davis' protégé, to bring the music to the public. Roney set to work, devoting considerable time and resources to the task. The film—shot in black-and-white to match archival footage from Davis' heyday and featuring insightful interviews with musicians, critics and those closest to Roney—tells this long-developing story with visual panache and palpable esteem for all involved.

Osborn and Capezera set up their cameras in Roney's New Jersey home, where his carefully assembled big band rehearsed in tight quarters; there, as in the filmmakers' footage of recording dates and mixing sessions, the musician is at once easygoing and exacting, a genial perfectionist. Though filled with music from Davis and Roney's careers, the film could have offered a sharper idea of what makes *The Universe Compositions* so tricky, or how a fully realized interpretation sounds. The directors build to a performance at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center, of which we hear just a bit.

The film's primary goal, though, is to show a determined artist at work, to give us an understanding of what brought him to this moment and to chronicle the care and enthusiasm with which he approached his work. Osborn and Capezera do this in edifying fashion, recounting Roney's signal appearance alongside Davis at the Montreux Jazz Festival in 1991, his efforts to transcend criticism that he was a Davis "clone" and his ear for everything from microphone quality to the way that *The Universe Compositions* should be conducted. Davis "saw me and heard me" more clearly than anyone else, Roney says, and this film demonstrates why the great trumpeter had such faith in his apprentice.

For more information, visit universedoc.com

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Peur Sur La Ville (Soundtrack)
Ennio Morricone (WeWantSounds)
by George Grella

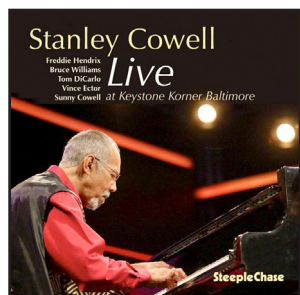
The hip reissue label WeWantSounds has brought out a special new edition of this Ennio Morricone soundtrack album; a two-LP set produced for Record Store Day that compiles the original soundtrack to this 1975 French detective movie, along with bonus material that had previously been issued on CD (though not LP) and two tracks never before released. Of course, since this is a soundtrack, the idea of unissued tracks is a little vague, not formal songs but instead cues meant to underpin and enhance specific dramatic moments in the movie. Still, for most listeners, more Morricone is always good Morricone and this example does not disappoint.

The composer, who died in July of 2020 at 91, scored hundreds of films and few will be familiar with all his work, though jazz fans might be struck by an arrow of recognition when they hear the main theme stitched through this album, an ominous bass/piano ostinato with Alessandro Alessandroni whistling the wonderful, emotionally complex theme over the top – John Zorn used this material on his masterpiece *The Big Gundown*. Morricone was a kaleidoscopic composer, a genius melodist, and one of the features that sets this soundtrack apart from much of his work is the level of thematic consistency; so many of the cues are based on the same ostinato, with its beating heart rhythm and the remarkable sound of Alessandroni.

Morricone was not the only soundtrack composer who could write truly inventive, original music (not just cues and adaptations of classical music), but he was one of the tiny few (with maybe Georges Delerue and Toru Takemitsu) who could write a wholly original and completely convincing pop tune, instead of a cringe-worthy pastiche only a movie producer could love. Here, those include “Dolcemente Ambigua” and the Burt Bacharach-esque “Essere Preso Del Panico”.

The two new tracks are the nostalgic pop tune “Tractations” and the excellent fantasy on the main theme, “Reconsidération”. This edition is advertised as remastered and the sound is smooth but a touch dense, although the mix places Alessandroni in a dramatic spot.

For more information, visit wewantsounds.com



Live at Keystone Korner Baltimore
Stanley Cowell (SteepleChase)
by John Pietaro

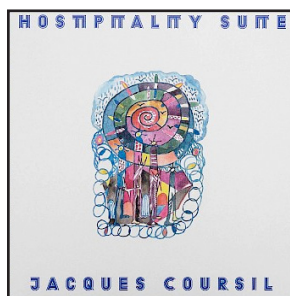
Just days after his passing in December of 2020 at 79, listening to the music of Stanley Cowell becomes immediately transformative. An artful player and composer over turbulent decades, Cowell was instrumental in this postmodern period, traversing the Loft years, the avant garde and back with a renewed, reinvigorated vision of straightahead jazz. But his grip

on the entirety of the music was always evident (note his adaptation of Eubie Blake’s “Charleston Rag” on this album to sense his command of the music’s heritage). This reviewer had the opportunity to see that up close in the ‘80s when, as a college and grad school student, he counted Cowell among his teachers. Professor Cowell taught two compelling courses of Jazz History (really the story of the diaspora and the nation itself) and facilitated a hands-on jazz ensemble the likes of which his students will rarely, if ever, experience again. He was a gentle man and gifted educator, brimming with enthusiasm for the art form. And these attributes are evinced within this live set from 2019.

The opening number, an original written for Cal Massey, is reflective of the soft-spoken complexity shared by both the honoree and composer. Cowell reveled in lengthy melodic statements and he submits this latter-day bop head dual-handed and solo. By the time he’s joined in the melody by trumpeter Freddie Hendrix and alto saxophonist Bruce Williams, the work is ingrained within the ear and the swing over sinewy lines feels nothing short of natural; you could call it Blue Note redux, in the best manner possible. But “Cal Massey” also acts as something of an introduction to each band member. The quintet is as clean and tight as a regular touring act, though such a lineup is one the pianist has rarely worked with over the years. On “Banana Pudding”, a lively, uptempo bit of postbop, another work with an extended melody line, the band is downright effervescent and Cowell’s solo is gripping, a testament to his strongest work yet. The rhythm section of bassist Tom DiCarlo and drummer Vince Ector sits exactly where they need be, supportive, sturdy, churningly interactive.

Hendrix’ wide brassy tone recalls Woody Shaw and Freddie Hubbard and he plays with the self-assuredness of both. His muscular solos throughout are journeys into hardbop past, but one always pushing toward what’s to come. “Montage for Toledo” is a softly swinging piece in 12/8 meter, which speaks to the pianist’s journeyman years, with the alluring dark lamentations of alto hypnotically working their way through the listener. And on “Equipoise”, the significance only multiplies. Another Cowell original, this time it features daughter Sunny’s shiver-inspiring vocal on this prescient song about seeking balance. The Baltimore-based singer is also a multi-instrumentalist, songwriter and a practicing attorney. Surely, this piece is a highlight of the performance, a special father-daughter moment as well as grand, rich vocal in an already bountiful set. If this turns out to be Cowell’s final statement, he left us on a truly brilliant note.

For more information, visit steeplechase.dk



Hostipitality Suite
Jacques Coursil (SAVVY)
by Andrey Henkin

Musicologists of keener analytical skill than this reviewer could be able to say whether Charles Ives’ lifetime of selling insurance or Philip Glass’ experience as a cab driver had an impact on their respective composing. But it is clear that Martinican-French trumpeter Jacques Coursil, who died in June of 2020 at 82, thoroughly imbued his music with the theoretical knowledge gained over decades as a linguist. But even that term is limiting; in a 2005 interview with this writer, he said, “My position is kind of a philosopher

but I had my training in linguistics and philosophy of language and all that goes with linguistics”.

Though a musician since the mid ‘60s, Coursil’s output is scant, which, rather than a criticism, instead can be seen as the methodology of a person extremely careful about what he says. *Hostipitality Suite* is his last album and, as was the case with Eric Dolphy and *Out To Lunch*, Coursil died before it was a physical object. It is now an LP but listening to it one hears something floating and omnipresent, not tethered to grooves or emanating from speakers.

The wordplay of the title is explained as “hostility and hospitality as proposed by [Algerian-French philosopher] Jacques Derrida.” Add to that the French words and phrases Coursil intones in his deep baritone, interspersed among absolutely vibrato-less trumpet and synth arrangement by Martinican composer Jeff Baillard, and the 38-minute suite becomes an elusive listen, atmospheric and non-linear, introspective and abstract, far more in line with his more recent work as a solo performer than anything he did decades ago as part of the New York and Parisian avant garde jazz scenes.

A word that keeps getting repeated is “étranger”, which can be translated as stranger or foreign. Now, when discussing translation as it applies to the work of a linguist, precision is necessary but we are left on our own to determine what Coursil meant: was he the stranger, a philosopher among musicians, a trumpeter among academics?; is strangeness/foreignness ultimately a relative concept? This amorphous quality extends to the music as the notes, words and electric washes move in and out of the foreground. In both music and language, living things changing over time, there are no final statements.

For more information, visit savvy-contemporary.com

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At The Club Room (for Simon H. Fell)
IST (Confront)
Pièce commémorative: Pour Simon
Various Artists (Confront)
by Marc Medwin

It may begin as a whisper, a rustling at the edge of perception, but it never remains static. Just as often, the sound rushes, roars and rumbles on the fringes of cognition. It swirls like half-formed memories and then pours out in emotive torrents in which even the need for a single meaning grows vague but, for the musicians involved in these two recordings released in tribute to the bassist Simon Fell, who died in June of 2020 at 61, meaning and association are crystal clear.

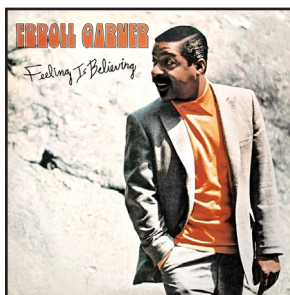
It is impossible to encapsulate the scope of Fell's work on two albums, no matter how inclusive. Yet, here we can gain an inkling of his contributions and influence, both direct and by association. The common factor is multi-instrumentalist Mark Wastell, who also founded Confront in 1996. With him, Fell and harpist Rhodri Davies formed IST, a boundary-blurring trio pioneering, but by no means limited to, a dynamically diverse music often relying on a nearly silent but intense energy and interplay. 24 years after it happened, we now hear the trio's second performance ever and it is a marvel of synchronous discovery caught in a dry but resonant space. The crystalline interplay of bows opening the first track of *At The Club Room* is a model of Protean articulation, bloom and decay, a chamber music in wonderful flux examining while deconstructing the permeable boundaries between light and shade. In these heady days of initial exploration, the pointillism of European free improvisation was complemented by what could be called interstitial silences, but more than dynamics were in play. The raw ingredients of sound, modified via alchemy, stood at the center of the trio's evolving aesthetic, but it could just as easily become molten or burst into flames, as happens leading up to and including 6:00 into the second track. The crackle of interactive electricity is palpable as each mirrors and enhances the others' forays down the myriad paths opening when an instrument is used to its fullest potential. Fell transforms a bass into chamber orchestra and percussion ensemble, ideas alternately pouring down like rain or wafting like the gentlest breeze.

The sonic intrigue so germane to IST is amplified in *Pièce commémorative: Pour Simon* from the large ensemble UN, a project of bassist David Chiesa in which Fell regularly participated. This commemorative piece was begun in April of 2020 as a kind of musical postcard for Fell, wishing him well during his illness. While, sadly, it was not completed before the bassist's passing, his compositional and performative spirit imbues the 20-minute work. A long-time lover of studio manipulation of live material, Fell would doubtless have found pleasure in the track-by-track construction, but the piece's whimsy would also certainly have appealed to his astutely prankish side. There is something jocosely sinister about Wastell's piano opening, bass frequencies preternaturally highlighted and augmented by what might be Davies' harp in *basso profundo* range. Lê Quan Ninh provides incisive percussive exhortations, like the one at 1:59, to the incredibly delicate tremolo of Anouck Genthon's violin in delicious *sul ponticello*. Humorous juxtapositions abound, like the single percussive at 15:26 that follows hot on the heels of voices trapped in what sounds like nothing so much as ring-modulated static. All paves the way for another explosion, a feast for the ears covering the entire frequency spectrum.

Throughout, the low-register piano acts as a *basso continuo*, another idea that would have pleased the ever-inquiring and boundary-suspicious dedicatee. Like IST, each sound is just as likely to obscure as belie its origins and it is only with signifiers like the breath at 16:22 that cause and effect have a hope of being separated, if such a consideration is really appropriate at all. Where IST exploited environmental possibility in a concert setting, UN harnesses the power of multiple and transcultural environments to similar effect and with all the benefits of studio production.

Fell was a joyful maverick. He could tear it up in a jazz trio, was conversant in the languages of art music and dug beyond the foundations of improvised forms and structures with equal fluency. His love of music-making manifested in his writing and speaking, just as his influence is palpable in these tributes to his inclusive musical legacy. As the proceeds go to charity, purchasing these releases will reward twice and the musical enjoyment to be gained is beyond measure.

For more information, visit confrontrecordings.bandcamp.com



Feeling Is Believing
Erroll Garner (Octave Music-Mack Avenue)
by Marilyn Lester

The latest in Octave Music's remastering of Erroll Garner albums is *Feeling Is Believing*, recorded in late 1969 with several new collaborators appearing over the 11 tracks. One was gifted drummer Charles (Charli) Persip, who died in August of 2020 at 91. His resumé is hard to beat: at the birth of bebop; played with the best; led his own band (Supersound); mastered a range of genres; and became a respected educator. His work with Garner is a clear indication of his adaptability, wherein his task was to work at complementing the pianist's style while at the same time being equally creative in a contained framework. That's no mean feat, given Garner's off-the-charts improvisational ability and eccentric method of playing, with each hand creating its own melodic and rhythmic dynamic. This later period in Garner's career was one in which he allowed himself a great deal of freedom to explore and adapt new creative ideas, such as Latin undertones, a dash of funk and more complex harmonies. His rhythm players on *Feeling Is Believing* were up to the task, supplying Garner with a contemporary sound, different from prior approaches to his work.

Right out of the gate, Garner is off and running with speed on "For Once in My Life" (Ron Miller). After an almost discordant intro, the melody travels with power to its conclusion while Persip gets in the groove with Garner's percussive left hand. What follows is a collection of songs contemporaneous to 1970 plus a handful of Garner's own tunes, such as the title song, a lush ballad full of lyrical embellishments. Persip plays on another Garner piece, "Paisley Eyes", a happy-go-lucky light swing tune with prominent accompaniment by Garner's regular conguero Jose Mangual. Persip's excellent sense of time and overall abilities are best heard on "Spinning Wheel" (David Clayton Thomas), even behind subdued but forward conga.

But make no mistake, on *Feeling Is Believing*, Garner is the man. His various sidemen serve the virtuoso at the keys, taking no solo turns, but offering flawless musical support for the main attraction.

For more information, visit mackavenue.com

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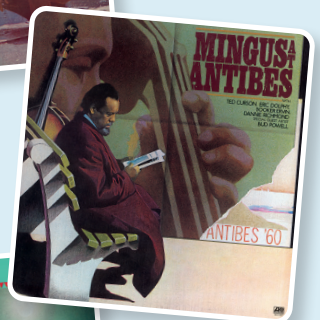
Sonny Stitt & The Top Brass

John Lee Hooker
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by Kurt Gottschalk

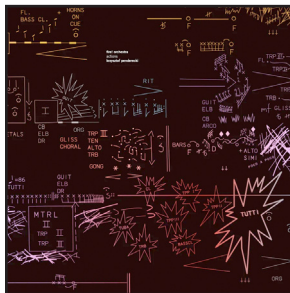
Trumpeter Toshinori Kondo led a busy life, making music that even in its more meditative moments itself felt busy, and didn't seem to have slowed when he died in October of 2020 at 71. Ten albums were posted to Bandcamp during the last six months of his life, including five volumes of solo electric trumpet music recorded during lockdown and bearing the title "Beyond Corona". (All are streaming in full at toshinorikondo.bandcamp.com.) The fourth was dedicated to his friend, the fashion designer Kansai Yamamoto—famous for his work for David Bowie—who died in July of 2020 at 76. The fifth includes a short note about making music despite being in pain and having difficulty breathing. While no cause of death was given by the family at the time of his death, it's apparent that Kondo was facing difficulties.

Also during that time, the Polish label Bocian Records released a brief meeting between Kondo and the Russian sax/bass/drum trio Brom. Recorded in Moscow in March 2019, the album shows Kondo at full breath and energy, matching the younger players in 12 minutes of blast.

The Sea is Rough is available as download

(streaming at bocian.bandcamp.com) and 12" 45 rpm vinyl, a format most often used for dance music. Grooves do exist here, although they are rare. In your face, electric bass and effects-laden horns give a fullness of sound reminiscent of Peter Brötzmann's Full Blast trio—hardly a surprise, as Kondo worked regularly with Brötzmann over the years. The A side hits full on, the flip lets off a little, a bit like a dub mix on one of those old max-singles. That wouldn't have been a bad idea, in fact. The sea may be rough, but there's not enough of it.

For more information, visit bocian.bandcamp.com



Actions
Fire! Orchestra (Rune Grammofon)
by Phil Freeman

Krzysztof Penderecki, who died in March of 2020 at 86, was best known as a classical composer and conductor, but in 1971, he collaborated with trumpeter Don Cherry on *Actions for Free Jazz Orchestra*, a 16-minute piece performed at the Donaueschingen Music Festival with an ensemble of Kenny Wheeler, Manfred Schoof and Tomasz Stanko (trumpets), Albert Mangelsdorff and Paul Rutherford (trombones), Gerd Dudek, Willem Breuker and Peter Brötzmann

(saxophones), Gunter Hampel (flute and bass clarinet), Fred Van Hove (piano and organ), Terje Rypdal (guitar), Peter Warren and Buschi Niebergall (basses) and Han Bennink (drums), with Penderecki conducting. Not unlike John Coltrane's *Ascension* or Ornette Coleman's *Free Jazz*, it juxtaposed swinging ensemble passages against raucous solo and duo sections.

In 2018, Swedish saxophonist Mats Gustafsson and his Fire! Orchestra were commissioned to revisit *Actions* for the Sacrum Profanum festival in Kraków, near Penderecki's Debica birthplace. Their version of the piece runs a full 40 minutes and includes Goran Kajfes, Niklas Barnö and Susana Santos Silva (trumpets), Maria Bertel (trombone), Per Åke Holmlander (tuba), Anna Högberg (alto), Per "Texas" Johansson (tenor, clarinet and flute), Gustafsson (baritone saxophone and conduction), Christer Bothén (bass clarinet), Reine Fiske (guitar), Alex Zethson (Hammond organ), Elsa Bergman (upright bass), Torbjörn Zetterberg (electric bass) and Andreas Werliin (drums).

Rather than extend the solo portions, though, they've slowed the whole thing down to a dubby, psychedelic crawl, with guitar, bass and organ giving it a dark, forbidding atmosphere. The horns hoot, sputter and moan at each other like apes at midnight, but there are a few real solos as well: one of the trumpeters early on, then Gustafsson later. This is a fascinating, unexpected performance very different from previous Fire! Orchestra discs, more in line with groups like Globe Unity Orchestra or bassist Alan Silva's large-scale projects. Although it's likely a one-off, it does point to a potentially fascinating new direction going forward, should Gustafsson choose to take that path.

For more information, visit runegrammofon.com

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www.espdisk.com espdisk.bandcamp.com
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Leewise
Lee Konitz (Storyville)
by Scott Yanow

Few jazz musicians had as long a career as Lee Konitz and even fewer were consistently creative for so many decades. The alto saxophonist, who passed away in April of 2020 at 92, already had his cool tone and basic style together as early as 1947 when he made his recording debut with Claude Thornhill. In his final public performance on his 92nd birthday, which can be seen on YouTube, Konitz had not only retained his distinctive sound but was still pushing himself. He had lost neither his musical curiosity nor his chance-taking and very open style.

An individualist from the start, Konitz was part of the Lennie Tristano school of adventurous cool jazz yet eventually broke away to follow his own path: an unlikely but successful stint with Stan Kenton's orchestra; many collaborations with tenor saxophonist Warne Marsh and projects ranging from solo LP and duet albums to relaxed free jazz albums, Konitz was both a traditionalist (in his own way) and an innovator.

In 1992, he was given the prestigious JAZZPAR award by the Danish Jazz Center and recorded *Leewise* in Copenhagen. On this newly remastered reissue of the CD, he performs five numbers with an all-star

Danish nonet but only his "Stardust" was not composed specifically for the occasion so this is far from a retrospective of past glories.

"Skygger" has a spoken interlude with Brigitte Frieboe paying verbal tribute to Konitz. The other seven numbers include a quintet performance of Konitz' early composition "Subconscious Lee" plus six duets with either flugelhorn player Allan Botschinsky, who died in November of 2020 at 80 (nearly free interplay on "AllanLee"), alto saxophonist Jens Sondergaard (emulating Konitz' sound and style on "Alone Together"), pianist Peggy Stern or bassist Jesper Lundgaard as the other musician.

45 years into his career, Konitz showed that, while retaining his basic approach to chordal improvising, he was still full of surprises.

For more information, visit storyvillerecords.com



Néropolitaines
Manu Dibango (Frémeaux & Associés)
by Tom Greenland

Manu Dibango died in March of 2020 at 86 but his legacy as the most internationally acclaimed African jazz saxophonist will endure. Best known for his 1972 hit "Soul Makossa" – Michael Jackson appropriated it

for the outro vamp of "Wanna Be Startin' Somethin'" – Dibango had a unique way of blending hooks with genres as diverse as makossa (from his hometown of Douala in French Cameroon), Nigerian Afrobeat, Congolese rumba, Ghanaian highlife, South African mbaqanga, Jamaican reggae, even Nuyorican salsa (he played with the Fania All-Stars). This cultural/rhythmic eclecticism is evident on *Néropolitaines*, a reissue of two albums released in 1989 and 1995, which retains all but three of the original songs, now resequenced. The tracks are richly layered without clutter, most having two guitar parts, three or more drum/percussion parts, keyboard and/or organ and a horn section (Dibango dubbing in extra saxophones); the second session adds a four-piece string section and features pioneer Afrobeat drummer Tony Allen, who himself died in April of 2020 at 79.

Dibango's infectious amalgam suits the nightclubs and parties it was intended for, yet the complexity of the interlocking parts and the intelligence inherent in his solos merit closer attention. The arrangements are mercurial, making abrupt textural shifts sustaining interest in what would otherwise be heavily repetitive music. Wah-wah guitar, gospel organ and string section on "Panafrikan Jam", the title track, "Aloko Party" and "Longe Lese" recall Norman Whitfield's arrangements for The Temptations or Curtis Mayfield's for *Superfly* while "Mpuni Mwa Moni" and "Oh Koh!" fall into the soukous/rumba tradition, but with hints of reggae. Similarly, "Parfum des îles" mashes up soukous, tango, funk and Grover Washington-style R&B. While Dibango's solos conform to the emotional architecture of pop music, his work on the title track, "Oh Koh!" (showing his skronkiest side) and "Mudied Asu" (a duet with acoustic guitar) reveal a more experimental sensibility.

For more information, visit fremeaux.com



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ANDRÉ ROLIGHETEN
saxophones, bassclarinet, percussion

PER "TEXAS" JOHANSSON
tenorsaxophone, contrabass clarinet, clarinet, percussion

MACIEJ OBARA
altosaxophone, percussion

METTE RASMUSSEN
altosaxophone, percussion

EIRIK HEGDAL
saxophones, clarinet, percussion

THOMAS JOHANSSON
trumpet, percussion

GORAN KAJFES
trumpet, percussion

EIRIK JOHANNESSEN
trombone, percussion

PETTER ELDH
doublebass, percussion

INGEBRIGT FLATEN
doublebass, percussion

OLE MORTEN VÅGAN
doublebass, percussion

HANS HULBÆKMO
drums, percussion

HÅKON MJÅSET JOHANSEN
drums, percussion

GARD NILSSEN
drums, percussion

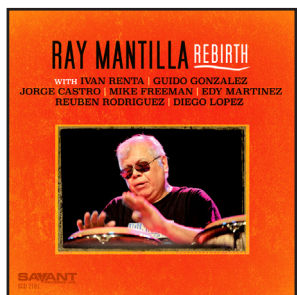
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Rebirth
Ray Mantilla (Savant)
by Russ Musto

Recorded just months before his death in March of 2020 at 85, this final effort from versatile conguero-percussionist Ray Mantilla, his tenth as a leader, stands out as a distinctive conclusion to a stellar career spanning seven-plus decades.

The date opens with Puerto Rican trumpeter Piro Rodriguez' original "Moondance", featuring a cast of Latin jazz veterans in trumpeter Guido Gonzalez, tenor and soprano saxophonist Ivan Renta, flutist/baritone saxophonist Jorge Castro, pianist/arranger Edy Martinez, bassist Ruben Rodriguez and drummer Diego Lopez. This rollicking expedition begins with a conga- and cowbell-augmented drumkit dialogue stating the propulsive AfroCuban rhythmic foundation flowing throughout the date and driving the skilled soloists' heady postbop harmonic excursions.

The music turns soulful on Bobby Timmons' "Dat Dere" and Percy Mayfield's "Hit The Road Jack", the former swinging smoothly over a cha-cha-cha-chaing groove, the latter, a feature for guest vibraphonist Mike Freeman, rocking jubilantly over an insistent rim-tapping snare-drum beat. Martinez' pretty "Mia" underscores the pianist's skill as a composer and soloist on this mellow outing. Vibraphone is out front on Tito Puente's "Philly Mambo", the AfroCuban dance classic popularized by the composer and fellow vibraphonist Cal Tjader. Martinez moves over to Fender Rhodes for his "Cumbia Jazz Fusion Experimental", an episodic piece that begins with electric keyboard and flute celestially floating over the hypnotic Mantilla-Lopez conga-trap drum exchange, after which the music charges straightahead with brawny tenor digging in before returning to the atmospheric Colombian rhythm.

Freeman is back one more time for his swinging arrangement of Bobby Hutcherson's "Yuyo", which has him soloing fluently over a pulsating Rhodes montuno backed by the riffing horn section. Martinez' tangoing orchestration of the beloved Rafael Hernández bolero "Preciosa", spotlighting romantic full bodied tenor, recalls the pianist's many years as a key member of Gato Barbieri's ensembles. His eponymously titled "Martinez" is a jaunty, melodically appealing outing

with he and Rodriguez sharing solo duties with the three horns. The date ends percussively with Mantilla's "Rebirth Bata Rumba Experimental" on which his congas come center stage, soloing handily with Renta over spacey piano and the batá-drumming trio of Diego Lopez, Ogudaro Díaz and Rafael Monteagudo's mesmerizing rhythms.

For more information, visit jazzdepot.com



Swirling
Sun Ra Arkestra (Strut)
by Monique Ngozi Nri

The baritone saxophone line on "Seductive Fantasy", the second track on the Sun Ra Arkestra's latest album *Swirling*, finds Pico Danny Ray Thompson, who died in March of 2020 at 73, leading the band in indisputably Sun Ra-like fashion on a melody with the swing of bebop, sassiness of Broadway and the otherworldliness of Sun Ra. We're living in the space age! Witness Sun Ra's lyrics and the call and response. It's an enthralling mix, as is the rest of this project.

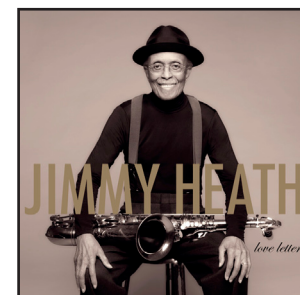
Pico was a 1947 brother, as was Billy Bang, violinist, another bandmember who passed away in 2011. It was the custom of the bands' clan of 1947 brothers, which included my partner trumpeter Ahmed Abdullah, to call each other on their birthdays. Pico would regale us with tales of incidents with his job at the TSA or funny things that happened on the road on those calls. It was Pico who drove Ahmed from the Philadelphia train station to the Sun Ra house for his first rehearsal there in 1975. According to John Szwed, who wrote a book on the band, Pico joined the band playing baritone and flute in 1968. He quickly became Sun Ra's right-hand man and could be found at concerts along with Buster Smith and Elson Nascimento, selling merchandise and generally getting things organized.

In 2019, on our first visit to the Newport Jazz festival, we just missed the Arkestra's performance. Still, we managed to speak with Pico after what was reportedly a phenomenal concert. Freshly returned from a year of touring in Europe and the states for Sun Ra's centennial year, the band was swinging.

Though many of the band's original members have passed away, including Atakotune, who plays congas on this album, alongside Thompson, Nascimento, Noel Scott, James Stewart, Michael Ray, Cecil Brooks, Vincent Chancey, Dave Davis, Farid Barron, Dave Hotep, Tyler Mitchell and Wayne Anthony Smith, Jr., the band swings on led by Sun Ra's most devoted disciple, now-96-year-old alto saxophonist Marshall Allen. The tracks are both unmistakably Sun Ra but also infused with a new and fresh energy created in part by the nuances of Tara Middleton's space voice, uncannily like that of the departed June Tyson. Middleton bends and twists the notes acapella on the "Satellites Are Spinning" but also gives her own stamp to Sun Ra staples like "Astro Black".

Highlights include the title track, which is the sole original by Marshall Allen, rhythmically engaging "Rocket No 9" and opener "Angels and Demons", which includes every element in Sun Ra's arsenal, from space sounds and to the inclusion of his mystic poetry: "Angels demons play / A rare refrain / Of cosmic flame / Rhythms of the things they only know".

For more information, visit strut.k7store.com



Love Letter
Jimmy Heath (Verve)
by Pierre Giroux

Jimmy Heath's final album was completed shortly before he died in January of 2020 at 93. Heath surrounded his graceful saxophone sound and cool tone with a coterie of sympathetic players such as pianist Kenny Barron, guitarist Russell Malone and drummer Lewis Nash along with guest trumpeter Wynton Marsalis and singers Cécile McLorin Salvant and Gregory Porter. They explore a setlist mostly of ballads, written by Billie Holiday, Dizzy Gillespie and Kenny Dorham, as well as several Heath originals on this accomplished, creative and engaging release.

The session starts with Heath's "Ballad From Upper Neighbors Suite". After introducing the theme, Heath launches into a long solo both feathery and ruminative in tone and content. Barron, bassist David Wong and Nash provide supportive but unobtrusive accompaniment with distinctive melodic figures. On Holiday-Mal Waldron's "Left Alone" Salvant brings her crystalline voice to a flawless interpretation of the lyrics. Heath's interjections are a calming force of poise and agility.

"La Mesha" is a Dorham original showcasing the bristling trumpet of Marsalis, as he and Heath take turns interpreting the tune's mellow harmonic stylistics and Barron takes a brief solo filled with graceful disclosure. Gordon Parks was a photographer, film director (the original *Shaft* in 1971) and composer including "Don't Misunderstand", interpreted here by Porter in his deep baritone, delivering the lyrics with smoky grace and feeling while Heath fills the space with bluesy grooves, which together spells heartache. One of Gillespie's singular compositions, "Con Alma", is given a new look by Heath and Co. via an understated Latin vibe, Monte Croff's vibraphone providing quiet energy along with Malone's delicate touch.

The closer is another Holiday composition, "Don't Explain", written as she sought to deal with the infidelity of her first husband, interpreted by Heath as a lament, sadness emanating from his saxophone. Barron's solo is delivered in a cool measured style, transposing through shade and shape. With this release, Jimmy Heath has left us the perfect goodbye.

For more information, visit vervelabelgroup.com



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 CHARLES LLOYD (saxophone)

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EMMET COHEN (piano)
 KARL EVANGELISTA (guitar)
 SULLIVAN FORTNER (piano)
 HEDVIG MOLLESTAD (guitar)
 LUKE STEWART (bass)

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 INTAKT (intaktrec.ch)
 NOT TWO (nottwo.com)
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 MATT WILSON QUARTET – *Hug!* (Palmetto)
 – Laurence Donohue-Greene

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 FIRE! ORCHESTRA – *Actions* (Rune Grammofon)
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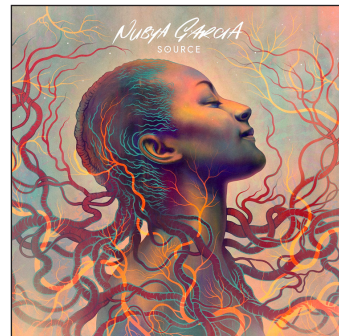
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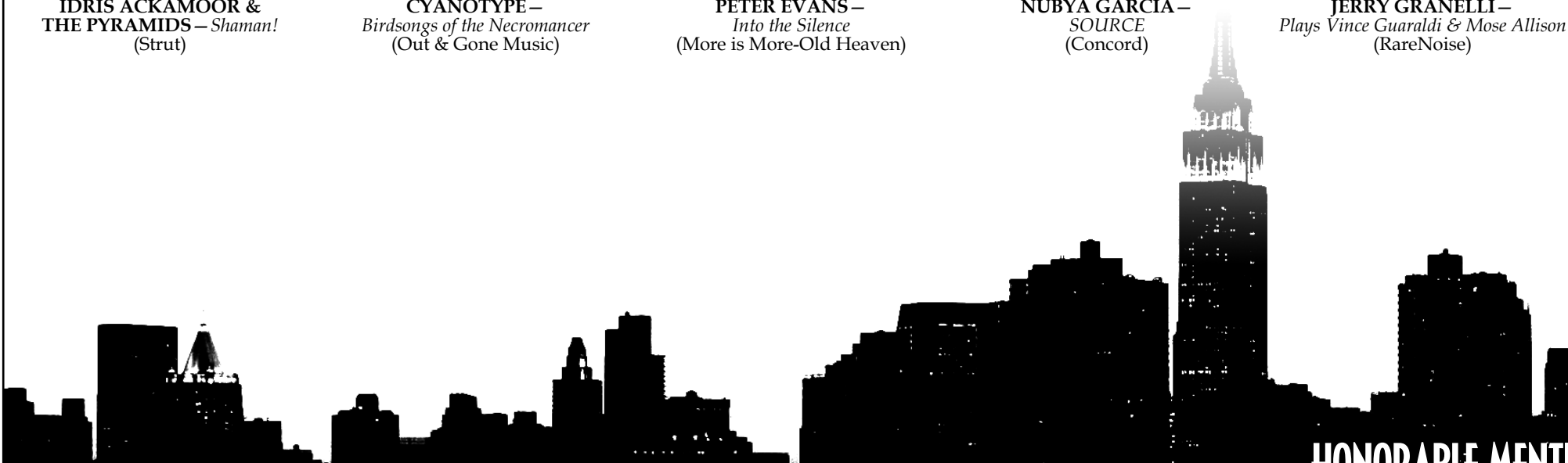
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 Sonar (with David Tom) – *Tranceportation (Volume 2)* (RareNoise) • Esperanza Spalding/Fred Hersch – *Live at the Village Vanguard* (s/r) • Alister Spence – *Whirlpool* (s/
 Etuk Ubong – *Africa Today* (Night Dreamer) • Diego Urcola Quartet (featuring Paquito D'Rivera) – *El Duelo* (Sunnyside) • Trevor Watts – *The Lockdown Solos* (Hi4Head)

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LATIN RELEASES

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 RAY MANTILLA—*Rebirth* (Savant)
 JOSÉ RIZO'S MONGORAMA—*Mariposas Cantan* (Saungu)
 GONZALO RUBALCABA/AYMÉE NUVIOLA—*Viento y Tiempo - Live at Blue Note Tokyo* (Top Stop Music)
 PAPO VÁZQUEZ MIGHTY PIRATES
 TROUBADOURS—*Chapter 10: Breaking Cover* (Picaro)

VOCAL RELEASES

LUCIA CADOTSCH—*Speak Low II* (We Jazz)
 YOON SUN CHOI/JACOB SACKS—*I Should Care* (Yeah Yeah)
 JAY CLAYTON/JERRY GRANELLI—*Alone Together* (Sunnyside)
 COSMIC VIBRATIONS FT. DWIGHT TRIBLE—*Pathways & Passages* (Spiritmuse)
 ARCHIE SHEPP, RAW POETIC,
 DAMU THE FUDGEMUNK—*Ocean Bridges* (Redefinition)

LIVE ALBUMS

MATS GUSTAFSSON—*Padova Solo* (Catalytic Sound)
 JAMES BRANDON LEWIS/CHAD TAYLOR—*Live in Willisau* (Intakt)
 CHARLES LLOYD—*8: Kindred Spirits (Live From the Lobero)* (Blue Note)
 BARRE PHILLIPS—*Thirty years in between* (Les Disques Victo)
 MARTIAL SOLAL/DAVE LIEBMAN—*Masters in Paris* (Sunnyside)

BOXED SETS

PAUL DESMOND—*The Complete 1975 Toronto Recordings* (Mosaic)
 CHARLES LLOYD—*8: Kindred Spirits (Live From the Lobero)* (Blue Note)
 MODERN JAZZ QUINTET KARLSRUHE/
 FOUR MEN ONLY—*Complete Recordings* (NoBusiness)
 CHARLIE PARKER—*The Mercury & Clef 10-Inch LP Collection* (Verve)
 VARIOUS ARTISTS—*Not Two... but Twenty* (Not Two)

JAZZ BOOKS

THE ART OF JAZZ
 Alyn Shipton (Penguin/Random House)
 BETTER DAYS WILL COME AGAIN: THE LIFE OF
 ARTHUR BRIGGS, JAZZ GENIUS OF HARLEM,
 PARIS AND A NAZI PRISON CAMP
 Travis Atria (Chicago Review Press)
 JAZZ IMAGES BY FRANCIS WOLFF
 (Elemental Music)
 PLAY THE WAY YOU FEEL: THE ESSENTIAL GUIDE
 TO JAZZ STORIES ON FILM
 Kevin Whitehead (Oxford University Press)
 SITTING IN: JAZZ CLUBS OF THE 1940S AND 1950S
 Jeff Gold (Harper Design)

LARGE ENSEMBLE RELEASES

AARDVARK JAZZ ORCHESTRA—*Faces of Souls* (Leo)
 FIRE! ORCHESTRA—*Actions* (Rune Grammofon)
 JACOB GARCHIK—*Clear Line* (Yestereve)
 GARD NILSEN SUPERSONIC ORCHESTRA—*If You Listen Carefully The Music Is Yours* (Odin)
 MARIA SCHNEIDER ORCHESTRA—*Data Lords* (ArtistShare)

UNEARTHED GEMS

ART BLAKEY & THE JAZZ MESSENGERS—*Just Coolin'* (Blue Note)
 ELLA FITZGERALD—*The Lost Berlin Tapes* (Verve)
 LONDON JAZZ COMPOSERS ORCHESTRA—*That Time* (Not Two)
 CHARLES MINGUS—*@ Bremen 1964 & 1975* (Sunnyside)
 ALAN WAKEMAN—*The Octet Broadcasts (1969 and 1979)* (Gearbox)

TRIBUTES

LAKECIA BENJAMIN—*Pursuance: The Coltranes* (Ropeadope)
 RAOUL BJÖRKENHEIM—*Solar Winds* (Long Song)
 FIRE! ORCHESTRA—*Actions* (Rune Grammofon)
 KRISTJAN RANDALU/DAVE LIEBMAN—*Mussorgsky Pictures Revisited* (BMC Records)
 JOHN SCOFIELD—*Swallow Tales* (ECM)

DEBUTS

MWATA BOWDEN—*1 Foot In 1 Foot Out* (Asian Improv)
 KARL EVANGELISTA—*Apura!* (Astral Spirits)
 ANTTI LÖTJÖNEN—*Quintet East* (We Jazz)
 LUCA T. MAI—*Heavenly Guide* (Trost)
 JORGE ROEDER—*El Suelo Mío* (s/r)

REISSUES

RASHIED ALI/FRANK LOWE—*Duo Exchange* (Survival)
 DAVE BRUBECK TRIO (FEATURING GERRY
 MULLIGAN)—*Compadres (Recorded Live in Mexico)*
 (Columbia-Speakers Corner)
 ERROLL GARNER—*That's My Kick*
 (Mack Avenue-Octave Music)
 MODERN JAZZ QUINTET KARLSRUHE/
 FOUR MEN ONLY—*Complete Recordings* (NoBusiness)
 MASAYUKI TAKAYANAGI NEW DIRECTION UNIT—*Axis/Another Revolvable Thing (In Concert)*
 (Offbeat-Blank Forms Editions)

ONS—NEW RELEASES

Transylvanian Folk Songs (The Béla Bartók Field Recordings) (Sunnyside) • **Kenny Barron/Dave Holland Trio** (featuring Johnathan Blake)—*Without Deception* (Dare2)
 d) • **Samuel Blaser**—*18 monologues élastiques* (Outhere Music) • **James Brandon Lewis Quartet**—*Molecular* (Intakt) • **Alan Braufman**—*The Fire Still Burns* (Valley of Search)
Trovalusci/Ken Vandermark—*Open Border* (Audiographic) • **Nels Cline Singers**—*Share the Wealth* (Blue Note) • **Avishai Cohen**—*Big Vicious* (ECM)
 —*Legal Tender* (Clean Feed) • **Sylvie Courvoisier**—*Free Hoops* (Intakt) • **Aaron Diehl**—*The Vagabond* (Mack Avenue) • **Chris Dingman**—*Embrace* (Inner Arts)
ron Douglas/Brandee Younger—*Force Majeure* (International Anthem) • **Duchess**—*Live at Jazz Standard* (Anzic) • **Fabian Dudek**—*Creating Meaning* (Fixcel)
er Evans—*Standards* (More Is More) • **Peter Evans Being & Becoming**—*Eponymous* (More Is More) • **Joe Fiedler's Big Sackbut**—*Live in Graz* (Multiphonics Music)
estra NY—*Entity* (Libra) • **Satoko Fujii/Natsuki Tamura**—*Pentas* (Not Two) • **Leo Genovese/Mariano Otero/Sergio Verdinelli**—*Sin Tiempo* (ears&eyes)
Do Not Slam The Door! (BMC Records) • **GRID**—*Decomposing Force* (NNA Tapes) • **Elisabeth Harnik/Paal Nilssen-Love**—*Tangram* (Catalytic Sound)
 iologs Music) • **Daniel Herskedal**—*Call For Winter* (Edition) • **Peter Hess**—*Present Company* (Diskonife) • **Jon Pål Inderberg Trio**—*Radio Inderberg* (AMP Music)
 s—*Black, Brown and Beige* (Blue Engine) • **Karuna Trio**—*Imaginary Archipelago* (Meta) • **Kirk Knuffke**—*Brightness: Live in Amsterdam* (Royal Potato Family)
Kühn & Trummerschlunk—*Playing Probabilities* (ACT Music) • **José Lencastre/Jorge Nuno/Felipe Zenicola/João Valinho**—*Anthropic Neglect* (Clean Feed)
lly Martin—*Guilty* (Amulet) • **Makaya McCraven**—*Universal Beings E & F Sides* (International Anthem) • **Mike McGinnis**—*Time is Thicker* (Open Stream Music)
three (Northern-Spy) • **Sam Newsome**—*Sonic Journey* (s/r) • **Sam Newsome**—*Free Wyoming* (s/r) • **Evan Parker/Paul Lytton**—*Collective Calls (Revisited)* (Jubilee) (Intakt)
t/Nels Cline—*Music from the Early 21st Century* (RareNoise) • **Bruno Råberg/Jason Robinson/Bob Weiner**—*The Urgency of Now* (Creative Nation Music)
h Richards—*Supersense* (Northern Spy) • **Howard Riley**—*More Listening, More Hearing* (SLAM) • **Stephen Riley**—*Friday The 13th* (SteepleChase)
 l) • **Angelica Sanchez/Marilyn Crispell**—*How To Turn The Moon* (Pyroclastic) • **Dave Sewelson**—*More Music for a Free World* (Mahakala Music)
 Josh Sinton's What Happens in a Year—*cérémonie musique* (FiP) • **Øyvind Skarbø/Fredrik Ljungkvist/Kris Davis/Ole Morten Vågan**—*Inland Empire* (Clean Feed)
 r) • **Vinnie Sperrazza/Jacob Sacks/Masa Kamaguchi**—*Play Sonny Rollins* (Fresh Sound-New Talent) • **Natsuki Tamura/Satoko Fujii/Ramón López**—*Mantle* (Not Two)
) • **Weisblat/Ralske/Lafkas/Capp**—*Treatise on the Fragility of Knowledge* (Noncept) • **Mike Westbrook**—*Paris* (ASC) • **Torbjörn Zetterberg**—*Are You Happy?* (Moserobie)

ALBUM REVIEWS



Tripel/Dubbel

Jaimie Branch/Dave Rempis/Ingebrigt Håker Flaten/
Tollef Østvang (Aerophonic)

Tour Beats Vol. 1

Anteloper (International Anthem)

Zurich Concert

Dave Gisler Trio (with Jaimie Branch) (Intakt)

by Phil Freeman

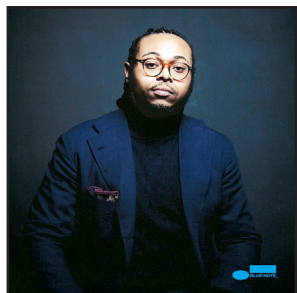
Trumpeter Jaimie Branch was around for quite a while before breaking out with 2017's *Fly or Die*; her earliest recorded credits came from nearly 15 years before that in her longtime home of Chicago. Now that she's reached a level of prominence within the global jazz avant garde, though, her appearances merit front-cover billing and on two of these three albums, she delivers the kind of star turn people (fairly or not) expect these days.

Tripel/Dubbel, a fully improvised 40-minute performance recorded in Antwerp, Belgium, features two Americans—Branch and alto/tenor saxophonist Dave Rempis—and two Norwegians, bassist Ingebrigt Håker Flaten and drummer Tollef Østvang. Though Branch and Rempis have known each other and played together since 2005, this is their first recorded appearance. The piece, "Night Into Day (Into Night)", is a slowly shifting journey, which allows both horns to unfurl their banners fully, without ever devolving into total blare; there's a moment about ten minutes in when Rempis' honking, R&B-style alto solo is augmented by Branch's sudden appearance beside him, offering New Orleans-style polyphony. Behind them, bassist and drummer lay down a rolling but slightly martial groove.

Anteloper is the duo of Branch and drummer Jason Nazary; the simply-titled *Tour Beats Vol. 1* is a four-track EP recorded in summer 2018, a follow-up to their debut *Kudu*. There's a little trumpet splashed here and there and some live drumming and a whole lot of synths and drum machines. The longest track, "Isotope 420°", starts as a ticking and buzzing electronic soundscape, with atmospherics reminiscent of Herbie Hancock's *Sextant*; then a booming hip-hop beat and thick electric synth come in to give it more whomp, before Branch launches a lyrical, heartfelt solo.

Zurich Concert comes from the unerhört! Festival, Branch with Swiss guitarist Dave Gisler's trio of bassist Raffaele Bossard and Lionel Friedli on music from their 2018 CD *Rabbits On The Run* and other tunes. Gisler leans toward the rock-ier side of jazz guitar (think Raoul Björkenheim, Brandon Ross, Vernon Reid or Bill Frisell at his crankiest). Bossard and Friedli are a tough, even frantic rhythm section, bridging free time and punk rock energy, and Branch cuts loose with thrilling, fanfare-like solos recalling early '70s Freddie Hubbard.

For more information, visit aerophonicrecords.com, intlanthem.bandcamp.com and intaktrec.ch. Branch live-streams Jan. 5th at artsforart.org/onlinesalon.html and Jan. 22nd at kerrytownconcerthouse.com/edgefest.



Omega
Immanuel Wilkins (Blue Note)
by Tom Greenland

Alto saxophonist Immanuel Wilkins, who moved from Philadelphia five years ago to earn his Bachelor's

Degree at Juilliard, has already carved a respectable niche for himself as a sideman on the local scene. For *Omega*, his debut as a leader, he enlisted his four-year working quartet of pianist Micah Thomas, bassist Daryl Johns and drummer Kweku Sumbry. The upshot is a remarkably seasoned work for an inaugural effort.

Wilkins' playing reveals a strong grounding in bebop vocabulary, but he is also clearly concerned with the nuances of timbre, producing a broad, warm tone. Thomas is an eclectic stylist who works with abstract concepts, playing around the beat as much as he plays along with it, an agile accompanist and foil for Wilkins. Johns plays a mostly supportive role—both he and Sumbry are mixed down, undermining their presence somewhat—but has some bright moments in "The Dreamer" and "Part 1. The Key" while Sumbry shines on "Part 2. Saudade" and "Part 3. Eulogy".

Some of Wilkins' best writing is heard on whimsical opener "Warriors", which finds him in a robust Michael Brecker-meets-Wayne Shorter mood; equally catchy "Saudade", which flaunts the easy exchange between he and Thomas; and similarly interactive "Part 4. Guarded Heart". The leader shines brightest on aforementioned "Warriors"; "Ferguson - An American Tradition", where he integrates subtle tonal colors into his bebop-laden lines; "Mary Turner - An American Tradition", Ornette Coleman-inspired tone dancing over an AfroCuban groove; "Guarded Heart", channeling full-throttle, mid-(John) Coltrane-style blowing; and the closing title track, an exciting yodeling effect created by juxtaposing the high and low ranges of his horn.

Admirable for its continuous flow from beginning to end, *Omega* offers listeners an immersive, alpha wave-inducing experience.

For more information, visit bluenote.com. Wilkins live-streams Jan. 20th at barbayeux.com.



MPT Trio Volume 1
Francisco Mela (577 Records)
by John Sharpe

Under the direction of drummer Francisco Mela, MPT Trio gives avant jazz a Cuban spin on their debut *Volume 1*. Mela has a long history of integrating the rhythmic verve from his native island into the jazz arena. He's enlisted countryman tenor saxophonist Hery Paz, who also appeared alongside him on *Ancestros* (Newvelle, 2018), and Venezuelan guitarist Juanma Trujillo.

In fact it's opener "Calipso", from Trujillo's pen, which sets out the band's wares most clearly. It begins with infectious polyrhythms, Mela evoking steel pans via rimshots, before the sunny tune launches circling tenor and guitar in attentive counterpoint. Although that's the most straightforward cut, the tuneful aspect of Mela does pop up elsewhere too, notably on the episodic "Suite For Leo Brouwer", which suggests an enigmatic, sometimes contradictory personality if the music is any guide. While he steers, cajoles and supports, Mela's expansive sonorities are never overbearing.

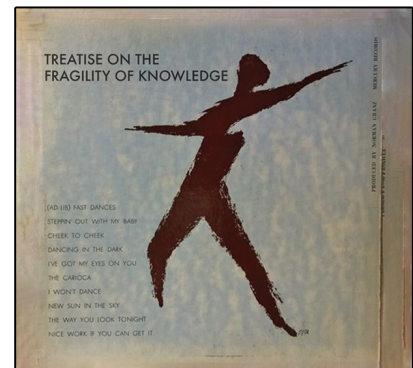
Trujillo plays a similarly loquacious role, filling in the middle and bottom, which makes the outfit sound larger than a trio. He brings an orchestral dimension to the mix with his effects, which can be heard at the start of the mysterious "Whisper", where he employs multiple voices: chiming chords, staccato picks and sudden swells. He gets to shred too, his heroics illuminating the urgent punchy "Vino" and again on the at-first fragmented but then rocky "Baldor". He

provides an effective foil for Paz, whose attractive burnished tone often pursues an abstract trajectory, though his introductory tenor soliloquy to the regretful "Naima" (not the Coltrane classic), where his breathy vibrato traces the melody with an appealing vocalized edge, constitutes a high point.

Whether at the lyrical end of the spectrum where they began or at the other extreme, exemplified by the uncompromising free-form of the churning set closer "El Llanto De La Tierra", the threesome allies unbridled invention with cohesive group focus.

For more information, visit 577records.com. Mela live-streams Jan. 27th at barbayeux.com.

NYC JAZZ RECORD : BEST of 2020 (Honorable Mention)



TREATISE ON THE FRAGILITY OF KNOWLEDGE

BARRY WEISBLAT, *electronics* bass, ANDREW LAFKAS
KURT RALSKE, *sop sax* drums, TODD CAPP

RECOMMENDED

- Patricia Brennan — *Maquishti* (Valley of Search)
- Todd Capp's Mystery Train — *Crisps* (Nonconcept)
- Dezron Douglas/Brandee Younger — *Force Majeure* (International Anthem)
- Marshall Gilkes — *Waiting to Continue* (s/r)
- Ayelet Rose Gottlieb — *13 Lunar Meditations: Summoning The Witches* (s/r)
- Pasquale Grasso — *Solo Standards* (Sony Masterworks)
- Mark Helias/Tim Berne — *Blood From A Stone* (Radiolegs Music)
- José Lencastre/Jorge Nuno/Felipe Zenicola/João Valinho — *Anthropic Neglect* (Clean Feed)
- Steph Richards — *Supersense* (Northern Spy)
- Mike Westbrook — *Paris* (ASC)

Laurence Donohue-Greene, Managing Editor

NEW RELEASES

- Marco Colonna & Alexander Hawkins — *Dolphy Underlined* (Fundacja Sluchaj)
- Chris Corsano — *Mezzaluma* (Catalytic Sound)
- Dezron Douglas/Brandee Younger — *Force Majeure* (International Anthem)
- Leo Genovese/Mariano Otero/Sergio Verdinelli — *Sin Tiempo* (ears&eyes)
- José Lencastre/Jorge Nuno/Felipe Zenicola/João Valinho — *Anthropic Neglect* (Clean Feed)
- Misha Mengelberg — *Rituals of Transition* (i dischi di angelica)
- Charles Mingus — *@Bremen 1964 & 1975* (Sunnyside)
- NoSax NoClar — *Kahmsin* (YOLK)
- Sonny Rollins — *Rollins in Holland* (Resonance)
- Mike Westbrook — *Love and Understanding* (featuring John Surman) (My Only Desire)

Andrey Henkin, Editorial Director



The Ripple
Jeff Rupert/George Garzone (Rupe Media)
 by Marco Cangiano

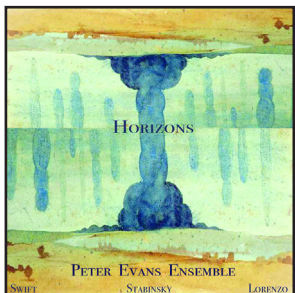
“The Ripple” refers to the widespread influence Lester Young had on modern jazz. To prove the point, Jeff Rupert and George Garzone do not showcase any of Young’s compositions or even tunes recorded by him but instead assembled a repertoire of tunes written and/or executed by musicians influenced by him. The list is long and includes modern giants such as Stan Getz, Wayne Shorter and Joe Henderson.

While the Lee Konitz/Warne Marsh quintet may come across as a natural reference, given the contrapuntal dialogue between the two saxophones, it is Young’s sound and style filtered through Stan Getz’ experience that dominates the proceedings. This is more evident in Rupert’s supple phrasing and sound (his “Go-Go” being a clear example), whereas Garzone is more of his own man and occasionally pushes the envelope, as in Hoagy Carmichael’s “Stardust”. The group is rounded out by the very congenial trio of Richard Drexler (piano), Jeremy Allen (bass) and Marty Morrell (drums). Although the brunt of the solos are carried by the co-leaders, Drexler has his fair share of solo outings delivered with impeccable taste. Allen and Morrell could not provide a more relaxed and hard-swinging anchor. The former’s solo in Ben Kynard-Lionel Hampton’s “Red Top” is not to be missed.

Rupert’s three inspired originals, aforementioned “Go-Go”, “Hoboken” and “Beauty Becomes Her”, capture particularly well the Young/Getz legacy and atmosphere. The other tunes are all well-known standards, but Rupert and Garzone’s interpretations are as fresh as they were playing them for the very first time.

Among the highlights are lovely versions of the ballads “The Shadow of Your Smile” (Johnny Mandel-Paul Francis Webster) and “Detour Ahead” (Herb Ellis-John Frigo-Lou Carter), in which Rupert and Garzone duel in terms of their capacity to reinvigorate the immortal melodies. Blues-infused “Red Top” is taken at a brisk tempo, triggering Garzone’s more surreal side. Shorter’s “Lester Left Town” is a statement to its composer and influence—how long before a similar CD is put together about Shorter’s legacy? The CD is aptly concluded by an impromptu duet between the saxophones, meandering through Arthur Schwartz-Howard Dietz’ “Alone Together”. The ripple will linger for quite a while in the listeners’ ears.

For more information, visit facebook.com/JeffRupertSax. Garzone live-streams Jan. 27th at barbayeux.com.



Horizons
Peter Evans Ensemble (More Is More)
 by Phil Freeman

Trumpeter Peter Evans has been working with violinist Mazz Swift, synth player Ron Stabinsky and percussionist Levy Lorenzo, who also contributes

electronic sounds, since 2018. This album encompasses seven compositions they’ve been workshopping and performing, all of which break any stylistic boundaries within which one may care to confine them: not exactly jazz, but too much fun to be “modern composition” or “new music” and at times they almost rock.

The title track makes an ominous opener, with low sustained horn growls and violin introducing it as Lorenzo plays a conga pattern that’s like some sort of ritual being called to order. When he moves to what sounds like a floor tom and Evans and Swift begin improvising simultaneously, the energy level jumps even higher. On “Caves of the Mind”, there’s a thrilling moment where piccolo trumpet rises trilling over Tony Oxley-ish toms, after which the whole thing erupts. Synth zaps bring to mind Pere Ubu while violin is dark and Balkan and the percussion goes from tense to explosive. There’s another surprise at the end, when Evans manages to make the trumpet sound like a whinnying horse. “Passing Through” begins with a unison melody, trumpet mirrored by violin and echoed by fuzzy synth; the effect is as if the two organic instruments were too closely mic’d and are now distorting slightly. On “Homo Ludens - for Cecil Taylor (Trio Version)”, electronic static and grinding sounds of the Merzbow/malfunctioning dial-up modem type seem almost to bury trumpet in washes of distortion and piercing test tones.

The final track, “Interior”, is the shortest and the most conventionally beautiful. It’s a duet for violin and keyboards, Swift holding incredibly long high notes until they begin to shiver in the air like feedback. Meanwhile, Stabinsky plays gentle electric piano-like figures, taking the album out on an almost romantic note.

For more information, visit peterevansmusic.bandcamp.com. Evans live-streams Jan. 28th at roulette.org.



What Comes Next?
Peter Bernstein (Smoke Sessions)
 by Jim Motavalli

Guitarist Peter Bernstein didn’t lead a date until 1994, when he was 27, but since then he’s been extremely prolific, with over two dozen releases. This new album exudes a relaxed, peaceful feel, belying the fact it was recorded in June 2020 under pandemic restrictions. Six tunes are Bernstein’s, complemented by one each from Carl Fischer/Frankie Laine, Dizzy Gillespie and—a real find—Sonny Rollins. The latter’s “Newark News”, a calypso in the style of “St. Thomas”, was never recorded by the master himself. Bernstein’s band is pianist Sullivan Fortner, bassist Peter Washington, a frequent collaborator, and drummer Joe Farnsworth. The album follows a simple format: tasty head, solos by Bernstein, Fortner, who makes major lyrical contributions, and (often) Washington, then Bernstein again and a swinging conclusion. A blowing session? Sure, but with assured compositions from the leader.

“Empty Streets” is pensive, based on observing New York hollowed out by the pandemic. “Harbor No Illusions” is up tempo, but still quite restrained; Bernstein comes out swinging, but notice how cleanly he articulates every note, whatever the tempo. Farnsworth gets in some great licks, trading fours with Bernstein. Sufi mystic Rumi contributed the title of “Dance in Your Blood”, another mildly uptempo workout. Bernstein knows his way around a standard; hear how he eases into the strong melody of Fischer/

Laine’s “We’ll Be Together Again”. His is the only solo, but you couldn’t ask for more sympathetic support.

“Con Alma” is taken at the same basic tempo as the master’s original, with invaluable work from Farnsworth. Bernstein offers a long solo with many tricky switch-ups to keep it interesting. “Blood Wolf Moon Blues” was on the late Jimmy Cobb’s 2019 CD *This I Dig of You*, on which Bernstein played. The album ends with “Newark News”. The quartet really gets into that groove to conclude this fine album on an up note. Rollins gave his blessing to getting this tune waxed.

For more information, visit smokesessionsrecords.com. Bernstein live-streams Jan. 29th-30th at villagevanguard.com.

ON SCREEN



Billie
 (Verve/UMe)
 by Russ Musto

A compelling biopic, *Billie* chronicles the enigmatic life of Billie Holiday in stark detail. Combining Holiday’s words (culled from her few existing radio and TV interviews) with recollections of those who knew her, recorded by would-be biographer Linda Lipnack Kuehl (whose life and purported suicide is also touched upon in the film), along with video excerpts and photos of performances, writer-director James Erskine has woven together an engaging narrative that is both insightful and diverting cinema.

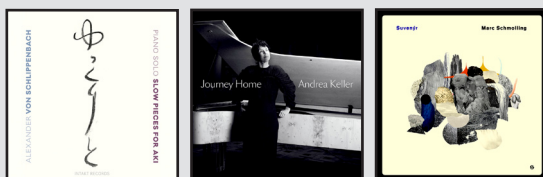
Holiday is first seen mid-career, gowned and smiling coyly, singing “Now or Never” with the Count Basie band before we hear the voice of actress Sylvia Syms asserting, “I saw the whole world in that face; all of the beauty and all of the misery. Billie Holiday sang only truth. She knew nothing else.” Segueing to “God Bless The Child” we hear Holiday herself declaring, “The things I sing have to have something to do with me and my life and my friends’ lives. They have meaning.” And there is the thematic thread that ties together her story.

A cousin tells of Holiday’s early days in Baltimore, which included her prostituting herself to survive before arriving in New York as a teenager and finding out she could make money singing. John Hammond notes her vocalizing “as an improvising horn player” like Louis Armstrong, with whom she’s seen singing “The Blues Are Brewin’”. The movie delves deeply into Holiday’s real-life blues, detailing abusive relationships with men and persecution for drug use, worsening with the growing notoriety that came with her recording of “Strange Fruit”, the chilling Civil Rights anthem that prompted Charles Mingus to note “she was fighting for equality before Martin Luther King” and Papa Jo Jones and Artie Shaw to expound on her struggles touring the Jim Crow South.

Much of the footage depicting Holiday has been colorized, a source of some criticism, but it can be said that in doing so the film takes her out of the shadowy past, placing her brightly in the present, making the story that ends with her arrest and tragic death at 44, handcuffed to a hospital bed, all the more relevant to modern issues of racism, addiction and incarceration.

Holiday-related live-streams take place Jan. 10th and 24th at 92y.org/billieholiday.aspx.

GLOBE UNITY



Slow Pieces for Aki (Piano Solo)
Alexander von Schlippenbach (Intakt)

Journey Home

Andrea Keller (s/r)

Suvényr

Marc Schmolling (SCHMOLLINGSTONES)
by Tom Greenland

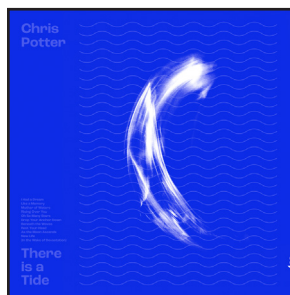
Piano is probably the most versatile instrument for solo performance: besides its considerable harmonic and melodic capabilities it makes a fine drum and can produce a plethora of other timbres via extended techniques. This column reviews solo CDs recorded in Switzerland, Australia and Germany.

Alexander von Schlippenbach's trio and Globe Unity Orchestra is off-the-map energetic, so when his life/musical partner Aki Takase, who turns 73 this month, posited a lower, slower, softer approach, his answer was *Slow Pieces for Aki*. Short compositions are followed by free improvs, the latter extending or reshaping the former, both unfolding organically from small gestures, blurring any distinction. The pieces share a hesitant yet deliberate quality, as if the pianist, like a chess grandmaster, is weighing future consequences before making his move. On "Torso", "Blues b" and "Improvisation VIII" his ugly/beautiful chords spackle the pensive melodies with iridescent hues. A debt to Monk is heard in his technique of peeling off a finger mid-chord to expose buried pitches, close adherence to the melodic skeleton and use of stabbing cluster chords. The two abstract 'blues' are utterly original, a debt he owes to no one but himself.

Melbourne-based Andrea Keller's *Journey Home* sounds like a love song to piano, perhaps because it is recorded on three of the largest pianos on earth, two with 102 keys, one with 108, all handmade by Stuart & Sons, each with its distinctive timbre. Keller approaches her free improvs with zen-like openness, eschewing preconceptions. She exploits extreme range contrasts by spread-eagling her arms, educing now rhapsodic, now minimalistic passages hovering around but never fully committing to tonal centers. On "Generations of Leaves", "Tenderly We Weave" and "Consequentially" — all which sound as if they're played on "Big Beleura" (the 108-key piano named for the resort it's housed in) — soprano-pitched notes voiced at the very top of Keller's right-hand chords tinkle just out of hearing range while bassissimo pitches (vibrating as slow as 16 Hz!) rumble in an unearthly manner at the other end of the keyboard.

Suvényr is Berlin-based pianist Marc Schmolling's second solo album, recorded on two separate sessions. Like Keller he is of Czech heritage — his mother, Inka Machulková, was a prominent beat poet in '60s Prague — and he too comes to the keyboard without a prepared roadmap for improvisation. Like Schlippenbach, he thinks twice (or maybe three or four times) before he plays once, elongating phrase-ends into pregnant pauses. A very unusual and compelling quality of his music is that, although it appears to develop, harmonize, modulate and cadence — all those things one expects of tonal music — it never really does, such that pinpointing a set key or distinct melody proves ultimately elusive. All of which creates an existential ambiance, slightly familiar and yet slightly unnerving at the same time.

For more information, visit intaktrec.ch, andreakellerpiano.com.au and marc-schmolling.de



There Is A Tide
Chris Potter (Edition)
by George Kanzler

The phenomenon of the one-man-band recording in jazz can be traced back to at least to the Swing Era, when Sidney Bechet recorded on reeds and all the rhythm section instruments on an experiment with overdubbing for "Sheik of Araby". But the practice is rare in jazz, more common in rock. This Chris Potter album may change that. It transcends the gimmick to produce a rich, original tapestry of sounds that articulate intricacies like a baroque chamber suite. Beside writing all the music and playing all the reeds — saxophones, flutes, clarinets — Potter, who turns 50 this month, also, through overdubbing, plays all the rhythm instruments, from piano and keyboards to guitars, electric bass, drums and percussion, plus manipulating sound samples. The results are not only surprisingly listenable, but also one of Potter's most accessible albums.

Although Potter solos most often on tenor, eschewing 'out' phrasing for hard-driving grooves, he also solos on all his other reeds, most notably a lovely clarinet on the ballad "Rest Your Head" and emphatic bass clarinet statements on at least four of the ten tracks. Anchoring most of the pieces with bass guitar, Potter varies tempo and meter, but most creatively invents different ensemble sounds, from the low-end reeds on the walking tempo "Like A Memory" to the piano-keyboard-organ weaving with flutes and saxophones on the power ballad "Oh So Many Stars". On "Drop Your Anchor Down" he puts a hand-drum shuffle under a bass clarinet lead, adding keyboard behind a lyrical guitar solo. The most impressive arrangement is "Beneath the Waves", beginning with spacey electric and acoustic reeds floating over an insistent rhythm, then moving into fugue-like rounds of staggered lines from bass clarinet, soprano, clarinet and tenor, reminiscent of the fugue at the center of Duke Ellington's *A Tone Parallel to Harlem*. The limited-edition LP ends with "New Life (In the Wake of Devastation)", combining full ensemble with a rousing tenor solo.

For more information, visit editionrecords.com



Musique pour le film d'un ami
Steve Potts (Un-Deux-Trois-Souffle Continu)
by Robert Bush

It would be hard to imagine a small-group sideman with more utility and ultimate value than alto and soprano saxophone master Steve Potts (who turns 78 this month) demonstrated in his 30 years with Steve Lacy. The two met in exile in France and immediately developed a very strong and symbiotic relationship.

Potts studied with Eric Dolphy and Charles Lloyd before heading to Europe in search of greater opportunities and less racism, like so many of his contemporaries. Although he proved to be the ultimate "most valuable player" in various Lacy groups, his

efforts as a leader are not nearly as prolific. Five years after arriving in France, Potts was approached to compose and record this soundtrack (apparently for the French equivalent of a *Shaft*-type action film) and that's probably important to keep in mind.

He uses a revolving ensemble of American expatriates and Lacy associates: Frank Abel on piano; Donny Donable and Kenny Tyler on drums; twin guitars of Elie Ferre and Christian Escoudé; Gus Nemeth and Jean-Jacques Avenel on bass; Ambrose Jackson on trumpet; Keno Speller on percussion; Joss Basseli on accordion; and Juliette Noessi on wordless vocals.

Potts plays both alto and soprano on opener "Marie France" alongside swirling guitars and electric piano laying down a period appropriate one-chord vamp. Potts has a gorgeous and distinct voice on his horns while the guitars seem to toggle between Wes Montgomery and James "Blood" Ulmer. Jackson gets a chance to shine on "Tango", exhibiting a fat, brassy tone that cuts through the somewhat muddy mix. Both guitars feature prominently on "Antigone", a dreamy, romantic track sans the leader. The drums really stand out on "Bhagavad-Gita" in support of nasal soprano. "Route 69" is one of the shorter tracks, cashing in on the wah-wah guitar and background funk typical of porn soundtracks of the era. A pleasant surprise is the inclusion of accordion master Basseli, who pretty much steals the show on the two versions of "Java", while "Mary-Jo" features Potts on both horns, with excellent guitar from Escoudé and indistinct vocals from Noessi.

Another vamp-based tune, "Rock (La Defense)", finds Potts on alto really pushing the envelope. It's a standout and vastly superior to any comparable soundtrack of that genre from that time period.

For more information, visit soufflecontinurecords.com

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Future Song (Live Reflections)
Marilyn Mazur (Stunt)
Drapery
Laura Toxværd (ILK Music)
 by Mark Keresman

Percussionist Marilyn Mazur, born 66 years ago this month in New York and raised in Denmark, has established herself in the oft-overlapping zones of jazz, world music and improvised music. *Future Song (Live Reflections)* seems to summarize Mazur's artistic past while not giving in to any sort of nostalgia or retro-vibe. "Subway Groove" has a lilting melodious hook, then the lilt is supplanted by a dollop of sardonic menace courtesy of some good-naturedly lurching-forward rhythms and slightly dissonant ensemble riffs, including a guitar lead driven by some feverish sustain. The brief "Love Eruption" is, despite the seeming lack of a melodic line, a compelling free-verse sonic poem/interlude. The kaleidoscopic nearly-eight-minute "First Dream" brings to mind mid '70s Miles Davis via Nils Petter Molvaer's heated trumpet, bubbling keyboards, wordless vocals, percolating percussion, undulating wah-wah and roiling percussion waves; the effect is entrancing then evolves into an unsettling panorama, the various instruments and sounds poking from the background to the fore, trumpet crying with dignity and longing, a beacon fighting a fogbank to be seen.

Laura Toxværd (b. 1977) is a Danish alto saxophonist who paid those figurative/literal dues with Mazur, Raymond Strid and John Tchicai. She has a tart, mercury-fluid tone that evokes, surprisingly, few peers. Eerie ballad "Lament" finds her velvety yet gently harrowing alto negotiating through a choppy sea of Peter Friis Nielsen's rippling, steely electric bass, Mazur's heartbeat-like drumming and the surreal crackle of guitarist Gustaf Ljunggren's six (?) strings. The feeling both soothing and queasy, Toxværd subtly emotive, full of yearning yet never quite wearing her heart on her figurative sleeve. "Keys" finds her getting deep into her horn, driving into dark-ish, guttural expression, over-blowing but in a coolly deliberate, raspy-vocalized manner.

Both of these albums are sterling examples of the mutability of jazz and the continuing possibilities of fusion and are heartily recommended to cultural gatecrashers and anti-purists.

For more information, visit sundance.dk and ilkmusic.com



Amalgam
Ivo Perelman/Matthew Shipp (Mahakala Music)
Garden of Jewels
Ivo Perelman Trio (Tao Forms)
Deep Resonance
Ivo Perelman/Arcado String Trio (Fundacja Sluchaj!)
 by Steven Loewy

The last several years have witnessed an explosion of activity from Brazilian saxophonist Ivo Perelman, who turns 60 this month. His winning musicality, relentless efforts to expand the reach of the tenor and numerous recordings, often with his sometimes alter-ego, pianist Matthew Shipp, have catapulted him to the first ranks of the world's free improvisers. What makes this more impressive is that Perelman seems to enjoy an uncanny

ability to reinvent himself and, over the decades, has varied his style and approach remarkably, exploring and testing strategies and shifting and evolving from a fire-breather immersed in the extremes of the '60s to a subtle, sophisticated performer who combines a uniquely personal approach to his horn while absorbing and redirecting his formidable energy.

The recordings reviewed here are the latest in his continually growing discography, offering a glimpse at some new directions. Ultimately, the question must be asked: is Perelman a revolutionary, striking new chords that energize and even electrify an existing tradition, or is his approach one that conserves and expands? While these cannot be answered fully in the course of a review and perhaps are yet answerable, the trinity of approaches developed in these recordings offers a glimpse at some answers.

Shipp and Perelman have been performing together for decades, producing more than ten albums and generally receiving critical accolades for music in which the two developed an uncanny resonance. After pronouncements that the two of them had essentially accomplished all that they could accomplish together, they nonetheless have, reluctantly, continued to edge toward new ways of relating.

For *Amalgam*, the pace lessens somewhat, saxophone and piano look inward a bit, the strong sense of camaraderie still prevailing, and there remain the signature forays to the altissimo range and the subtle, sophisticated performances by Shipp, who focuses on repetition and deep listening, with an unmitigated independent streak that inspires Perelman masterfully. So, for example, on "Part One", you could think that the saxophonist's huge round sound qualifies him as a disciple of a modernized Coleman Hawkins while the following piece opens with quietly dense piano with breathy saxophone added, eventually exploding in dense piano chords, a squeaking horn, morphing to a lovely full-toned venture. There is great variety through all 12 pieces, intense piano and a horn that is clearly an extension of self.

Garden of Jewels adds drummer Whit Dickey to the duo. Although this trio has only recorded once before and despite the three of them performing, as usual, without any preparation, the three acquit themselves admirably.

The addition of Dickey gives the trio a new sound, more aggressive but also in some ways more fun to hear, with greater variety and more taking of chances. Perelman doubles down on his falsetto notes and on "Four", there is such great interaction among the three that they sound like a longstanding group. The unsung and modest Dickey splendidly powers the unit, with Perelman all over the horn and Shipp creating tension with pounding repetitions. This album is unabashedly entertaining, structurally focusing on odd syncopations and jagged short phrasing, each piece with its special moments.

The last of the three recordings, *Deep Resonance*, is arguably the best, though simple comparisons are almost meaningless, considering the distinctly different strategies harboring deeply spun delights. Performing with the resurrected Arcado String Trio, which has not recorded together in decades, Perelman makes himself into a sort of cello, blending in to the swirls of energized machinations that explore myriad possibilities.

Perelman studied classical guitar, took up the cello and even "tried" violin, viola and bass as a child. The Arcado Trio has never sounded better and with Perelman sounding so natural, the trio easily becomes a magnificent string quartet, but when the strings are as talented as Mark Dresser on acoustic string bass, Hank Roberts on cello and Mark Feldman on violin, you know it will be something special and it is, particularly with the addition of Perelman's inspired playing. The results are magnificent, with all kinds of noises and sounds emanating, feeling at times like a

high pitched human voice on the opening track and at others a rich tapestry of striking cacophony. When all four go high, the striking dissonance is thrilling. The strings are just as effective when pursuing dense, slow tempos, as on the second track, or when they show off their shimmering beauty with sliding glissandos on the third. You could even say the heavens open, as there are stints of pizzicato, of squeaky high pitches and much, much more. The results are simply exquisite, making this a clear choice as one of the best recordings of 2020.

For more information, visit mahakalamusic.com, taoforms.bandcamp.com and fsrecords.net

IN PRINT



Learning the Score: A Jazz Memoir
James Spaulding (Speetones Book Publishing)
 by Kevin Canfield

Many autobiographies are rife with boasts and score-settling. James Spaulding could have easily written such a book. His accomplishments are impressive and in more than five decades in jazz, the alto saxophonist/flutist has stared down numerous racists and scoundrels. His music, he writes, has given him a "unique understanding of the sufferings of my people." Yet Spaulding's memoir is a beneficent self-portrait of a resilient artist resolved to help younger musicians dodge the pitfalls of a hard-knock profession.

Well known for his versatile talents—he was part of both the Sun Ra Arkestra and played "straightahead bebop" alongside Freddie Hubbard and other stars—the 83-year-old was immersed in music from the start. His father, a jazz guitarist, bought five-year-old Spaulding a bugle. He formed a band at 11 and soon was playing alto and flute at teenage dances. After stints in the Army and music school, he secured a place in Sun Ra's band. "Sunny," he recalls, gave ample latitude: "Our only instruction was to not repeat the same idea twice." Spaulding played on several Sun Ra albums, but "received very little in salary"—a common theme in this candid book.

He was with the David Murray Octet for more than a decade, worked often as a sideman and recorded as a leader several times. In Japan with Murray, autograph-hungry fans made him "feel more at home and appreciated than I have ever felt here in America." Spaulding writes vividly about the stateside racism that forced him to "enter the white clubs through the back door." Once, when leading a band, he "felt we would get more work if the leader was white" and so he gave top billing to a white trombonist. Some fellow Black musicians were understandably upset. The painful episode helped push him to "the verge of a nervous breakdown."

Like many, Spaulding often worked for paltry pay and was deprived of his deserved royalties. Thus the closing section includes a detailed primer on contracts, copyright and artists' unions. "I have worked as a professional musician in the land of my birth under some tough, uncomfortable and undesirable conditions," he writes. This generous book exemplifies the grit required to make it in a demanding field.

For more information, visit jamesrspaulding.com



Revisits the Goodman Years
Teddy Wilson Trio (Storyville)
 by Ken Dryden

There was nothing flashy about pianist Teddy Wilson during his long career, a gifted swinger with a wide-ranging repertoire and strong technique that was recognizable within seconds. Wilson joined Benny Goodman's trio, then gained even greater exposure in the clarinetist's famous quartet with the addition of Lionel Hampton. The pianist left to lead his own big band and small groups in the '40s but continued to work with Goodman off and on for the rest of his life.

This 1980 trio session in Copenhagen paired him with Danish bassist Jesper Lundgaard and expatriate American drummer Ed Thigpen, exploring various standards and obscure chestnuts he had played with Goodman, all impeccably swinging with his characteristic flourishes. Critics may have taken his skills for granted but pianists who followed him praised his subtle incorporation of stride into his left hand and use of tenths, in addition to the brilliance of his improvisations and inventive insertions of song quotes.

While Lundgaard was only in his mid 20s at the time of the recording, he provides superb accompaniment and solos with skill belying his tender years. Thigpen was a veteran, working with both the Oscar Peterson Trio and Tommy Flanagan. He is more subdued on this date, spending much of his time using brushes to keep the focus on the leader, though he is no slouch in the spotlight, especially with his snappy feature in Art Hickman's "Rose Room".

It would be easy for such a seasoned pianist to fall back on time-tested arrangements, but he finds new approaches to these familiar works, with his breezy takes of Ted Snyder's "The Sheik Of Araby" and John and Reb Spikes' long forgotten "Someday Sweetheart" among the highlights. The warmth and brilliant fidelity of this remastered 180-gram LP reissue rekindles the magic of this format, when labels took pride in reproducing what the engineers captured in the studio.

For more information, visit storyvillerecords.com. An Ertegun Jazz Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony for Wilson takes place in early 2021.



Electric Blue
Mark Egan/Danny Gottlieb (Wavetone)
 by John Pietaro

The pairing of bassist Mark Egan, who turns 70 this month, and drummer Danny Gottlieb must be designated a lifetime musical partnership, something increasingly hard to come by in recent decades. The two are still best recalled as the free-flowing, melody-driven rhythm section of the classic Pat Metheny Group, but they met in the early '70s at the University of Miami where Metheny was also a student. There, Egan studied privately with Jaco Pastorius and one can still hear the effects not only on Egan but Gottlieb as well. Beyond the celebrated albums they recorded with Metheny, in 1981

the pair left to found fusion band Elements and Egan also enjoyed a tenure with Gil Evans while embarking on a bountiful session career. Gottlieb predated Egan in the Metheny Group, becoming a founding member after he and the guitarist departed the Gary Burton Quartet. His resumé includes work with Evans, Michael Franks, Flora Purim and Airto, Mahavishnu Orchestra and WDR Big Band, among others.

Such a wide array of influences features well into the new duo album, *Electric Blue*. Some of the inspiration is evident, such as the spirit of Pastorius, on an album with the bass out front. But this isn't an homage to that mythic bassist, nor necessarily to this duet's history so much as two veterans of jazz' '70s transitional period drawing out new vistas within the limited palette. Though not credited as such, Egan carefully uses effects to broaden the soundscape, perhaps a midi synth, surely reverb and chorus, and often employs overdubbing in order to play melody, solo statements and intriguing basslines. And drums are recorded in a setting making the most of the room sound: warm, large, cavernous. This is especially apparent in the CD's opening spaciouly placed tom-tom accents, leading to the entry of an Egan melody high on the neck.

Ringling bass harmonics, slides and double stops, in collaboration with quasi-Latin pulsations (including rhythmic coloring with woodblocks), are immediately compelling, as are reference points heard within some selections, i.e., "Down the Road" seems to contain bits of Joe Zawinul's "A Remark You Made". Amidst the many bright moments, so to speak, including the complex pianissimo interactions on both the title cut and "Offering" and buoyant march and sizzling improvisations of "Cabarete", it's hard to not imagine some space being filled by less dark sonorities. Even in the hands of masters like Egan and Gottlieb, the wanton ear leans toward the light. If *Electric Blue* incorporated guests to craft varying trios, its impact and artistry could only be magnified, even as listeners celebrated the duet at the album's core.

For more information, visit markegan.com/wavetone



Stormy Whispers
Joëlle Léandre/Myra Melford/Lauren Newton
(Fundacja Stuchaj!)
 by Kurt Gottschalk

Vocalist Lauren Newton is likely the least known name in this trio, at least in some listening circles. She may also have the most diverse catalogue of the three women. Newton has been involved in some worthy projects: duos with Anthony Braxton and Aki Takase; a vocal group that included Jeanne Lee and Bobby McFerrin and another with Saadet Türköz and Ami Yoshida; and various collaborations with bassist Joëlle Léandre, who represents another third of this group.

Newton benefits from having a strong personality to set the course and on *Stormy Whispers* she has a pair of them. Pianist Myra Melford, who turns 64 this month, plays with Léandre in the remarkable Tiger Trio and makes an exemplary third wheel to the Léandre/Newton duo. *Stormy Whispers* marks a first meeting, recorded live at the 13th International Festival of Improvised Music in Warsaw in 2018, highlighting female contributions under the rather insurrectionist rubric "Women Alarm!" There is at play the sort of conviviality and flexibility rewarding repeat listens. Among the eight whispers (as the tracks are titled) are

a couple of duets – Léandre the common denominator – but, notably, at no point does there seem to be a leader and rarely does there appear a solo. (A brief but dynamic introduction to one piece by Melford stands out). The music is constructed in equal parts and with constantly shifting boundaries; all three move between abstraction and phraseology with a fluidity that makes for a ride both fast and smooth.

The trio had another appearance scheduled for August 2020 in France, which of course was canceled due to the pandemic, but it gives reason to hold out hope that they will one day whisper again.

For more information, visit fsrecords.net

DROP THE NEEDLE



Compadres (Recorded Live in Mexico)
Dave Brubeck Trio (featuring Gerry Mulligan)
(Columbia-Speakers Corner)
 by Duck Baker

When Dave Brubeck's "classic" quartet with alto saxophonist Paul Desmond, bassist Gene Wright and drummer Joe Morello recorded *The Last Time We Saw Paris* in the fall of 1967, they had been performing together for just under a decade. And as one of the biggest drawing cards in the jazz world, the quartet kept very busy throughout that time, until the leader finally decided it was time to turn to other things, particularly to classical and Third Stream composing. It wasn't long, however, before an offer from impresario George Wein saw Brubeck teaming up with Gerry Mulligan (who died 25 years ago this month) for a tour of Mexico and a quartet rounded out by bassist Jack Six and drummer Alan Dawson would go on to make several records over the next five years. *Compadres*, the first, dates from that tour and it is nice to see it back in circulation, for several reasons. It gave Brubeck the chance to keep a small group together on more of a part-time basis and continue working things out along familiar lines but with a different set of partners. For his part Mulligan was in a very different situation, having not kept anything steady going since the breakup of his marvelous Concert Jazz Band in 1964.

The previous quartet had recorded two LP's worth of live material in Mexico in 1967, one of which featured Mexican traditional and pop material, but originals by Brubeck and Mulligan dominate *Compadres*. These range from "Jumping Bean", a Mulligan opus with plenty of hot sauce that became a staple for this band, to Brubeck's delicate ballad "Tender Woman", to which he did not return, oddly. Another worthy Brubeck contribution is "Indian Song", based on a simple folk theme and featuring a long solo by Dawson, as great in his way as Morello was in his (Booker Ervin and Jaki Byard fans know). The two Mexican pop standards, "Adios, Mariquita Linda" and "Amapola", are also standouts. On the latter Brubeck and Mulligan demonstrate that these "cool school" icons could really crank up the heat when needed while Dawson drives things brilliantly. One feels that Mulligan and Brubeck were rediscovering basic pleasures of jazz on *Compadres*, things that their fans will want to rediscover, as well.

For more information, visit speakerscornerrecords.com

ANTHONY BRAXTON
EUGENE CHADBOURNE
DUO (IMPROV) 2017

Duo (Improv) 2017
Anthony Braxton/Eugene Chadbourne
(New Braxton House)
by Stuart Broomer

Anthony Braxton is an artist of duration, each recent year bringing another epic to light, whether it's a full-length opera like *Trillium J* (3 CDs), the *Sextet* (Parker) 1993 (11) or the *GTM* (*Syntax*) 2017 choir recordings (12). He's equally at home with density: consider the JazzFest Berlin six-hour, 60-musician *Sonic Genome* or *Composition 376* in the *Echo Echo Mirror House Music* series with its 15 musicians playing Braxton recordings from mp3 players as well as their own instruments.

For all that, there's never been anything quite like *Duo (Improv) 2017* with Eugene Chadbourne (who turns 67 this month). Each plays seven instruments here: Braxton covers soprano, alto, baritone, bass and contrabass saxophones as well as contrabass clarinet; Chadbourne plays a Gibson Marauder electric guitar, Gibson acoustic, bajo sexto (a 12-string member of the guitar family in the bass register), Deering 5-string banjo, Deering fretless 5-string banjo, Regal 5-string banjo and prepared guitar.

Between November 27th-30th, 2017, the two recorded two duets a day, working to the famous Braxton hourglass. They never exceed the hour but get close to it, wrapping up *Duo Improv 6* at the 59'46" mark. The eight-CD box set is sold out at this point but remains available as a download, including an additional, shorter improvisation.

What distinguishes this is the purely improvised content and the intensity of the relationship, just two musicians inventing that much content. The music's special quality comes out of the players' differences and similarities. There are, of course, the contrasting backgrounds and references of the musicians: Braxton's roots are AfroAmerican Chicago while Chadbourne's are in the Carolinas. When Chadbourne sojourned in Canada in the '70s, he was based in Alberta, Canada's answer to Texas. While Braxton has occasionally paid tribute to Jimi Hendrix, Captain Beefheart or Merle Haggard and even played with Wolf Eyes, his references belong largely to the worlds of jazz and classical music. Chadbourne, for his part, has adapted a Bach *Sonata and Partita* for five-string banjo, but his references are to Country & Western and Rockabilly, albeit delivered with a radical wit and musicality.

But there's a wonderful empathy here, growing out of irony, anarchist aesthetics, elasticity and sheer virtuosic inventiveness, all made possible by the range and flexibility of each, one with reflexes forged in bop, the other in bluegrass. It's easier to find analogues in literature than in music, whether it's in classic American travelogues like Francis Parkman's *The Oregon Trail* or Mark Twain's *Life on the Mississippi*. Maybe it's more like Thomas Pynchon's *Mason & Dixon* in its postmodern playfulness, or even the punning, random mythologizing of Gertrude Stein's *Four in America*. There's some spectacular miming here, Braxton playing staccato rhythms on a bass saxophone that feel uncannily like Chadbourne's banjo or the latter stretching his sonic resource to turn a banjo into an Asian instrument at one point and a guitar into prepared piano at another. Braxton can also get a baritone sound that suggests a pre-Rockabilly Sun R&B record.

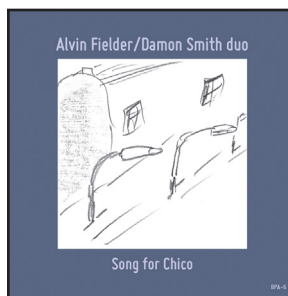
The music grows out of a dialogue stretching to the '70s and Chadbourne's portrait of Braxton in the extended liner essay reveals the warmth and humor

that they share: "I put on a reel to reel copy of my first volume of solo guitar music and clung on to every comment. I liked the way the shriek my rosin-coated palm made on the back of an acoustic guitar was even 'too much!' for Braxton: 'Now you are really freaking me out! You may have gone too far!'"

That warmth should be apparent to all here, as well as the invention, whether it's at a blistering tempo with swarming alto and banjo notes or a quiet interlude of saxophone air and banjo tapping near the conclusion of *Improv 3*. What may prove most striking is the sheer lyric beauty that the two can achieve on *Improv 5*, with interludes devoted to sonic exploration.

Though one will listen in whatever way one does, this isn't a marathon, but rather a celebration of depth. Each of the extended improvisations takes its own exploratory path, a creative wandering through varied landscapes and shifting moods, from kinetic joy to somber reflection.

For more information, visit newbraxtonhouse.bandcamp.com



Song for Chico
Alvin Fielder/Damon Smith Duo
(Balance Point Acoustics)
by Robert Bush

Jazz is an artform that includes an obscene number of artists who can legitimately be described as "criminally underrated" and when it comes to drummers, perhaps no one exemplifies that ideal more than the late Alvin Fielder, who died two years ago this month. He came to Chicago from Mississippi in the early '60s and ended up as a charter member of the AACM, appearing most notably on Roscoe Mitchell's volcanic Delmark debut *Sound* in 1966. He had a parallel career as a pharmacist and he was drawn back to his hometown to help mind the family business even while creating lasting relationships with folks like Kidd Jordan, Charles Brackeen and Joel Futterman. He also began playing with contrabass firebrand Damon Smith back in 2010 in bands led by Frode Gjerstad and Joe McPhee.

Song for Chico is just Fielder and Smith on a program balancing three free improvisations against three loosely structured tunes: the title piece (dedicated to Chico-Hamilton), "Roots" (dedicated to Johnny Dyani) and "Variations on a theme by Cecil Taylor".

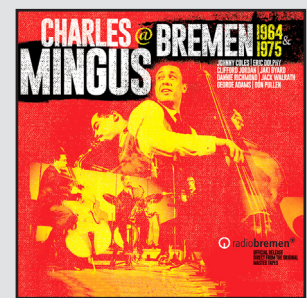
There's an exquisite sense of push and pull. Fielder acts as the master traditionalist, coming out of the Max Roach/Ed Blackwell continuum, while Smith operates from a considerably more modern perspective (he was a student of Lisle Ellis.) The tension between those two poles makes for consistently exciting music—and they obviously have a wealth of shared experience upon which to draw.

Smith has a huge, woody sound and concentrates much of his explorations on the lower end of the sonic spectrum. His arco is rich and his pizzicato is dark and grainy. Fielder is a marvel, his work with brushes alone is worth the price of admission. There were times when the work of Jimmy Garrison and Elvin Jones came to mind (think "The Drum Thing" from *Crescent*).

Smith opens "Roots" with convulsive ponticello bowing toggling against resonant pulls on the E string, setting up a vamp of considerable gravity while Fielder counters with pliant soft mallets and hissing hi-hats for one of the disc's most illuminative moments.

For more information, visit balancepointacoustics.com

UNEARTHED GEM



Charles Mingus @ Bremen 1964 & 1975
Charles Mingus (Sunnyside)
by George Kanzler

These two concert recordings—11 years apart—document bassist Charles Mingus' last band to feature multi-reed-wind player Eric Dolphy (1964) and his last working band (1975). At the 1964 concert, four of the six tracks run well over 20 minutes, one of them over 30 minutes. The 1975 tracks are shorter, with one half-hour-plus exception.

Beside Dolphy, the 1964 band featured two other horns, trumpeter Johnny Coles and tenor saxophonist Clifford Jordan, plus pianist Jaki Byard and, like the 1975 band, was anchored by Mingus, who died 42 years ago this month, and drummer Dannie Richmond. That 1975 band featured trumpeter Jack Walrath, tenor saxophonist George Adams and pianist Don Pullen. Those latter two co-lead a quartet after their time with Mingus.

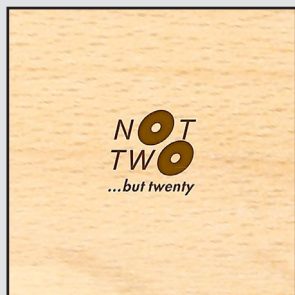
Mingus was always experimenting with and expanding on form in his pieces and the 1964 band was among his most expansive. Accelerando and decelerando, abrupt dynamic shifts, solos riding over rhythms only to fall into a cappella passages: All these are strategies on the 26-minute "Hope So Eric", each soloist featured in those varied contexts, plus Mingus and Richmond dialoguing before Dolphy's alto roars out over the final choruses. The equally long "Meditations on Integration" displays another favorite Mingus ploy, beginning as a ballad, with Dolphy's flute up front, then roiling into fast, swirling ensemble lines before solos running the gamut from ballad to hard-driving tempo, culminating in a feverish Dolphy bass clarinet solo before a return to ballad tempo with flute and arco bass leading the ensemble.

"Fables of Faubus" is the only composition played at both concerts and the contrast is striking. In 1964 there are no lyrics, the weight of the caustic anti-racist message carried by the burlesquing horn themes. Each musician cycles through the panoply of solo strategies heard on "Hope So Eric", but Byard nails the ironies of the piece in conjuring up the ugly in "Yankee Doodle Dandy" and inspiration of "Lift Every Voice and Sing". The 1975 band includes the mocking lyrics ("Name me someone who's ridiculous? Governor Faubus") and braying trumpet, but the solos are all over a constant, swing tempo.

The 1964 concert also included "Parkeriana", Mingus' pastiche of Charlie Parker tunes introducing solo forays, a piano solo referencing Fats Waller and Art Tatum and a "Sophisticated Lady" featuring pizzicato bass. In 1975, Walrath added variety to the trumpet chair with mutes, using them especially effectively on Sy Johnson's meaty ballad "For Harry Carney", also notable for precise, pointillist piano. Except for a kaleidoscopic "Sue's Changes" running the dynamics and tempos gamut, the 1975 tunes adhere to more or less steady rhythms and tempos. "Duke Ellington's Sound of Love" is lovely, a typically long-lined, sumptuous Mingus ballad. Adams adds ecstatic vocals to his similar tenor approach on the closing encore, "Devil Blues".

For more information, visit sunnysiderecords.com

BOXED SET



Not Two... but Twenty
Various Artists (Not Two)
by Kurt Gottschalk

At the end of a softly dramatic 20-minute improv by reedplayers Mats Gustafsson and Mikołaj Trzaska, tuba player Per-Åke Holmlander and bass guitarist Rafał Mazur and opening the second disc of the *Not Two... but Twenty*, an off-mic voice (Gustafsson?) exclaims with a laugh “We never play like that!” There’s a tinge of delight in his voice that encapsulates the buzz of a jazz festival. Much of the thrill comes with the discovery of unfamiliar players and opportunity to be among the first to hear new, sometimes one-off, groupings, exciting, in part, because it’s so ephemeral. The bands might carry on, but the festival gig is an exclusive. Occasionally, and fortunately, FOMO-counteracting compilations allow the rest of the huddled masses yearning to breathe free jazz a chance to experience those moments.

Not Two... but Twenty compiles performances from the 20th anniversary celebration of Not Two Records—held in 2018 in the small village of Wleń, Poland—onto five CDs housed in a handsomely

crafted wooden box and the excitement of the festival is palpable. There’s plenty of the happenstance of spontaneous grouping and creation, but there’s also moments of the ingenuity sometimes demanded by circumstance. The remoteness of the old castle where the festival was held, for example, made obtaining a piano difficult, so we get the unusual opportunity to hear Agustí Fernández on an electric keyboard. It doesn’t slow him down and it’s fun to hear the choices he makes with the instrument’s limited dynamics.

The set is bookended by a pair of short sets of audio vérité providing a nice “you were there” feel, even if you likely weren’t and even if the whole of the presentation is neither complete nor chronological. A beautiful 18-minute invocation by violinist Maya Homburger and bassist Barry Guy opens the first disc with works by György Kurtág, H.I.F. Biber and Guy’s own “Tales of Enchantment”. (Homburger returns later for a brief and beautiful solo set of Bach and another piece by Guy in the presence of a happily barking dog). The other bookend is a surprise coda for the weekend, an impromptu group improvisation led by label founder Marek Winiarski, who was handed a set of cue cards without warning or time to prepare. It’s less than 10 minutes of musicians rising to the occasion of a good-natured if shaky proposition.

There’s a full and wonderful disc featuring bassist Joëlle Léandre, building from a duo with Guy to a trio with Guy and drummer Zlatko Kaučič, then adding trombonist Steve Swell for a particularly satisfying foursome. Another quartet with Kaučič, Swell and reedplayer Ken Vandermark follows, then a sublime solo and resolving in a bass and reeds duet with Trzaska.

A half-hour with saxophone master Peter

Brötzmann and drummer Paal Nilssen-Love show the pair’s ease and familiarity within a shared spirit of exploration. The music moves easily between attack and restraint with varying moods and shifting reference points. (British scribe John Sharpe hears “Summertime” in the last of the three pieces, according to his lengthy liner notes; I didn’t catch that, but I did discern Brötzmann quoting Max Roach’s seminal “Driva Man” to resolve the piece.) Another exciting duo is delivered by saxophonists Gustafsson and Vandermark, morphing into a horn quartet with the addition of Swell and Holmlander. The collection is sequenced so nicely and the players so committed to the moment that it doesn’t come off as a respite from the rhythm section. It’s just an extension of the duet that flows in feeling into Fernández outfit with Mazur, Guy and Kaučič. It just feels right.

The festival was a fitting and much deserved celebration for one of Europe’s finer jazz labels and this collection is a fine favor for the rest of us. Winiarski has issued over 300 titles in his two decades of operation, with artists from Europe, America and Japan on the roster. The label was also responsible for the eight-disc Léandre retrospective *A Woman’s Work* from 2016 and, prior to that, four Vandermark boxes and a five-disc set by Guy. Thinking small wouldn’t seem to be Winiarski’s strong suit and we can only hope for more extravagances in the future. The set is advertised as a limited edition, but is still readily available at a relatively modest price. The one thing *Not Two... but Twenty* doesn’t offer is a view inside the castle, but some secrets must be saved, one supposes, for those who were actually in attendance.

For more information, nottwo.com

“Enjoyably unpredictable, Hug! is an album full of risk-taking fun that dares you to embrace it.”
-AllMusic.com

“The repertoire he [Matt Wilson] explores with them here is cleverly eclectic.”
-London Jazz News

THE NEW YORK CITY
JAZZ RECORD
BEST OF 2020

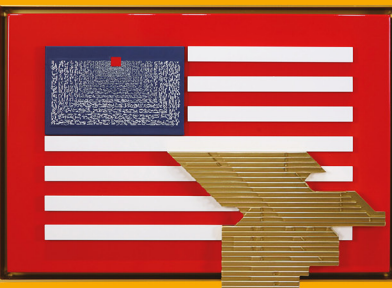
hug!

MATT WILSON QUARTET

with Jeff Lederer, Kirk Knuffke, Chris Lightcap

SPIRITMUSE RECORDS

KAMIL ELZABAR'S
AMERICA
THE BEAUTIFUL



PATHWAYS & PASSAGES
Cosmic Vibrations
FE. DWIGHT TRIBLE



THE NEW YORK CITY
JAZZ RECORD
BEST OF 2020



SPIRITMUSE RECORDS

<https://spiritmuserecords.bandcamp.com>

(INTERVIEW CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6)

freeing, not constricting.

I like genres. Some people don't believe in them and want to live their life "genre-free". I have little interest in that perspective. I'm more like, "What is the genre?" If we know what genre it is, then we can fill the container with the right kind of material. In this project, Bud Powell is within the genre of bebop. I take bebop very seriously as a genre. I do things to it that are not pure bebop, but at the same time, I'm aware of the difference.

Everything "new" is a combination of previous things. What matters is how well you know each element you're combining. If you're writing a supernatural detective story, you need to ask yourself how well you know the supernatural genre and how well you know the detective genre. People often know one side more than the other. That's always been an issue in the arts, but here in the postmodern age of the 21st Century, everything's a click away. It's all one big mashup. The question is how well you can control all the aspects you're dialing in to the final product.

Sometimes, a college music student will say, "I don't want to be labeled. Don't even call it jazz; it's all beyond category." I get it, but at the same time, any single phrase you can play on an instrument has a heritage, so what lineage are you in? And if you know your lineage, you can accept it or work against it.

TNYCJR: Does this influence your selection of musicians as well?

EI: I chose the musicians for this project for specific reasons. There's a core quintet of Americans, plus the Italian big band. The result is sort of a concerto grosso. My friend Ben Street plays bass. Ben really believes in jazz and plays with so much personality. There aren't too many bass players you can hear on a record and immediately identify, but Ben is one of those.

Drummer Lewis Nash was suggested by Umbria. I'd heard and admired Lewis my whole life but hadn't played with him before. For a big band you need a drummer who lays down the law. You can't necessarily go in with a really idiosyncratic force like Paul Motian or Elvin Jones for a big band. Lewis is a consecrated bebop master who's played with the Who's Who, so he was a perfect choice.

I'd admired [trumpeter] Ingrid Jensen for years in the context of Darcy James Argue's Secret Society, so she was always in the back of my mind as someone I'd choose if I ever did a big band project. She's got connections musically to Kenny Wheeler, who wrote some of the more durable modern big band music. As for tenor saxophonist Dayna Stephens, I heard about him from Ben when in need of a sub for Mark Turner in the Billy Hart Quartet. Dayna is fast and very creative. Both Dayna and Ingrid get a few expansive solos in this project, but they also have solos in which they need to tell a story in just a chorus or two, like the original Powell session with Sonny Rollins, Fats Navarro, Tommy Potter and Roy Haynes.

It was hard for all of us. We all left with a new appreciation for that genre of pure bebop, where everybody says their piece in three minutes. It was a joy to work within those confines.

TNYCJR: What surprised you the most when you first got together and played?

EI: I knew Lewis was great, but he struck me as very generous in his playing. He's a natural accompanist. I'm not so used to that. I'm used to these people who push me around—and I want to be pushed around. But Lewis was like a beautiful jazz couch that you could just sit on and relax. As for Ingrid and Dayna, I knew they were virtuosos, but hearing them play these high-level, burning jazz solos confirmed that I'd gotten

the right people. It wasn't a surprise, exactly, but sometimes you put things together in your mind and it doesn't always come out that way in reality. But they showed up, they kicked ass and it was great.

TNYCJR: What's next for you?

EI: I expect to play quite a bit more solo piano eventually; that's been coming along. A current commission is six formal sonatas for six virtuosos, which is going great. More formal composition is certainly in my future. The Billy Hart Quartet continues and we're live-streaming at Dizzy's Club to celebrate his 80th birthday. There's also a wonderful singer named Marcy Harriell who I had a New Year's Eve gig with last year doing music of Burt Bacharach and it was a huge success. Fortunately, there's plenty to do. I'm blessed with a pretty sizable list of geniuses who are somehow willing to work with me.

TNYCJR: What would you most like to see happen in jazz that hasn't happened already—or, for that matter, hasn't happened for a long time and should be revived?

EI: Composition is important. Instrumental virtuosity is important. The blues is really important. AfroCuban rhythm is important. Romantic harmony is important. Telling a story is important. When we hear the great jazz records of the '40s, '50s and '60s, it's all in a pretty perfect balance. After John Coltrane passed away, we've had 50 years of great music, but it's seldom been the whole package. I believe in inclusivity. There are so many elements of music and if you can get a passing grade in many of them, you can keep moving it forward. When I talk about Burt Bacharach in the same breath as Bud Powell, I don't see them that differently in the sense that both are the very highest level composers within their respective genres. ❖

For more information, visit ethaniverson.com. Iverson live-streams Jan. 29th at smallslive.com.

Recommended Listening:

- Ethan Iverson Trio—*Deconstruction Zone (Standards) / Construction Zone (Originals)* (Fresh Sound-New Talent, 1998)
- Billy Hart—*Quartet* (HighNote, 2005)
- Ethan Iverson/Albert "Tootie" Heath/Ben Street—*Live at Smalls* (smallslive, 2009)
- The Bad Plus—*The Rite of Spring* (Masterworks, 2013)
- Ethan Iverson—*The Purity Of The Turf* (Criss Cross, 2016)
- Mark Turner/Ethan Iverson—*Temporary Kings* (ECM, 2017)

(ENCORE CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8)

Scott's and as recently as 2019, they sold out concerts throughout Europe.

"Most bands don't really play like their records sound, especially from the postbop era, but I sound like my records sound, not only that, I've got the same people...with Jean and Michael and Henry Franklin together, we're the foundation of that sound. That's some powerful stuff!"

Carn is compiling his songbook and while continuing to compose, he's looking forward to life beyond the pandemic. "I'm not the kind of person that's going to retire. I've got new music coming out and I'm playing better than ever." ❖

For more information, visit jazzisdead.co/doug-carn

Recommended Listening:

- Doug Carn—*The Doug Carn Trio* (Savoy, 1969)
- Doug Carn—*Infant Eyes* (Black Jazz, 1971)

- Doug Carn—*Adam's Apple* (Black Jazz, 1974)
- Cindy Blackman—*Another Lifetime* (Four Quarters Entertainment, 2005)
- Wallace Roney—*Home* (HighNote, 2010)
- Ali Shaheed Muhammad & Adrian Younge / Doug Carn—*Jazz Is Dead 5* (Jazz is Dead, 2019)

(LEST WE FORGET CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8)

aspirin of the bartender, who readily complied. Noticing a pistol within the drawer, Winchester told the bartender of his prior law enforcement work and offered to show him a trick from the job. Winchester emptied the revolver of its cartridges, replacing several. He didn't expect the chamber to load, but the model operated differently than his service weapon and, holding the gun to his temple, fired.

The end came as quickly as had his moment of celebrity and Lem Winchester stands eternal on jazz' walk of shadows. ❖

Recommended Listening:

- Patrolman Lem Winchester—*New Faces at Newport* (Metro Jazz-Verve, 1958)
- Lem Winchester and Ramsey Lewis Trio—*Perform A Tribute to Clifford Brown* (Argo, 1958)
- Lem Winchester and Benny Golson—*Winchester Special* (New Jazz, 1959)
- Lem Winchester—*Another Opus* (Prestige, 1960)
- Jack McDuff (with Jimmy Forrest)—*Tough 'Duff* (Prestige, 1960)
- Lem Winchester Sextet (featuring Oliver Nelson)—*Lem's Beat* (Prestige New Jazz, 1960)

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ON THIS DAY

by Andrey Henkin



At Storyville
Lee Konitz (Storyville)
January 5th, 1954

Alto saxophonist Lee Konitz was only 26 when he played the set at Boston's Storyville club that would become this 10" LP but had already established himself under Claude Thornhill, Stan Kenton, Miles Davis and Lennie Tristano, plus his own dates as a leader. Four tunes, including one of the earliest appearances of his theme song "Subconscious Lee", are with a band of pianist Ronnie Ball, bassist Percy Heath and drummer Al Levitt, the former pair occasional sidemen in the '50s but the latter reuniting with Konitz in the mid '70s.



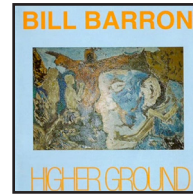
Tribute A Monk
Enrique Villegas (Trova)
January 5th, 1967

The influence of pianist Thelonious Monk was international, even in cities in which he never performed, such as Argentine capital Buenos Aires, where a club was named for him in 2002 and, decades earlier, this tribute was made by pianist Enrique Villegas and his trio with bassist Jorge López Ruiz and drummer Eduardo Casalla, all stalwarts of the South American country's jazz scene. Only half of the date is in homage though, a medley of "Bemsha Swing", "Round Midnight" and "Blue Monk", Side B standards and Sonny Rollins' "St. Thomas".



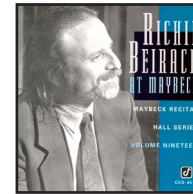
Cello Again
Sam Jones (Xanadu)
January 5th, 1976

Sam Jones was one of a small but significant coterie of bassists who doubled on cello, joining peers like Oscar Pettiford and Ray Brown and heirs such as Ron Carter. For this date, one of nine he made for Xanadu, SteepleChase and Muse in the '70s, bass duties go to David Williams in a quintet completed by alto saxophonist Charles McPherson, pianist Barry Harris and drummer Billy Higgins on a set of standards, a tune by Higgins and two Jones tunes, including the apt "In Walked Ray", which appeared on Jones' 1961 Riverside LP *The Chant*.



Higher Ground
Bill Barron (Joken)
January 5th, 1989

Tenor saxophonist Bill Barron's reputation is hardly commensurate with a compelling leader discography from the '60s-80s, fruitful partnership with trumpeter Ted Curson in the '60s and work with Charles Mingus, Cecil Taylor, Philly Joe Jones and others, especially compared with his pianist younger brother Kenny, who appears on this, the elder Barron's last album (he died 8 months later at 62). The pair, Eddie Henderson (trumpet), Rufus Reid (bass) and Ben Riley (drums) play standards, one Kenny piece and three by Bill.



At Maybeck
Richie Beirach (Concord)
January 5th, 1992

While known for his longstanding partnership with Dave Liebman, a facet of pianist Richie Beirach going back almost as far is solo performance. He began recording in this format back in the mid '70s and has released well over a dozen solo albums since the 1977 ECM date *Hubris*. For the 19th volume of Concord's Maybeck Recital Hall series, Beirach plays a 10-song program of almost exclusively standards, most appearing on his other albums, closing the concert with the sole original, the title track from his 1979 ECM trio set *Elm*.

BIRTHDAYS

January 1
†Al McKibbon 1919-2005
†Milt Jackson 1923-99
†Helmut Brandt 1931-2001
Sonny Greenwich b.1936
†Susannah McCorkle 1946-2001
Chris Potter b.1970
James Shipp b.1980

January 2
†Nick Fatool 1915-2000
†Arthur Prysock 1929-97
Noah Jarrett b.1978

January 3
†Preston Jackson 1902-83
†Herbie Nichols 1919-63
†Musa Kaleem 1921-88
†Geezil (Harolde) Minerve 1922-92
†John Jenkins 1931-93
†Motohiko Hino 1946-1999
James Carter b.1969

January 4
†Frankie Newton 1906-54
†Joe Marsala 1907-78
†Slim Gaillard 1916-91
†Frank Wess 1922-2013
Al Dreares b.1929
John McLaughlin b.1942
Eugene Chadbourne b.1954
Alex Cline b.1956

January 5
†Wild Bill Davison 1906-89
†Lennie Hastings 1927-78
Dizzy Reece b.1931
Chuck Flores b.1935
Myra Melford b.1957

January 6
†Keith Christie 1931-80
†Danny Moore 1941-2005
Barry Altschul b.1943
Adam Larson b.1990

January 7
†Henry "Red" Allen 1908-67
†Chano Pozo 1915-48
†Keg Purnell 1915-65
†Sam Woodyard 1925-88
†Kenny Davern 1935-2006
†Eldee Young 1936-2007

January 8
†Wendell Culley 1906-83
†Bobby Tucker 1923-2007
Bill Goodwin b.1942
Thurman Barker b.1948
Marilyn Mazur b.1955
Dan Tepfer b.1982

January 9
†Kenny Clarke 1914-85
†Jimmy Maxwell 1917-2002
†Betty Roche 1920-99
†Roger Guerin 1926-2010
†Bucky Pizzarelli 1926-2020
†Carson Smith 1931-97
Malcolm Cecil b.1937

January 10
†Haywood Henry 1913-94
†Buddy Johnson 1915-77
†Max Roach 1924-2007
†Willie Dennis 1926-65
†Allen Eager 1927-2003
Gianluigi Trovesi b.1944
William Parker b.1952
Mike Stern b.1954

January 11
†Wilbur De Paris 1900-73
†Tab Smith 1909-71
†Bob Enevoldsen 1920-2006
†Osie Johnson 1923-66
†Cal Massey 1927-72

January 12
†Trummy Young 1912-84
†Jay McShann 1916-2006
†Guy Lafitte 1927-98
†Ronald Shannon Jackson 1940-2013
Ernst Bier b.1951
Jane Ira Bloom b.1955
Ivo Perelman b.1961
Ingrid Jensen b.1966
Gene Lake b.1966

January 13
†Quentin Butter Jackson 1909-76
†Otis Johnson 1910-94
†Melba Liston 1926-99
†Joe Pass 1929-95
Bill Easley b.1946
Eero Koivistoinen b.1946

January 14
†Jimmy Crawford 1910-80
†Billy Butterfield 1917-88
†Joe Muranyi 1928-2012
†Kenny Wheeler 1930-2014
†Grady Tate 1932-2017

January 15
†Gene Krupa 1909-73
†Artie Shapiro 1916-2003
†Bob Maize 1945-2004
Baikida Carroll b.1947

January 16
†Irving Mills 1884-1985
Aldo Romano b.1941

January 17
†Big Sid Catlett 1910-51
†George Handy 1920-97
†Cedar Walton 1934-2013
†Ted Dunbar 1937-98
Billy Harper b.1943
Pheeroan akLaff b.1955

January 18
Don Thompson b.1940
Al Foster b.1944
†Steve Grossman 1951-2020
Clark Gayton b.1963
Dominic Lash b.1980

January 19
†JR Monterose 1927-93
†Horace Parlan 1931-2017
†Hod O'Brien 1936-2016
Phil Wilson b.1937
†Sam T. Brown 1939-77
Joe Magnarelli b.1960

January 20
†Jimmy Cobb 1929-2020
Valery Ponomarev b.1943
†Chuck Donamico 1944-2002
Andy Sheppard b.1957
Jeff "Tain" Watts b.1960
Tatsuya Nakatani b.1970

January 21
Steve Potts b.1945
Lou Grassi b.1947
Kevin Norton b.1956
Jason Moran b.1975

January 22
†Juan Tizol 1900-84
†Teddy McRae 1908-99
†JJ Johnson 1924-2001
†Teddy Smith 1932-79
†Jean-Louis Viale 1933-84
Alan Silva b.1939
Eberhard Weber b.1940
Maarten Altena b.1943
Michal Urbaniak b.1943

January 23
†Benny Waters 1902-98
†Django Reinhardt 1910-53
†Teddy Napoleon 1914-64
†Scoops Carry 1915-70
†Ray Abrams 1920-92
†Marty Paich 1925-95
†Curtis Counce 1926-63
†Harold Ousley 1929-2015
Gary Burton b.1943
Andre Hayward b.1973

January 24
†Avery Parrish 1917-59
†Jimmy Forrest 1920-80
†Joe Albany 1924-88
Lenny McBrowne b.1933
†Bobby Scott 1937-90
†Julius Hemphill 1938-95
Marcus Printup b.1967
Duane Eubanks b.1969

January 25
†Wellman Braud 1891-1966
†Truck Parham 1913-2002
†Lloyd Smith 1917-82
†Barbara Carroll 1925-2017
†Antonio Carlos Jobim 1927-95
Alexis Cuadrado b.1971

January 26
†Stephane Grappelli 1908-97
†Alice Babs 1924-2014
Dick Nash b.1928
Benny Golson b.1929
Aki Takase b.1948

January 27
†Oran "Hot Lips" Page 1908-54
Jimmie Smith b.1938
†Bobby Hutcherson 1941-2016

January 28
†Ronnie Scott 1927-96
Buddy Terry b.1941
Bob Moses b.1948
Kent Kessler b.1957
Lorenzo Sanguedolce b.1975

January 29
†Arnold Ross 1921-2000
†Ed Shaughnessy 1929-2013
†Frank Assunto 1932-74
†Derek Bailey 1932-2005
†Jeff Clyne 1937-2010
†Jeanne Lee 1939-2000

January 30
†Roy Eldridge 1911-89
†Bernie Leighton 1921-94
†Ahmed Abdul Malik 1927-93
†Tubby Hayes 1935-73
†Tony Levin 1940-2011
Ralph Lalama b.1951

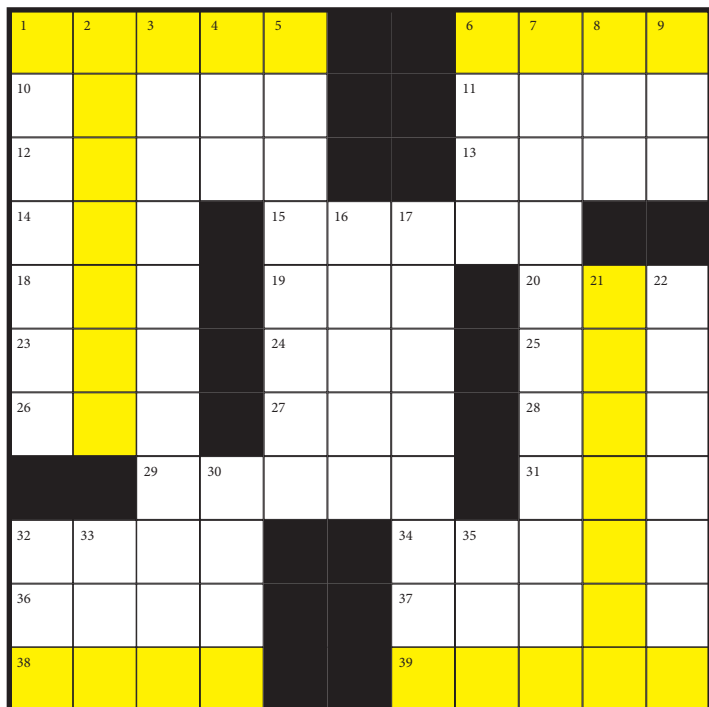
January 31
†Bobby Hackett 1915-76
Garnett Brown b.1936
Frank Ricotti b.1949
Per Zanussi b.1977



JAMES CARTER
January 3rd, 1969

James Carter's website has the subtitle "Saxophone Virtuoso". While this is a bit of healthy braggadocio, in Carter's case the overused term is an accurate one. He has demonstrated that he can play pretty much anything at an astonishing level since his first credits in the mid '80s, whether as part of The Tough Young Tenors; in the bands of Julius Hemphill, Lester Bowie, Frank Lowe, Ronald Shannon Jackson and Hamiet Bluiett; guesting with the Art Ensemble of Chicago, Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra, his cousin Regina Carter, Ginger Baker, Kathleen Battle and Cesaria Evora; as a late-period member of World Saxophone Quartet; or on his own albums for DIW, Atlantic, Columbia, Warner Bros., Half Note and EmArcy. (AH)

CROSSWORD



ACROSS

- Bassist from a city in Vermont?
- Bassist from a city in Connecticut?
- 1968-69 Duke Pearson Blue Note album ____ *Cave*
- Who Knows It*
- With *Out*, Adam Kolker tune that needs to make up its mind
- Late '30s British clarinetist Jack
- With *The*, 2007 Joe Fiedler Clean Feed album
- South African pianist Nxumalo to his friends
- Australian trumpeter Malet
- You'll need this airport code to see the Rivers Cities Jazz Band
- Label releasing tapes by Grid, Subtle Degrees and Battle Trance
- Curr. needed when visting Melissa Aldana's birthplace
- Vocalist produced by Pat Metheny
- Albare band with George Garzone, Antonio Sanchez and others
- Abeat Records Quartett
- Innerhythmic Records catalogue prefix
- Anthony Braxton ____-Centric Foundation
- At the heart of drummer Prieto?
- Noble trumpeter Ernie
- Jazz cruise co.
- Pianist Jean-Philippe with a single LP on Futura
- Given name of AACM reedplayer Wallace McMillan

DOWN

- Dave Brubeck was charged with being this during World War II
- Estonian trumpeter Priit
- Bassist from a city in Indiana?
- Bassist from a city in Texas?
- Swing Era big band leader Henry
- Bassist from a city in Texas?
- Like many a touring musician
- RareNoise Records catalogue prefix
- Endless 1975 Alice Coltrane Warner Bros. album
- 1956 Cal Tjader Fantasy album *Latin* ____
- He was somewhat responsible for the Atomic Basie album cover
- Vocalist Fort, singer to pianist Anat
- Instr. of 13 Across
- Italian pianist Enrico
- Label co-founded by John Jack and Mike Westbrook in 1973
- Bassist from a city in Nebraska?
- Kari Ikonen wrote a tune for this Chernobyl disaster city
- 1975 Leroy Jenkins JCOA album *For Players* ____
- St. Louis equivalent of AACM
- Musicians could use this prog. during the pandemic
- Monaco's Cap D' ____ Jazz Festival

By Andrey Henkin visit nycjazzrecord.com for answers