

MAY 2021—ISSUE 229

YOUR FREE GUIDE TO THE NYC JAZZ SCENE

NYCJAZZRECORD.COM



THE NEW YORK JAZZ RECORD

DIGITAL
ONLY
EDITION



**MARK
FELDMAN**
SOUNDING POINTS

**CAROL
SUDHALTER**

**MARK
SHIM**

**MIKE
WESTBROOK**

**GEORGE
OTSUKA**

Managing Editor:
Laurence Donohue-Greene
**Editorial Director &
Production Manager:**
Andrey Henkin

To Contact:
The New York City Jazz Record
66 Mt. Airy Road East
Croton-on-Hudson, NY 10520
United States
Phone/Fax: 212-568-9628

Laurence Donohue-Greene:
ldgreene@nycjazzrecord.com

Andrey Henkin:
ahenkin@nycjazzrecord.com

General Inquiries:
info@nycjazzrecord.com

Advertising:
advertising@nycjazzrecord.com

Calendar:
calendar@nycjazzrecord.com

VOXNews:
voxnews@nycjazzrecord.com

US Subscription rates: 12 issues, \$40
Canada Subscription rates: 12 issues, \$45
International Subscription rates: 12 issues, \$50
For subscription assistance, send check, cash or
money order to the address above
or email info@nycjazzrecord.com

Staff Writers
Duck Baker, Stuart Broomer,
Robert Bush, Kevin Canfield,
Marco Cangiano, Thomas Conrad,
Pierre Crépon, Ken Dryden,
Donald Elfman, Phil Freeman,
Kurt Gottschalk, Tom Greenland,
George Grella, Anders Griffen, Tyran Grillo,
Alex Henderson, Robert Iannapolo,
Mark Keresman, Marilyn Lester,
Suzanne Lorge, Marc Medwin,
Jim Motavalli, Russ Musto,
John Pietaro, Joel Roberts,
John Sharpe, Elliott Simon,
Anna Steegmann, Scott Yanow

Contributing Writers
Dan Bilawsky, Brian Charette, Michael Cobb,
Jordannah Elizabeth, Pierre Giroux,
George Kanzler, Steven Loewy,
Francesco Martinelli, Monique Ngozi Nri

Contributing Photographers
Doerte Fitschen-Rath, Dave Green,
Tom Greenland, Jimmy Katz
Gus Philippas, Luciano Rossetti

Fact-checker
Nate Dorward

nycjazzrecord.com



THE NEW YORK CITY JAZZ RECORD

MAY 2021—ISSUE 229

ON THE COVER : MARK FELDMAN	3	BY MICHAEL COBB
NEW YORK@NIGHT	4	
INTERVIEW : CAROL SUDHALTER	6	BY JIM MOTAVALLI
ARTIST FEATURE : MARK SHIM	7	BY GEORGE GRELLA
ENCORE : MIKE WESTBROOK	8	BY FRANCESCO MARTINELLI
LEST WE FORGET : GEORGE OTSUKA	8	BY ALEX HENDERSON
LABEL SPOTLIGHT : CADILLAC	9	BY MARK KERESMAN
VOXNEWS	9	BY SUZANNE LORGE
OBITUARIES	10	BY ANDREY HENKIN
ALBUM REVIEWS	12	
MISCELLANY	24	

May is special around the Jazz Record office. It is our birthday month, another chance, after our January Best Of issue, to reflect on the year that has passed. But, to belabor a point that has been made endlessly, the past year has had little to celebrate. With this issue, we have now published 14 digital-only editions; what was first a stop-gap measure has become the norm, just like leaving the house without a mask seems like a dream. Things seem to be improving: vaccines are available; the weather is warming up, allowing for shows to take place outside; NYC regulations have been relaxed and some clubs are reopening...as gently as a flower opening for the first time of the season. But – and this is a Sir Mix-a-Lot-sized but – this is not the time to stop being vigilant, lest we end up right back where we were a year ago, a terrifying thought.

Most of our features and CD Reviews are reflective of the current state of semi-lockdown: violinist Mark Feldman (On The Cover), saxophonist Mark Shim (Artist Feature) both have live-streaming events this month. So too does saxophonist/flutist Carol Sudhalter (Interview) but she also performs en plein-air. There are numerous concerts scheduled at various parks throughout the city, so dust yourself off and go support musicians who have missed audiences as much as audiences have missed them.

On The Cover: Mark Feldman (photo by Luciano Rossetti)

All rights reserved. Reproduction without permission strictly prohibited. All material copyrights property of the authors.

MARK FELDMAN

SOUNDING POINTS

BY MICHAEL COBB



LUCIANO ROSSETTI

Violinist Mark Feldman, born and soon to be based again in Chicago, has worked with some of the biggest names in jazz: John Zorn, John Abercrombie, Marc Ribot, Bill Frisell, Dave Douglas, Billy Hart, Lee Konitz, Pharoah Sanders and many others. He has also recorded and performed with musicians outside of jazz including country artists Loretta Lynn, Ray Price, Willie Nelson and Johnny Cash and indie-pop rockers They Might Be Giants.

Feldman recently released a solo album, *Sounding Point* (Intakt), overdubbing himself for a multi-layered string experience. The album opens with the composition "As We Are" written by Swiss pianist and collaborator Sylvie Courvoisier. In this first track alone, the listener immediately hears Feldman's wide-ranging vocabulary. With seemingly effortless skill, he astonishingly flits between glissandi and vigorous snap pizzicati that at times bring to mind the music of Béla Bartók. About three-quarters of the way through, Feldman lets loose a cascade of notes veering into free jazz and finishes with his bow stroking long, slightly atonal chords. It's stunning stuff that demands careful consideration.

Regarding the choice to cover Courvoisier's piece, Feldman says, "We were partners for a long time. I knew the tune from her last record and I heard her practice it a lot. I didn't even question my choice, I just thought it sounded good and decided to do it."

Sounding Point includes another cover, Ornette Coleman's "Peace Warriors". "The head is multi-tracked and the middle section has shout choruses, but it's still a solo violin performance," he explains. Feldman has been playing the tune since the '90s in a band that included trumpeter Douglas and bassist Ratz Harris. "Ornette played violin in addition to trumpet and alto saxophone. I heard John Zorn do it on his album *Naked City*. So it was always a tune I liked. When I was doing this record, it just popped into my head. I imagined it with a big band approach with shout choruses and parallel harmonies, but all with violins using a multi-track," he says.

The album was recorded at Feldman's home in Brooklyn, New York, which he calls Studio Lulu. "Basically, I put curtains over the doors and windows and I hired somebody to be the engineer, so that I didn't have to think about all the technical things. I recorded it onto a laptop to Pro Tools," he explains. Having recorded at his house before, Feldman has figured out the resonant corners of his apartment. Once satisfied with the tracks, he sent the files to Ryan Streber at Oktaven audio, who balanced and mastered the sound. "There wasn't even any mixing per se," he says. About working at Studio Lulu, Feldman says, "It's easier to focus and not be under the pressure of the clock ticking. I don't need isolation or headphones and I already know which room my violin sounds good in."

As to what inspired him to do this project, Feldman knew he was leaving New York, which he says gave him the energy to get it done. He also got a push from abroad. "Patrik Landolt, who runs Intakt Records in

Switzerland, had heard my solo work before and asked me to do another solo record. Once the pandemic hit, we revisited the idea. It was the perfect time," he recounts.

Reflecting on his career and the evolution of his style, Feldman says, "I always wanted to be a creative musician, but I worked as a studio musician to support myself. As soon as you tell people you've played with someone, they read into it. For me, I was using it as a way to move forward with my life and pay bills. But of course, there are some things that carry back and forth." In terms of the role of the violin and its connection to jazz and popular music, Feldman says, "For me the real continuation comes out of [Polish violinist] Zbigniew Seifert. He was probably the most significant jazz violinist for me. Content-wise, his playing drew heavily from the pentatonic period of John Coltrane and Eastern European classical music with a very masculine sound, maybe like Bartók. I copied him a lot until around 1998 and then I shifted away from it when I realized I was copying."

For Feldman, developing a signature sound is something that evolved naturally and without too much forethought: "I did it by not thinking about it. To me it's like when you pick up the phone and speak to a friend. You know how his voice is. I never tried to develop any sound. I just believe that the sound of a musician is a natural thing. It certainly is for singers. You listen to a singer and think 'He was born with that.' I look at it the same way, like a singer. That's what I've got."

Thinking on his many collaborations over the years, Feldman is enthusiastic. "I worked with a lot of great people. For ten years I played in a quartet with the late guitarist John Abercrombie, bassist Marc Johnson and drummer Joey Baron. I did five ECM records and lots of European and American tours. I played in drummer Billy Hart's quartet for about three years in the '90s, which was an extended association with saxophonist John Stubblefield, pianist Dave Kikoski, bassist Santi Debriano and guitarist Dave Fiuczynski. I did four nights at Jazz at Lincoln Center with Paul Bley and another duo at Lincoln Center with Muhal Richard Abrams, which were both cool. I did a lot of work with my partner Sylvie Courvoisier and a ton of work with John Zorn in his different groups. I played in Bar Kokhba, a larger group with guitarist Marc Ribot, Joey Baron and Brazilian percussionist Cyro Baptista. We traveled a lot," he recalls.

Feldman did soundtracks and hundreds of CDs in New York as a sideman. In 2005 he recorded his own album *What Exit* for ECM with the late British pianist John Taylor, Swedish bass player Anders Jormin and New York drummer Tom Rainey. He also worked with saxophonist Michael Brecker on his second-to-last record, recorded and toured with saxophonist Chris Potter. Feldman even worked with percussionist Trilok Gurtu for a while, who played with John McLaughlin and Miles Davis. "Those are a few highlights," he recounts.

What's been the key to success? "Mostly, I respond

to what's going on and not second guess stuff. I just go for it. I always felt like I was the same person; I never tried to disguise who I was. Whenever I did that, it always had the worst outcome. I figure if someone calls me, they want me to be me. It's their responsibility to know what I can do. The more I believed in that, the more successful I was," Feldman says.

When composing music, Feldman uses several different processes. "I usually have the blank page crisis for one or two days. Then you get to a certain point where you push the rock up the hill and then it starts rolling down the hill. And you think, 'OK, this thing is now riding itself.' Another way is that you just start writing as much as possible without caring about the content or the quality. It's like poetry magnets. I compose like that. I write tons of shit. I don't care what it is. It's more about just getting stuff on paper. And then I remove stuff after that initial dump. I look at it like a sculpture process," he says.

Technologically speaking, Feldman prefers simplicity. "I'm an old guy and had already been working before all this modern technology. When I was getting started, people had four-track cassette decks and then sequencers came later. Now I use Sibelius and Pro Tools. I usually write in pen and paper and try to remove things. What's left when I remove things is the piece. When I do additive stuff, I use pen and paper and then enter it into Sibelius and then play it back on the sequencer, which you can manipulate from there," he explains.

For most musicians, who earn their living from live performances, the pandemic has been hugely disruptive. For Feldman, it has also been challenging with public performances canceled worldwide.

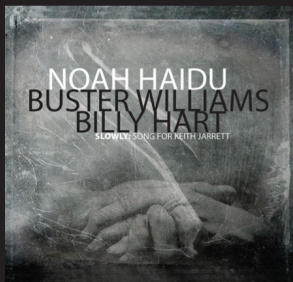
"My last gig was last March [2020] in Belgium and I haven't engaged in anything since then. But I am doing a solo virtual concert at the Soapbox Gallery in Brooklyn, which is a gallery and performance space. They have a good series on jazz and improvisation during the week," he says.

Thinking about the future, Feldman sounds cautiously optimistic and says, "At the end of May I'm moving to Chicago and am hoping that maybe I'll start some musical things with the people that live there. I have a whole month of gigs in Belgium next year. Right now that's about all. I'm not as busy as I used to be. But musicians never really retire, do they?" ❖

For more information, visit markfeldmanviolin.com. Feldman live-streams solo May 12th at soapboxgallery.org.

Recommended Listening:

- Mark Dresser/Mark Feldman/Hank Roberts – *Arcado* (JMT-Winter&Winter, 1989)
- Dave Douglas – *Five* (Soul Note, 1995)
- Masada String Trio – *John Zorn 50th Birthday Celebration, Vol. 1* (Tzadik, 2003)
- Mark Feldman – *What Exit* (ECM, 2005)
- Bar Kokhba Sextet – *Lucifer: The Book of Angels, Vol. 10* (Tzadik, 2007)
- Mark Feldman – *Sounding Point* (Intakt, 2020)

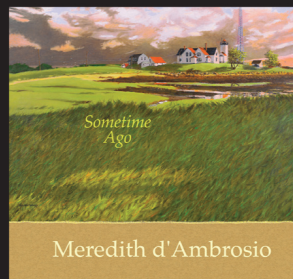


NOAH HAIDU
SLOWLY: SONG FOR
KEITH JARRETT

SSC 1596
AVAILABLE 5/7/21

—*Jazzwise (UK): "Haidu's ability to express deep feelings is striking."* — Tony Hall
—*DownBeat: "Infinite Distances pulses with soul... a sumptuous record that swings and grooves with far out moments."* — Dan Ouellette

NOAH HAIDU piano
BUSTER WILLIAMS bass
BILLY HART drums



MEREDITH
d'AMBROSIO
SOMETIME AGO

SSC 1581
AVAILABLE 5/14/21

—*Jazz Times: "She has, very much akin to Mabel Mercer, always maintained a less-is-more approach, a hushed elegance that gently propels each song like a paper boat across a still pond"* — Christopher Loudon

MEREDITH d'AMBROSIO vocals
RANDY HALBERSTADT piano
DARYL JOHNES bass
STEVE JOHNS drums
DON SICKLER trumpet & flugelhorn



DOV MANSKI
ERIN PARSCH
THE HUE OF SILENCE

SSC 1617
AVAILABLE 5/21/21

—*Together, the visual and audio components that combine to comprise Manski and Parsch's The Hue of Silence are ethereally stimulating, creating a complex program that feeds the eyes and ears*

DOV MANSKI piano, wurlitzer, programs
ERIN PARSCH paintings



Sunnyside

www.sunnysiderecords.com

Who says jazz has to be the exclusive preserve of cognoscenti huddled over small tables in crowded, dimly lit nightclubs? As multi-instrumentalist **Daniel Carter** proved on a recent afternoon (Apr. 15th) in Brooklyn's Prospect Park, jazz can speak to the 'incognoscenti' too: those folks—out jogging or biking around the belt road, practicing jujitsu, walking their dogs, barbecuing or whatever—weren't even paying attention to the music until the improvised vibrations sweetly but surely permeated their psyches. Joining Carter on a small patch of turf adjacent to the park's bandshell were Roshni Samlal (tablas) and Dan Kurfirst (drums), who set up between them a lilting rhythmic bed of steady eighth-notes (and triplets at one point) over which Carter floated placid but pungent themes (or near-themes), hoisting a new horn for each new episode, first flute, then muted trumpet and saxophones (tenor, soprano and alto). There was a small battery amp to boost the tablas, but the overall volume remained soft and subdued, merging with the shouts and laughter of children playing on the nearby slides and swings. Some of these small humans, unsure what to make of Carter's shiny brass instruments, milled closer as he played, transfixed by the curious tones. There was some rain earlier and it looked like more was on the way, but perhaps the weather gods too were listening as the music lofted into the overcast skies, because they stayed the waterworks just a bit longer, not wanting to break the mood. —Tom Greenland



Daniel Carter @ Prospect Park

TOM GREENLAND

Brooklyn's sixth annual **BRIC JazzFest** (Apr. 8th-10th) reflected the events of this remarkable year: COVID kept everyone home, watching the live-stream performances (three per night) as the artists played to an essentially empty house. The program, inspired by the Black Lives Matter movement, was comprised of (mostly) local artists and between-act film clips endorsing racial justice. Many of the headliners—Nikara Warren's Black Wall Street, Phony Ppl and Roy Ayers on the first night; Justin Hicks, Keyon Harrold and Michelle Ndegeocello on the second; MAE.SUN (aka Hailey Niswanger), Van Hunt and Nate Smith on the third—mixed jazz with neo-soul, funk, hip-hop, reggae, even metal and other influences in novel, hard-to-categorize hybrids. Pianist Robert Glasper, wearing a "Hate Has Been Cancelled" knit cap, accompanied by bassist Vicente Archer, drummer Marcus Gilmore and DJ Jahi Sundance, provided a powerful finale for the festival, opening with a cover of Radiohead's "Packt Like Sardines in a Crushd Tin Box", crooning the lyrics over a smooth, Rhodes piano-driven jam, later adding voice-over from a Martin Luther King speech. The next piece could have been "Stella by Starlight", but if it was, the pianist's unique interpretation made it into something else altogether. A hymn-like number, overlain with samples from just-passed DMX' "Prayer", preceded "Better Than I Imagine", a minor ballad over a four-chord vamp, a soft landing after the rigorous improvisation earlier in the set. (TG)

Capping the first conference day of the Louis Armstrong International Continuum (Apr. 8th) was the **James Zollar Quartet** with guest **Brianna Thomas**, followed by **Stefon Harris & Blackout**. Thomas has shown considerable growth since her days starting out—she's more confident now and has a stronger stage presence along with more powerful vocals. Her phrasing on "Drop Me Off in Harlem" was matched by Zollar's articulate playing and deft plunger work. "Dream a Little Dream of Me" was enhanced by a creative backbeat from bassist Peter Washington and solid drummer Sean Mason. When it comes to vibraphone/marimba playing, Harris is unendingly dynamic and innovative. His group, with a long history, was cohesive and in the pocket. "Dat Dere" was an homage to drummer Art Blakey, elevating the tune to modern sensibilities with inventive turns. Pianist Keith Brown delivered a lush, classically-influenced solo intro to a Bobby Hutcherson tune while the solo intro by bassist Ben Williams to Harris original "Chasin Kindall" was also noteworthy. A new take on the classic "What a Wonderful World", while brightly innovative musically, transformed the vocals into a disappointing R&B art song, sung by Casey Benjamin, who far excels in ability on saxophone and vocoder. Drummer Terreon Gully proved a steady force throughout. The encore, "Do You Know What It Means to Miss New Orleans", Zollar and Thomas returning, was a fitting, traditional ending. —Marilyn Lester



James Zollar

The phrase is worn out but the sentiment is nonetheless true: **Fred Hersch** is a force of nature. The 15-time Grammy nominee is a pianist with a seemingly unending supply of off-the-charts creativity. In Jazz Standard's virtual The Flip Side Sessions, Hersch's Trio with bassist Drew Gress and drummer Jochen Rueckert (Apr. 2nd) presented a stellar program of standards and originals, all highly engaging, without a lost moment within them. Immediately revealed at the head of the session was the maestro's vividly articulate and expressive style, which he makes seem as natural as waving hello. Hersch is powerfully in touch with his craft, producing a rich tone deeply rooted in a pianistic terra firma. So tuned in is he that mood and emotion is immediately conveyed. "Wichita Lineman" and "I'll Be Seeing You", for instance, were achingly emotive even without the lyrics. "A Cockeyed Optimist" not only required Gress to keep up with the fast tempo, but also revealed Hersch's brilliance in arranging. The former did much heavy lifting throughout the program, excelling in demanding solos. An original number, "Snape Maltings", named after an English village that inspired him and also J.K. Rowling, was cleverly whimsical; it was no doubt last heard in the halls of Hogwarts School. Hersch's "Sad Poet", dedicated to Antônio Carlos Jobim, featured extraordinary rhythmic countermelodies played virtuosically by Gress and Rueckert within a dramatically accelerating arc of meditation to exuberance. (ML)

A sunny Easter Sunday afternoon (Apr. 4th) brought out a crowd of jazz fans and interested passersby to the south end of Central Park's Literary Walk for the first concert of the spring edition of Giant Step Arts/Keyed UP!'s "Walk With The Wind" series of free performances dedicated to late congressman John Lewis. Assembled in front of the William Shakespeare statue, the **Wayne Escoffery-Jeremy Pelt Quartet** kicked things off with an urgently swinging rendition of Sonny Rollins' "East Broadway Rundown". It began with the horns harmonizing the jarring melody over the walking bass of Dezron Douglas and crackling drums of Johnathan Blake before Escoffery took off spinning out long fluid tenor lines. Pelt was up next, blowing a brassy-toned boppish solo, after which Douglas took a turn before the horns returned, trading fours and eights with Blake, then racing to an exciting conclusion. The music continued with a relaxed take on Joe Henderson's "Punjab", which, at times, found the quartet in an Ornette Coleman-ish groove. That persisted with Kenny Dorham's "Short Story", building to a wildly swinging climax. The mood calmed with a dreamy performance of Lerner-Loewe ballad "If Ever I Would Leave You", tagged with a terse reprise of the "East Broadway Rundown" theme. After a short break the band was back for a second set of favorites like Wayne Shorter's "United", Thelonious Monk's "Bemsha Swing" and Dizzy Gillespie's "Con Alma", closing with Kenny Barron's fiery "Voyage". — **Russ Musto**



Escoffery/Douglas/Blake/Pelt @ Central Park

Chilly temperatures and blustery winds drove the crowd for Brooklyn Rooftop Jazz Series' Friday night (Apr. 9th) performance by the **Philip Harper Quintet** indoors to the well-appointed 14 B Lounge at its Sunset Park waterfront warehouse site. Trumpeter Harper and tenor saxophonist Jonathan Beshay in the frontline, backed by the rhythm section of keyboard player Miki Yamanaka, bassist Dishan Harper and drummer Curtis Nowasad, got things off to a rousing start with a hardbopping version of Sonny Clark's *Cool Struttin'* classic "Blue Minor". It concluded with a climactic series of fiery horn exchanges with drums, recalling the sound and spirit of the leader's youthful tenure with Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers. Harper revealed himself to be a skillfully swinging vocalist on a hip arrangement of "The Lamp Is Low", which had him singing the song's lyric over the bassline of "Seven Steps To Heaven" before picking up his horn to solo with bristling fire, setting the pace for similarly swinging statements from the other members of the band. Beshay was in the spotlight on the set's ballad feature, a stirring rendition of Hoagy Carmichael's "Stardust", on which the saxophonist exhibited an impressive tonal range, playing with a warm soothing sound in the middle register and a searing altissimo cry up top. Harper's trumpet and vocal were back up front on Ronnell Bright's cheery "Sweet Pumpkin" before he ended the set featuring nephew Dishan on Paul Chambers' "Ease It". (RM)

Like so many of we night people drawn outward as evening becomes encased in the darkling, vocalist **Andrea Wolper** and her trio—bassist Ken Filiano and pianist John DiMartino—struggled through the stillness of lock-down. Their live-stream at Soapbox Gallery (Apr. 6th) opened with "You and the Night and Music" in celebration of both the artform and, at least it seemed to this reviewer, the loosening of restrictions in our city. A lilting sort of modal jazz strained through the Dietz-Schwartz classic, open, ringing piano chords sending the vocal melody into melisma. "Music is one of the things that has kept us going," Wolper explained, only slightly breathlessly after the sounding of this not-so-standard. The singer, a veteran who ranges from the wholly improvised to contemporary classical, has often worked with Filiano, a bassist unlike most any other. His conflation of Charles Mingus, Jimmie Blanton and Scott La Faro has only been described as a gift to those in his airspace, evident as Wolper launched into Carole King's "Been to Canaan", rich, dominant basslines leaping over and through the tune against icy passing piano tones and chord fragments. Other works included one of 6/4-meter with repetitive melodic figures over dramatically shifting harmonies, the lyrics born of an article in *The New York Times*. And then there was Richard Rodgers' "Something Good", reimagined with solo arco bass leading into Wolper's dark-throated vocal improvisation, surely speaking of the night itself. — **John Pietaro**



Andrea Wolper & Ken Filiano @ Soapbox Gallery

Single-handedly, **Zeena Parkins** cultivated untouched sonic ground to bring the harp, once almost completely coveted by the symphony and folksong, into new music. Since moving to New York in 1984, she's used the full-scale acoustic harp and singularly designed electric harps with a first-line Downtown cadre and then some: Braxton, Zorn, Ono, Oliveros, Morris, No Safety, Rzewski, Skeleton Crew and the Jasper Johns Dance Company, among many. No surprise, Parkins' recent live-stream at Roulette (Apr. 8th) offered two sets of vastly different sound palettes. Set one, a duo with vocalist Megan Schubert, focused on sound exploration with Parkins on an electric instrument and effects. "EK Stasis" was inspired by late Bay Area artist Jay DeFeo, a contemporary and comrade of the Beats, whose creative boundlessness was felt throughout the evening. Schubert's wide, drone-like vocalizations, croaks and coos often matched Parkins' textures, adding harmonies and echoes. Following this, Green Dome, Parkins' spectacular trio with drummer Ryan Sawyer and pianist Ryan Ross Smith, performed "Lace, Movement IV". Starting pensively, the piece progressed as Parkins, on acoustic harp (at points bowed), dropped biting chords with Ross as sticks danced over cymbals. Colors shimmered with timelessness as repetitions phased in and out of sync, Parkins' rapid 16th notes and Sawyer's almost tacit tom-tom play tore into a too-short collective improvisation with Ross. The three carved reams and reams of interwoven sound. (JP)

WHAT'S NEWS

The **Robert D. Bielecki Foundation** has announced its latest grant recipients: Ingrid Laubrock; Sun Ra House Repair Fund; Bang on a Can; Yarn/Wire; Louth Contemporary Music Society and Birdland. For more information, visit rdbf.org/2021-recipients.

This month marks the 30th Anniversary of venerable/vital institution **Downtown Music Gallery**, founded by Bruce Gallanter. Visit downtownmusicgallery.com for various celebrations.

Award-winning vocalist **Cécile McLorin Salvant** has entered into partnerships with Salter House, which will offer her drawing festooned on bathrobes and dining linens, and Picture Room, which will sell her original artwork. For more information, visit salter.house and pictureroom.shop.

Among the recent Academy Award winners was **Jon Batiste**/Trent Reznor/Atticus Ross for their score to Disney's *Soul*, one of 35 accolades the film has received for its music.

Harlem Stage's 2021 Gala, "Art and Activism", will take place virtually May 21st at 8 pm and include performances by Vijay Iyer, José James, Elena Pinderhughes and others. For more information, visit harlemstage.org/gala2021.

Lincoln Center presents **Restart Stages**, starting May 10th, an outdoor performing arts center constructed on the Lincoln Center campus with numerous events throughout the month, including Eddie Palmieri, Pauline Jean and Godwin Louis, Red Baraat and more. For more information, visit RestartStages.org.

Among the latest recipients of **Guggenheim Fellowships** are Rez Abbasi, Miya Masaoka, Helen Sung and Elio Villafranca. For more information, visit gf.org/announcement-2021.

In celebration of its 20th Anniversary, Vancouver-based **Cellar Live Records** has announced a series of initiatives: a collaboration with trumpeter Jeremy Pelt to raise funds for three albums led by Black artists; a partnership with The SmallsLIVE Foundation, releasing recorded specially commissioned works; and 15 albums from a variety of roster artists. For more information, visit cellarlive.com.

A celebration of the recently published William Parker biography by Cisco Bradley, **Universal Tonality — The Life and Music of William Parker** (Duke University Press), will take place virtually on May 15th. For more information, visit howlandculturalcenter.org.

The **2021 Jazz Journalists Association Jazz Awards** nominees have been announced in 47 categories of jazz and jazz media (this gazette for Print Periodical/Website of the Year). In addition, the latest class of Jazz Heroes has also been named, with local honorees being Gail Boyd and Louise Rogers. For more information, visit jjazzawards.org.

Initiating **Impulse! Records'** 60th Anniversary celebration is the release of *Music, Message and the Moment*, a four-LP boxed set with tracks by John Coltrane, Quincy Jones, Charles Mingus, Oliver Nelson, Pharoah Sanders, Archie Shepp and other Impulse artists plus liner notes by Greg Tate and A.B. Spellman as well as an audiophile reissue series beginning with Ray Charles' *Genius + Soul = Jazz* and Gil Evans Orchestra's *Out of the Cool*. For more information, visit impulserrecords.com.

Edition Records and bassist **Dave Holland's** Dare2 label have partnered, with the first fruit released on May 28th, *Another Land* with guitarist Kevin Eubanks and drummer Obed Calvaire. For more information, visit editionrecords.com.

Noted music writer **Ted Gioia** has announced the launch of a subscription newsletter, *Culture Notes of an Honest Broker*, via the Substack platform, described as a "trustworthy guide to music, books, and culture—with a mix of longform essays, reviews, commentary, links, observations, and amusements." For more information, visit tedgioia.substack.com.

The **2021 Jazz Congress**, presented in partnership by Jazz at Lincoln Center and *JazzTimes*, will take place virtually May 17th-20th. For more information and to register, visit jazzcongress.org.

Park Avenue Army will present Jason Moran and Laurie Anderson in four "improvisational sonic meditations dedicated to the city of New York" titled Party in the Bardo, taking place in the Army's expansive Wade Thompson Drill Hall May 5th-9th. For more information, visit armyonyonpark.org.

Jazz at Lincoln Center's new semester of **Swing University** has begun, offering virtual classes on John Coltrane, Jazz 101, Wes Montgomery, Louis Armstrong, Iconic Jazz Pianists, Ornette Coleman, Roots and Rhythms of Latin Jazz, Ella Fitzgerald, Great Arrangers of Jazz and The Rise of Jazz-Rock Fusion. For more information and to register, visit 2021.jazz.org/swing-u.

Various Award News: 2021 Recipients of the **Instant Award in Improvised Music** are Henry Threadgill and the recently departed Milford Graves. *Music From and Inspired By Soul* by Jon Batiste (Walt Disney Records) won Outstanding Jazz Album - Instrumental at the **NAACP Image Awards**. The 10th **European Jazz Network Award** for Adventurous Programming went to Jazzfest Berlin. **New Music USA Creator Development Fund** Grant Recipients include Ava Mendoza, Christopher Tordini, David Leon, Helen Sung, Hery Paz, Jean Carla Rodea, Kavita Shah, Luke Stewart, Melanie Dyer, Richie Goods and Tomeka Reid.

Registration is open for **Make Music New York**, taking place on Jun. 21st for free throughout the city's public spaces. For more information, visit makemusicny.org/register.

South Arts is now accepting applications for its **Jazz Road Creative Residencies Grants** of up to \$40,000 through Jul. 1st. For more information, visit southarts.org.

Blank Forms and Grimm Artisanal Ales have announced a collaborative series of "avant-ales" launching in early April, beginning with Blank Beer, a rotating aleatoric lager available exclusively at Blank Forms events and the Grimm brewery in East Williamsburg.

Submit news to ahenkin@nycjazzrecord.com

PHOTO BY GUS PHILIPPAS / COURTESY OF THE ARTIST



CAROL SUDHALTER

BY JIM MOTAVALLI

When baritone saxophonist/flutist Carol Sudhalter arrived in New York from her native Boston circa 1978, she settled in Queens, which could boast of being homebase for Louis Armstrong and numerous other jazz musicians. Sudhalter formed the Astoria Big Band in 1986 and has kept the group going ever since. The group, with original arrangements by some top names, has gotten more than 20 grants from the Queens Council on the Arts and the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs. Sudhalter also leads the monthly Louis Armstrong Legacy Jazz Jam at Flushing Town Hall; it's virtual now, but should be back in the hall soon. Other Sudhalter cultural contributions to her adopted home include founding the Athens Square Park Jazz Mondays, the Astoria/LIC Waterfront Jazz Festival and the Sunset Jazz Concerts at Ralph DeMarco Park.

The New York City Jazz Record: How did you get started on baritone?

Carol Sudhalter: Great question. I started late with the saxophones, originally on tenor. My father was an alto player, a great alto player, and I acquired his alto when he died. So I was playing that. Somehow I began listening to baritone and just became very enchanted with the sound of it. I found that it brought out my female energy, whereas the tenor brought out my male energy. I know that doesn't make sense to anyone but that's the way I felt it.

TNYCJR: Two different schools of the baritone are the playing of Gerry Mulligan on the cool side and Pepper Adams or Gary Smulyan with hardbop on the hot side. Would it be fair to say your playing is somewhere in between those two poles?

CS: I would align myself instead with Harry Carney [from the Duke Ellington Orchestra], at least a little bit. I'm into the baritone as a very lyrical instrument. I adore Pepper Adams and all the people you just mentioned, plus Leo Parker and Cecil Payne. Maybe Harry Carney and Leo Parker when they play ballads, that's my model. I go for the really rich colors and low notes.

TNYCJR: So you're originally from Boston? Was that a good place to grow up for someone who wanted to play jazz?

CS: I'm from Newton. I think it was great. My brother [Dick Sudhalter, a jazz trumpeter, journalist and author] and my father [alto saxophonist Al Sudhalter] both played in clubs around Boston. My father played at the Statler Hilton with Eddy Duchin, my brother at Jazz Village. What I grew up hearing was traditional, Dixieland-type jazz. It was the thrust of my family's listening.

TNYCJR: When you moved from Boston to New York, did that open up your opportunities?

CS: Definitely. I felt immediately that this was the place for me to be. The pool of musicians is endless. And actually about a year after I got here, since I was doing club dates, I thought I could select the venues better if I started my own booking agency. The business provided jazz trios and so forth for birthdays and anniversaries and it meant I didn't have to play in a lot of loud wedding bands. I'd get these special requests and I really enjoyed filling them: a bassoonist or a bagpiper to play in the lobby of a building. All these different things. The music might be a mix of jazz, Latin, classical. It was wonderful, but I don't do it anymore.

TNYCJR: It sounds like you've been pretty good at putting things together so you didn't have to have a day job.

CS: That's right, though I did have a day job when I moved here to join Latin Fever, which was the first all-female Latin band. The band didn't have all that much work, though we did play at Madison Square Garden. So I got a job as a medical transcriptionist. I was very good at taking dictation. That kept me going, but gradually I acquired a nice pool of students. I really, really like private teaching. So yes, I figured out ways to make a living. I had originally thought I might become an entomologist, because I was very inspired by Rachel Carson and *Silent Spring* and I studied to be a science writer. I worked briefly for the USDA in Washington, but it didn't work out. I was starting to take music more and more seriously. My poor father saved all his life to send me to this very refined school, Smith College, so I'd become anything other than a musician. I felt so guilty.

TNYCJR: But he was a musician himself.

CS: He was a great alto sax player, but he was very cynical about the music world. He thought it was just not nice and especially not nice for women. When I announced in my last year of college that I was going to become a musician and not a science writer, he tried everything to discourage me. He was very disappointed. He wanted me to get married and get a nice job writing about science. I was taking classes in Third Stream music at New England Conservatory and he finally consented, after a big argument, to come to one of my concerts. He had tears in his eyes, praised me and said it was a beautiful event. He died soon after that.

TNYCJR: Did anyone besides your dad try to discourage you from playing saxophone because you were female?

CS: Oh yes. I started on saxophones when I was 32. My first boyfriend, a trumpet player, said to me when I picked up the tenor, "You really should look at why you picked this instrument. You should look at your

motives. Why would you pick a man's instrument?" A few years later, when I moved to New York, he was the first one to support me. He totally turned around and got me into a band in Harlem as lead alto. What were very sexist attitudes in the '60s and '70s was starting to turn around by the '80s.

TNYCJR: Claire Daly is another woman who plays the baritone.

CS: She's quite a well-known baritone player and very, very good. There are many in the succeeding generations, like Lauren Sevian, some incredible players.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 23)

"Each piece personalizes itself to your own experience, and you should try to live the music rather than just hear it. If you allow all your senses to converge into one, you'll be rewarded with a wonderfully refreshing and renewing experience as Panayides and company deliver ethereal textures and energetic cosmic wave files."

Roots Music Report by Joe Ross

FIELD THEORY
MATT PANAYIDES

pacific coast jazz

Available at all major music retailers
Pacific Coast Jazz 93445
www.MattPanyides.com

MÁRCIO RESENDE

ElegantFish

ELEGANT FISH

The new album from acclaimed Brazilian saxophonist and flautist **Márcio Resende** featuring **Toninho Horta** (guitar) and **Sandro Albert** (guitar/production) is available now.

For information visit
www.marciorende.com



MARK SHIM

BY GEORGE GRELLA

For a listener who has been fortunate to catch tenor saxophonist Mark Shim live or hear him via the relatively small number of recordings of which he's been a part, either as a leader or sideman, the paucity of exposure is frustrating. Shim is one of the most unique and exciting players on the contemporary jazz scene, with a sound that carries a powerful sheer effect and ideas about improvisation pushing at the edges of modern jazz from the inside out.

Early apprenticeships with drummer Elvin Jones and vocalist Betty Carter led to three Blue Note albums, *Mind Over Matter* (1998), *Turbulent Flow* (1999) and the supergroup of young musicians (Stefon Harris, Jason Moran, Greg Osby, Nasheet Waits, Shim) on *New Directions* (2000).

As a sideman, his fiery playing is a substantial feature on guitarist David Gilmore's *Transitions* and bassist Matt Brewer's *Ganymede* (both on Criss Cross) and he's a terrific foil and partner for Steve Lehman on the alto saxophonist's albums *Artificial Light* (Fresh Sound-New Talent) and *Travail, Transformation and Flow* and *Mise en Abîme* (Pi Recordings), where his approach to rhythm, both complex and funky, is right at home with Lehman's compositional structures.

Both fans and the uninitiated should take note that Shim has a performance scheduled for May 12th, a live-stream show, with masks, from Bar Bayeux via the venue's Facebook page (and then archived for a week on YouTube). He'll be playing in a trio with Brewer and drummer Tyshawn Sorey.

His career launched when he was barely in his 20s, touring with Carter. Talking on the phone from his apartment in Brooklyn about this past pandemic year and what he's been working on, he expressed deep admiration for the extraordinary singer and her musicality. Shim says, "I was really too young to appreciate her genius," at the time he was playing with her. "I knew I was standing next to greatness. Now it's remarkable to listen back and understand how meticulous she was with rhythm. Everything she did had purpose, pitch-wise and rhythm."

Rhythm is one major component of his distinctive, gripping playing, the other the burly, warm sound he produces in all registers of the tenor. "My first teacher in college," Skip Gailles, at Virginia Commonwealth University, he explains, "was really interested in having a big sound. It's taken many years for me to craft those lessons into a sound." Laughing, he admits that the sheer weight of it "sometimes strikes me as overbearing." Developing that sound meant working through some major influences. "I was definitely a Joe Henderson freak," he points out. "I was emulating him a lot, it actually became a problem!"

That sound always keeps his playing firmly planted in meaning and expression, but it's still malleable. "As I got older, I got more into late '80s Sonny Rollins. I appreciated the power and aggression in his playing, that dark core." Even after spending decades working on his sound, which has "been

frustrating at times," the work is still not done and the pandemic turned into a major woodshedding opportunity for Shim. "I've changed a lot during this pandemic, my embouchure," he says. And he adds, "I've been playing standards again," after years away from jazz repertoire.

That's intriguing from such a modern stylist. His classic, weighty sound is the soulful, expressive side of a complex concept, realized in immaculate technique, of sub-dividing beats into quintuplets and beyond and setting odd numbers against even meters. He can be seen demonstrating this in a video produced for the My Music Masterclass site, "Developing Your Rhythmic Concept". In that video and in his playing, he goes beyond standard swing rhythms and quarter-note meters into fitting consistent strings of odd-numbered notes into each beat, setting three against two and five against four.

"I've always been interested in rhythm," he points out and "started to listen to jazz seriously" late in high school. By that time, "I was already heavily into rhythm, via hip-hop... I have a desire to hear as much rhythmic complexity as I can. But you can push it too far and lose the soulful element. I think this is a problem with younger musicians, making things complex and sophisticated but sterile. I have a desire to search for new possibilities for improvising. It's one thing to be playing standard forms—that's one thing I've been revisiting this past year, after playing all those gigs that fry your brains," like with the Steve Lehman Octet, "that's something I've been working on for a long time, preparing myself to work with complex rhythms and harmonies."

Along with the deep woodshedding and return to the roots of jazz via standards, Shim has been teaching this past year, although with some ambivalence. He's taught previously at Banff, but pandemic teaching has been as much a matter of circumstances as anything else. He's been giving lessons online during the pandemic, lately through the New School, but admits he doesn't "really like" remote teaching, which frustrates close observation of students' technique. "When the pandemic started," he explains, "a lot of younger musicians started reaching out to musicians," who have inspired them, "looking to get lessons online. But working through Zoom isn't really my cup of tea." Once the fall semester started at the New School, however, "I got some students through them and just bucked up."

As grueling and frustrating as the pandemic has been for so many, including musicians, Shim sounds more than philosophical about the experience, even optimistic. Talking about the Bar Bayeux gig and the musicians he's brought into it, he comes off as clearly prepared and eager. After all, it's been a year of practice and inner exploration leading up to the date. "I haven't played with humans in over a year!", he points out, "but I've got high hopes, I've really made a lot of advancement this past year." ❖

For more information, visit mymusicmasterclass.com/premiumvideos/mark-shim-jazz-lesson-developing-your-rhythmic-concept. Shim live-streams May 12th at barbayeux.com.

Recommended Listening:

- Mark Shim — *Turbulent Flow* (Blue Note, 1999)
- Liberty Ellman — *Tactiles* (Pi, 2003)
- Carlo de Rosa Cross-Fade — *Brain Dance* (Cuneiform, 2009)
- Steve Lehman Octet — *Mise en Abîme* (Pi, 2014)
- Vijay Iyer Sextet — *Far From Over* (ECM, 2017)
- Matt Brewer — *Ganymede* (Criss Cross, 2018)

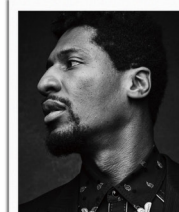
PLEASE CONSIDER SUPPORTING THE NEW YORK CITY JAZZ RECORD WITH A DONATION OF \$40-50

WHEN WE RETURN TO PRINT, THIS DONATION MAY BE APPLIED TOWARDS AN ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION. (\$40 DOMESTIC; \$45 CANADA; \$50 INT'L)

PAYMENT CAN BE MADE BY CHECK, MONEY ORDER OR PAYPAL FOR MORE INFORMATION: LDGREENE@NYCJAZZRECORD.COM

WWW.NYCJAZZRECORD.COM

We Belong together Let's GO!
Celebrating **42 YEARS** of **WBGO Spirit & Community**



Jon Batiste



Bettye Lavette



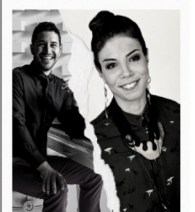
Eddie Palmieri



Joey Alexander



Samera Underhughes



Emmet Cohen
Melissa Aldana

June 17, 2021
Tickets + info
WBGO.org/Together



MIKE WESTBROOK

BY FRANCESCO MARTINELLI

In an amazing bout of creativity and endurance English composer and bandleader Mike Westbrook, who turned 85 in March, provided listeners all over the world with a precious selection of films documenting his 50+ years of activity with the Mike Westbrook Jazz Motion Picture Show, available on his website. It's an excellent starting point after which you'll want to listen to his original music, his classic celebrations of the great composers of the past like Rossini and Ellington to his own memorable renditions in music of lyrics by Blake and many other poets, a concept that accompanied him over the years in projects like *The Cortège* and *London Bridge is Broken Down*, still two of the most accomplished records in Westbrook's canon.

The starting point for Westbrook is unmistakably the creative orchestral tradition of African-American composers like Duke Ellington and Charles Mingus; he shares with them the unending search for ways to integrate soloists' improvised contributions into the prepared score. He also has the most precious ally in the supple voice and dramatic gift of his life and art companion, painter and musician Kate Westbrook, a constant presence in his music for almost 50 years. Her voice is an essential element of the music they created together, a unifying factor, as Brian Morton wrote, in a career that has spanned decades and all genres: a relationship not unlike the one between Steve Lacy and Irene Aebi and equally irksome for the male-dominated jazz world.

Westbrook was an art teacher in Plymouth in the late '50s, a jazz fan playing trumpet and aspiring to be a composer, inspired by blues and boogie. He founded a sextet with guitarist/future AMM founder Keith Rowe and trumpeter Phil Minton, a major contributor

as singer and instrumentalist in many of Westbrook's projects over the years. Rowe recruited John Surman, at 16 just beginning to play baritone saxophone. All the members of the band moved to London in the early '60s. Those were the roots of Westbrook's Concert Band that played Ronnie Scott's Old Place, the original club in Gerard Street graciously left to the London jazz avant garde musicians for the remaining time of the lease. That band included, among others, Mike Osborne and South African bassist Harry Miller and its Deram albums, *Celebration* and *Release*, were a manifesto of the upcoming European jazz of the '70s and showcase for Surman's many talents as soloist and composer. The first album is based only on original compositions while the second features rearrangements of an eclectic choice of songs, including "Lover Man", "Flying Home" and "The Girl from Ipanema", establishing another key theme of Westbrook's oeuvre. Since then the list of his collaborators over the decades reads like a Who's Who of UK and European jazz.

The following album, 1969's *Marching Song*, released at the time as two separate LPs but now available on CD in its entirety, is a pacifist jazz symphony, an ecological statement including text-based pieces, free-form solos and bluesy harmonica. In an article for UK magazine *Avant* Westbrook himself described his Ellingtonian approach: "In my band I had a combination of free improvisers and straightahead players, as well as people from the rock world. As a composer, I've always been interested in structuring music in some way. That can mean a formal arrangement or chord sequence or just a concept or even a poem. There were a lot of people around like Kenny Wheeler and Paul Rutherford who enjoyed playing in a range of settings. The ideal world is one where all these things can come together." *Love Songs* from 1970 was the first major vocal record, with the voice of Norma Winstone. The beginning of the '70s saw a burst of activity with his first Blake project, *Tyger*, born as a musical staged at the National Theatre and then released on RCA; the *Metropolis* suite with Winstone, Wheeler, Rutherford, Harry Beckett and John Taylor among others and *Solid Gold Cadillac*, jazz-rock including Minton on trumpet and voice. In 1973 Kate and Mike met.

Westbrook then had a proposal of forming a street band to play at fringe theater festivals and community arts events with the "magicians' collective" Welfare State (the street theater company founded by John Fox in 1968). After Westbrook, the Musical Director of the company would be Lol Coxhill. This became the basis for the Brass Band, a group that formed the Westbrooks' main touring group and the nucleus of many future projects, including *The Cortège*. A milestone was receiving a commission to write for the Swedish Radio Jazz Orchestra featuring Surman as soloist. *Citadel/Room 315* premiered in 1974 in Stockholm: "I wrote most of it on a piano in Room 315 in Leeds Polytechnic, where Kate was teaching at the Art School," said Westbrook, hence the title. Followers of the UK music scene will probably notice the key role of art schools—open to innovation and art from the 20th Century—in the careers of most of the musicians who after 1960 brought British music to the global forefront. In 1977 there was a momentous meeting between Westbrook's band and Henry Cow for a live concert and the bandleader was inspired by Dagmar Krause's vocals, Lindsay Cooper's bassoon and Georgie Born's cello: they later joined the band for *The Cortège*.

Westbrook's music from mid '70s-mid '80s ranges from the brilliant solo *Piano*, with its echoes of Monk and stride, to the major suite *London Bridge is Broken Down*, his first collaboration with a full classical ensemble. Westbrook recalled the mishaps at the premiere in Amiens, France: "...it was a European work that included English poetry and French and German poetry selected by Kate with the help of European friends. There was a long period of rehearsal in London and several trips to Amiens, before the two ensembles met for the premiere. *London Bridge* was long and the conductor Alexandre Myrat proposed performing it in three parts. The concert opened with a popular French/Canadian duo who clearly delighted the jazz festival audience. They came back again and again for encores while 50 of us waited in the wings. The first part of *London Bridge* went fine. Unfortunately the message had not got through to most of the audience that there were three parts to the composition. A sizeable number

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 23)

LEST WE FORGET



GEORGE OTSUKA

BY ALEX HENDERSON

Japanese drummer Keiji "George" Otsuka, who was 82 when he died in Tokyo on Mar. 10th, 2020, had a career spanning over 60 years and was known not only for the high caliber of Japanese musicians he employed, but also for all the American and Europeans who hired him when they were in Japan, a list that included pianists Richie Beirach, Kenny Kirkland and Hampton Hawes, bassists Reggie Workman and Miroslav Vitous, alto saxophonist Phil Woods and guitarist John Scofield.

Born in Tokyo on Apr. 6th, 1937, Otsuka emerged during the '50s and made a name for himself when he joined alto saxophonist Sadao Watanabe's group in the latter part of the decade. Otsuka's roots were bop but in the early '60s, he was influenced by the modal innovations of trumpeter Miles Davis and tenor saxophonist John Coltrane. The '60s found Otsuka working as a sideman for saxophonist Hidehiko Matsumoto in addition to leading his own trio.

In 1970, Otsuka toured Japan as part of the Four

Drums alongside three well-known drummers from the U.S.: Jack DeJohnette, Roy Haynes and Mel Lewis. Otsuka kept busy as both a leader and a sideman during the '70s and '80s. Paris-based WeWantSounds label has reissued his 1975 Bellwood LP *Loving You George: The George Otsuka Quintet at Nemu Jazz Inn*, a concert with soprano and tenor saxophonist Shozo Sasaki, keyboard player Fumio Karashima, bassist Mitsuaki Furono and percussionist Norio Ohno on Otsuka original "Little Island", Coltrane's "Miles' Mode", pianist Steve Kuhn's "Something Everywhere" and singer Minnie Riperton's 1974 R&B hit "Lovin' You". The performance is passionate postbop bordering on fusion at times. "Lovin' You" is a major surprise: while Riperton's version was a mellow, ethereal quiet storm ballad, Otsuka's midtempo interpretation gives the song a funkier, grittier edge.

Japanese trumpeter Shunzo Ohno, who spent two years as a sideman for Otsuka during the early '70s, recalls, "Although George could not read music well, his ear was spot on. He captured originality, creativity and was a very musical drummer." Ohno has fond memories of that period: "George Otsuka's trio, his quartet—later quintet—in the '70s was George's artistic height. The live concerts were always packed. There was a sense of electricity in the air. The level of music was great with Hideo Ichikawa, a genius pianist who also recorded with Joe Henderson, and bassist Masaoki Terakawa."

Japan's jazz scene thrived in the decades following World War II and Ohno considers Otsuka an important contributor to the relationship between American and Japanese players: "American jazz musicians were coming to Japan because they were welcomed, respected and treasured. Jazz resonated with a war-torn country. Japanese were also seeking inspiration and jazz provided a path. It was a relationship that provided a mutual respect of jazz, imagination, creativity and deep-hearted sensitivity. American jazz artists felt that respect in the '50s and '60s; so, in the '70s, artists like George were burgeoning. And that was a perfect synergy." Otsuka didn't live long enough to witness the reissue of *Loving You George*. Regardless, Ohno is glad that WeWantSounds thought enough of Otsuka to make an album that had been out of print for so long commercially available again. "George's focus was on the purity of music and the creative energy between musicians," Ohno observed. "He helped expand the vitality of jazz in Japan." ❖

Recommended Listening:

- Hampton Hawes—*Jam Session* (Columbia, 1968)
- George Otsuka Quintet—*Sea Breeze* (Union, 1971)
- George Otsuka 5—*Go On!* (Three Blind Mice, 1972)
- Jack DeJohnette—*Jackeyboard* (Trio, 1973)
- George Otsuka Quintet—*Physical Structure* (Three Blind Mice, 1976)
- Miroslav Vitous—*Guardian Angels* (Trio, 1978)

CADILLAC

BY MARK KERESMAN

Record labels are as common as blades of grass these days but as any music devotee familiar with the ups and downs of the business will tell you, that commonality is superficial. Some labels end up having a specific impact (sometimes aimed for, sometimes not). Other outfits put a new set of clothing on sounds from the past. And still others focus on styles that mainstream outfits—and even some indie labels—would find anathema...or downright commercial suicide. Cadillac specializes in, mostly but not entirely, styles of jazz too chancy for mainstream concerns and provides a daïs of sorts for some of the UK’s—and beyond—jazz makers.

Brief historical context: in the ‘60s Columbia issued albums by pianists Denny Zeitlin and Burton Greene; there was even one by iconic free jazz drummer Sunny Murray sadly never released. However, as the decade wore on, the majors showed increasing indifference toward jazz being made in/of the moment and, as history has shown, musicians knew that if they wanted to proceed with integrity, they’d have to do it themselves. Labels such as Incus and Cadillac sprang forth to do what needed to be done, to document the newest sounds and, in the case of the latter, also show proper respect to older sounds.

Cadillac was founded by John Jack and pianist/composer/bandleader Mike Westbrook in 1973. Originally it was a vehicle intended to release the

latter’s albums at a time when more pop-oriented/funk-ed up variants of fusion had supplanted both old school and avant sounds as far as most major record companies were concerned. Westbrook and Jack, the latter a salesman for Melodisc, 77 and Esquire labels (all UK indies from the ‘40s-50s), saw an opportunity offered by Dame Fortune to build something and ran with it, shaping a boutique label that reflected their eclectic tastes.

Jack was indeed a proverbial larger-than-life character, perhaps the stuff of a future biopic: in the early ‘60s he was a roadie for skiffle band The Vipers and in 1963 a promoter who booked a young rhythm and blues quintet called The Rolling Stones into the north London jazz club the Manor House. From 1965-68 Jack managed the original Ronnie Scott’s club when it was based in Chinatown, becoming affectionately known as “the Old Place”, a haunt where one could hear not just jazz—but trad and modern—but rhythm and blues, South African township sounds and poets. Jack was a mercurial presence, a dapper gent that could easily transition from muttered expletives to gentle offers of “What can I do for you, dear boy?”

From UK modernists Ken Colyer, Stan Tracey and Harry Beckett and American firebrands Frank Lowe and David Murray to younger, emerging UK talents such as Andy Sheppard, Cadillac would document it all. Its goal would be twofold, focusing on newly recorded sounds and archival material with historical portent. Cadillac drove into the marketplace such gems as Fela Kuti’s Highlife African sounds, reissuing the 10-inch LP *Fela’s First—The Complete 1959 Melodisc Session*. In the decades following, Kuti has become a larger-than-life figure as a bandleader and political

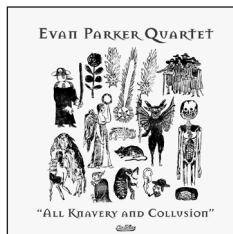
figure; this platter finds him achieving liftoff. Aside from its commitment to new sounds, Cadillac didn’t forget the granddaddies of the music, releasing the LP *New Orleans Parade* by trad jazz legend George Lewis and his Eureka Brass Band, giving needed attention to performers still exploring the origins of jazz.

Unshackled by the marketplace-mindset of the majors, Cadillac put wheels under vital sounds, be they classic/traditional jazz (Lewis, Crane River Jazz Band) to a certain degree mainstream (Westbrook, Bobby Wellins) to the outer limits (Evan Parker). The latter’s quartet outing *All Knavery and Collusion*, released last month, is classic out jazz—wild, slightly feral, spacious, wiry, thorny, the latest in uneasy—and riveting—listening.

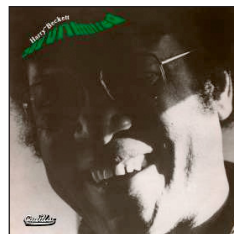
Reissues of important UK discs include trumpeter Beckett’s *Joy Unlimited* from 1974 and currently a best seller of Cadillac’s catalogue. This is a gem; while its fusion aspects date parts of it slightly, *Joy Unlimited* sounds as if it could’ve been spawned last year: a joy-filled mélange of forward-looking hardbop and a bit of soul-jazz, with concise soloing and persuasive, engaging grooves that are direct yet never pander to searching for that mythical Wider Audience. The track “Not Just Tomorrow” could score medium airplay even now (among more enlightened FM outlets) with its loping, pulsating rhythm and heartfelt and sweetly melodious trumpet solo.

Let the words of label honcho Mike Gavin be a summation: “Musical labels are a limitation—Mike Westbrook was co-founder of the label and its first recording artist and his career [which would eventually supplant his involvement with the record label] is a

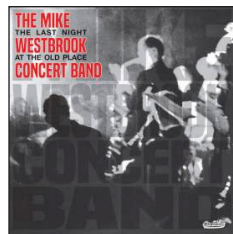
(CONTINUED ON PAGE 23)



All Knavery and Collusion
Evan Parker



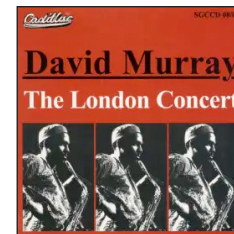
Joy Unlimited
Harry Beckett



The Last Night at The Old Place
Mike Westbrook Concert Band



Alone & Together With
Stan Tracey/Mike Osborne



The London Concert
David Murray

VOXNEWS

SOMETHING WONDERFUL

BY SUZANNE LORGE

Peggy Lee wasn’t born with that name. Her given name, back in May 1920, was Norma Deloris Egstrom. But for some impulsive reason lost to time, the radio host of one of her earliest professional gigs assigned her the now-celebrated anonym and it stuck. Not only did it stick, it made music history: Lee went on to become one of the most known (and prolific) jazz and pop singers of her generation. Last June, in honor of the singer/songwriter’s birthday centennial, PBS aired *Fever: The Music of Peggy Lee*, an updated version of the 2004 documentary chronicling her spectacular career. As a follow-up, last month Omnivore released a two-disc companion package to that documentary—*Something Wonderful: Peggy Lee Sings the Great American Songbook*, 40 previously unissued tracks from Lee’s own radio program in the early ‘50s. Though remastered, these tunes retain all the ping of the analog originals. Listen to her translucent intonation on the rangy “If I Were A Bell”; blue notes on the ballad “Old Rockin’ Chair”; and relaxed back-phrasing on “That Old Black Magic”. She also chats collegially with guests Johnny Mercer, Hoagy Carmichael, Frank Loesser and Matt Dennis, at times joining these pioneering composers in duets. Listening

to these tracks today, it’s as if Lee were broadcasting from midtown and seven decades had disappeared into the ethers. Some names never lose their luster.

Creative jazz composer **Lauren Lee** flies solo on *The Queen of Cups* (ears&eyes), in a departure from her usual duo or trio gigs. Lee, never at a loss for intriguing compositional ideas, makes full use of her vocal and pianistic talents here as well, from traditional piano accompaniment underneath spare, moody vocals on the original ballads “Cogitation” and “Cocoon” to the cleverly executed vocalese showcases “Up In the Air” and “Another Reality” and fresh, modern reworkings of Ralph Rainger-Leo Robin’s “If I Should Lose You” and Wayne Shorter’s “Footprints”. As an improvisatory musician, Lee is at her best on this record, equal parts masterful and vulnerable. She’ll be live-streaming the release concert from Soapbox Gallery on May 17.

Vocalist **Charmaine Lee** recently accepted a Van Lier Fellowship at Roulette, affording her the opportunity to “create, rehearse, experiment and investigate new directions” in her craft. Her process is to manipulate vocal sounds to an extreme, applying all manner of electronic effects (amplification, distortion, feedback) in generating wholly new auditory experiences. Her first solo full-length LP, *KNVF*, which came out on the French label Erratum Musical this past March, thus redefines vocal art: Lee doesn’t so much sing as design abstract tableaux with her voice.

By contrast, industry-decorated singer **Dara Tucker**

exalts exquisite timbre, stirring melodies and warm harmonies on *Dreams of Waking: Music for a Better World* (Green Hill Music). The Oklahoma native draws from the classic singer-songwriter canon to build a program affirming our gentler selves: a jazz-funk take on “You Haven’t Done Nothin’”; reharmonized “Bridge Over Troubled Water”; beseeching “I Think It’s Going To Rain Today”. Tucker excels as a songwriter herself; her “Do We Sleep” drives home the album’s forward-looking message with burnished vocals, silky horn lines (saxophonist John Ellis, trumpeter Giveton Gelin) and delicate comping (pianist Sullivan Fortner). The album, as much about promise as redemption, drops on May 28th.

This year the Jazz Journalists Association honors singer **Louise Rogers** with a Jazz Hero Award, in large measure for her work in energizing the upper Manhattan jazz scene. In 2014, Rogers and pianist Mark Kross founded Jazz WaHi (visit jazzwahi.com), an ever-evolving non-profit that promotes jazz education and performances in the Hudson Heights section of the city. What started as a weekly jazz jam at a local pub now includes a monthly vocal jazz series, an annual jazz festival and, most recently, a composer’s commission. Most impressive of all, Rogers and Kross have continued to host performances throughout the pandemic with nary a letup. Check out their virtual “Jazz Hang and Salon” on Wednesdays, their plein air concerts on Tuesdays in Bennett Park and this month’s vocal series on May 6th, featuring the gifted **Erli Perez**. ❖

RALPH PETERSON

BY ANDREY HENKIN



Ralph Peterson, a drummer who was part of the Young Lions retro-jazz movement of the '80s but also veered outwards and got the ultimate endorsement when he was asked to play alongside Art Blakey in his Jazz Messengers Big Band in 1983 and continued until the drummer's death in 1990, later returning the favor decades later with The Messenger Legacy band (featuring numerous Blakey alumni), died Mar. 1st at 58 after a long battle with cancer.

Peterson was born May 20th, 1962 in Pleasantville, NJ into a musical family, with his father and grandfather also drummers. He began behind the kit at age five and continued his studies through high school and in the jazz program at Rutgers University. His early work was with Out Of The Blue, Branford Marsalis, Terence Blanchard and others but also David Murray and Craig Harris. As he told our own Russ Musto less than six weeks before his death for a cover feature published in February, "Terence and Donald and David Murray at the same time! Jon Faddis and Henry Threadgill at the same time! Craig Harris and OTB at the same time! It was a blessing, but at the time it almost seemed like a burden or a trap because I could never get all the way down with either camp."

Over the years, which, unfortunately, included very jazz-traditional problems with drugs and alcohol, Peterson compiled sideman credits with Betty Carter ("...when she was teaching me to play brushes and didn't want me to sweep, she said, 'they're brushes, ain't they? So paint!' That opened up the door and the ballad took off"), William Fielder, Walter Davis, Jr., Jon Faddis, James Spaulding, Roy Hargrove, Michele Rosewoman, Don Byron, Charles Lloyd, Craig Handy, Anthony Cox, Uri Caine, Bobby Zankel, Stanley Cowell, Mark Shim, Orrin Evans, Duane Eubanks, Carmen Lundy, Frank Lowe, George Colligan, Jeremy Pelt, Wayne Escoffery, Sean Jones, Melissa Aldana and many others. He also had numerous albums as a leader since the '80s for Blue Note, Evidence, Sirocco, Criss Cross and, in the new millennium, his own Onyx Productions.

His precocious work with Blakey—the only time the venerable leader included another drummer in his band—informed Peterson's development as he would go on to mentor younger musicians in his own bands, most recently the Gen-Next Big Band, and found The Messenger Legacy band, which released its debut, *Onward & Upward* (Onyx) in 2020, timed to Blakey's centennial: 11 original compositions and arrangements by a rotating lineup of 17 players, 14 who were former Messengers. Said Peterson of the project, "Every time I play the drums it is in tribute to Art, but I wanted to do something that goes beyond me, beyond any individual. I wanted to pay tribute in a way that was authentic, genuine, and meaningful not just to a few, but to every person he touched through his music."



CHRIS BARBER (Apr. 17th, 1930 - Mar. 2nd, 2021) The British trombonist and OBE recipient was crucial in reviving interest in trad-jazz in England in the '50s first with Ken Colyer and then with bands he led well into the new millennium, making dozens of records for Decca, Storyville, Columbia, Tempo, Pye Nixa, Metronome, Amiga, Marmalade, Polydor, Timeless, Bellaphon, G.H.B. and many other labels and was also important to British and international music history through work with figures who would go on to spawn bands like The Beatles, The Rolling Stones and Cream. Barber died Mar. 2nd at 90.



JACK BRADLEY (Jan. 3rd, 1934 - Mar. 21st, 2021) The collection of memorabilia of this personal photographer and unofficial archivist to Louis Armstrong became the foundation of the Louis Armstrong House Museum, housed in the trumpeter's former home in Corona, Queens. Bradley died Mar. 21st at 87.



MALCOLM CECIL (Jan. 9th, 1937 - Mar. 28th, 2021) The inventor known for his early work with synthesizers and going on to work with an array of rock and pop stars as a collaborator, producer and recording engineer got his start as a bassist in his native England, working with Tonys Crombie and Kinsley, Dick Morrissey, Vic Ash and others. Cecil died Mar. 28th at 84.



BUDDY DEPPENSCHMIDT (Feb. 16th, 1936 - Mar. 20th, 2021) The drummer helped usher in the Samba craze of the '60s via the 1962 Verve album *Jazz Samba* by Stan Getz/Charlie Byrd, the latter in whose trio he was during the period. Deppenschmidt died Mar. 20th at 85 of complications from COVID-19.



DUFFY JACKSON (Jul. 3rd, 1953 - Mar. 3rd, 2021) The drummer's 1995 Milestone album *Swing! Swing! Swing!* summarized a career that found him working with Monty Alexander, Cleveland Eaton, Ira Sullivan, Sonny Stitt, Illinois Jacquet, Jon Hendricks, Harry Allen and, most notably, the Count Basie Orchestra. Jackson died Mar. 3rd at 67.



PAUL JACKSON (Mar. 28th, 1947 - Mar. 18, 2021) The electric bassist was best known for membership in Herbie Hancock's Headhunters, appearing on the band's eponymous debut and *Thrust*, plus later Hancock albums like *Flood* and *Man-Child*, and continuing with the band post-Hancock, plus work with Eddie Henderson, Azar Lawrence, Stanley Turrentine, Charles Earland, Stomu Yamashta, Bennie Maupin, Bill Summers, Sonny Rollins and others to go along with a handful of albums as a leader, a couple with fellow Headhunter Mike Clark. Jackson died Mar. 18th at 73.



JAMES LEARY III (Jun. 4th, 1946 - March 2021) The bassist put out a handful of records in the '80s-90s on Blue Collar and Vital (and then LifeForceJazz in 2012) and recorded with Bobby Hutcherson, Hadley Caliman, John Klemmer, George Duke, Earl Hines, Eddie Davis, David Schnitter, Eddie Marshall, John Handy, Harold Land, Count Basie Orchestra and Gene Harris All Star Big Band. Leary died in March at 75.



SHUICHI MURAKAMI (Jan. 1st, 1951 - Mar. 9th, 2021) The Japanese drummer had albums since the mid '70s on Toshiba, Polydor, Victor, JVC and Universal Music and sideman work for Yosuke Yamashita, Hiromasa Suzuki, Kazumi Watanabe, Masayoshi Takanaka, Kiyoshi Sugimoto, Yoshio Suzuki, Tsunehide Matsuki, Jun Fukamachi and the Prism band. Murakami died Mar. 9th at 70.



FREDDIE REDD (May 29th, 1928 - Mar. 17th, 2021) The pianist was best known for his composing for and acting in Jack Gelber's 1959 play about drug-using jazz musicians *The Connection*, the music for which was released on Blue Note in 1960, one of many albums he made as a leader for Prestige, Metronome, Riverside, Nixa, Futura, Baybridge, Interplay, Uptown, Triloka, Milestone, Boplicity, SteepleChase and, most recently, Bleeboop to go along with early sideman dates under Art Farmer, Joe Roland, Gene Ammons, Rolf Ericson, Benny Bailey and Tommy Potter. Redd died Mar. 17th at 92.



DEAN REILLY (Jun. 30th, 1926 - Mar. 9th, 2021) The West Coast-based bassist had credits with Earl Hines, Vince Guaraldi, Mel Lewis, Brew Moore, George Barnes, Cal Tjader, Eddie Duran, Helen Humes and others. Reilly died Mar. 9th at 94.



LEN SKEAT (Feb. 9th, 1937 - Mar. 9th, 2021) The British bassist (and brother to saxophonist Bill) worked with The Hot Club of London, Denny Wright, Don Harper, Eddie Thompson, Bill Watrous, Brian Lemon, Danny Moss, Charly Antolini, Spike Robinson, Harry Allen, George Masso and others. Skeat died Mar. 9th at 84.



FRANK TIRRO (Sep. 20th, 1935 - Mar. 28th, 2021) The music historian and former Dean of the Yale School of Music helped the study of jazz become part of academia, publishing such books as *Jazz: A History*, *Living with Jazz* and *The Birth of the Cool: Miles Davis and His Associates*. Tirro died Mar. 28th at 85.



AKIRA WADA (Aug. 26th, 1956 - Mar. 28th, 2021) The Japanese guitarist and co-founder of Prism, which has had dozens of albums since the '70s, had his own albums for Warner Bros., TDK and Eastern Gale and sideman credits under Toshiyuki Honda, Yasuko Agawa, Jun Fukamachi and others. Wada died Mar. 28th at 64.



MARK WHITECAGE (Jun. 4th, 1937 - Mar. 8th, 2021) The reedplayer (and husband to predeceased fellow reedplayer Rozanne Levine) came out of the improvised music scene of his native Connecticut in the late '60s, first working with Bobby Naughton then going on to credits with Gunter Hampel, Perry Robinson, Jeanne Lee, David Eyges, Mario Pavone, Saheb Sarbib, Joe Fonda, Michael Jefry Stevens, Steve Swell, Dominic Duval, Joseph Scianni, Marshall Allen, Anthony Braxton, Jay Rosen, Dom Minasi, Jacques Coursil and others, had membership in The Composers Collective, INTERface and The Nu Band and his own or co-led albums since the '90s on Acoustics, CIMP, Red Toucan, GM and Clean Feed. Whitecage died Mar. 8th at 83. ❖



Greenwich House Music School

www.greenwichhousemusicschool.org

46 Barrow Street



+

JOE'S PUB

May 13th - June 17th

Thursdays at 8 PM

FREE

Streaming on Joe's Pub Live! on YouTube

For concert information and streaming links,
visit www.greenwichhouse.org/uncharted

Supported by the New York Presenters Consortium
in association with Joe's Pub, the David Rubenstein
Atrium at Lincoln Center, and National Sawdust.

5/13 - MIGGUEL ANGGELO

5/20 - SHAINA TAUB

5/27 - HAIG PAPAIZIAN

5/31 - ZAWADI NOËL

6/10 - RILEY MULHERKAR (THE WESTERLIES)

6/17 - ELLA BRIC (Linda Briceño)

Uncharted is made possible by
The Baisley Powell Elebash Fund



Council on
the Arts

NYC Cultural
Affairs



NEW YORK UNIVERSITY

NEW JAZZ FROM RUNE GRAMMOFON



FIRE!
DEFEAT

LP / CD / DL



Elephant9
ARRIVAL OF THE NEW ELDERS

LP / CD / DL



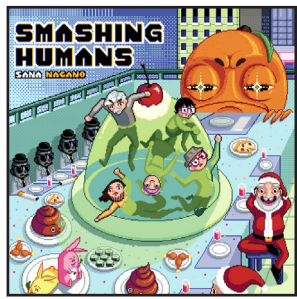
Kjetil Mulelid
PIANO

LP / CD / DL



Hedvig Mollestad Trio
DING DONG. YOU'RE DEAD.

LP / CD / DL



Smashing Humans
Sana Nagano (577 Records)
by Elliott Simon

Smashing Humans, a score of sorts for a coming digital apocalypse, is the debut release from an innovative quintet led by violinist Sana Nagano. The album art features caricatures of the band escaping from a gelatinous dessert that is ready for an assortment of pixelated creatures to eat it. Tunes like “The Other Seven” and “Heavenly Evil Devil” obtusely reflect the storyline with repetitive catchy hooks, which through anger, noise and seemingly directionless noodling, are magically transformed.

Nagano along with Peter Apfelbaum, here on tenor saxophone, shares an association with vibraphonist Karl Berger and they are muscular, sparkling and resourceful players. They meld timbres to blend into one instrument and play off of each other showcasing prodigious chops. Bassist Ken Filiano and drummer Joe Hertenstein, both well known to the NYC creative music scene, make for a propulsive rhythm section that is so outstanding that they would drive any musician to play at their best. Nagano and Apfelbaum take advantage of this solid support to explore and create a variety of intense new music. Newcomer guitarist Keisuke Matsuno is exceptional and turns opener “Strings and Figures”, which arrives almost fully formed, into a band tour de force as he slashes through the composition.

Simple scalar solos traded by Nagano and Apfelbaum develop into a magnificent group voicing dissolving into a sparse landscape on “Humans in Grey”, “Chance Music” showcases Hertenstein and the rest of the band’s spirituality while “Loud Dinner Wanted” satisfies its title’s request with fiery instrumental interplay. Although it may be intentional that “Dark Waw” never finds itself and closer “The Other Humans” is not very interesting, in the end *Smashing Humans* mirrors a chaotic society brought back from the edge of destruction.

For more information, visit 577records.com. This project live-streams May 1st at fb.me/e/23AxOkith and May 15th at fb.me/e/4cpfUpAcy.



Backwards Compatible
The 8-Bit Big Band (TeamChuck)
by Brian Charette

Backwards Compatible is the third album from this slick big band led by Charlie Rosen, an accomplished Tony-nominated Broadway composer and arranger with 11 shows under his belt at the young age of 30.

Originally from Los Angeles the gifted Rosen plays 70 instruments, citing bass is his main axe. All of the compositions come from popular video games. The members of the band, often active gamers themselves, are mostly from New York City and read as a Who’s Who of young jazz stars.

Opener “The Chrono Trigger Main Theme” is a mashup of the 1995 video game *Chrono* and Jaco Pastorius’ “Kuru/ Speak Like a Child” from his 1975 eponymous leader debut. Pianist Steven Feifke burns on the changes with deft bebop and side-stepped arpeggios. The slow section features lovely strings in expert voicings and hemiola. Pastorius gets a few more winks as a disco jam ensues with great section writing and hiccuping hi-hat groove and there is even “Spain”-influenced claps during the breakdown before the recapitulation. “Hydrocity Zone” from the game *Sonic the Hedgehog 3* features alto saxophonist Grace Kelly on a Tower of Power inspired horn-riff. She moves easily up and down the horn as tight rhythm section hits accentuate her tongue-in-cheek delivery. Her masterful choruses have just the right amount of delay and Maceo Parker channeling.

Trumpeter Benny Benack III does double duty on “Want You Gone”. Usually done in an upbeat pop style in the game *Portal 2*, the tune gets a Sinatra ‘spang-a-lang’, bass clarinet anchoring the playful reediness as Benack croons. A smooth modulation to a faraway key raises an eyebrow as Benack shows great range. His comical asides mix *Sinatra at the Sands* with commentary about the video game sequel. His solo is short and smart. He sings the chorus out with just bass exiting after a building horn tag with a high-note stinger payoff.

“Super Mario Land Underground” has a mysterious Arabic flavor borrowing a few riffs from Led Zeppelin’s “Kashmir”. Leo P on baritone saxophone shreds multiphonic wildness over electronic washes and heavy metal drums. A witty return of the Zeppelin horn riff cues a Rimsky Korsakov-inspired interlude. “Saria’s Song” from *The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time* features bassist Adam Neely in a virtuosic performance centered around a 16th note unison bordered by falling symmetrical chord structures. The pretty Lydian melody gets great support from the strings. Kelly is featured again, this time on vocals on “Jump up Super Star” from *Super Mario Odyssey*. A barbershop quartet provides the backgrounds as a 1942 big band jungle builds. This is a unique, fun album with concept, orchestration and a great collection of jazz’ brightest young stars.

For more information, visit the8bitbigband.com. This project live-streams May 1st from Sony Hall at the8bitbigband.com/tickets-sonyhall.



A Change In The Weather
Steve LaSpina (SteepleChase)
by Pierre Giroux

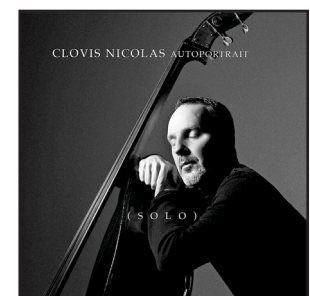
Steve LaSpina, a highly regarded bassist for decades, has played and recorded with numerous iconic jazz names, in addition to leading his own groups. In this delightful session, the group anchors their playing in LaSpina’s compositions, which provides a conceptual basis over which they build solo excursions.

The opening title track is a snappy postbop romp featuring stellar work from tenor saxophonist Joel Frahm and pianist Luis Perdomo, as well as assertive and inventive playing from the leader. “Clouds” is a perfect followup, bristling with an uptempo style pushed along by the sparkling cymbal liveliness of drummer Eric McPherson. It is clear that the band knows their way around the tunes as their solos easily flesh out on the framework of each number.

As the disc spins out, songs like “Always Believe”, “The Road Ahead” and “Moving Forward” make it evident that LaSpina structures his compositions in such a way that they combine certainty and the unexpected. Accordingly the musicians can use their extensive creative power to seek out surprising crannies.

“Serenity” is an intriguingly contemplative number, which, from the opening bars, exudes warm, resonant bass. Both Frahm and Perdomo delight with their ruminative agility and probing intuition. The closer, “When It’s Time Again”, showcases Frahm on soprano on which he demonstrates a forthright determined attack. LaSpina has a solo filled with melodic crispness and Perdomo continues his playing with clear-eyed curiosity. This interesting quartet outing shows a band at the top of its game.

For more information, visit steeplechase.dk. LaSpina live-streams May 2nd as part of William Paterson University’s “The Jazz Room at Home” concert series at wp-presents.org.



Autoportrait (Solo)
Clovis Nicolas (Sunnyside)
by Dan Bilawsky

With inward glances come outward advances. That may seem like a paradoxical construct on the surface, but it’s hardly a self-contradictory statement. Given time to meditate, experiment and focus, a musician is gifted the greatest tool needed to mold new art and bring it into the world.

Bassist Clovis Nicolas has firsthand knowledge of that fact. After starting work on a solo album in September 2019 and cementing his intentions in a meeting with producer Daniel Yvinec in early 2020, the bassist quickly found himself closed off from the world when COVID-19 came into the picture. But rather than view the pandemic’s arrival as a solitary confinement sentence, he found freedom in the space it offered. Nicolas used the days, weeks and months to hone his craft, chipping away at a singular vision all the while and a year after first setting things in motion he recorded this brilliant set.

Opening with “After Bach”, he nods to the titular composer’s cello suites and the harmonic knowledge embedded in those Baroque masterworks. Then he puts his bop chops on display with a trip through Tadd Dameron’s “Hot House”, transfers history and perspective to deeper realms by tackling Coleman Hawkins’ historic “Body and Soul” solo from 1939, gives a rhythmically vibrant reading of his own “Thon’s Tea” (which originally appeared on 2014’s *Nine Stories*) and brings a sense of order to a wide open landscape with the aptly titled “Free”.

Nicolas moves across numerous territories. He puts his blues bona fides on display with “Another Rendezvous”, explores a chorale’s structural integrity with “Jubilate Deo”, pays homage to Dave Holland with the energized “Four Steps” and speaks to the tenor of these times with Duke Ellington’s “Solitude”. By the time *Autoportrait* hits its homestretch—a run that includes Lennie Tristano’s demanding “Line Up”, classically-aligned “Chloe”, sprinting miniature “Lady Bass” and an “Everything Happens to Me” closer—things still sound as fresh as can be.

For more information, visit sunnysiderecords.com. This project live-streams May 3rd at soapboxgallery.org.



A Lifeboat (Part I)

Michael Sarian/Matthew Putman (577 Records)
by John Sharpe

A Lifeboat (Part I) represents the latest installment of an ongoing project begun in 2020 by trumpeter Michael Sarian and pianist Matthew Putman, following two volumes of *Improvisations* also released on 577 Records. As with those albums, the music contained here is the spontaneous product of the two musicians' COVID-restricted encounters. Lockdown confined their meetings to Sarian's makeshift home studio and for Putman that meant relying on a 20-year-old electric keyboard. Their regular get-togethers culminated in 13 cuts, ordered into three chapters, each recorded in a single session over a three-week period last August.

Putman's tenure in the Telepathic Band alongside Daniel Carter, Federico Ughi, Hilliard Greene and Patrick Holmes makes him well suited to such impromptu music making. His keys furnish the date with a rich reverberant backdrop and a shimmering timeless feel. But even within the context of a constant to and fro, he's mainly cast in the role of accompanist by breathy, lyrical trumpet and flugelhorn. Sometimes reminiscent of Kirk Knuffke or Kenny Wheeler, Sarian largely carries the expressive baggage, spicing his bright extemporizations with half-valve effects, querulous sighs and thin squeals.

The cover shows the two masked protagonists sitting in a bar and this would be the perfect late night setting to take in their intimate dialogue. Their exchanges are fundamentally melodic at the core, weaving together tune-like fragments teetering on the cusp of familiarity. They combine in straightforward engagement, quickly evolving in the moment, creating an emotional volatility befitting the unprecedented situation, particularly during the first chapter.

The second chapter reflects a wistful longing, with hymn-like keys and ballad musings while on the title track they fleetingly conjure a jaunty ditty, almost as if whistling in the dark. Matters become shadier and more discordant by the last chapter, with the choppy staccato of numbers like "Learning How To Swim (Part II)" providing a welcome contrast, but even the more existentially challenging titles merely alternate the unsettled with the sunny, suggesting an essentially optimistic outlook.

For more information, visit 577records.com. This project live-streams May 6th at 577records.com/events.



Kinetic

Steven Feifke Big Band (Outside In Music)
by George Kanzler

The title could arguably be *Hyper-Kinetic*. Steven Feifke takes the idea of big band seriously, pushing ensemble strategies at the listener like a juggler keeps multiple balls in the air. The more current approach—of opening ensemble, solo spotlights, maybe a shout

chorus or two and closing ensemble—is not Feifke's blueprint on these ten tracks. He updates the Swing Era concept of a big band constantly active, with not only shouts and riffs, but also counter-melodies and backgrounds (contrasting and echoing) for soloists.

The opening title track demonstrates his approach. There's a brief, massed ensemble opening giving way to a blistering tempo for a solo from Feifke on piano with rhythm, bolstered by big band blasts. Trumpeter Gabriel King Medd solos over band riffs that lead to a shout chorus with a drum solo (Ulysses Owens, Jr.) engulfed by swirling horns and reeds to take it to a finale. Most of the other instrumental tracks (seven of the eight are originals) are as full of orchestral/ensemble gestures and sections as that opener. But Feifke varies the tone and timbre, using flutes in the lead on "Unveiling of a Mirror", a piece that also has a shout chorus blending muted brass and soprano saxophone; flutes and muted brass give way to whimsical brass and reeds on the fleet, jazzy bossa "Word Travels Fast". He also features flutes on the final A section of Horace Silver's "Nica's Dream", the first two As featuring Benny Benack III's trumpet, with the bridge an ensemble with muted horns. His and Feifke's solos, as are almost all throughout, are shadowed and countered by ensemble riffs and backgrounds.

Vocalist Veronica Swift, for whom Feifke arranged the orchestral tracks on *This Bitter Earth* (Mack Avenue) CD, appears on two tracks, both standards. "Until the Real Thing Comes Along" evokes Ellingtonia in a richly textured saxophones opening while "On the Street Where You Live" is propelled by martial-like 2/4 riffs. Both arrangements and vocals recall the classic jazz vocal performances of the pre-rock era.

For more information, visit outsideinmusic.com. Feifke is at *The Django at The Roxy* May 13th.

RECOMMENDED NEW RELEASES

- Nazareno Caputo — *Phylum* (AUT)
- George Colligan Theoretical Planets — *Long Term Goals* (PJCE)
- Don Kapot — *Hooligan* (W.E.R.F.)
- Maria Grand — *Reciprocity* (Biophilia)
- Masabumi Kikuchi — *Hanamichi (The Final Studio Recording)* (Red Hook)
- Rebecca Kilgore Trio — *Vol. 1* (Heavywood)
- James Brandon Lewis Red Lily Quintet — *Jesup Wagon* (TAO Forms)
- Hedvig Mollestad Trio — *Ding Dong. You're Dead* (Rune Grammofon)
- Natsuki Tamura/Satoko Fujii — *Keshin* (Libra)
- Saadet Türköz/Nils Wogram — *SongDreaming* (Leo)

Laurence Donohue-Greene, Managing Editor

- Larry Coryell & Philip Catherine (with Jazz at Berlin Philharmonic XI) — *The Last Call* (ACT Music)
- Michael Formanek — *Imperfect Measures* (Intakt)
- Susie Ibarra — *Talking Gong* (New Focus)
- Hedvig Mollestad Trio — *Ding Dong. You're Dead* (Rune Grammofon)
- Rempis Percussion Quartet — *Sud Des Alpes* (Aerophonic)
- Irène Schweizer/Hamid Drake — *Celebration* (Intakt)
- Martial Solal — *Coming Yesterday: Live at Salle Gaveau 2019* (Challenge)
- Sabu Toyozumi/Mats Gustafsson — *Hokusai* (NoBusiness Chap Chap Series)
- Min Xiao-Fen — *White Lotus (featuring Rez Abbasi)* (Outside In Music)
- Miguel Zenón — *Law Years: The Music of Ornette Coleman (Live at the Birds Eye Jazz Club)* (Miel Music)

Andrey Henkin, Editorial Director

ANDY WASSERMAN



PEREGRINATION

Andy Wasserman

SOLO PIANO
ORIGINAL COMPOSITIONS
(TransMedia Sound & Music)



Peregrination, solo pianist Andy Wasserman's 20th album, showcases 7 new original compositions for solo piano, resonating with the intention to uplift and inspire the listener on their own inner journey, a magnetic and mysterious pilgrimage to the center of the heart. This contemporary Jazz music is structured on a foundation of his four decades of work as editorial assistant and Certified Instructor of George Russell's Lydian Chromatic Concept of Tonal Organization.

AVAILABLE ON

Spotify YouTube Music amazon music bandcamp

"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...the rolling complexities in Wasserman's works are beautifully, almost mystically woven together."

The New York City Jazz Record
January 2021 - NY@Night LiveStream review

"PEREGRINATION" ALBUM LIVE:
<https://vimeo.com/534999491>

WEEKLY LIVESTREAMED CONCERTS

Tune in, join the upbeat vibes and let this LIVE music rejuvenate you!
Every Sunday, 7:00pm Eastern/4:00 Pacific

Solo piano concert of fresh, brand-new, original compositions and improvisations performed on a beautifully restored, resonant 1924 Steinway "M" grand piano

FREE: no registration, tickets or log-in required!

Watch on ROKU TV and at
ANDYWASSERMAN.COM



Magic Dance: The Music of Kenny Barron
Greg Abate (Whaling City Sound)
 by Scott Yanow

Saxophonist Greg Abate's two-CD set *Magic Dance* is the best type of tribute. Not only is it a straightahead exploration of 14 of Kenny Barron's compositions, but also it features Barron himself, playing in prime form.

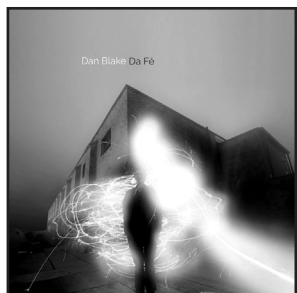
Barron, who turns 78 this year, has been a significant pianist and composer since the early '60s. His playing has grown in its individuality and power through the years and he has long been a skilled but underrated composer. While his "Voyage" has caught on as a standard, most of his other originals were long overdue to be explored again at length.

Abate, a veteran saxophonist based in New England who is best known on alto, had previously recorded with Barron just one time, for his 1996 album *Bop Lives*. For the tribute, Abate, Barron, bassist Dezron Douglas and drummer Johnathan Blake dig into many of the pianist's finest songs, which often have accessible melodies along with complex and original chord changes. With the exception of "Voyage", these are not the type of tunes that show up often at jam sessions.

Abate, who is heard on five different instruments, overdubbed a second horn on five songs (mostly for the melody statements) and on "Innocence" and "Voyage" he is heard as a full five-part horn section. His playing is excellent throughout and his occasional soprano solos (most notably on "Innocence") make the case for him being ranked as one of the top jazz players on that horn. Other highlights include the catchy "Sunshower", picturesque "Cook's Bay", thoughtful "Rain", an inventive and exciting arrangement of "Voyage" and every solo played by the ageless pianist.

Magic Dance is one of the finest recent recordings by both Abate and Barron with the tribute not revisiting past triumphs but standing on its own as a superior modern jazz date.

For more information, visit whalingcitysound.com. Barron live-streams May 14th at jazzstandard.com.



Da Fé
Dan Blake (Sunnyside)
 by Marco Cangiano

Dan Blake, a Brooklyn-based multi-instrumentalist, composer and educator with a wide-ranging resumé, has composed a very ambitious work in the midst of the ongoing pandemic and its consequences, drawing inspirations from deeply personal and spiritual experiences. The CD, consisting of nine captivating originals, is a suite with a prologue and an epilogue.

The quartet with pianist Carmen Staaf, bassist Dmitry Ishenko and drummer Jeff Williams is augmented by the numerous keyboards of Leo Genovese, a frequent musical partner of Blake. The musical climate is reminiscent of John Coltrane's classic quartet both musically and in terms of spiritual

quest, with an added postbop flavor. Blake's overdubbing and alternating between soprano and tenor saxophone is quite effective, much as Genovese's complementing elegiac piano. Ishenko and Williams handle the rhythmic challenges with gusto.

The CD opens with a dramatic and meditative piano solo, "Prologue—The New Normal", foreshadowing rather bleak post-pandemic images. The modal and Eastern-inspired "Cry" reflects on the Palestinian people's plight while delivering an impressive piano solo besides the leader's soprano. "Like Fish in Puddles" is inspired by Buddhist poems and is the tune more closely resembling Coltrane's quartet, particularly the leader's soprano style and the inevitable piano reference to McCoy Tyner.

"Pain" is a more esoteric and airier piece slowly developing into a dirge. It is inspired by Blake's recent family losses and features the full range of his tenor floating on a dense carpet of electronic effects provided by Genovese. "The Cliff" sounds loosely based on a Monk-ish theme, with supple drumming in evidence sustaining a repeated riff by overdubbed saxophones and angular piano. Ishenko's intense solo leaves the listener with the taste for more.

The title track, which translates to "about faith", delivers a suspenseful yet dramatic atmosphere built once again upon keyboards, twisting soprano and insisting piano chords. Finally, "Epilogue: It Heals Itself" closes on a hopeful note, much like Coltrane's "After the Rain". The slow progression develops around three chords and provides the launch pad for a dialogue between the soprano and tenor saxophones on what could be next. Notwithstanding the programmatic intent and noble inspirations, this is music that stands on its own.

For more information, visit sunnysiderecords.com. This project live-streams May 14th at facebook.com/jazzhabitat.



The Queen of Cups
Lauren Lee (ears&eyes)
 by Jordannah Elizabeth

During the COVID-19 lockdown, composer Lauren Lee began to rethink and reconstruct songs meant for her trio, gathering freshly composed repertoire and old songs, which manifest on her third album, *The Queen of Cups*. This solo vocal and piano album consists of half original music and half reimagined standards that stem from Lee's intricate imagination and distinct compositional style.

One of the most enticing components is the esoteric title. This mystical tarot card archetype is that of a being who wades deeply within her emotions and flows in the watery depths of her empathic and caring behavioral projections. The Queen of Cups sits on a throne reigning alone, which lends insight into the metamorphosis of trio music into a solo effort. Lee performs her sparse pieces, personal lyrics and unique scatting technique with confidence and quietly crisp production.

Opener "Cognition" offers rich piano, which rings and sonically glows against voice. Lee does not sing lyrics, but instead creates romantically somber melodies. "Up in the Air" features the careful layering of voice, piano playing simple notes and chords in support of the structured juggling of vocal expressions.

Ralph Rainger-Leo Robin's "If I Should Lose You" is minimal and haunting, Lee accompanying herself with organ. She has created her own lane when it

comes to reinterpreting jazz standards, taking the barest elements, the bones of jazz favorites, drawing them into her own world and offering up versions never done before. That is true for Axel Stordahl-Paul Weston-Sammy Cahn's "I Should Care", done in a slightly more upbeat interpretation.

Lee creates a postmodern minimalistic musical reality, which invokes yearning to learn more about her inspiration. She doesn't seem to have misgivings about making music exactly the way she pleases and there's courageousness in the crux of her sparse music.

For more information, visit earsandeyesrecords.com. This project live-streams May 17th at soapboxgallery.org.

UNEARTHED GEM



In Baltimore
George Coleman Quintet (Reel to Real)
 by Phil Freeman

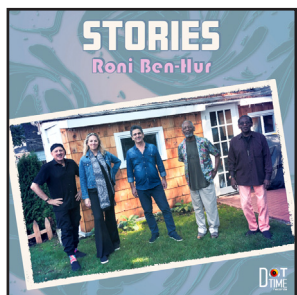
Baltimore's Left Bank Jazz Society put on shows for over 30 years, beginning in the mid '60s. A few have been released, including an April 1968 performance by tenor saxophonist Joe Henderson split across two '90s Verve CDs; a 1972 set by singer Etta Jones, backed by pianist Cedar Walton's trio; and drummer Roy Brooks' *The Free Slave*, recorded in 1970.

George Coleman was part of Brooks' band on that date. 13 months later—and 50 years ago this month—the tenor saxophonist was back in Baltimore, leading his own quintet with trumpeter Danny Moore, pianist Albert Dailey, bassist Larry Ridley and drummer Harold White. That set of performances is preserved here, on tapes recorded by Left Bank founder and engineer Vernon Lewis.

Coleman was a highly regarded player almost as soon as he emerged out of Memphis in the mid '50s. He worked with Max Roach, Jimmy Smith, Booker Little and Lee Morgan, then joined Miles Davis' quintet for a year. He played on Herbie Hancock's *Maiden Voyage* and joined Elvin Jones' band in 1969. His style was gutsy and soulful at times, but always retained the fast, clean articulation of bebop. He never had much use for free playing, always preferring a memorable melody and a strong set of chord changes to keep himself anchored and that's where he's still at today at age 86.

Everyone plays at a high level, with Coleman and Moore a perfectly matched frontline and the rhythm section supporting them with subtlety and power. White's solo on "I Got Rhythm" is a Jones-esque display of explosive energy kept under extraordinary control. But there's absolutely nothing that sounds like it was recorded in 1971. The setlist is straight from the '50s: John Lewis' "Afternoon in Paris", Clifford Brown's "Joy Spring" and "Sandu" and versions of the Gershwin's aforementioned "I Got Rhythm" and Johnny Green-Edward Heyman-Robert Sour-Frank Eyton's "Body and Soul". Occasionally, on the latter, Coleman rises to a pitch of intensity nodding to mid '60s Sonny Rollins, but never gets anywhere near Albert Ayler or Pharoah Sanders territory. This performance is a strange kind of time capsule, a monument to stubborn traditionalism.

For more information, visit cellarlive.com



Stories
Roni Ben-Hur (Dot Time)
by Ken Dryden

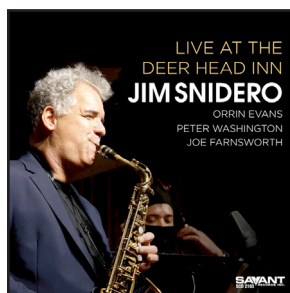
Guitarist Roni Ben-Hur has put together a release drawing from many styles while the instrumentalists he recruited are all among the most in demand artists active today: trumpeter Ingrid Jensen, pianist George Cables, bassist Harvie S and drummer Victor Lewis. There is a feeling that it is a working group that has played this music for audiences and nailed everything on the first take, rather than a one-shot studio meeting.

The leader's originals include "But I Had To Say Goodbye", a bittersweet ballad, along with the upbeat "Ma'of", which celebrates the coming of age of his two daughters. Ben-Hur's inclusion of Elmo Hope's unjustly obscure bop gem "Something For Kenny" is a nice touch, showcasing his formidable chops along with potent solos by Jensen and Cables. John Hicks' "After the Morning" is arranged as a lyrical, easygoing jazz waltz for quartet (Cables sits out), with superb interplay between both muted and open horn and soft guitar. Cables' effusive "Melodious Funk" captures the humor found in many of Monk's works; the composer carries much of the load in this playful tune and it is clear that everyone had a ball.

Although none of the vocal selections are in

English, the singers convey the mood rather well. Magos Herrera is featured in "La Serena", a Sephardic folk song adapted by the guitarist into a strikingly brisk setting, with ample seasoning from expressive trumpet. Tamuz Nissim sings in Hebrew in the subtle "Ha'omnam", a poem that served as a message of hope when it was written during the Holocaust. It is arranged as an intricate bossa nova, with a bit of scatting as well.

For more information, visit dottimerecords.com. Ben-Hur live-streams May 22nd at soapboxgallery.org.



Live at the Deer Head Inn
Jim Snidero (Savant)
by Pierre Giroux

Jim Snidero is a technically gifted alto saxophonist who plays with a cool sound and airy vibrato. In this live recording from the Deer Head Inn, Snidero surrounds himself with sympathetic and talented players: Orrin Evans (piano), Peter Washington (bass) and Joe Farnsworth (drums). The band works from a songbook of well-known standards on which they can take chances. This was Snidero's first live recording in an over 30-year career and took place on Halloween 2020, in the throes of the pandemic. It was a very welcome opportunity to play before a live audience, which had

been missing since the earliest part of the year.

Although Snidero is more of a disciple of Phil Woods than Charlie Parker, this session included a couple of Parker-associated themes, including his own "Now's The Time" and the ballad "My Old Flame", which he first recorded in 1947. The former, which is a blues-based riff with typical bebop phrasing, is taken as written by Snidero and the band. Snidero runs through the theme, which is followed by a bass solo packed with a lot of weight. Snidero jumps back in, showing his emotion and exciting technique after which Evans takes a solo filled with dexterity and keyboard coverage. Perhaps it was the unexpected attendance of Parker's step-daughter Kim at the club that pushed the band to their intense connection to the piece.

For a five-year period earlier in his career, Snidero was in the band that backed Frank Sinatra, through which he gained an appreciation of his song interpretations. When you listen to Snidero's version of "Ol' Man River", you can hear the Sinatra phrasing in the opening bars that Snidero plays. His solo explorations are expressive and intense. Evans' interlude is reassuringly compelling, which leads to the reprise of the melody by Snidero. "Idle Moments" was written by Duke Pearson and first appeared as the title track of a 1963 Blue Note LP by guitarist Grant Green. It is a languid, minor-key number Snidero delivers with impeccable taste throughout the long structure and interesting melodic lines.

The penultimate track is the other aforementioned Parker-connected number "My Old Flame", on which Snidero gives full reign to his ballad prowess. His solo bursts with insight and texture. The release is a welcome vaccination in these uncertain pandemic times.

For more information, visit jazzdepot.com

SteepleChase
Complete catalogs: www.steeplechase.dk

new releases CD - download - streaming

Ballad For A Rainy Afternoon
Mark Soskin
Rich Perry • Jay Anderson • Matt Wilson

SCCD 31914

Straight Off
Martin Jacobsen
Hiroshi Murayama
Gilles Naturel
Mark Taylor

SCCD 31916

Checkmate
John Hart
Gary Smulyan
David Wong
Andy Watson

SCCD 31910

Double Rainbow
Gene Segal
Jay Anderson
Adam Nussbaum

SCCD 31915

US distribution: **Stateside**
www.statesidemusic.com email: info@statesidemusic.com

Cadillac

EVAN PARKER QUARTET
"ALL KNAVERY AND COLLUSION"

From Ken Colyer to
Dudu Pukwana

Recording the vital
spirit of the London
jazz scene for 50
years

TORI HANDSLEY
AS WE STAND

THE MIKE WESTBROOK
THE LAST NIGHT
AT THE OLD PLACE
CONCERT BAND

Soon to come:
Albert Nicholas
The Jazz Doctors

Cadillac Music & Publishing
<https://cadillacrecords77.com/>
<https://cadillac77.bandcamp.com/>

37th edition

festival
international
musique
actuelle
victoriaville

fimav

12 live concerts
in 3 days

May 17 to 23, 2021

Friday 21
Saturday 22
Sunday 23

7 days
of sound art
installations
in public spaces

Ayelet Rose Gottlieb

René Lussier
Érick d'Orion
Robbie Kuster
Martin Tétreault

Eve Egoyan Solo

GGRIL

Le Choeur de Growlers

Tamayugé

Thisquietarmy X Away

Scott Thomson

« Aérosolo »

Kathleen Yearwood

« Requiem (World in Ashes) »

Bernard Falaise

« Bascule »

Quatuor Bozzini

Nicolas Caloia
Yves Charuest

Ensemble
SuperMusique

« Le fleuve »

TICKETS ON SALE
NOW

fimav.qc.ca

Québec



Canada



Imperfect Measures
Michael Formanek (Intakt)
Dyads

Michael and Peter Formanek (Out Of Your Head)
by Dan Bilawsky

Solo sessions and duo dates are de rigueur these days, what with COVID-19 calling for solitary confinement and creation. But neither one of these releases actually came about as a product of the pause on gatherings. Instead, each reflects a different facet of formidable bassist Michael Formanek's complete return to the scene prior to the pandemic. After spending 17 years teaching at the prestigious Peabody Conservatory while channeling additional strengths and ambitions into sideman work, cooperative ventures and three notable leader dates on the ECM imprint, Formanek moved back into the life of the full-time improviser. Over the past several years, since making that transition, his bass has carried significant weight on a pair of albums from guitarist Mary Halvorson's Code Girl, three releases from collective trio Thumbscrew and a set apiece from his own Elusion Quartet and Very Practical Trio. Along the way, Formanek clearly found time also to bottle and preserve sage wisdom and searching suggestions in the solo format and with a familial duo.

Bass is the lone instrument on *Imperfect Measures*, but Formanek wasn't all by his lonesome when he recorded this in 2017. Building the project around the concept of music giving rise to art, he invited illustrator Warren Linn to sketch along with/to his discoveries. Some of Linn's finalized creations, in turn, helped to finish Formanek's work, appearing in the CD's packaging. The music—almost exclusively improvised, with only a couple of sketches or seeds to grow—offers serious thought(s) on time and dimension. The bustling "Quickdraw" holds tension through pace. "On The Skin" subtly nods to tango composer Eduardo Arolas' "Comme il Faut". "A Maze" adopts a trembling arco. And "The Stand" works rhythmic and motivic hooks to their fullest. Open to wherever the muse of the moment takes him, Formanek is always seeking out the sound of opportunity in these performances. As restless as it is assured, this program possesses a mesmeric draw.

While self-motivation is at the root of most solo endeavors, a duo declaration—one like *Dyads*, especially—is less about individual drive than shared experience(s). So with concentric interests and connections nourished and strengthened over time, Formanek and his son, saxophonist/clarinetist Peter, were primed for this pairing. Recorded at the close of 2019, soon after they finished touring, this album speaks directly to lives and minds intertwined. From the very beginning, with the mysterious-turned-grooving "Two, Not One", things just click. And no matter where they go from there—further left, or right, or straight down a rabbit hole—these men are in sync. There's rooted back-and-forth talk on "After You", material and scenic suggestions in "The Woods", tempestuous streaks storming through "Hurricane" unsettled (and unsettling) thoughts forwarded in "Hoarse Syrinx" and a blend of order and impulse behind "That Was Then". Genes may have a little something to do with the magic here, but don't discount a tremendous work ethic and big, developed ears. It's all in the family.

For more information, visit intaktrec.ch and outofyourheadrecords.com. Michael Formanek live-streams solo May 10th at soapboxgallery.org.

GLOBE UNITY



Altered Alchemy
Achim Kaufmann/Ignaz Schick (Zarek)
Under the Sun Live 2019
Space Quartet (Noise Precision Library)
A Mountain Doesn't Know It's Tall
Fred Frith/Ikue Mori (Intakt)
by Tom Greenland

Machines are putting people out of work, doing those repetitive (and not-so-repetitive) jobs faster and better, without tiring. In the jazz place, humans needn't worry they'll be replaced, as it's inherently impossible to pre-program a musical 'surprise'. In fact, three recent releases suggest that men and machines are learning to work together, to the benefit of both.

Berlin-based Ignaz Schick imaginatively deploys turntables, samplers and live electronics in a variety of settings, especially duos. *Altered Alchemy*, a duet with pianist Achim Kaufmann recorded in the winter of 2016, is a generous two-CD set (comprised of 8 tracks averaging 15 minutes in length), which, as the title suggests, shows how the sound worlds—acoustic piano prepared with various implements and battery of custom electronics—collide, blend and transmogrify their creative elements. Here the 'natural' and mechanical materials are not at odds—one never overpowers the other and there is no patent leadership—rather they collectively engender a kind of musical gnosis. Some samples seem familiar (dogs, rain, people murmuring), but most are metaphorical in character: hissings and creakings, whirrs and rumbles, sirens and static—all highly suggestive, few with overt references.

Under the Sun is similar in the sense that it amalgamates the realms of 'acoustica' and electronica through spontaneous improvisation, different because it is four musicians performing live. Led by Rafael Toral, who plies a handheld controller (akin to those used by gamers) to exhort acoustic and electronic feedback from his amp, the Space Quartet also has bassist Hugo Antunes, drummer/percussionist Nuno Morão and Nuno Torres, who switches between alto saxophone and electronics, thereby shifting the electronic-to-acoustic ratio between 1:3 and 2:2. A pair of 20-minute pieces were recorded in October 2019 in Portugal, the title track at ZDB in Lisbon, "Beneath the Moon" at Teatro Viriato in Viseu. Toral's approach to electronic synthesis (complemented by Torres') is notable for his juxtaposition of vocalistic tones evoking the cries of feral beasts with overtly robotic tones reminiscent of *Star Wars* droid R2-D2.

In spite of their almost 40-year association, *A Mountain Doesn't Know It's Tall* is the first duet record by Ikue Mori and Fred Frith, the former featured on laptop electronics, the latter on guitar and homemade instruments and found objects (including "toys"). If the alchemists of the first disc favored epic musical poems, the quartet of the second shorter stanzas, then Mori and Frith are working in the milieu of haiku: terse statements of a minute or two or three, musical pictographs inspired by programmatic titles (or was it the other way around?) such as "Stirred by Wind and Leaves" or "A Thief Breaks into an Empty House". Of the electronic musicians featured here, Mori is perhaps the most abstract, but even her most eccentric gestures are so intimately entwined with Frith's that the two are often indistinguishable.

For more information, visit zarekberlin.bandcamp.com, rafaeltoral.net and intaktrec.ch



Symbiosis
Jeff Coffin/Derek Brown (Ear Up)
Let It Shine
Jeff Coffin/Helen Gillet (Ear Up)
by Dan Bilawsky

For protean performer, saxophonist and recording artist Jeff Coffin, creative juices seem to flow unimpeded. Many who are familiar with the saxophonist/reedplayer have come to that realization without actually hearing any of his projects, only taking into account his Grammy-garnering 14-year tenure with Béla Fleck and The Flecktones and stentorian contributions in studios and stadiums with Dave Matthews Band.

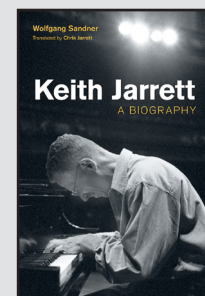
But Coffin's rich discography, containing more than 15 albums under his own name or as a co-leader, attests to how well he constantly channels his imagination into many and varied environments. As a conversationalist and sharp-eared collaborator he's particularly suited to duo settings, made clear most recently, in 2018, with the release of recorded encounters with percussionist Tatsuya Nakatani (*Flight*) and drummer Roy "Futureman" Wooten (*The Moment of Now*). Moving into the present, a pair of dissimilar duo albums, arriving less than a month apart on Coffin's Ear Up imprint, furthers that line of thinking.

Symbiosis, Coffin's meet-up with beat-box saxophone stylist Derek Brown, presents seven originals. All but one of the performances were recorded live without overdubbing, with each man covering one saxophone per track and an extroverted sensibility carries across this energetic endeavor. The two musicians often feel like three or four, with popping and slap-tongued articulations, key-clanked percussion and saxophone basslines adding a notable rhythmic foundation. Coffin carries his tenor with swaggering soul and Brown alternates between tenor and baritone, keeping it fun and funky from the bottom up. Only the closer—"Somewhere I Can't Recall", presenting with added colors and a cool-headed disposition—strays a bit in character. With intriguing riffs and grounding grooves underscoring some sly and raucous blowing, this synergistic partnership is largely about hearty partying.

While *Symbiosis* finds Coffin playing to the rafters, *Let It Shine* is all about eyeing the room and exploring the atmosphere that surrounds it. A much more nuanced set than the lively blow-down with Brown, this collaboration with genre-defying cellist Helen Gillet stretches into many a different a corner. A blend of soprano saxophone and arco cello lines lends a mournful quality to "The Sun Never Says". The two-act "Lazy Drag Jig" moves from understated hipness to prance-and-dance mode with style. The wistful "Sometimes Springtime" puts Gillet's lyric writing and vocals in the spotlight. And "Lampsi", with its entrancing five-plus-six feel and Mediterranean mien, is absolutely alluring. With the exception of Ernst Reijseger's elegiac "Do You Still" and Gillet's mood-shifting "Unzen", all of the music stems from Coffin's pen and pure heart. Wooten drops in as a guest, adding cajón on 2 of the 10 tracks, but his contributions don't alter the basic nature and chemistry of those cuts or the project on the whole. Embracing the idea of layering on many of these pieces and offering unobscured grace when they go au naturel, Coffin and Gillet, left to their own devices, create one beauty after another.

For more information, visit earuprecords.com

IN PRINT



Keith Jarrett: A Biography by Wolfgang Sandner
Translated by Chris Jarrett (Equinox Publishing)
by Tyran Grillo

The late Ian Carr's *Keith Jarrett: The Man and His Music* long stood as the most complete portrait of its subject, who turns 76 this month. Being a product of 1991, however, the book begged a companion this side of the second millennium. In 2015, German music editor and biographer Wolfgang Sandner answered that call. Five years later, Jarrett's youngest brother Chris, who lives and teaches in Germany, offered this superbly rendered, expanded and updated translation into English. The result, *Keith Jarrett: A Biography*, retreads some of the pianist's formative milestones while stringing through them artful observations, interpretations and connections.

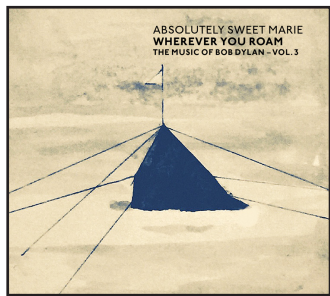
We find ourselves transported back to Jarrett's upbringing in Allentown, Pennsylvania, where Sandner credits Jarrett's mother for not putting her son on the pedestal that has separated so many young prodigies from the possibility of a normal childhood. This may be one reason why his genius was able to flourish so organically—untainted by the bane of expectation, he built a career on transcending it.

We sit in the audience during his first solo recital at the age of seven—a mélange of classical and original compositions—waiting for the moment when jazz will enter the soundtrack of his past. We cling to the wall like proverbial flies as, in a mere five-year span, he joins forces with Art Blakey, Charles Lloyd and Miles Davis. Jarrett's tenure with the latter, who convinces him to join after multiple overtures, goes largely unrecorded and survives only through anecdote. By the time Jarrett parts ways with the latter, it's 1971, just two years after the founding of ECM Records by producer Manfred Eicher, with whom Jarrett will forge a lasting relationship. Said relationship yields albums—80 between 1971-2020—that were made to exist, just as they exist to have documented a pianist who "had not really become a soloist—he had actually always been one" (pg. 88).

Jarrett's "musical syntax" is as recognizable as it is challenging to distill in words. Whether in his traversals of the Great American Songbook with bassist Gary Peacock and drummer Jack DeJohnette or his recording of J.S. Bach's *The Well-Tempered Clavier* (of which he characteristically remarked, "I was actually refusing more than I was giving"), the mosaic we think we know has revealed tile after unprecedented tile.

All of which serves to validate Sandner's decision to view jazz through a hypermodern lens, framing its latter-day developments as a recalibration of space among the rubble of the Second World War. And there, in the middle of it all, Jarrett spans the ocean like a bridge between the forward march of Americanism and the traumatic retrogression of the continent. This may be why Sandner concedes in his foreword: "Most of all, though, this music should be heard." For a musician of Jarrett's caliber, the best biography remains the discography.

For more information, visit equinoxpub.com



**Wherever You Roam (The Music of Bob Dylan - Vol. 3)
Absolutely Sweet Marie (Tiger Moon)**
by John Pietaro

The Berliners collectively known as Absolutely Sweet Marie, named for Bob Dylan's song from the deliciously notorious *Blonde on Blonde* album, are at it again. Thankfully. The quartet, all devotees to Dylan (who turns 80 this month), are free jazz musicians and thinkers who delight in reconstructing the melodies of the master folk poet, reimagining them within the scope of a unique lineup of brass, reeds and drums. Though their first two volumes dedicated to this music seemed to cover most of the big Dylan classics, this current title includes enough to keep even casual fans interested, but, remember, this is far from a cover band. Trumpeter Steffen Faul and tenor saxophonist Alexander Beierbach take the lead much of the way through while trombonist Matthias Müller gravitates between dancing basslines, harmonies and significant solos and drummer Max Andrzejewski throbs, pulsates and ignites the atmosphere.

A noted Dylan title, "The Mighty Quinn" (aka "Quinn the Eskimo"), a 1968 hit for Manfred Mann, is presented as if poured from a Salvation Army band sneaking hip into an otherwise droll job. Faul has the very recognizable melody, cutting through chops-laden drumming and harsh, new chord voicings. Among the other fascinating cuts is "New Morning" (originally on Dylan's 1970 album of the same name), which swings roughly in a teasingly harmolodic manner. Müller's free sections, particularly in contrast to the hymn-like playing of the other horns, will absolutely lure you in. And Beierbach's rubato feature on "Nettie Moore" (from *Modern Times*, 2006) carries so much urgency, the ear is reminded of David Murray at his most heartfelt. More so, he captures the sound of the song's original loss and empty wandering.

And now for something completely different: "The Times They Are a-Changing", vital, wise, acoustic Dylan of 1964 is transformed into a simmering jazz waltz, its melody turned inside out by expansive, ever shifting three-part harmonies and then splintered into fragments defined by Andrzejewski's jagged, free implosions. Müller takes the only solo, backed by rapidly incendiary drumming and the overall effect is enough to light the night skies. Like Dylan taking the stage with the New York Art Quartet during his Rolling Thunder Revue—and calling on the spirit of Ayler for good measure.

For more information, visit tigermoonrecords.de



Live at Jazz Inn Lovely 1990
**Masayuki Jojo Takayanagi/Nobuyoshi Ino/
Masabumi PUI Kikuchi (Chap Chap-NoBusiness)**
by John Sharpe

This live date from the titular Nagoya venue reveals the mellow side of Japanese free jazz. That could seem

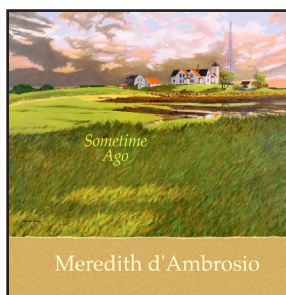
unlikely when considering the lead name, guitarist Masayuki Takayanagi, a maverick follower of Lennie Tristano who later turned to total freak-outs and noise, partnering with the likes of outsider saxophonist Kaoru Abe. Recorded nine months before his death 30 years ago this month, the concert finds him in the company of regular collaborator bassist Nobuyoshi Ino, plus celebrated pianist Masabumi Kikuchi, who died in 2015, sitting in during a trip home from his long sojourn in the U.S.

Kikuchi, who worked with Miles Davis, Gil Evans, Dave Liebman and Joe Henderson, as well as a cooperative trio with Gary Peacock and Paul Motian, exerts a pull towards the tradition. But Takayanagi and Ino are not unwilling accomplices. Even on one of the two cuts they play as a duo, they touch on a standard material as a basis for further exploration. Much of the time Ino, who sure-footedly straddles the inside/outside dichotomy, anchors the often conversational interaction close to the mainstream.

But it's when he picks up his bow to become an equal voice without any supportive function that proceedings unloose their moorings. One of the high points of the disc comes on "Duo I" when his arco slashes and organ-like tones engage in prickly dialogue with Takayanagi's scratchy fragmentation. Similarly on "Trio III" Ino extracts creaks and groans from his bass as the weather veers stormy, Kikuchi thunders and the guitarist flashes in dramatic gesture.

Conventional gambits reappear during "Trio I" as the three parlay an abstraction, which doesn't shy from consonance. Later Kikuchi plies repeated rhythmic figures that rejuvenate the exchanges, before ultimately harping on an insistent progression. Once Ino latches on, the pianist moves into a loose rendition of Monk's "Locomotive", with Takayanagi adding oblique but blues-inflected commentary. It forms the final chapter in an album, which soothes as much as it stirs.

For more information, visit nobusinessrecords.com



Sometime Ago
Meredith d'Ambrosio (Sunnyside)
by George Kanzler

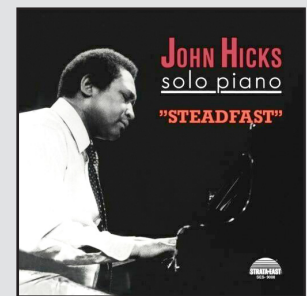
"I Wished On The Moon" was definitively recorded in 1935 by Billie Holiday. Meredith d'Ambrosio, who turned 80 this year, reprises the Ralph Rainger-Dorothy Parker song here and her version couldn't be more different. D'Ambrosio, with the exemplary trio of Randy Halberstadt (piano), Daryl Johns (bass) and Steve Johns (drums), takes it at a similar heartbeat tempo to Holiday's version. However, her vocal approach is softer, bringing a wistful feel to the lyrics while her unique tone and timbre are as smooth as velvet or suede, her inflections as soft as a powder puff.

That song, "If I Should Lose You" with a bossa beat and "I Remember You" with lush, elastic phrasing are the only more or less familiar standards on this album. She and Halberstadt co-wrote two tracks and singly penned one each. "Moonlight", from John Williams-Alan and Marilyn Bergman, is a gentle waltz, d'Ambrosio reaching a higher register without losing her ethereally velvet tone. The title track, by Sergio Mihanovich, is a slow ballad, the singer's wistful regrets shadowed by Don Sickler's flugelhorn. D'Ambrosio's voice throughout combines the fragility of a Chet Baker with the perspicacity of a Mabel Mercer. She is also a fine lyricist-composer. On "Feast Your

Eyes", a Halberstadt tune, she sardonically catalogues a decadent buffet of extravagant morsels that distract a handsome "Adonis": "If only he would look my way...all he sees is food". "My Open Heart", another Halberstadt tune, is a pure expression of longing: "I come to you with an open heart, my open heart". Her own "Oh Well, What the Hell", with Sickler on muted trumpet, is a swinging stroll through "what will be, time will tell" territory. Whether singing her own lyrics or exploring the familiar or obscure songs of others, d'Ambrosio's finely honed sensibilities bring a unique perspective to the songs.

For more information, visit sunnysiderecords.com

DROP THE NEEDLE



Steadfast (Solo Piano)
John Hicks (Strata East-Pure Pleasure)
by Ken Dryden

John Hicks flew under the radar of many jazz listeners, though the pianist built an extensive, wide-ranging discography as a sideman and leader during a career that lasted over four decades until his sudden death 15 years ago this month at 64. One of two LPs that Hicks recorded in 1975, both made for Strata-East, this was his leader debut. It has been sporadically reissued since the label ceased operations, most recently as this UK LP.

While most of Hicks' recordings were in small group settings, he made a number of solo piano albums. *Steadfast* finds him at the top of his game, with an excellent instrument and engineer in a London studio. The setlist seems very spontaneous, as if Hicks is playing what comes to mind for his own enjoyment, drawing from decades-old standards, time-tested jazz works and his own rewarding originals.

Even this early in his career, Hicks consistently finds new approaches to familiar works. Sometimes he seems barely to pause before moving on to the next song, as if he were making a direct-to-disc LP. This type of playing demands repeated hearing to catch the nuances of each selection.

Hicks' joyful "One For John Mixon" is a masterful bop vehicle displaying his inventiveness. His approach to Billy Strayhorn's "Lush Life" removes it from its typical maudlin setting, retaining the essence of its melody but at a faster tempo with plenty of added flourishes. Almost immediately, he segues into an inventive rendition of Clare Fischer's Latin gem "Pensativa", with his dazzling left hand working overtime. His brooding postbop original title track opens the second side, leading into several lyrical ballad interpretations, highlighted by a delicate, swinging take of Duke Ellington's "In A Sentimental Mood" and understated exploration of Mal Waldron's "Soul Eyes".

The warmth of this 180-gram LP is formidable, with none of the annoying pops and defects that have often marred 21st Century high-end records. Additionally, Pure Pleasure earlier reissued *Hells Bells*, a trio date that Hicks also recorded for Strata-East on the same day as *Steadfast*.

For more information, visit purepleasurerecords.com



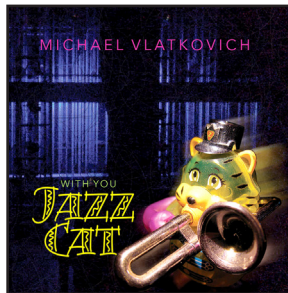
Sings Irving Berlin
Yaala Ballin (SteepleChase Lookout)
 by Marilyn Lester

Ballin and Baline—a similarity that led singer Yaala Ballin to make this new CD as she researched a possible ancestral connection. Irving Berlin, born Israel Baline on May 11th, 1888, went on to become a quintessential American songwriter with an output exceeding 1,200 tunes. He was essentially a melodist, with the ability to tell stories that deeply touched hearts. With Ballin, over 13 tracks of familiar works, the numbers don't so much pull heartstrings but are carried by solid musicality. Her phrasing and vocal dynamics are polished and she is aided by a trio who add immeasurably to the final result. First among them is bassist Ari Roland, who injects amazing energy, creativity and presence. His bowing on "Blue Skies" is perfection; this cut is one of the best on the album, its light swing working well with the tune that's famously written in a minor key, contrary to its upbeat lyric.

Ballin's slightly accented delivery (she's originally from Israel) is charming, her vocal tone clear and strong. She handles swing and trad ballads, such as "They Say That Falling in Love Is Wonderful" and "All Alone" equally well. It's on the latter that she does add emotion to technique. Jazz arrangements, by definition,

often run in contrast to traditional popular interpretations and this CD is no exception. Adding a samba beat, for instance, to "Say It Isn't So" works well with the number, even though it's usually sung as a torch song. Bookending the tracks are "It's a Lovely Day" and "Cheek to Cheek", the two swaying numbers, both buoyant and cheery. Throughout guitarist Chris Flory and pianist Michael Kanan exceed roles as mere accompanists. Their technical and artistic mastery are as important to the final product as Ballin's vocals. This is a completely enjoyable tribute to Berlin, whose popularity justly never seems to fade.

For more information, visit steeplechase.dk



With You Jazz Cat
Michael Vlatkovich (pfMENTUM)
 by Robert Bush

The West Coast has always gotten the short shrift, respect-wise, when it comes to jazz and improvised music, despite the fact that many of the greatest musicians, from Charles Mingus to Eric Dolphy to Dexter Gordon, hail from California: Los Angeles, to be exact. When multi-instrumentalist Vinny Golia migrated from New York in the late '70s, he helped create a vibrant scene that continues to thrive even

today. A key contributor to that scene is slide trombone virtuoso Michael Vlatkovich, who turns 70 this month and whose latest effort is a standout representative of the creative music scene in L.A.

This may be Vlatkovich's most accessible album to date. One can hear the influence of Mingus peering over the transom and this assemblage—Greg Zilloboog and Louis Lopez (trumpets), Bill Plakes and Andrew Pask (saxophones), Wayne Peet (keyboards), Dominic Genova (bass) and Ken Park (drums)—is definitely up to the task. Vlatkovich himself is criminally underrated in the mainstream jazz press. He's got a wonderful personal sound and singular approach to improvisation. On the opener, "Mr. 60", the listener is instantly drawn to that brawny timbre and to the rich and woody bass commentary. The trombonist also has a wicked sense of humor, most evident on clever titles like "Don't Know What You've Lost Until It's Gone", which also illustrates killer solos from trumpet and baritone saxophone. The reeds get a thorough workout and a chance to shine in wonderfully off-kilter fashion on "Bob, The Fish That Discovered Water", which contains stellar ensemble writing as well.

Another highlight comes on "Nursing Home Fashion Show", a sumptuous duo feature for piano and trombone and classic example of deep simpatico. There is an underlying current of the blues throughout the session, especially on the numerically titled, "011...923", which showcases a swaggering plunger-mute essay and an equally astonishing bass retort. Also noteworthy is "I'll Show Him Who He Thinks We Are", spotlighting a relentlessly manic alto solo from Pask, who conjured up Dolphy in mesmerizing fashion. These jazz cats take a back seat to no one regardless of geography.

For more information, visit pfmentum.com



Lauren Lee
The Queen of Cups
 available 4/30 via ears and eyes records
<http://earsandeyesrecords.bandcamp.com>

Record Release Concert Livestream
 via Soapbox Gallery
Monday May 17 8pm
<http://soapboxgallery.org>

Your Gift To The Jazz Foundation Provides Emergency Support For Basic Needs To Our Beloved Community of Jazz and Blues Musicians.

Please Donate Now:
www.JazzFoundation.Org/Donate

Fred Staton
 Photo by Richard Corman



Musa - Ancestral Streams
Stanley Cowell (Strata-East - Pure Pleasure)
Such Great Friends

Stanley Cowell, Billy Harper, Reggie Workman,
Billy Hart (Strata-East - Pure Pleasure)
by Monique Ngozi Nri

Stanley Cowell could be described as an unsung hero in the sense that while he was revered in the music community, he did not have nor did he seek the fame of his contemporaries. Though he won many awards and accolades during his lifetime, he was really a musician's musician judging by the caliber of leaders like Rahsaan Roland Kirk, Max Roach, Bobby Hutcherson, Marion Brown and Harold Land who drew upon his services. The thing that his wife Sylvia Cowell drew to this reviewer's attention on his passing last December was his role as a father and a husband. Cowell, as attested to by his daughter Sunny, took each of his roles seriously and found a way to balance a deep commitment to exploring his chosen musical instrument with an equal commitment to his family, his teaching and to social justice. Listening to and researching this pair of remastered LPs, this reviewer was struck by the quality of Cowell's relationships with his family, his fellow musicians and his students.

Musa - Ancestral Streams was his first solo piano album. The word Musa means "saved from the water" in Arabic and other languages. The album is perhaps conceived as an homage to the history of the music from which it is drawn. Released by his own record company Strata-East in 1974, this gorgeous album is dedicated to his father, Stanley R Cowell, Sr.: "His encouragement and the opportunities he provided for my musical/spiritual growth I shall always remember."

Those opportunities included the chance to meet and play for Art Tatum when he was six at the motel that his father owned. Cowell was born in Toledo, Ohio 80 years ago this month on May 5th. It was a rare thing in those days to have a Black-owned business. Many musicians frequented the motel because of segregation, allowing the younger Cowell to see the musicians and their lifestyle. Trained as a classical pianist by day at the University of Michigan, Cowell spent his nights playing jazz in the clubs. As soon as he was done with his studies, Cowell set off for New York, hoping to play with his idols.

It was a relationship that trumpeter Charles Tolliver described as "an instant bond like no other", a friendship of 53 years that began at a rehearsal for a new Max Roach Quintet. That friendship spawned the independent label Strata-East, which Cowell described in an interview as a condominium: "Charles and I created the corporation—in other words, we owned the building. The artist-producers owned their recording(s)—in other words, they owned space in the building. A legal contract agreement was mutually executed by SER and the artist-producers."

Cowell drew on the business acumen of his parents and the seminal idea for those times of owning what one had created. A Jazz Messenger blog post noted, "From the outset, presentation and quality became a central part of the creative vision. The label's sharp black and white logo by graphic designer Ted Plair set the tone. Always pressed on the finest vinyl, Strata-East's recordings were pressed in limited numbers, adding to their cultish status."

Pure Pleasure has remastered this album perfectly and faithfully reproduced the album sleeve featuring the artwork of Carol Byard, who depicts Cowell emitting spheres of orange, turquoise, blue and purple

in a trance-like state, fingers outstretched. The inside of the gatefold shows a spirit transcending in a black and white painting of ancestral symbols. Magical.

This reviewer saw Cowell and his daughter perform the song "Equipoise" at his last live recording at the Keystone Korner in Baltimore in 2020. The second track on *Musa - Ancestral Streams*, it is arguably Cowell's most admired composition, one he returned to many times and which has also been covered by many musicians and sampled by hip-hop artists like The Pharcyde. (See "Equipoise: A Critical Analysis of Covers", January 17th, 2014 by Ben Gray at nextbop.com/blog). The melody on this solo piano version is haunting, plaintive, yet hopeful. Cowell's intonation hits that sweet spot, drawing in the listener. It feels like floating on some celestial plane.

Opening "Abscretions" has a definite masculine tone, with the melody placed stridently in the bass clef. It could be a victory march or a Black man striding towards freedom. Coming of age in the '70s, Cowell was influenced by the struggles against the social injustices of the time. "Prayer For Peace", in contradiction to its title, seems to convey more of the turmoil of war than the tranquility of peace, strangely jarring with a rhythmic insistence on change. The final composition on the A-Side is unnervingly short at 2.45. Entitled "Emil Danenberg", from *The Illusion Suite*, it is the oldest composition on this side and far more abstract than any of the other pieces.

The B-Side opens with another song from *The Illusion Suite*, "Maimoun". "Travelin' Man" has been described as Cowell's anthem; he duets with himself on electric piano and mbira (thumb piano). It is a light, breezy tune. "Departures 1" is a frenetic display of virtuosity and brilliant use of every inch of the keyboard threaded with complex rhythms and scales. Cowell ends on the lush ballad "Sweet Song".

Pianist Jason Moran says of the album: "The record is close to my heart. This is the solo piano record that showed an expansive relationship to the jazz piano canon and at the same time, upended the notion of how the canon sounds. Many times Cowell sounds like ten hands instead of 10 fingers. In essence, he is a structuralist, but one that can see and okay the negative and positive of the sound. His strategies evolved the piano. Lastly, this recording is important to hip-hop producers and Stanley's sounds found a new garden to sprout from for a new generation."

Such Great Friends speaks again to relationships, this time with fellow musicians. The album cover is crisp black and white with blue accents and the title in a deeper blue. The face of each musician—Cowell, tenor saxophonist Billy Harper, bassist Reggie Workman and drummer Billy Hart—is shown with a separate picture of their hands on their instruments below. The back cover features the band whole again (photos by veteran Ray Ross, who died in 2004). Each participant (notably, for that time, each with his own publishing company) brings a composition. Three songs exceed 10 minutes except Hart's "Layla Joy"; Workman's "East Harlem Nostalgia" clocks in an impressive 16:58.

Cowell's contribution is "Sweet Song" from *Musa - Ancestral Streams*, opening with solo piano until Harper glides in. The pace is slow and measured and drums light and spare. Harper's "Destiny is Yours" has a cute melody and traditional head-solos-head form. "Layla Joy" features a short drum solo but is dominated by tenor. To close, "East Harlem Nostalgia" opens with several minutes of solo bass before the band takes us for a ride through the titular neighborhood, the hoots and hollers of Harlem streets echoing in Harper's horn.

These two reissues are excellent additions to Cowell's legacy, hopefully bringing the music to new fans. He was a practicing Buddhist and Bodhisattva of the earth and his music and spirit will live on.

For more information, visit purepleasurerecords.com



Cryptic Scattered Images of Time Forgotten
Trió Kontrasz (BMC Records)
Do Not Slam The Door!

Grencsó Collective Special 5 (with Ken Vandermark) (BMC Records)
by Steven Loewy

These albums illuminate the fascinating evolution and virtuosity of two related small groups with roots in Eastern Europe, each with an eclectic vision. The trio album, *Cryptic Scattered Images of Time Forgotten*, features the outstanding piano work of Stevan Kovács Tickmayer (also known as "István" instead of "Stevan"), reed player István Grencsó (who turns 65 this month) and drummer Szilveszter Miklós. All three perform also the Grencsó Collective Special 5' *Do Not Slam The Door!* with bassists Róbert Benkő and Ernő Hock and guest saxophonist Ken Vandermark.

Although sporting similar personnel, the two recordings are successful and gripping in their own ways. With a strong musical background in classical music, free jazz and even rock and a ticklish sense of humor, Tickmayer leads the trio through a smorgasbord of colors and inventive devices, relying on shifts in rhythm, melding genres and strong solos from the group with disparate musical elements. The results are uniquely appealing, sucking the listener into a world that shifts from radical ambient structures to fusion to wildly expressive piano improvisations, colored strongly by the pianist's writing, which keeps the trio deliciously off-balance. The contrasts are demanding and constant, including the dark, brooding, ponderous soprano of Grencsó. But whether it is the mysterious deep sounds of opener "The Wizard Garden", two-handed pounding of the piano with the creative lines from the saxophone on catchy, toe-tapping "Different Divisions and Rags" or "Sinbad Waltz", with its continually morphing explorations, the trio delights in its entirely original way. The final track, "Trash Tango", fully expresses the import of this group. It elicits laughter from the audience as it rolls a tango with crashing drums, complex silly snippets, hardcore pianisms and hilarious shifts in time.

Do Not Slam The Door! is equally compelling, but it is led by and showcases Grencsó, who shines throughout with his original sounds on flute, alto and tenor saxophones and clarinet and, critically, features Vandermark throughout. The opening "Parallel Phenomenon" sets the tone, with Vandermark and Grencsó going head-to-head, a cappella style, with the latter impressive in his sparring with the great Chicago free improviser. As with *Cryptic Scattered Images of Time Forgotten*, there are constant leaps of genre, changing instrumentation and the group seems much larger than it is. On "Curtain", the saxophones let loose with wildly exciting solos after the opening hardbop-influenced opening salvo, anchored by freestyle drumming. Contrast this with the following piece, the elegiac, atmospheric, but edgy "Only You Can Hear It", with Tickmayer plucking the piano inside with a strong bass underpinning. The pieces are diverse and demanding and along the way there are excellent contributions by every member of the band, from expressive bass solos to a range of reeds, in what is a serious and convincing effort. The Grencsó Collective Special 5 deserves greater recognition on this side of the Atlantic and perhaps the addition of Vandermark on this recording will entice some to sample this very fine album.

For more information, visit bmcrecords.hu



Improdiments
Agustí Fernández/Liudas Mockūnas (NoBusiness)
NOX
Nate Wooley, Liudas Mockūnas, Barry Guy,
Arkadijus Gotesmanas (NoBusiness)
 by Stuart Broomer

Liudas Mockūnas is a Lithuanian reed player, composer and improviser who, over the past 20 years, has built up an impressive discography, with international collaborations including duets with Marc Ducret, Barry Guy and William Hooker and groups with Vladimir Tarasov, Vyacheslav Ganelin and Raymond Strid. These two LPs, recorded at Improdimentsija (Improdimension), a Vilnius concert series, extend that documentation. Mockūnas, who turns 45 this month, may not be well known outside his native land, but he sounds perfectly at home with some of the world's most accomplished improvisers.

Improdiments, duets with Catalan pianist Agustí Fernández, comes from two different editions of the titular series, "Improdimension I" from December 2019, "Improdimension II" from October 2018, each side in three segments. "Improdimension 1" begins with Mockūnas on soprano in a remarkable display of close listening, the saxophonist and pianist mirroring one another's phrasing in a freewheeling, almost rhapsodic improvisation suggesting classical modelling and structure. The second episode takes the same attentiveness into the realm of sound exploration, the saxophonist initiating with a mad honking of metallic ducks, eventually drawing percussive punctuations of prepared piano. The segment eventually gives rise to individual flights, Mockūnas exploring rapid multiphonic runs that have their own character, followed by Fernández' forceful two-handed chromatic fantasia. When Mockūnas switches to tenor for the third segment, he shows rare discretion, emphasizing subtle distinctions in attack and tone production as well as a strange bass range. The musicians are in almost perfect lock-step, brilliantly negotiating a blank manuscript that bridges third stream and free improvisation.

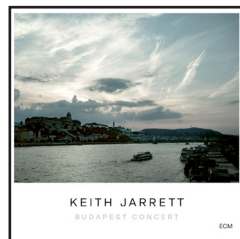
The earlier "Improdimension II" opens with a spacious reverie with Fernández moving between keyboard and strings, eventually turning to high-pitched, sliding sounds as Mockūnas enters playing his secret weapon, a contrabass clarinet he mines for complex squawks and wavering tones around the depths of the human hearing range. The middle segment is a piano solo, a powerful and characteristic Fernández invention with a broad sweep from chromatic flurries through bass rumblings and high-register tremolos, ultimately arriving at a pensive ballad. The final segment, a tour de force, has Mockūnas opening with a solo passage of contrabass clarinet in which his ability to create seemingly independent parts adds a hallucinatory element to this potent brew, which is further extended when Fernández inserts more zither-like runs inside Mockūnas' lines.

NOX presents Mockūnas in a classic quartet formation, collectively improvising with trumpeter Nate Wooley, English bassist Guy and the veteran Lithuanian drummer Arkadijus Gotesmanas. The side-long "Multa Dies" assembles itself gradually, with Mockūnas on an emotionally taut sopranino exchanging brief phrases with Wooley as Guy throws off decorative runs. The first phase that hints at the group's power is a dialogue between Wooley and Mockūnas consisting of alternating high-pitched cries that build both emotional and physical resonance, leading to an intense soprano

solo with strongly interlaced support from Guy and Gotesmanas, a subtle drummer whose contributions move quickly from subtle inflection to explosive force. Mockūnas works in his other horns, tenor and contrabass clarinet, in the evolving sonic textures of the piece.

"Multa Nox" is as subtle as collective improvisation can be, at times a delicate reverie that seems to be heard through quicksilver bass, at once slow and resonant with sudden delicate flights into the upper register, as Wooley moves from muted to open trumpet and Mockūnas explores high harmonics on his contrabass clarinet, creating a kind of bass whistling. As the music gradually grows in intensity, Gotesmanas adds rapid snare punctuations before it turns to a slow, pitch-bending passage of trumpet with some bass mirroring, finally concluding in a kind of dour lullaby of trumpet, contrabass clarinet rumbles and bowed bass harmonics. The concluding "Multa Lux" is hyper free jazz, with constantly shifting voices cascading over one another, including Wooley's damp-air whistles and Mockūnas' bizarre bass register on tenor. It's another masterful study in collectivized movement, with constantly changing individual inputs from the musicians somehow forming a continuous tapestry of sounds.

For more information, visit nobusinessrecords.com



Budapest Concert
Keith Jarrett (ECM)
 by George Grella

With the knowledge that two strokes Keith Jarrett (who turns 76 this month) suffered in 2018 have made it likely he'll never play piano in public again, it's tempting to hear the two-CD *Budapest Concert* album as a capstone. If this is indeed the last new Jarrett album we'll hear—recorded in 2016, it's actually an archival release—then it's by default the former, but it's the latter only in the sense that his extensive and substantial series of live, improvised concerts are, each and every one, a summation of all the things that have made him the musician he is, heard in that moment.

Within the world of free improvisation, Jarrett's career is singular both for the mass appeal of his playing and the aesthetic of a focus on order he brings to the keyboard. That method, creating spontaneous material and shaping it into clear forms and structures, is the reason why he has sold millions of copies of completely free albums like the *Köln Concert*. It is as profound a way to make music as any other approach to free playing and it has its own unique dangers.

Budapest Concert, like the rest of his late period improvised albums, is very different than *Köln Concert*, a series of shorter pieces that go through a variety of moods and models, rather than the extended explorations and vamps of the earlier album. It's also as fine a concert album as he's produced. His technique is not as pristine as it was last century—there are some passages where his fingers muddle his thoughts—and on a couple tracks, like "Part X" (every original title is generic), he spends too much time on a banal sequence of chords. The rewards, however, are both frequent and tremendous. There's plenty of his driving, soulful rhythms—Jarrett is one of the swinging-est modern jazz musicians—and there's a substantial focus on spontaneous ballads, which are, in a word, exquisite. On tracks like "Part V", which opens Disc 2, he pulls together harmonies and melody that match the finest songwriters in the Great American Songbook. The way he shades dynamics and shapes phases is so subtle and logical that it seems he's lived with these tunes for

decades, even though he's making them up on the spot. Which in a way he has; each of these pieces is deeply communicative and seems to get at the essence of Jarrett's musical thinking and even being.

The large-scale pace and shape of the concert is also superb, another feature of Jarrett's masterful improvising; he's thinking in the moment while also keeping track of the overall direction across 90 minutes. "Part X", one of the relatively weaker tracks, is the last of the regular recital, then Jarrett returns for four encores: a ballad, a blues and luscious and heartbreaking readings of "It's a Lonesome Old Town" and "Answer Me".

For more information, visit ecmrecords.com

DROP THE NEEDLE



Something's Up
Doug Raney (SteepleChase)
 by Scott Yanow

Doug Raney, who died five years ago this month at only 59, was a fluent bop-based guitarist with a cool sound who sounded relaxed even when playing double-time runs over rapid tempos. The son of guitarist Jimmy Raney, the scion had a similar style as his father with perhaps a slightly darker tone. He had such a clear singing sound that it is difficult to believe that he started out as a teenager playing rock.

Raney had switched to jazz by the time he worked with pianist Al Haig in 1974 when he was 18. Three years later he toured Europe with his father as a duo and soon had permanently moved to Copenhagen. Raney had a long-time association with the SteepleChase label, appearing on many records as a sideman. The liner notes for this newly reissued LP say that *Something's Up* was his 11th album for the label as a leader; there would be seven more and each was consistently rewarding.

For this set from Feb. 26th, 1988, the then-31-year-old guitarist teams up with his regular pianist of the time Ben Besiakov, another Dane in bassist Jesper Lundgaard and drummer Billy Hart. Raney is the main soloist although Besiakov (who sometimes recalls early Herbie Hancock and Wynton Kelly) makes the most of his solo space. While mostly found in a supportive role, Lundgaard and Hart also have a few short solos.

The quartet performs Raney's augmented medium-tempo minor blues title track (which has many creative choruses from the guitarist), an extended version of Irene Higginbotham-Ervin Drake-Dan Fisher's "Good Morning Heartache", Billy Strayhorn's "Upper Manhattan Medical Group", a melodic take on Jerome Kern-Oscar Hammerstein's "Nobody Else But Me" and a pair of driving Raney originals: "Speedy Recovery" and "Visceral Drives". Their playing fits into the mainstream of hardbop yet never sounds predictable with the guitarist constantly pushing himself, particularly during the title track and "Visceral Drives".

Something's Up is an excellent place to start in exploring the musical talents of Doug Raney.

For more information, visit steeplechase.dk

★ ★
★ the ★
★ Open at 6pm! ★

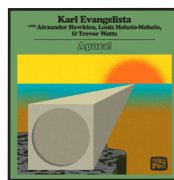
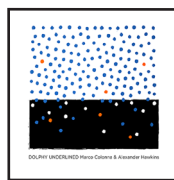
DJANGO

LIVE! ★
On Stage! ★
ALL IN PERSON

SAT 5/1	ANWAR MARSHALL TRIO LEZLIE HARRISON	7PM 9PM
WED 5/5	TRIO GUATACA FEAT. JAINARDO BATISTA MANNY A & THE Q-BAND	7PM 9PM
THR 5/6	ED CHERRY TRIO IAN HENDRICKSON-SMITH	7PM 9PM
FRI 5/7	DAVID KIKOSKI TRIO KEN FOWSER QUINTET FEAT. WILLIE JONES III	7PM 9PM
SAT 5/8	PASQUALE GRASSO TRIO MICHAEL ARENELLA QUINTET	7PM 9PM
WED 5/12	BENNY BENACK LAUREN HENDERSON	7PM 9PM
THU 5/13	ALEX CLAFFY TRIO STEVEN FEIFKE ALBUM RELEASE EVENT	7PM 9PM
FRI 5/14	WAYNE ESCOFFERY TRIO KEN FOWSER QUINTET FEAT. DONALD VEGA	7PM 9PM
SAT 5/15	JASON TIEMANN MIKE LEDONNE QUARTET	7PM 9PM
WED 5/19	JOHN DOKES MARIANNE SOLIVAN	7PM 9PM
THU 5/20	RALE MICIC TRIO ALBUM RELEASE EVENT BRANDI DISTERHEFT QUARTET	7PM 9PM
FRI 5/21	STACY DILLARD TRIO KEN FOWSER QUINTET FEAT. PETER BERNSTEIN	7PM 9PM
SAT 5/22	JOE BLOCK TRIO PRETTY FOR THE PEOPLE	7PM 9PM
WED 5/26	IMANI ROUSSELLE SAMARA JOY	7PM 9PM
THR 5/27	CHARLES GOOLD FEAT. TRIPTYCH MARK WHITFIELD	7PM 9PM
FRI 5/28	RICK GERMANSON TRIO ANTOINE DRYE	7PM 9PM
SAT 5/29	NICK HEMPTON TRIO JOE FARNSWORTH	7PM 9PM

View LINE-UP
Reserve
2 AVE. OF THE AMERICAS
Celtar Level
THE DJANGO NYC .COM
OPENTABLE .COM
TRIBECA

**DINNER, LIBATIONS & LIVE JAZZ!
IN THE ♥ OF TRIBECA**



Dolphy Underlined
Marco Colonna & Alexander Hawkins
(Fundacja Sluchaj)
Togetherness Music (For Sixteen Musicians)
Featuring Evan Parker + Riot Ensemble
Alexander Hawkins (Intakt)
Apura!
Karl Evangelista (with Alexander Hawkins,
Louis Moholo-Moholo & Trevor Watts)
(Astral Spirits)
by Kurt Gottschalk

Like others of the generation who fed into what Gunther Schuller would call “Third Stream”, Eric Dolphy was frustrated during his all-too-short life that, by virtue of skin color, he was excluded from a career as a composer. He did, however, leave a small but potent body of work, which, occasionally, not often enough, gets visited by musicians attuned to his labyrinthine themes.

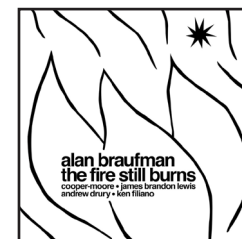
Italian reedplayer Marco Colonna and British pianist Alexander Hawkins (who turns 40 this month) delve into what the master left behind on *Dolphy Underlined*, a set of nine solos and duets ruminating on the familiar themes. They make for a wonderfully intuitive duo—the way they slide in and out of “Out to Lunch” is nothing short of gorgeous. It’s fascinating to hear Hawkins shift from chordal accompaniment (with variations) to mirroring the saxophone lines, or more precisely mirroring the feel of the saxophone, in “Something Sweet, Something Tender”, approximating the glissandi and semi-tones of the horn, suggesting things of which the piano is incapable. In a solo take on “Gazzelloni”, Hawkins finds some unexpected hints of ragtime and barrelhouse without painting the tune as a throwback. And Colonna recalls Dolphy’s fine solo bass clarinet excursions into “God Bless the Child” with his own reverently personal rendition. It’s not at all difficult to project an aching nostalgia onto their lovingly played renditions.

There’s no way of knowing what kind of composer Dolphy might have become had time and diabetes allowed, but the insightful and intuitive compositions on Hawkins’ *Togetherness Music* could be taken as grist for the imagination. The set of 6 pieces for 16 musicians—Rachel Musson (flute, tenor saxophone), Percy Pursglove (trumpet), James Arben (flute, bass clarinet), Neil Charles (bass), Mark Sanders (drums), Matthew Wright (electronics), Benedict Taylor (viola), Hannah Marshall (cello) and The Riot Ensemble: Mandhira de Saram (violin), Marie Schreer (violin), Stephen Upshaw (viola) and Louise McMonagle (cello) and Marianne Schofield (bass)—is wonderfully well structured, plenty of open space without devolving into chaos. The opening composition seems to call the featured soloist out from its very title. “Indistinguishable From Magic” is, like Duke Ellington’s “Concerto for Cootie”, a feature not so much for a particular instrument as for its player, in this instance countryman Evan Parker (with whom Hawkins recorded a set of duets back in 2016, *Leaps in Leicester*, for Clean Feed). It’s a stunning 10-minute vehicle for the unmistakable sound of his saxophone. A couple of densities for strings follow before Hawkins finally comes out swinging on “Leaving the Classroom of a Beloved Teacher” (he plays before that, but here he gives himself the spotlight). A serenity follows under the unlikely title “Ecstatic Baobabs” and the album closes with some nice rickety jazz in “Optimism of the Will”. This isn’t Hawkins’ first outing as a leader (do not miss his 2017 quartet with vocalist Elaine Mitchener, also on Intakt), but it’s his first with a band this big and he manages exceedingly well.

Hawkins also, of course, has done plenty of work as a sideman and bandmember (of particular note is his organ playing with the trio Decoy). Most recently,

he can be heard in an expansive double-CD set led by guitarist Karl Evangelista. The up-and-comer put together an impressive ensemble for the project, with Hawkins, British saxophonist Trevor Watts and South African drummer Louis Moholo-Moholo in what (as Evangelista points out in his liner notes) may be the first time the latter pair have recorded together since the ‘80s. It’s a mostly free session, with strong and enjoyable ties connecting saxophone and guitar on the one side and piano and drums on the other. The mix often favors Evangelista, which isn’t much of a detriment as he consistently rewards the attention paid. Hawkins is given interesting problems to solve across *Apura!*’s 100 minutes and consistently engages and resolves. He continues to be a name to watch.

For more information, visit fsrecords.net, intaktrec.ch and astralspiritsrecords.com



The Fire Still Burns
Alan Braufman (Valley of Search)
by Phil Freeman

Alto saxophonist Alan Braufman (who turns 70 this month) was at the heart of the New York Loft scene of the early ‘70s. He, late saxophonist David S. Ware, multi-instrumentalist Cooper-Moore (then known as Gene Ashton), bassist Chris Amberger, drummer Tom Bruno and others lived together at 501 Canal Street, where they performed their own music and allowed others to play as well. Braufman claims that 501 Canal was the site of one of David Murray’s earliest New York performances.

In addition to making his own album, *Valley of Search*, which was released on India Navigation in 1975 and reissued in 2018, he performed on Cecil McBee’s *Mutima*, Carla Bley’s *Musique Mecanique* and William Hooker’s *Brighter Lights* and *Lifelines*. But he disappeared in the ‘80s, abandoning the East Coast for Salt Lake City.

The Fire Still Burns was inspired by the warm reception the *Valley of Search* reissue was given. Braufman reunited with Cooper-Moore and tenor saxophonist James Brandon Lewis, bassist Ken Filiano and drummer Andrew Drury round out the lineup. The album packs eight tracks into just 36 minutes and they blend smoothly into one another. The opening “Sunrise” is a spiritual jazz fanfare, a calling to order, with Braufman and Lewis sharing an almost liturgical melody as the rhythm section rumbles like an approaching tide. Eventually, Braufman takes a keening, forceful solo (his tone on alto is extremely impressive, as powerful as the late Arthur Blythe) as Cooper-Moore lays down gospel chords and trilling extrapolations behind him. The pianist launches the next piece, “Morning Bazaar”, solo and when the band comes in, the groove and the uplifting, praise-the-sun melody recall the kind of rocking swing in which Kamasi Washington’s groups specialize. Braufman switches to flute, an instrument on which he’s extremely skilled.

The entire album shifts back and forth between gospel-flavored soul jazz (“Alone Again”, “City Nights”) and raucous free eruptions (“No Floor No Ceiling”, “Creation”). Braufman and Lewis are an excellent team, the vast difference in their ages rendered trivial by their intuitive musical communication and Cooper-Moore, Filiano and Drury never let up. This is a serious, thoughtful artistic statement.

For more information, visit alanbraufman.bandcamp.com

(INTERVIEW CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6)

TNYCJR: How have you been affected by the pandemic? I know you've been leading the Louis Armstrong Legacy Jazz Jam at Flushing Town Hall. You told me it's been virtual for a while, but you're hoping to go back into the hall.

CS: It's been a very interesting ride for me. First of all, I did get COVID—at the end of March last year and I had it through April and May. So I stayed home and when I got tested I had antibodies. I felt a little better by June. And then all year I had long-haul COVID, all kinds of stuff. I'm feeling much better just this month. As soon as I could, some of the parents of students I teach urged me to go virtual. I was reluctant, but then I tried it and found that for certain age groups it really worked well. I've resumed lessons in person with a few families, but most are still virtual.

And I started back with the Town Hall again, as a virtual concert rather than a jam session. I didn't realize it would work so well virtually. In fact, we expanded our audience worldwide. We have people from Italy, New Zealand and Australia sending in files they do at home, impromptu recordings. So it's like a jam in that sense, but we don't play together.

TNYCJR: And the status of the Astoria Big Band?

CS: We got a grant to do a concert, which was originally supposed to happen in December 2020. Now it's on May 29th, outside a church in Sunnyside. People in and outside the band are writing arrangements for us. It's going to be women composers of popular music.

TNYCJR: The last recording you made was *Live at Saint Peter's Church* with your quartet in 2019. Are you thinking of making another record?

CS: Yes, though I doubt it will be a CD. CDs seem to be going out of fashion. But whatever medium it is, I think the best thing would be to record my own compositions. I've put one or two on each of the 10 CDs and one LP I've made.

TNYCJR: As a writer, who are your biggest influences?

CS: It's such a hard question, there are so many good writers. Tadd Dameron writes one gem after another, Sonny Rollins. I have a book of Gerry Mulligan's compositions and they are very interesting...and not easy.

TNYCJR: When I was young, I used to think Mulligan was really square, but with age you acquire wisdom and now I think he was some kind of genius.

CS: There's something in what you say about those concepts we have when we're young. When I was at Smith, [trumpeter] Louis Armstrong came and played. I went but there was hardly anyone else there. But when [bassist] Charles Mingus also came that same year, the place was packed. Mingus was in, but Armstrong was out. Now we know Louis as one of the all-time great teachers for all of us. ❖

For more information, visit sudhalter.com. *Sudhalter live-streams May 12th at flushingtowhall.org/virtual-jazz-jam-may-2021 and appears live May 29th at Sunnyside Reformed Church.*

Recommended Listening:

- Carol Sudhalter — *Hey There* (Carolina, 1984-85)
- Carol Sudhalter — *It's Time* (s/r, 2001)
- Carol Sudhalter's Astoria Jazz Band — *Last Train to Astoria* (Carolina, 2002)
- Carol Sudhalter — *Shades of Carol* (Alfa Music/Rai Trade, 2005)

- Carmelo Leotta/Carol Sudhalter — *Carmelo & Carol Remember The Great Film Music of The Sixties* (Geco, 2010)
- Carol Sudhalter Quartet — *Live at Saint Peter's Church* (Alfa Music, 2019)

(ENCORE CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8)

left, thinking the concert was over. By the second interval it was really getting late and a lot more people left, thinking this must surely be the end. We completed the concert to a small scattering of die-hards... In fact we had given the Jazz Festival rather more than it bargained for... Next morning the organizers wouldn't look us in the eye and the reviews were poor." Following sales and the influence of the album more than vindicated it. Included in the period are *Mama Chicago*, a musical devoted to the Prohibition Era, and *Love for Sale*, probably the best recording of the long-standing trio of the Westbrooks with saxophonist Chris Biscoe, weaving a tale of sentiment and social protest through classic songs by Weill, Porter and Holst and original compositions on texts by Rimbaud, Blake, Kate Westbrook and Anne LePape. After *Smith's Hotel* from 1983 Westbrook introduced the "infamous Smith's Hotel chord", a harmonic development that could be his own harmolodia: "a way of superimposing a pattern on another, a conventional chord with a kind of free counterpoint, which gives intervals and clusters."

Two major albums for hatART of the '80s present very different tributes to composers: *On Duke's Birthday* is a suite of original compositions while *Westbrook-Rossini* is based on rearranged versions of the Italian opera composer's music. Westbrook always has a special relationship with Italy. Filippo Bianchi was instrumental in the commission of Westbrook's Beatles project, *Off Abbey Road*, subsequently released on Enja, for the Reggio Emilia festival in 1988. Pompeo Benincasa from Catania Jazz invited Westbrook in 1992, with guest Italian trombonist Danilo Terenzi and French violinist Dominique Pifarely, for a concert that was recently released.

The latter double CD is a remarkable synthesis of Westbrook's music from reinterpretations of Ellington and Weill to settings in music of Blake's poetry in a vibrant live environment. The release is dedicated to the late Jon Hiseman, of Colosseum fame and sometime Westbrook collaborator, who died shortly after bringing back to life the problematic live recordings. It was a momentous event, chronicled at the time by Morton on *The Wire* and rightly celebrated in a unique 2018 concert in the same Sicilian city with the Uncommon Orchestra, the 20+-member group established in 2016 by Westbrook in the mold of his Metropolis band. On the *Jazz Motion Picture Show* you can enjoy the rendition of the traditional Sicilian folksong "Lu Me Sceccu (My Ass)" with Pete Whyman on clarinet. In Westbrook's own words, the Catania festival was "the best gift a composer ever had." ❖

For more information, visit westbrookjazz.co.uk

Recommended Listening:

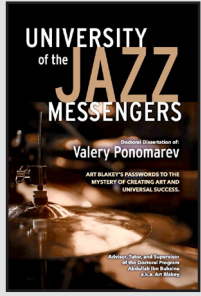
- Mike Westbrook Concert Band — *Celebration* (Deram, 1967)
- Mike Westbrook Orchestra — *Metropolis* (RCA, 1971)
- Mike Westbrook (featuring John Surman) — *Love And Understanding* (Citadel/Room 315 Sweden '74) (My Only Desire, 1974)
- Mike Westbrook Orchestra — *Love/Dream and Variations* (Transatlantic, 1976)
- Mike Westbrook Orchestra — *On Duke's Birthday* (hatOLOGY, 1984)
- Mike Westbrook — *Starcross Bridge* (hatOLOGY, 2017)

(LABEL CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9)

good indicator of the label's mindset. Improvisation is at the heart of the music, but there are no boundaries. Since taking over the label my concerns have been to curate John Jack's legacy by protecting the tape archive, reissuing albums and releasing both projects he had planned and new material that to my mind would have been of interest to him. The goals of the label when it was founded were to document the scene and to support the artists. We continue to do that in our idiosyncratic way." ❖

For more information, visit cadillacrecords77.com

IN PRINT



University of the Jazz Messengers
Valery Ponomarev (BookBaby)
by Ken Dryden

A young jazz musician desirous of a professional career once he or she completes a college jazz program still has a lot to learn about what is expected by a bandleader or an audience. Sloppy appearance, looking bored or unhappy on stage, arriving late for a performance and overly long solos are some of the many pitfalls that musicians can take years to learn if they don't first work for a seasoned leader.

Over-three plus decades, drummer Art Blakey groomed myriad young artists for success by teaching them, pushing them to compose and arrange for his band and to give their best at all times. But it was his frequent statements ("Music washes away the dust of everyday life" and "If you make a mistake, make it loud! Make music out of it") that stayed with most Messengers, even long after they left to form their own groups.

Russian trumpeter Valery Ponomarev is one of the many Messengers (Blakey reminded his players that they were always Messengers, even after becoming leaders themselves) who took the drummer's often pithy statements about how to be a jazz musician to heart. This brief book compiles all the ones Ponomarev could remember. He then explains his interpretation of each piece of advice or philosophy, reminding instrumentalists that there is much to work on to make the best possible music and develop a fan base, sometimes things that aren't so obvious.

Whether it is learning a lyric to song before you solo on it (to help understand the mood of the work, something non-Messengers like Ben Webster and Dexter Gordon both understood); emphasizing the importance of playing in public; hanging out at others' shows and releasing new albums ("If you don't appear, you disappear"); overlong solos ("They are applauding because they are happy you finished"); or keeping music fresh (in the studio, "The first take is the best take"), Blakey's remarks stand the test of time. Ponomarev's book should be mandatory reading, not only for aspiring young players, but also veterans who can take an audience, interview or their fellow musicians for granted.

For more information, visit vponomarev.com. Ponomarev live-streams May 13th at soapboxgallery.org.

