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‘Tis the season for The Little Drummer Boy. But that metronomic kid has had more than his fair share of attention since 1941. What about the little bassist boys and girls? Seems un-holiday-like to ignore them, leave proverbial lumps of coal in their stocking, no? So this issue is devoted to all those hard-working bassists, lugging their instruments through the snowdrifts outside your window. There should be a special “nice” list just for them.

George Mraz (Cover) has been a veritable Santa’s Helper for everyone from Oscar Peterson to Joe Lovano but this month he drives the sleigh himself in a rare leader gig. Matthew Garrison (Interview) learned his craft around the Christmas tree from his legendary dad and roasts chestnuts in his own ShapeShifter Lab club. Thomas Morgan (Artist Feature) looks elfin and his playing is indeed magical, bringing good cheer to others. We’ve got three wise men in the form of Chris White (Encore), the late “Pops” Foster (Lest We Forget) and recently departed Jack Bruce (In Memoriam) and we’ll fill up your 12 days of Christmas, eight days of Hanukkah and seven days of Kwanzaa with a special section of bassist-led CD reviews (pg. 16-21).

Enough innuendo. The holidays are about commerce. We have ideas for you in our Gift Guide. And we don’t even charge a commission. What could be more holiday-spirited than that?

On The Cover: George Mraz (photo by Alan Nahigian)

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**Dec. Weekends + Holiday Schedule**

12/6, 12/6 & 12/7

**George Cables Quartet**

Craig Handy (ts & fl) George Cables (p)
Essiet Essiet (b) Victor Lewis (d)

12/12, 12/13 & 12/14

**Jacky Terrasson Quartet**

Jacky Terrasson (p) Burniss Travis III (b)
Jonathan Pinson (d) Mauricio Herrera (perc)

**Countdown 2015 Coltrane Festival**

12/19 - 12/22 - Coltrane Festival

Gary Bartz (saxes) Barney McAll (p)
James King (b) Greg Bandy (d)

12/23 - 12/25 - Coltrane Festival

**Eric Alexander & Harold Mabern Quartet**

feat. Louis Hayes
Eric Alexander (ts) Harold Mabern (p)
Doug Weiss (b) Louis Hayes (d)

12/26 - 12/1/15 - Coltrane Festival

**Eric Alexander & Harold Mabern Sextet**

feat. Jeremy Pelt & Vincent Herring
Jeremy Pelt (tp) Vincent Herring (alto sax) Eric Alexander (ts)
Harold Mabern (p) John Webber (b) Joe Farnsworth (d)

**DEC. Weeknights**

**M 12/1**

Fraternity Order of Jazz
Featuring Duane Eubanks

**Tu 12/2**

Mike Ledonne's Groover Quartet

**W 12/3**

Sharel Cassity Quintet

**Th 12/4**

Cynthia Scott

**M 12/8**

The Captain Black Big Band

**Tu 12/9**

Mike Ledonne's Groover Quartet

**W 12/10**

Tommy Campbell & Vocal-Eyes
Featuring Carolyn Leonhart & Miles Griffith

**Th 12/11**

The Baylor Project

**M 12/15**

Fraternity Order of Jazz
Featuring Eddie Henderson

**Tu 12/16**

Mike Ledonne's Groover Quartet

**W 12/17**

Dezron Douglas Black Lion Quartet

**Th 12/18**

Freddie Bryant's
Latin-Brazilian Holiday Sextet
Featuring Steve Wilson

**SUNDAY JAZZ BRUNCH**

**Su** Annette St. John & Her Trio

**DEC. Round Midnight**

**Tu** Emmett Cohen Organ Trio

**W** Camille Thurman Quartet

**Th** Nickle & Dime Ops

**F** Patience Higgins' Sugar Hill Quartet

**Sa** Johnny O'Neal & Friends

**Su** Wilerm Delisfort Quartet

**THE SMOKE JAM SESSION FEAT. SPECIAL GUESTS & HOSTED BY**

**M 12/1** John Farnsworth

**M 12/8** Orrin Evans

**M 12/15** John Farnsworth

**SUNDAY JAZZ BRUNCH**

**Su** Annette St. John & Her Trio

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**Countdown 2015 Coltrane Festival**

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Eric Alexander & Harold Mabern Sextet

feat. Jeremy Pelt & Vincent Herring
Jeremy Pelt (tp) Vincent Herring (alto sax) Eric Alexander (ts)
Harold Mabern (p) John Webber (b) Joe Farnsworth (d)
Oliver Lake took on the challenging instrumentalization of four alto saxophones plus Pheeroan akLaff’s drums as part of the AACM-New York fall concert series at the Community Church of New York (Nov. 7th). Lake is, of course, a founding member of the landmark World Saxophone Quartet (WSQ), which is voiced like a classic string quartet—at least most of the time—while his Alto Madness employed four similar voices. And although WSQ tends to be programmatically driven (DeEllington, Jimi Hendrix, R&B, politics) here he seemed to run through a history of what he had learned over close to 40 years composing for and working with like voices, from layered harmonies to full-on sound wall to drones and loops. The saxophonists (Darius Jones, Bruce Williams and Anthony Ware) played off-mic, which made their voices meld almost all the more. It was great to hear the church’s natural resonance. Much of the group parts were written in close harmonies, closer than the commonality of the instruments would dictate, but when they got to some lavish expansions in “Net Down”, it was impossible to keep that more storied sax quartet from coming to mind. Lake explored not just the possibilities of the instrumentation but also the potential of the players in unaccompanied sections.

They tried to march, he strutted: they tried to squeal, he serenaded. He wasn’t being contentious, but he was under them. If they pulled back, Coleman pulled back, and “PiPi PiPi”, the set’s opener, unfolded a catchy folk melody in stacked phrases set in 7/4, then shifted between accents of twos and threes, with round-robin soloing. Prieto’s solo here and elsewhere was an excursion in polyrhythmic independence, each of his limbs sounding like a separate percussionist. “Clavates”, a labyrinthine exploration of the clave (“key”) rhythm, never sacrificed feel for formal complexity; “Seven by Seven” floated like an odd-metered tango, ending with Valera’s soulful statements; “Ilu-ilu”, based on a metric palindrome, alternated between the darker and lighter sides of the beat; “Just Go” exhibited engaging group interplay and a conversational tenor saxophone solo; and “Blah Blah” featured yet another formidable drum disquisition. “Trio Absolute”, the finale, began with Prieto’s amazing seat solo sung over a fast rhumba clave, followed by a two-handed rattle and shaker solo by Apfelbaum and then a climactic three-part drum solo where Prieto played with the tempo, stretching it in 7/4, then shifted between accents of twos and threes, with round-robin soloing. Prieto’s solo here and elsewhere was an excursion in polyrhythmic independence, each of his limbs sounding like a separate percussionist. “Clavates”, a labyrinthine exploration of the clave (“key”) rhythm, never sacrificed feel for formal complexity; “Seven by Seven” floated like an odd-metered tango, ending with Valera’s soulful statements; “Ilu-ilu”, based on a metric palindrome, alternated between the darker and lighter sides of the beat; “Just Go” exhibited engaging group interplay and a conversational tenor saxophone solo; and “Blah Blah” featured yet another formidable drum disquisition. “Trio Absolute”, the finale, began with Prieto’s amazing seat solo sung over a fast rhumba clave, followed by a two-handed rattle and shaker solo by Apfelbaum and then a climactic three-part drum solo where Prieto played with the tempo, stretching it like a rubber band.

—Tom Greenland

Moving from James P. Johnson to Butch Morris and from solo to trio, Anthony Coleman played a pair of wide-ranging sets at the Greenwich House Music School (Nov. 6th). In the latter he found jazz, rags and formal voicings as if it were a medley while a second Johnson piece charted a gradual dissolution. Between the two he played his own “Oogenera”, dedicated to Butch Morris. The slow sonata was structured to work like one of Morris’ conducted improvisations, with built-in choices built-in to be made mid-stream, but had little of the “locked grooves” of Morris’ music until the third movement when a repeated bass chord seemed like a church bell ringing in Morris’ memory. A final solo piece began with a reading about exhaustion and competition in contemporary society before making a tangle of Cole Porter with contemporary clustering. Coleman was joined in the second set by saxophonist Michael Attias and drummer Mike Pride for a 30-minute game of cat-and-mouse. The pair were relentless in their drive and continuity came from volution as Coleman repeatedly pulled thematic rags out from under them. If they pulled back, Coleman pulled back further. If they slowed, he got up and walked off stage. They tried to march, he strutted: they tried to squeal, he serenaded. He wasn’t being contentious, but he was mischievous. They finally converged in open waters, giving in to the temptation to play somewhat together until Coleman stopped suddenly, watching for reactions with a devilish smile.

—Kurt Gottschalk

Queens’ historic Flushing Town Hall hosted drummer/composer Dafnis Prieto’s Si o Si (“Yes or Yes”) Quintet (Oct. 8th), an A-team aggregate (multi-instrumentalist Peter Apfelbaum, pianist Manuel Valera and bassist Johannes Weidenmuller) that epitomizes the can-do attitude implied by its name. Raised in Santa Clara, Cuba, equally facile with street beats as he is with conservatory techniques, Prieto can—and does—do it all. “Si o Si”, the set’s opener, unfolded a catchy folk melody in stacked phrases set in 7/4, then shifted between accents of twos and threes, with round-robin soloing. Prieto’s solo here and elsewhere was an excursion in polyrhythmic independence, each of his limbs sounding like a separate percussionist. “Clavates”, a labyrinthine exploration of the clave (“key”) rhythm, never sacrificed feel for formal complexity; “Seven by Seven” floated like an odd-metered tango, ending with Valera’s soulful statements; “Ilu-ilu”, based on a metric palindrome, alternated between the darker and lighter sides of the beat; “Just Go” exhibited engaging group interplay and a conversational tenor saxophone solo; and “Blah Blah” featured yet another formidable drum disquisition. “Trio Absolute”, the finale, began with Prieto’s amazing seat solo sung over a fast rhumba clave, followed by a two-handed rattle and shaker solo by Apfelbaum and then a climactic three-part drum solo where Prieto played with the tempo, stretching it like a rubber band.

—Tom Greenland

Ever since his 2007 release Back East, tenor saxophonist Joshua Redman has grappled with the pianoless trio format, a setting that puts considerable pressure on—even as it provides the utmost freedom for—the frontman (or –woman). On Halloween at the Village Vanguard, Redman was in a second-set mood, striding onto wearing a three-dollar bat mask purchased for the occasion and, with a “Nice and peppy!” directive to bassist Reuben Rogers and drummer Gregory Hutchinson, launched into Matt Penman’s funky ditty “Two Steps”, followed by Thelonious Monk’s seasonally appropriate “Friday the 13th”, which segued into an up-Latin take on Brook Bowman’s “East of the Sun (and West of the Moon)”. The audience was slow to warm, disconcerted perhaps by Redman’s bemasked men, audibly relieved when he finally doffed the mask and donned a soprano saxophone for “Zarahaf”, a beautiful and unusual song written for his mother, structured on ten-beat phrases and evoking a Middle Eastern modality. Redman’s tone, spartan or obviating the need for a chording instrument and phrasing and intelligent lyricism are impeccable, as part of the AACM-New York fall concert series at the Community Church of New York (Nov. 7th).
Michael Blake is a tenor saxophonist. That fact is clear from the cover of his new Sunnyside album *Tiddy Boom*, itself an oblique tribute to a pair of giants on the instrument: Coleman "Hawk" Hawkins and Lester "Prez" Young. But in all of Blake’s history, from membership in The Lounge Lizards and the Jazz Composers Collective (JCC) to his discography as a leader, he may never have been more of a tenor saxophonist than he was at Jazz at Kitano (Nov. 12th), celebrating the release of the aforementioned disc with JCC chums Frank Kimbrough (piano) and Ben Allison (bass) plus depping drummer Jeremy "Bean" Clemons. Blake has always been a compelling author—the music came via a Chamber Music America New Works grant—but what the packed house saw was a man possessed, possibly channeling the musical ghosts he was fitting. In a 60-minute set, the quartet played four tunes from the disc, not counting a seven-minute ballad encore. Average that out and you get lengthily workouts that heavily featured Blake’s gorgeously pure tone (with only occasional forays in overblowing). That is not to ignore the contributions of his band—Kimbrough was virtuosic; Allison may never have swung so hard and Clemons is a refreshingly attentive drummer—but the night was about Blake, evinced by the lengthy improvised outros given to each song, doubling their lengths from the album versions, the saxophonist flush with creative twists and dynamic alterations. Time for Blake to get his own nickname. —Andrey Henkin

**What's News**

The winners of the 2014 Thelonious Monk International Jazz Competition for Trumpet have been announced. Marquis Hill of Chicago took top honors, Billy Buss of Berkeley came in second and Adam O’Farrill of Brooklyn was the third-place finisher. For more information, visit monkinstitute.org.

The winners of the 15th Annual Latin Grammy Awards have been announced. The winners in relevant categories are Best Instrumental Album: Final Night At Birdland — Arturo O’Farrill & The Chico O’Farrill Afro-Cuban Jazz Orchestra (ZOHO); Best Tango Album: Tangos — Rubén Blades (Sunnyside); Best Flamenco Album: Canción Andaluza — Paco de Lucía (Universal Music Spain); and Best Latin Jazz Album: a tie between The Vigil — Chick Corea (Concord Jazz/Sterch Records) and Song For Maura — Paquito D’Rivera & Trio Corrente (Paquito Records/Sunnyside). For more information, visit latin Grammy.com.

Ashleigh Smith has been named the winner of the third Annual Sarah Vaughan Vocal Competition, AKF the Sassy Awards. The second-place winner was Shacara Rogers and the third-place winner was Sarah McKenzie. Smith will receive $5,000 and a contract with Concord Music Group. For more information, visit sarahvaughancompetition.com.

Trumpeter Chris Botti (who plays his annual three-week holiday run at Blue Note starting Dec. 15th) performed the National Anthem during the broadcast of the Monday Night Football game between the visiting Indianapolis Colts and the New York Giants last month.

ACT Records President Siggi Loch received the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany in a ceremony in Berlin last month.

**Café Society Swing**, a theatrical show, by Alex Webb, directed by Simon Green and featuring vocalists Cyrille Aimée, Charenee Wade and Allan Harris about the legendary New York venue, will have a run at 59E59 Theaters Dec. 16th-Jan. 4th. For more information, visit 59e59.org.

Drawings by the late multi-raid legend Yusel Lateef, Towards The Unknown, will be exhibited at the White Columns gallery at 320 W. 13th Street through Dec. 20th. For more information, visit whitecolumns.org.

Ben Young has left his position as Director of Columbia University’s WKCR (89.9 FM) radio.

Randall Kline, founder of SFJAZZ, will be honored at the 2015 Jazz Connect Conference, to be held at Saint Peter’s Church Jan. 8th-9th, 2015. Pre-registration has started for the event. For more information, visit sites.google.com/site/jazzconnect2014/home-1.

A tentative lineup has been released for the 2015 Winter Jazzfest, to be held Jan. 8th-10th at 11 venues, including Le Poisson Rouge, Judson Church, Blue Note and Zinc Bar. For more information and to purchase tickets, visit winterjazzfest.com.
Matthew Garrison has a pedigree of diversity and innovation. Born Jun. 2nd, 1970, he is the son of John Coltrane bassist Jimmy Garrison and moved to Italy with his mom after his father’s passing. He moved back to the U.S. in the ’80s, where he lived with his godfather, drummer Jack DeJohnette. He went to Berklee College of Music on a full scholarship, ultimately choosing the electric bass over the acoustic. His eponymous debut CD in 2000, according to Bass Player magazine, “raised the bar” for electric bass players. Since 2012 he’s run the ShapeShifter Lab in Brooklyn with Fortuna Sung (“ShapeShifter” is the title of a Garrison album), a hotbed of musical innovation.

The New York City Jazz Record: Who were your influences on the bass?

Matthew Garrison: When I first started playing I was more into R&B and pop, so I was playing along with pop records. I think I gravitated first towards a pop band called Level 42 [and the bassist, Mark King] would slap, slap, slap and I was really into this guy. I was about 15. And then somebody said, “Hey man, if you listen to slap, have you ever checked out Stanley Clarke and his early work?” So I started checking out Stanley Clarke and I flipped out! And that led to Marcus Miller. I think he’s probably one of the most amazing cats on the instrument. And then I started listening to Jaco [Pastorius]. Of course, that led back to all the stuff that I’d been listening to [via] my dad all those years. So it was a kind of weird circle.

TNYCR: You’re a specialist on the electric but played some upright. Is there a difference in your approach?

MG: I never really kind of studied acoustic bass the way I should’ve. I kind of made up my own little thing that sucks. I can pretend quite well in the lower range [but] when it comes to the upper position, I just have no instructions. When you compare me to, like, the real cats I mean, it’s just a joke, okay? Let’s be honest! I was hanging out with [pianist] Kenny Kirkland once in Perugia, [at the] Umbria Jazz [Festival] and he said “When you gonna play some real wood, man?” And I didn’t know what to say. But anyway, acoustic bass, I love it. It’s absolutely one of the most beautiful instruments in the world. Just sonically, the textures, the colors you can get, but I love hearing it from cats that really can play it! And I’d like to leave it there.

TNYCR: When did you decide that using electronics in your music suited you?

MG: I think when I started working with [keyboardplayer] Joe Zawinul. He was working with still actually quite old technology in a way and some of the folks from Korg that were coming up with newer keyboards kept trying to convince him to step up his game because they were changing with the technology and he would just take one little piece at a time but he’d keep his old-ass analog keyboards, which sounded incredible and he used to use sequences in there which were quite interesting. Just sonically I was really getting into that what he was going for, I just didn’t understand how he was going about it. It was a little crazy how he was dealing with it. A good buddy of mine, [Tribal Tech keyboardplayer] Scott Kinsey, who works with me quite a lot, actually helped Joe start getting into the 21st century, although Joe would never really admit it. Also working with [guitarist] John McLaughlin, I saw how [he] worked a lot with computers and I got really interested in [his] approach to that... I think I got my first Macintosh in ’95 or something, first computer that I ever worked with and I just flipped out at the options. I watched the progress of software as it developed and I kind of grew with the software in a way, so it’s kind of interesting how the machines would change, then we would change, then the software would change, then you’d change the way you’d approach the recording process and that kept going up until the point that I made my first record. And when I got to my first recording I really had to start getting into stuff because I wanted to record it at home. This was in 2000 and that’s when I really had to start learning. What is this pipe cable? What is this A DAT? What is this S/PIDF? And I learned from there how to essentially be like a homemade audio engineer of sorts.

TNYCR: Was deciding to do it yourself a result of your own ambition, or did you try to approach mainstream companies and found that they weren’t receptive?

MG: Actually it was a little bit [of] the reverse because I was approached, I think in ’97, by Universal Music Group [UMG] to do something. I wasn’t ready. I didn’t even have music together. It didn’t really make sense. I’d gotten the machine maybe a year earlier and for me I needed some kind of canvas to start painting on and I didn’t want to sit there with paper. It just didn’t translate for me... I wasn’t even ready to be a bandleader, to be honest, because I was so used to playing with other people and just saying, yes, I’ll play this bassline and this line. But, of course, I was starting to put things together at home but there was no structure, there was no direction. And then what I was starting to see from UMG was that they wanted to start shaping it. They started to want to interpret the musicians that would be appropriate. At the time I didn’t understand how the whole thing worked. I was like, “I don’t want to do that. Why do I have to have this guy? I don’t play with him.” It’s probably the worst move I ever made. I mean, the other part to that was that I’ve been watching after my father’s estate and to see the opportunities that he missed either by his own choice or just through ignorance because of the process that he wasn’t ready himself to understand a lot of what was happening around [him]. People were starting to build these mechanisms and machines around this music that these guys were creating and they weren’t quite aware of it. So by the time it got to me trying to dig through a lot of that stuff and understanding how manipulative the system had become, no one actually gave a crap. They really didn’t care. I would call some of these record companies that owned some of the publishing and they [were] like “We don’t care. That’s how it is. He signed the document, that’s it. Shut up!” ... I really took that to heart and so I wanted to own all of the masters, I wanted to own the equipment that created the music, I wanted to be the publisher, I wanted to be the copyright owner, I wanted everything under my control without people messing around because I was seeing what was happening.

(Continued on Page 50)
Thomas Morgan didn’t have much time for an interview when contacted. Back in New York for a few days after a couple of months touring overseas with pianist Craig Taborn’s trio and Danish guitarist Jakob Bro’s multimedia quintet, within the week he was off across the Atlantic for most of a month to take the bass spot in two different working bands: drummer Jim Black’s trio and Polish trumpeter Tomasz Stanko’s quartet. Constant touring is just part of life for Morgan, 33, who has been one of the city’s busiest bassists almost since arriving here from California 15 years ago.

There’s a change of pace this month however. During his residency at SEEDS, his group featuring long-time collaborator Dan Weiss on drums and Pete Rende on analog synthesizers will showcase Morgan’s own compositions. “I don’t compose often,” Morgan admits. “Improvisation is enough of an outlet for me that I don’t feel an urge to compose except occasionally after a long break from playing. But [saxophonist/SEEDS proprietor] Ohad Talmor asked me to put together something and I’m writing music for that now. I have some ideas and plans that are informing the compositions but I hesitate to talk about them because I don’t want them to define the music too much in my mind or anyone else’s.”

Brought up in Hayward, CA, near Oakland, he started playing cello at seven and also played bass guitar in the junior high jazz band, “just playing the notes on the page,” he recalls. Later, after he began improvising along with tunes on the radio while attending music camp, he heard journeyman rock/jazz bassist Todd Sickafoose playing and was inspired to pick up the bass. With Sickafoose as his first teacher he found the transition from mid-sized to larger fiddle surprisingly easy. “The fingerings are different but the technique is different from pizzicato on a cello, but I found the transition from mid-sized to larger fiddle surprisingly easy. ‘The fingerings are different but the technique is different from pizzicato on a cello, but I found the transition from mid-sized to larger fiddle surprisingly easy. ’

“Young, Active, Legendary: The New York City Jazz Record’s Best of 2014 Calendar”

For more information, visit thomasmorgan.net. Morgan is at SEEDS Dec. 10th-12th as a leader, Drom Dec. 16th with David Virelles, Cornelia Street Café Dec. 20th with Jack Sacks and ShapeShifter Lab Dec. 21st with Yukari. See Calendar.

Recommended Listening:
- Dan Weiss – Timshe1 (Sunnyside, 2008)
- Masabumi Kikuchi – Sunrise (ECM, 2009)
- Samuel Blaser – Consort in Motion (Kind of Blue, 2010)
- Sylvie Courvoisier/Mark Feldman Quartet – Hôtel Du Nord (Intakt, 2011)
- Craig Taborn Trio – Chants (ECM, 2012)

James Jamerson’s playing on Motown classics like ‘What’s Go’n On’; Brazilian musicians like João Gilberto; and more. Dan Weiss introduced me to many of these. He’s a voluminous listener.”

Weiss and Morgan were constant rhythm section partners from 2003-11, playing about five jobs every week in different bands. Every other week they gigged at 55Bar with saxophonist Dave Binney and pianists Jacob Sacks or Taborn. “I feel that rhythm is the beginning of everything in music,” declares Morgan. “I tend toward a bottom-up approach rather than a top-down approach and one of the most fundamental details to be aware of as a bassist is the placement of the beat.”

Joey Baron, another drummer, gave Morgan his first taste of the big-time in a quartet that also featured guitarists Steve Cardenas and Adam Levy. “I was a sub for Tony Scherr,” Morgan explains, “but Joey told me more than once that it wasn’t that I was a second choice, that he was really happy with the band with me as well as with Tony... Joey taught me a lot about music and life. As I accomplished as he is, he remains curious, humble and hard-working. And he’s more attuned to the most fundamental and probably most important things in music like feel and blend.”

Similar encouragement came from pianist Masabumi Kikuchi and drummer Paul Motian. Notes Morgan: “Masabumi, aka Poo, came to a gig I played at The Jazz Gallery and afterwards asked me to come to his apartment to record duo. We did that several times. Later he said that he didn’t feel anything happened the first few times but then suddenly something clicked. I enjoyed it from the beginning and his way of improvising moment to moment was new and inspiring. In most bands, even when improvising without predetermined structure, you create a structure as you go. With Poo everything can change at any moment so it feels best not to think about creating some larger thing at all; that makes every moment feel new. After playing duo with Poo for a month or two we played trio with [saxophonist] Michael Attias and later [guitarist] Todd Neufeld. Poo also introduced me to Paul Motian. We recorded a quartet album called Cross Currents with [Japanese trumpeter] Terumasa Hino. Then I started playing in Paul’s bands: his Trio 2000 + 2, Octet + 1 or 2 and a one-time session with Petra Haden and Bill Frisell.”

Morgan, who will be doing a week at the Village Vanguard this March in duo with Frisell, also regularly works with many younger European-based musicians, most of whom he hooked up with in New York. What he hasn’t done however yet is release a session under his own name. “I’d like to in the future, but I have no concrete plans right now.”

With his schedule crowded with sideman and recording work, Morgan doesn’t have enough time for composing or bandleading. But when he finally takes the plunge, it’s almost certain that the same unassuming excellence he brings to other projects will definitely be showcased.
“It's something different for us to do,” declares George Mraz, speaking of his latest endeavor, co-leading a trio together with his wife, world-class pianist/composer Camilla Mraz, and innovative drummer Anthony Pinciotti in a special project that includes their own original “beyond jazz” compositions and an “improvised live soundtrack” to Dance of the Blue Angels, the award-winning short film by Czech director Steve Lichtag, which explores the fate of blue whales roaming the Silver Bank region of the Caribbean Atlantic. He says, “We had the idea to do something different. Camilla knew the director and he gave us permission to perform with this film of his. He took the original music out, so we could improvise and play our own stuff with it.”

The program had its New York premiere back in September in a concert at the Bohemian National Hall, following several European performances. “When we performed it there a lot of people cried because in a way it is a little sad,” Mraz remembers. The trio will reprise the music in an encore performance in December. “It is mostly improvised, so it will be different this time,” Mraz says. “I mean there are some set rules to the improvising, especially in the beginning. Then somewhere in the middle we play one of my tunes. It kind of fits with the mood of that part of the film and then we improvise again until the end of the film. At the end of the film we play one of Camilla’s songs when the credits go by.”

Mraz admits that it’s a real change from his usual role as the quintessential sideman. “It’s different people playing the music and Camilla understands it differently than the bebop guys I play with. I always try to do the best I can with whatever outfit that I’m playing with, but it’s nice to be able to play my tunes, the way I want to play them. It brings out a little more of my own stuff.”

One element of the Czech bassist’s “own stuff” is a virtuoso technique borne out of classical studies at the Prague Conservatory and honed through decades of working with many of the greatest of the great jazz masters. That incredible dexterity was nearly lost following a horrific accident in 2011. “I had a screw and titanium implant in the left hand and for six, maybe seven months, I didn’t even know if I’d ever be able to play again. For almost a year I couldn’t touch the bass. I couldn’t do anything with my left hand,” he admits.

“I had to adjust a little bit, but in a way it helped me because I left things I felt were not so essential to making good music. When you have so much time to think about it, it can change your thinking…the technique and all this stuff it’s not the most important thing in music. There are certain things that I either can’t play anymore or don’t really want to play anymore.”

Last month, Mraz was at Birdland anchoring an allstar quintet of Randy Brecker, Jimmy Greene, Renee Rosnes and Al Foster, performing the music of Joe Henderson. He reminisces, “I played seven years with Joe Henderson and that was a wonderful experience. Most of the gigs were with just the trio, which was my favorite part. I have a recording of a gig from somewhere in Texas that is just incredible. I can’t find one fault—which I can’t say about any other recording that I’ve ever done—about anybody, not just me, but Joe and Al equally. I mean, they were so fucking good, I wish that somebody would put it out. It was a perfect concert.

Joe never told me what to play. Most of the greats never said anything to me about what to play, which is maybe kind of important because a lot of people now tell you so many things you have to do. But then these guys never told me anything; don’t play this or do play this or don’t do this or don’t do that. Including Dizzy Gillespie. I mean everybody. I was so lucky to catch the end of a golden era that will probably never repeat again.” That golden era began in 1966 when Mraz left then-Czechoslovakia for Munich, where, as the house bassist in that city’s premier jazz club, The Domicile, he accompanied American jazz giants, including Clifford Jordan, Benny Bailey, Leo Wright, Mal Waldron and Hampton Hawes. Then in 1968 he came to Boston on a scholarship to Berklee. “People already kind of knew about me because I made two records before [his debut was with fellow Czechoslovakian and future fusion giant Jan Hammer],” he says, “so I immediately started playing the Jazz Workshop and Paul’s Mall and Lennie’s On The Turnpike, with Clark Terry, Herbie Hancock, Joe Williams, Carmen McRae, Moses Allison, whoever came through.”

Not long after his arrival in the states Mraz got the call to come to New York to join Dizzy. After a short stint with the iconic trumpeter he was drafted to play bass with the Oscar Peterson Trio. Bassist Rufus Reid remembers first encountering Mraz with that band. “I went to Europe in 1971 with Harold Land and Bobby Hutcherson and I saw George playing with the Oscar Peterson Trio on a tour with Louis Hayes and that was mindboggling. I said, ‘Who is this guy!’” Mraz would leave Peterson after a couple of years to join the Thad Jones-Mel Lewis Orchestra. Mraz says, “I spent about six or seven years with that band and I think for me it was the best schooling, better than the Conservatory and Berklee College because it was immediate results. Thad had 17 people that he heard at the same time. He wrote the arrangements, he knew what everybody was supposed to play and you knew that he was watching and listening to everybody. Whenever he smiled it meant it’s okay. When he frowned it meant I did something wrong. There was a tune I thought I knew and the chart was like five pages long and it wasn’t easy to put up in the space at the Vanguard, I only had one stand. So I figured, well Richard Davis played it without the chart so I’ll play it. So I played the tune and Thad started frowning at me and I didn’t know what it meant that he was frowning, so I put the bass down and I looked for the chart and it took me about a minute to find it. So once I put up the chart and started to play and found the place where they were Thad just, you know, he started smiling like the moon. Like ‘Yeah right, that’s what I hired you for, motherfucker.’”

For all his work with ensembles of varying instrumentation, it is still his role as the man in the middle of many great piano trios for which he is best known. “George Mraz is a master musician,” says pianist Bill Charlap. “He’s a virtuoso in every sense of the word, yet his technical command is always in service of the music.”

Drummer Billy Hart, who played with the bassist in the New York Jazz Quartet and Quest, says “He’s a consummate bassist and professional. He’s an extraordinary interpreter. He can handle anybody’s music…He knows the language. He has a sixth sense for knowing exactly where their left hand is going before it even gets there. On top of that, he has an incredible reputation for playing in tune or playing more in tune than most bass players.”

“George has been a part of some of my most memorable experiences on the stage,” drummer Lewis Nash says. “He’s one of the bassists of choice for pianists who like to play trio and who like that bass voice to be someone who can match their expressiveness and ability to solo, not just play the [traditional] bass role… He’s one of my favorite bass players to play with because I can be creative and exploratory without worrying that I need to mark time or keep form or anything like that because he’s got incredible ears, rhythmically and harmonically, so I feel very free and open when I play with him.”

Kenny Washington, who preceded Nash in the drum seat with Tommy Flanagan recalls, “He has perfect technique and is the most in-tune bass player that I’ve ever played with. Good solid time. This guy can hear anything, man. He can hear wet paint drying on the wall. When we used to play with Tommy, more often than not we would play a lot of the same tunes every night, but harmonically it was always different with Tommy. You never knew which way he was gonna go. George was on him like white on rice. Every harmonic turn, he caught him. Tommy Flanagan/George Mraz, that’s like the strongest piano/bass team I ever played with.”

Ray Drummond, who followed Mraz and Reid as bassist in the Jones-Lewis Orchestra, praises his predecessor. “He’s at the point where technical mastery is not even a question that you have to ask. It’s just like oh man, let me see how I can enjoy George’s message tonight. His messages, his stories, because that’s what we’re talking about. That’s the level that George plays on. You know Jimmy Rowles called him ‘Bounce.’ That’s because he’s a baad Czech.”

For more information, visit georgemraz.com. Mraz is at Bohemian National Hall Dec. 21st and Mezzrow Dec. 26th-27th with Michael Weiss. See Calendar.

Recommended Listening:
- Oscar Peterson Trio — Walking The Line (MPS, 1970)
- Art Pepper — The Complete Village Vanguard Sessions (Contemporary, 1977)
- Roland Hanna/George Mraz — Romanesque (Black-Hawk, 1982)
- Tommy Flanagan — Jazz Poet (Timeless,1989)
- George Mraz — My Foolish Heart (Milestone, 1995)
- David Hazeltine — The New Classic Trio (Sharp Nine, 2012)
David Virelles *Mbókò*
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CHRIS WHITE
BY GEORGE KANZLER

“That must have been 40 years ago,” says bassist Chris White when told of our first meeting, in a cramped corner of the basement of the Rutgers-Newark library that housed the collection of the nascent Institute of Jazz Studies. Overseeing the collection as director was part of White’s duties as the head of Jazz Studies at the college. “They had me teaching over at the office building next to the Newark Public Library that served as a classroom center,” continued White. “So I walked between there and the campus library basement, where I spent the rest of my time. I was there for about five years, until 1976.”

That job was the first of a number of academic roles White has played as a jazz educator since earning a degree at the Manhattan School of Music (MSM) in the late ‘60s. But before that career got off the ground, White was already a prominent bassist on the jazz scene, although it was not his first instrument. “My mother was a pianist,” says White, who was born Jul. 6, 1936 and grew up in Brooklyn, “and I did what she did, so I played the piano too. But when I went to high school [Boys High in Brooklyn] I heard the Charlie Parker and strings album and it turned me around, changed my life. Boys High didn’t have any saxophones so they gave me a trombone and I played it for three years. Then the orchestra director gave me a bass because he didn’t have a bassist to play a solo. He told me to take the bass home and learn the solo. I had never had the bass but two weeks and started getting phone calls for work. I guess work kind of decides what you’ll play and the bass seemed to be the instrument people wanted to pay me to play.”

Just out of Boys High, White received his first call for a job in Manhattan, to play bass with pianist Cecil Taylor’s group. So how did that go? “It was strange,” remembered White in our phone conversation, “I had never heard anyone play like that. It was fascinating to remember in our phone conversation, “I had never heard anyone play like that. It was fascinating to remember what she did, so I played the piano too. But when I started getting phone calls for work. I guess work kind of decides what you’ll play and the bass seemed to be the instrument people wanted to pay me to play.”

During a gig with Olatunji at Birdland, Dizzy Gillespie heard White and asked him to join his band. From 1962-66 White was a member of Gillespie’s bands, usually paired with drummer Rudy Collins. At first the front line included saxophonists Leo Wright and pianist Lalo Schifrin, later pianist Kenny Barron and saxophonist James Moody.

“What did I learn from Diz? What didn’t I learn from Diz,” says White. “Working with Diz was like going to school. It was like Big Band, where he shared the bass chores with Bill Crow (White has known “the Crow” since the ’60s), both of them playing together on Ornette Coleman’s “Una Muy Bonita,” as a definite highlight. Interface (Jazz Cat Records), a 2012 CD is co-led by White (who also produced) and Caputo and features two of White’s compositions.

For more information, visit chriswhitebass.com

Recommended Listening:
- Nina Simone – At The Village Gate (Colpix-Roulette, 1961)
- Dizzy Gillespie – The Verve/Philips Dizzy Gillespie Small Group Sessions (Mosaic, 1962-64)
- James Moody – Comin’ On Strong (Argo-Cadet, 1963)
- Bill Barron – Motivation (Savoy, 1972)
- Andrew Hill – Invitation (SteepleChase, 1974)

ENCORE

OLIVER KANZLER

GEORGE “POPS” FOSTER
BY ALEX HENDERSON

Pops” Foster was among the most important acoustic bassists to emerge during the early decades of New Orleans jazz. Foster played some other instruments as well, including tuba, trumpet and cello (which was his earliest instrument), but he is best remembered for the slapping technique that he perfected. Born in Ascension Parish, Louisiana May 18th, 1892, Foster was in his early teens when he began playing professionally around New Orleans in 1906. He went on to play in the riverboat band of pianist Fate Marable (who used him on tuba) from 1918-21. Regrettably, New Orleans jazz wasn’t officially documented on record until the Original Dixieland Jazz Band made their first recordings in 1917, but if there were any recordings of a young Foster playing around New Orleans in the late ’90s or early 1900s, they would no doubt be fascinating to hear.

Foster kept busy in the early ’20s, playing his bass for trombonist Kid Ory, trumpeter/cornet player Dewey Jackson and trumpeter/saxophonist Charlie Creath. After spending some time in St. Louis, Foster moved to New York City in 1928. After the move, he was employed in the bands of cornet player King Oliver (one of Louis Armstrong’s main influences) and pianist Luis Russell. The Panama-born Russell is famous for his work with Armstrong during the ’30s and playing in Russell’s orchestra gave Foster an opportunity to work with the trumpeter extensively. During the second half of the ’30s, Russell’s band was billed as “Louis Armstrong & His Orchestra”, which made sense from a commercial standpoint given Armstrong’s popularity, but it was the same band and Foster’s slapped bass was an exciting part of it. In 1940, however, Foster lost that gig when Armstrong’s manager, Joe Glaser, fired the band. One of the reasons given by Glaser’s office, according to Foster, was that he “was too old” (Foster turned 48 in 1940).

Jazz reached a major turning point in the mid ’40s, which saw the rise of alto saxophonist Charlie “Bird” Parker and the bebop revolution. But Foster stuck with the types of jazz he was known for: Dixieland and Swing. He maintained his traditionalist approach in the ‘40s as a sideman for pianist Art Hodes and clarinetist/saxophonists Sidney Bechet and Mezz Mezzrow. The late ’40s was great for Foster; he was quite active during that period, backing pianist Willie “The Lion” Smith and touring Europe with trombonist Jimmy Anchev in the early ’50s. The late ’50s and early ’60s found Foster playing in a smaller group led by pianist Earl “Fatha” Hines and in 1964, Foster and clarinetist Darnell Howard were part of a trio led by banjo player Elmer Snowden. In 1966, Foster toured Europe as part of the New Orleans All Stars. Foster and Hodes were reunited in 1968 for several sessions, including the piano/bass duet George “Pops” Foster with Art Hodes.

Jazz moved in a variety of directions during the ’60s, a decade that is remembered for everything from avant garde free jazz to modal jazz to funky soul jazz and organ combos. But Foster continued to focus on Dixieland and Swing. Stylistically, the Foster of the ’60s was not much different from the Foster of the ’20s and ’30s and he remained a staunch New Orleans traditionalist right up until the end.

Foster was 77 when he died in San Francisco on Oct. 29th, 1969 and his autobiography (which was co-written by Tom Stoddard) was released posthumously in 1971.

Recommended Listening:
- Louis Russell and His Orchestra – The Chronological: 1926-1929 (Classics, 1926-29)
- Louis Armstrong – Intégrale, Vol. 5: Tight Like This (Fremeaux & Associes, 1929)
- Sidney Bechet & Mezz Mezzrow – The King Jazz Records Story (King Jazz-Storyville, 1945-47)
- Sidney Bechet – The Fabulous Sidney Bechet (And His Hot Six with Sidney De Paris) (Blue Note, 1951)
- Earl “Fatha” Hines – His All Stars Live at the Crescendo (SteepleChase, 1956)
- “Pops” Foster – with Art Hodes (Jazzology, 1968)
Throughout the history of jazz, record labels have been vital in documenting the music that is of its time (and even apposite to no era at all), getting it out there to the folks that want (or need) to hear it. Apart from the majors, small labels have always been ahead of the curve—in the ’40s Savoy and Dial were vital in documenting bebop, the avant garde of its day. In the tumultuous ’60s ESP-Disk and Delmark recorded the burgeoning movement of free jazz; ECM Records was a framework for American and European players whose ‘style’ or sub-genre became less important than respect for individual approaches and well-recorded purity of artistic vision; and when major labels couldn’t be bothered to showcase a hardbop performer were he or she ablaze, labels such as Muse and SteepleChase, of the USA and Denmark respectively, gave a context to jazz’ mainstream free of any major label constraints.

Speaking of Denmark, Stunt Records, an affiliate of that country’s Sundance label, gives a prominent dais for Danish, American and assorted European jazz musicians. As with ECM, style was deemphasized in favor of what the artist himself/herself wanted to do and Stunt’s covers give ECM a run for their money with sleekly stark, Nordic-ly shiny yet warm (in an Ansel Adams manner) graphics and crystalline photography. Stunt’s roster includes such Danes as bassists Mads Vinding and Bo Stief and drummer Alex Riel—gents that made their international reputations playing with visiting and expatriate Americans—and younger, relatively under-heralded talents (in America as yet, anyway) like saxophonists Hans Ulrik and Jesper Thilo; American-like drummer Jimmy Cobb, pianist Kenny Werner, bassist Steve Swallow and saxophonist Jerry Bergonzi; and international artistic currencies such as pianist Enrico Pieranunzi and bassist Arild Andersen. Stunt Records releases beautifully balance integrity and eclecticism—bebop, postbop, world music, jazz vocals and cross-pollination of any of the former is on their carte du jour.

The label was formed in 1983 by Peter Littauer, who had been in the business for six years working in management and booking as well as running the label Pick Up. Littauer says, "The mission [statement] was to create a label with a ‘quality profile’ primarily, but not dogmatic, working in the fields [yes, plural] of jazz. With good musicians, good recordings and fine cover designs.” Stunt is affiliated with, Littauer elaborates, “Sundance for rock-oriented projects, SåDansk for children’s music, StuntX for music we find has an edge...a bit more way out. But Stunt Records is far most active with 15-20 releases per year.

All this and artist freedom, too—musicians free of the constraints (or suggestions) imposed by a label’s desire to make the final product palatable to that mythical ‘wider audience’. When asked if artists are bound to exclusive contracts, Littauer had an unusual explanation: "Somehow we do exclusive agreements. ‘When you release in your own name, you release with Stunt Records’...not that it is written down. It can [even] be unsaid, but it works that way. This goes for [Danish musicians and singers] Ulrik, Jakob Dinesen, Malene Mortensen, Kira Skov, Inge-Marie Gundersen, Thomas Clausen and Paul Banks,” among others. However, as many performers can alas attest, almost all label majors aow to the wonderfulness of their businesses. In this case it’s true, says bassist Jesper Bodilsen. “Stunt Records has a big impact of the Danish jazz scene. They release quite a lot of albums every year and because of their connection with the magazine JazzSpecial the artists are exposed to many jazz fans in Scandinavia.”

And fine releases they are, too, by many bassists—2008’s Helgoland by Jonas Westergaard is an exemplary set of wonderfully thoughtful and visceral jazz like Charles Mingus’ large-group forays in the early ’60s. Not ‘sounds like’ Mingus—Westergaard’s compositions are varied and emotive, cerebral and passionate (with some gospel-like undertones, as with Mingus) and the ensemble work is tight (without being slick) and magnificently volatile. And Ændres Christensen’s ‘Dear Someone’, with pianist Aaron Parks and veteran wizard drummer Paul Motian, is such a delight there ought to be some sort of government mandate (any government will do) that this album should be wildly heard. Christensen has some of the presence of Charlie Haden and the nimble swing of Ron Carter; Motian, that most impressionistic of drummers, plays with extra hard swing throughout (without forgoing subtlety, of course) and Parks has the joie de vivre of Vincent Guaraldi and funky, gospel-charged elan of Gene Harris.

Speaking of legendary players, Stunt gives a forum to those as well. The American bassist Chuck Israels, best known for his tenure as member of the Bill Evans quartet, released by katie bull

It was rush hour on the A train subway platform and the elderly singer held down his Spanish folk song—visiting the jazz torch. She can be heard at Zinc Bar (Dec. 8th) of that ordinary morning. With her back to the vocalist door, one small child’s eyes fixed on the walls closed, one small child’s eyes fixed on the doors closed—the joy of the music sets us free. Whether singing for you. O the spirit of the music sets me free,” croons on vocals that made their international reputations playing with saxophonists Hans Ulrik and Jesper Thilo; American-like drummer Jimmy Cobb, pianist Kenny Werner, bassist Steve Swallow and saxophonist Jerry Bergonzi; and international artistic currencies such as pianist Enrico Pieranunzi and bassist Arild Andersen. Stunt Records releases beautifully balance integrity and eclecticism—bebop, postbop, world music, jazz vocals and cross-pollination of any of the former is on their carte du jour.

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Jack Bruce, the iconic British rock bassist best known for being one-third of the power trio Cream but who had an impressive, if sporadic, jazz pedigree throughout the decades, died Oct. 25th at age 71 of liver disease.

Bruce was born May 14th, 1943 in Glasgow, Scotland. He attended the Royal Scottish Academy of Music as a cellist but soon left for England, switching to upright bass. Prior to joining Cream alongside guitarist Eric Clapton and drummer Ginger Baker in 1966, Bruce was a member of important British blues-rock bands led by Alexis Korner and Graham Bond (where he worked with Baker). After the two years that Cream existed, Bruce went out on his own as a leader, releasing three albums for Polydor from 1969-71, which featured important English jazz and fusion musicians like trumpeters Harry Beckett and Henry Lowther (Songs For A Tailor), drummer Jon Hiseman and guitarist John McLaughlin (Things We Like) and guitarist Chris Spedding and drummer John Marshall (Harmony Row). From the beginning, Bruce’s approach was not limited by his surroundings. In an interview with vintagerock.com, Bruce described his playing: “I don’t really play jazz, I play Jack... I don’t consciously play in different ways. If I’m playing in a rock band, I can unconsciously go into a jazz feel or whatever. I just don’t think I’ve got any limitations in the music. Labels are for other people to make; not for me—I don’t make any labels.” Many of his later albums would feature an eclectic array of jazz musicians like Carla Bley, Billy Cobham, Dick Heckstall-Smith and Horacio El Negro Hernandez. During the ‘60s-70s, Bruce appeared on over 20 sessions in its discography, also appeared on albums by Richie Cole and Bobby McFerrin and released one disc, 2007’s Love Stories (King Japan), under his own name. Hauser died Oct. 16th at 72.

**SPANKY DAVIS** (Mar. 6th, 1943—Oct. 23rd, 2014) The founder of The Manhattan Transfer, the Grammy-winning pop-vocal quartet active from the early ‘70s to today (the group performed at the Blue Note last month) with over 20 sessions in its discography, also appeared on albums by Richie Cole and Bobby McFerrin and released one disc, 2007’s Love Stories (King Japan), under his own name. Hauser died Oct. 16th at 72.

**BRIAN LEMON** (Feb. 11th, 1937—Oct. 11th, 2014) The British pianist was a fixture in his adopted home of London, releasing a handful of albums under his own name or as part of cooperatives during the ‘90s and playing on sessions by Tony Coe, Ruby Braff, Stéphane Grappelli, Joe Temperley and Charlie Watts. Lemon died Oct. 11th at 77.

**RAY SANTISI** (Feb. 1st, 1933—Oct. 29th, 2014) The Boston stalwart pianist’s career goes back to the early ‘50s and work with such saxophone luminaries as Charlie Parker, Stan Getz, Dexter Gordon, Zoot Sims and others, a smattering of albums under his own name and teaching at Berklee College of Music for 57 years. Santisi died Oct. 29th at 81.

**JACQUES THOLLOT** (Oct. 9th, 1946—Oct. 2nd, 2014) The French drummer was part of his country’s second wave of free improvisers, releasing albums on a number of European labels like Futura, Palm, Musica and Nato, performing/recording with the Kühn Brothers, Don Cherry, Jef Gilson, Sonny Sharrock and Sam Rivers and noted for his expansive solo performances. Thollot died Oct. 2nd at 67.
It took the Belgrade Jazz Festival 43 years to celebrate its 30th anniversary (Oct. 24th-27th). Like everything good in the Balkans, the festival went dark during the war years in the former Yugoslavia. Between 1971-90, the big names played Belgrade: Duke, Dizzy, Monk, Miles, Weather Report. When a group of Serbian jazz fans got the festival going again in 2005, they started small. Compared to major European festivals like Umbria or North Sea, Belgrade is still small. It runs four days. The main venue (in Dom Omladine, the Belgrade Youth Center, built in the Tito era to inculcate students with communist ideology) seats 540. There are usually only a couple of marquee names on the program. (In 2014 they were Charles Lloyd and Danilo Pérez.) But in the last 10 years the Belgrade festival has garnered a reputation that transcends its size, based on leading-edge, hardcore programming.

The third night this year was representative. There were four concerts, all extraordinary. They came from widely separated locations on the jazz map, geographically and stylistically. Pianist Jacob Anderskov led a Danish quintet with three string players and a percussionist. Many composers seek that elusive “third stream” between classical music and jazz, but few make it organic and idiomatic like Anderskov. He writes indelible melodies and uses strings to fulfill them in piercing sonorities and subtly evolving colors. The best piece was “The Post-Industrial Stone Age”. It was cinematic, suggesting a long, slow camera pan over a barren landscape. The strings played melodies within haunted melodies, in a requiem for the earth. Paolo Fresu appeared with a quintet first formed 30 years ago, recently reassembled. (Their new album is 30!), on Tuk.) It was the most mainstream music of the night, but vivid with fresh ideas. Fresu is a seductive trumpet player, with an unerring instinct for drama. The encore, “Sono Andate” from La Bohème, was a heady cocktail of Puccini, jazz and romantic Italian soul.

Sala Americana, a black hole of a performance space upstairs in Dom Omladine, is where the late night concerts happened. It was leading his band and the audience on a swinging deconstructed and unpredictable readings of classic tunes associated with the late singer/actress, including “I Wanna Be Evil”), Marie tackled tunes associated with the late singer/actress, including “C’est Si Bon”, “My Heart Belongs to Daddy” and tunes associated with the late singer/actress, including “C’est Si Bon”, “My Heart Belongs to Daddy” and “Peel Me a Grape”, which Marie turned into an uproarious and commanding anthem of female empowerment. A forceful stage presence, when she sings the line, “When I say do it, jump to it”, you know she means business. Marie, who doesn’t shy away from disclosing her personal struggles and demons, closed her engaging set with some as-yet-unrecorded original compositions, including the heartrending “Go Home” and uplifting “Blessings”.

Saturday night’s early headliner was the young New Orleans-born phenom (and New York resident of several years) Jon Batiste and his band Stay Human. An accomplished pianist and singer and member of one of the Crescent City’s most esteemed musical families, Batiste performs mostly traditional tunes drawn from the New Orleans canon, but with an entirely modern attitude. Above all, he’s an entertainer with tons of charisma and obvious crossover appeal—something jazz sorely needs. He opened his eclectic show with, of all things, a solo piano version of “The Star Spangled Banner”, played with dramatic classical and Gershwin-esque flourishes, which quickly established the Juilliard-trained artist’s pianistic bonafides. After that, he brought his band (saxophone, tuba, electric guitar, drums) onstage for thoroughly deconstructed and unpredictable readings of classic fare like Jelly Roll Morton’s “New Orleans Blues” and Scott Joplin’s ragtime classic “The Entertainer”, which delved into free jazz territory.

(Continued on page 51)
OSCAR PETERSON—
EXCLUSIVELY FOR MY FRIENDS

Oscar Peterson was a legend of jazz piano and made over a dozen albums for the German MPS label, all classics in his discography. This boxed set collects six of those sessions, five trios and one solo from 1965-68, recorded in the private studio of MPS producer Hans Georg Brunner-Schwer and presents them in 180-gram vinyl repressings.

mps-music.com, $175

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MY FAVORITE THINGS—
JAZZ PHOTOS 2004-2014

Noted Norwegian jazz journalist Jan Granlie is a fixture on the European jazz festival circuit and always has his camera. This gorgeous tome collects almost 150 color and black and white images shot between 2004-14 at prestigious festivals like Umeå, Tampere, Bergamo, Oslo, Moers, Molde and London and includes players like Mats Gustafsson, Carla Bley, Charlie Haden, Billy Harper, Jan Garbarek, Mary Halvorson, Sonny Rollins, Peter Brötzmann, Steven Bernstein, Henry Grimes, Archie Shepp and many others.

jangranlie@gmail.com, $40

WAYNE SHORTER QUARTET—
THE LANGUAGE OF THE UNKNOWN

The jazz group of the 21st century, this documentary, directed by Guido Lukoschek, follows the Wayne Shorter Quartet with Danilo Pérez, John Patitucci and Brian Blade for a 2012 Paris concert with footage and interviews and includes the complete concert as a bonus feature.

arthaus-musik.com, $40

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berlinerfestspiele.de, €19.99

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Noted Norwegian jazz journalist Jan Granlie is a fixture on the European jazz festival circuit and always has his camera. This gorgeous tome collects almost 150 color and black and white images shot between 2004-14 at prestigious festivals like Umeå, Tampere, Bergamo, Oslo, Moers, Molde and London and includes players like Mats Gustafsson, Carla Bley, Charlie Haden, Billy Harper, Jan Garbarek, Mary Halvorson, Sonny Rollins, Peter Brötzmann, Steven Bernstein, Henry Grimes, Archie Shepp and many others.

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andallthatjazz.com, $17.95

BLUE NOTE: UNCOMPROMISING EXPRESSION

As part of the celebration of the seminal label’s 75th anniversary, Blue Note has released this comprehensive and long-overdue official history of the label. There are forwards by Blue Note recording artists Wayne Shorter and Robert Glasper and current producer Don Was, gorgeous historical photos and reproductions of posters and album covers, biographies of label founders Max Margulies and Alfred Lion, exhaustive chronicles of important artists and key recording sessions, a spread of various LP labels used throughout the decades and an index. This 201-page book compiled and written by Richard Havers deserves a central place on your coffee table.

chroniclebooks.com, $85

CHARLES LLOYD—ARROWS INTO INFINITY

Saxophonist Charles Lloyd’s career has been a fascinating one since his first recordings all the way through his status as one of the most compelling musicians working in jazz today. This documentary by Dorothy Darr and Jeffery Morse traces Lloyd’s life from his early days in Tennessee, seminal work in the late ’60s, decades away from the music and triumphant return in 1989. Thoughts on the subject come from peers and admirers like Herbie Hancock, Ornette Coleman, Jack DeJohnette, Don Was, Stanley Crouch and Manfred Eicher.

ecmrecords.com, $25

MATS GUSTAFSSON NU ENSEMBLE—HIDROS 6 – KNOCKIN’

Released for the Swedish saxophonist’s 50th birthday, this boxed set of five CDs, two LPs and one DVD collects performances from 2013 Krakow Jazz Autumn, both small-group improvisations and the monumental full-ensemble piece, and features Ingemark Hakem Patten, dick13, Agusti Fernández, Joe McPhee, Peter Evans, Stine Janvind Midland and Paal Nilssen-Love.

nottwo.com, €75
Compositions that use complexity to justify their intentions rather than obscure their purposes highlight **The Quiet Fight**. This quintet is composed of the no-longer-new wave of young jazz musicians who are conservatory trained internationals and settle in NYC to hone their chops while looking for what they didn’t learn in school. Led by bassist Lauren Falls, it includes the formidable combination of Seamus Blake’s melodic tenor saxophone and guitarist Nir Felder’s clear tone and comfort with intricacy. Falls combines with her drummer brother, Trevor Falls (check out his adventurous 2014 debut: True Story), for an exceedingly textual rhythm section. Pianist Can Olgun is responsible, along with the multifaceted compositional approach, for giving the session its center. He embraces the melodies, runs counter and cooperatively with the rhythm and holds his own improvisationally with both Felder and Blake.

Most tunes have an organic atmosphere, as in the way the rhythm section reflects the rumbling sounds of a “B Line to Brooklyn”, Blake and Felder soulfully describing the people and architecture along the way. Similarly, “Counting Down the Days” layers thought-provoking improvisations over a repetitive setting. The title cut uses this approach to raise and release tension quietly while guest cellist Caleigh Drane adds to the underlying style and mystery of “Mademoiselle Chanel” before Falls shows the lady’s more loving side. The leader is an elegant bassist who occasionally pumps it up but is best at cuddling and expressing pensive moments. She is wonderful on ballads like her tenor saxophone and guitarist Nir Felder’s clear tone and comfort with intricacy. Falls combines with her drummer brother, Trevor Falls (check out his adventurous 2014 debut: True Story), for an exceedingly textual rhythm section. Pianist Can Olgun is responsible, along with the multifaceted compositional approach, for giving the session its center. He embraces the melodies, runs counter and cooperatively with the rhythm and holds his own improvisationally with both Felder and Blake.

A theory that warrants discographical research is that musicians who came up in the late ‘60s, when jazz’ position externally had been usurped and internally had been fractured, were less beholden to stylistic ‘purity’ during their careers. Certainly no one can question bassist Juini Booth’s jazz bonafides; in addition to starting out on important Marzette Watts releases for ESP-Disk’ and Savoy, Booth was part of Gary Bartz’ Harlem Bush Music and a participant in McCoy Tyner’s strongest period as a leader (mid ’70s Milestone).

Various misspellings of his name make a comprehensive sessionography difficult to assemble but this guy is covered with dirt from the jazz trenches.

On **Who’s That?**, Booth’s partners are not only decades his junior, they couldn’t even tangentially be considered jazz musicians in the broadest sense. Philipp Quehenberger (synthesizers) and Didi Kern (drums) have worked during the new millenium as part of the avant garde and improvised rock worlds. This trio has another credit, a 7" with Sun Ra Arkestra (of which Booth has been an on-again, off-again member since 1967) leader Marshall Allen recorded 10 months after this August 2011 Viennese date.

It should be stated immediately that while Booth doesn’t play bass on this album—neither his typical upright or his occasional electric—he synthesizer work, in tandem with that of Quehenberger’s, is done with a bassist’s mentality. Quehenberger bridges the gap between Sun Ra and Larry Young and Kern plays with entrancing repetition, distinguishing him from sometimes overbearing free jazz drummers.

The music is one long piece, split across sides of beautifully pressed clear vinyl (and available in a limited edition in an array of colored cardboard sleeves). Perhaps it wasn’t the group’s intention but close listening reveals snatches of almost traditional piano trio tropes, soul-jazz flourishes and prog-rog, à la early Soft Machine, strategies. It is expansive, introspective and deserves the ‘jazz’ tag for its exploratory spirit.

For more information, visit rockshel.com. Booth is at Nablus Dec. 5th as part of the Nablus Jazz Festival. See Calendar.
although unnamed, is important here as it provides a wonderful, rich resonance to the recording. While it is a scored piece, the score calls for a lot of decision-making by the performers, bringing in elements of improvisation and spontaneity. It is, in other words, an engaging and not easily classifiable piece of work.

For more information, visit infrequentseams.bandcamp.com. Ilgenfritz’s Cetus, released by Arts & Labor in August, is a far more conventional piece. Although it is not a standard jazz tune, it is a musical exercise of a sort, with its echoes of “On Top of Old Smokey” and dreamy country flavor. It’s also bowing the melody of Hoagy Carmichael’s “Winter Moon”, then plucks behind the guitar solo.

For more information, visit relativepitchrecords.com and actmusic.com. Wind is at Smalls Dec. 26th-27th with Ken Peplowski. See Calendar.

### Unearthed Gem

**Jaco Pastorius (Ominivore)**

Jaco Pastorius (1951-87) was an electric bassist whose inimitable sound was defined by riffs played at hummingbird velocity and embroi­dered with harmonic bursts as expressive as exclama­tion points. Pastorius’ major breakthrough was the self-titled album he released in 1976; **Modern American Music... Period!**

**The Criteria Sessions** is the demo recording of the sessions that would become that first album and provide insight into Pastorius’ musical development.

The demo, like the album, opens with Pastorius’ stellar performance of Charlie Parker’s “Donna Lee”, Pastorius alone without Don Alias on con­gas and the final note allowed to fade away completely instead of being choked off by the loud intrusion of “Come On, Come Over” that happens on the finished album. Pastorius’ virtuoso performance of “Balloon Song (12-Tone)” has the sound of someone who needs the door to crack open just enough to make a breakthrough while “Time Lapse” is a frenetic four-minute vamp that feels like compulsory exercises. “Pans #1”, with Otello Molineaux and Sir Cederik Lucious on steel drums, recalls Pastorius’ time playing gigs aboard Caribbean cruise ships.

There’s a medley of “Havana” (which would wind up on the Weather Report classic *Heavy Weather*) and haunting “Continuum”, which made the debut album. There’s also a stand-alone version of the latter closer in style to the album version.

There are a couple of instances where the demos improve on the album. “Kuru” is neither enhanced with the strings nor paired with Herbie Hancock’s “Speak Like A Child” and it has a plainness and simplicity more satisfying than the sleek finished product. The opposite is true, however, for “Opus Pocus”, listed on the demo as “Opus Pocus (Pans #2)”. The character is essentially the same but the final version is far more developed and satisfying.

Almost three decades after his tragic death, Jaco Pastorius is still the standard by which electric bassists are judged. He is also the model for Hoagy Carmichael’s “Winter Moon”, which plucks behind the guitar solo.

For more information, visit omivorerecords.com.

### Floorplan I

**James Ilgenfritz (Infrequent Seams)**

Ilgenfritz and Dominic Lash on basses and Braxton regular Aaron Simpson on steel string reading. Catherine and Wind begin in similar low-key interactive mode, limiting an autumnal version of “Old Folks” projected through a feeling of dappled sunlight, tempo slow walking and notes carefully placed, with minimal filigree and guitar employing a classic, understated amplified jazz sound. At the other end of the wide spectrum of guitar and bass juxtaposition rich, sustained tone—the electric—is the aforementioned Oscar Pettiford’s “Blues in the Closet”, opening with guitar feedback, the melody continuing in fuzz tones through a solo, then chuffing electric chords behind a bass solo. Paul McCartney’s “Jenny Wren” gets an amplified steel string reading and “Pans #2”, the closers of interest on this demo, feature sp契合 snappy plucking effects and Catherine vocally harmonizes—à la George Benson—with his electric chording and strumming on Dexter Gordon’s “Fried Bananas”. Wind’s “Song for D” is a rich, romantic ballad with heroic tunes and chords from the top culminating in a processional climax. His bass opens Hank Jones’ “Sublime” pizzicato with the theme and first solo, then picks up the pace for the prickly guitar solo before returning to the theme arco to take it out. He also bows the melody of Hoagy Carmichael’s “Winter Moon”, then plucks behind the guitar solo.

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For more information, visit omivorerecords.com.
England has long spoken jazz like a native tongue, although a decidedly British accent has developed over the years, especially along the abstract fringes trodden by innovators such as Joe Harriott, Derek Bailey, Evan Parker and others. Three recent bassisted projects continue the conversation.

Bassist Dominic Lash, a key member of the Oxford Improvisers musicians’ collective, enlisted fellow Oxonian, pianist Alexander Hawkins, along with drummer Javier Carmona and tenor saxophonist Ricardo Tejero (both London-based Spaniards) for Opabina. His minimally structured pieces allow for maximum collective input, resulting in a highly cohesive yet free-flowing musical program. From the anarchic beginnings of “Ishmus” and catchy, free-swing of “Waiting for Javier / Luzern” and “Halt the Busterman” to the gargled long-tones of “Hallucigenia”, ping-ponging clarinet and piano on “Azalplo” and pensive vamping of “Lullaby of the Limpet (for Ella)”, the group moves easily through various moods and modes to end with the powerfully understated “Piano Part Two / Catachretic”, which leavesgapping sonic spaces to be inhabited by the active listener.

Veteran bassist John Edwards, from West London, along with frequent collaborator, drummer/percussionist Mark Sanders (both served in the Evan Parker Trio, Trevor Watts Quartet and other projects), recorded A Field Perpetually At The Edge Of Disorder with pianist John Tilbury, a longstanding member of the free-improv group AMM. The disc, divided into two lengthy tracks, begins hesitantly, cracking bowed bass mingling with the piano’s low-string rumble and a clicking dry snare drum, eventually evoking the complex soundworld of a box-office movie in which the unsuspecting protagonist explores an abandoned, dilapidated house with rusty hinges, creaking floorboards, chiming clocks and other phenomena, where the suggestion of off-screen violence is more daunting than its graphic depiction. The musicians are thus like Foley artists who fill in the aural colors of a movie of the mind’s eye, inviting listeners to use their imaginations to create their own scenes.

Eminence grise bassist Barry Guy introduces two new works on Amphi - Radio Rondo, the third release by his New Orchestra. Boasting a formidable lineup that includes pianist Agustí Fernández, saxophonists Evan Parker and Mats Gustafsson and percussionist Paul Lytton, the group comes on like a 325-pound linebacker who can run broken-field patterns — sheer power coupled with graceful agility. “Amphi”, a seven-part suite featuring baroque violinist Maya Homburger, deploys various juxtapositions of soloists while “Radio Rondo” is more like a free improvisation for piano in which the orchestra supports and challenges Fernández at every turn with an assortment of tutti shouts, muffled noodlings and boisterous repartee.

While he’s generally known as the sideman of choice for Norway’s best (Jan Garbarek, Terje Rypdal) and visiting and expatriate Americans (Don Cherry, George Russell, Johnny Griffin), bassist Arild Andersen has a thriving career as a leader. Mira is a quietly powerful trio set with Tommy Smith (tenor saxophone and shakuhachi) and Paolo Vinaccia (drums) and has the ECM aesthetic down pat (immature sound quality, virtually crystalline separation of instruments), yet also burns with a quiet, subdued but steady fire.

Scotland-born Smith plays with a steely, full-bodied tone out of the Sonny Rollins and Dexter Gordon traditions. However, in the almost-somber ballad “Alfie”, his noir-ish, blues-hued approach evokes breath-toned master Ben Webster (and to a slightly lesser extent Don Byas). Andersen’s beautifully buoyant tone has some of the ‘fat’ sound of Charlie Haden but even more of a passionate throb, the notes turning into pools of sound, like raindrops bursting against pavement, while Vinaccia plays with rare restraint and some intriguing cracks. The restless “Reparate” finds Smith surging, wailing and, for a brief moment, talking in tongues, getting an almost vocal timbre out of his horn, while Andersen’s amazingly nimble playing takes on the stirring quality of a flamenco guitar. “Rejin” features Smith on shakuhachi and Vinaccia’s colossal death-knell drums, the former’s sprightly playing recalling Renaissance-era dance music and British Isles folk strains (he is from Scotland, after all). The title track begins as a ballad with warm strumming from Andersen and has more bluesy Smith, his sound augmented with a powerful yearning feeling throughout.

All three participants have voluptuous and distinctive sounds on their respective instruments. While the overall mood is somber, there’s plenty of vigor and wound-up keenness to go against the grain, thus generating the contrasting heat of the welcoming sun amid the Scandinavian chill.

**For more information, visit mod-technologies.com**

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Ark Ovrutski (ZOHO)  

Ark Ovrutski’s quintet album has an uptempo, loping feel to it—six original compositions and a version of “Milestones” all suffused with a palpable joy that will easily infect the listener. The leader is enthusiastically supported at all times by joy that will easily infect the listener. The leader is loping feel to it—six original compositions and a

The band and piano are the pulse of a jazz ensemble and when playing as a duet the blending of their sounds can have a comforting intimacy. These instruments, in different contexts and with intriguing variations, are at the cores of three recent albums.

Brothers Tony (bass and cello) and Pete (piano and organ) Levin have a ball on their self-titled album. Along with guitarist David Spinozza, tenor saxophonist Erik Lawrence and drummers Jeff Siegel and Steve Gadd, the Levins lay down vibrant originals driven by irresistible melodies: “Brothers” is a dynamite de facto theme song; Lawrence’s crepuscular tenor drives “Mystério”; Tony’s raspy scatting channels the spirit of Slam Stewart on “Havana”; and there’s a great cover of King Crimson’s “Matte Kudasai”, which Tony co-wrote. “When Sasha Gets the Blues” is a beautiful cello-piano duet. When the Levins are great on bass and piano, they shine on the cello and organ-centered tunes “Cello in the Night”, “Special Delivery” and “I Got Your Bach”, a sprightly take on Cello Suite No. 1. Throughout this album Pete’s keyboards are deft and evocative, Tony’s strings are robust and lyrical and the brothers are having the time of their lives.

The Jormin brothers, bassist Anders and pianist/percussionist Christian, are the only players on Provenance. Traditional songs, from their native Sweden and elsewhere, are a vital part of the music. The Jormins offer richly layered arrangements of “And Yet, I Wish You Well”, “Herding Song”, “Laid on Straw” and “Ave Maria”. The brothers are excellent composers, as evinced by the ambitious suites “Adagio Faroese” and “Song from the Lake of Jorm”. Straightahead tunes like “Cirrus”, “Bismillah” and “Villages and Rivers” underscore a sound conversance with the blues. Anders is a superb bassist, who can put a gut-seizing resonance into his plucking and his arco ranges from Middle Eastern melancholy to woodwind mimicry. Christian’s percussive work is consistently strong and when playing as a duet the blending of their instruments, in different contexts and with intriguing variations, is surprising, though keen observers like Ed Hazell and Kevin Whitehead fill out some of the experiential information, as do citations from the independent music press and a host of newsgroups, message boards and email correspondences. One thing that’s quickly gleaned is how much certain groups worked as well as how long some of Parker’s associations have endured. At the 2014 Vision Festival where Parker, drummer Hamid Drake and saxophonist Peter Brötzmann performed, the ease and gravity behind that music actually goes back to around 1981. The pages are chock full of tantalizing unissued sets, such as the (sadly unrecorded) working trio of saxophonist Charles Gayle, drummer Milford Graves and Parker, or fascinating on-off combinations of a 1994 quartet with Parker, saxophonist Joe Rigby, guitarist Rudolph Grey and drummer Tom Surgal.

The chief complaint with this book is that it’s not indexed. Of course, that would have expanded it to an insane size. Perhaps a downloadable index could have been offered—crucial details like when Parker first started playing with trumpeter Lewis Barnes, a stalwart member of his quartet, is like finding a needle in a haystack (it was in 1985) and this fact renders it almost unusable as a quick reference guide. The text layout is also very dense and doesn’t follow easily; it all looks a bit jumbled and there are quite a few typos/mis-key and some copyediting attention would be well deserved.

More information from Parker on specific relationships would make a book like this doubly interesting—players appear with only a passing shot at why they are there. It seems like one has to approach this information with either a detailed scenario or no extraneous information whatsoever. Perhaps such stories are being left for Parker himself to explain, but with this much gold, it seems like following up on such threads would be a necessity.

For more information, visit.lazybones.com, footprintsrecords.com and storyvillerecords.com

Eponymous  
Levin Brothers (Lazy Bones Recordings)  
Provenance

Anders Jormin/Christian Jormin (Footprint)
Live at Montmartre
Eddie Gomez/Carsten Dahl (Storyville)

For more information, visit bb10k.com/PARKER.disc.html. Parker is at JAZZ Dec. 15th. See Calendar.
I Remember You
John Menegon (Inner Circle Music)
by Elliott Simon

Can it be almost 10 years since David “Fathead” Newman released his posthumous tribute to Ray Charles (I Remember Brother Ray, HighNote)? The bassist was John Menegon and it is now unfortunately Menegon’s turn to honor Newman in that same way. I Remember You begins with a swinging “Blues for David Newman” and ends with a frenzied waltz to Newman’s turn to honor Newman in that same way. Menegon with vocalist Teri Roiger: “Gal” is a Wilson/Menegon percussive tour de force to which Roiger adds coloration while “New Ditty” impresses with Roiger’s sax-like vocal ability to swing lyrically over drum and bass. The session closes with an awkward but stylishly constructed (improvised?) ensemble piece that reminds us what “Dewey Knew”. I Remember You does more than simply pay tribute as it fittingly morphs into a celebration of diverse jazz influences.

For more information, visit innercercirclemusic.net. Menegon is at ShapeShifter Lab Dec. 12th. See Calendar.

Eponymous
Miroslav Vitous Group (ECM)
by Andrey Henkin

Czech Miroslav Vitous may be the lost star of the fusion era. Inexplicably, the Jaco Pastorius (or even Alphonso Johnson) years of Weather Report are the most beloved and Vitous’ own early albums never got the same attention as, say, those of Stanley Clarke. But of all the bassists that came up in the late ’60s, Vitous is remarkable in that his leader discography, from his seminal debut Mountain in the Clouds (Atlantic, 1969) to the most recent Remembering Weather Report (ECM, 2009), doesn’t contain a single clunker.

As part of its recent vinyl reissue series, ECM has released the eponymous second release by Vitous on the label, recorded in July 1980, 14 months after his label debut First Meeting and including the same international group of Englishman John Surman (soprano/baritone saxophone and bass clarinet), American Kenny Kirkland (piano) and Norwegian Jon Christensen (drums). It is fascinating, and a possible testament to ECM producer Manfred Eicher’s vision, that prior to this pair of albums, Vitous and Surman had never recorded together, nor had Vitous worked previously with either Kirkland or Christensen.

The album is a collection of eight pieces, three by the leader, one each by Surman and Kirkland and a trio of compositions credited to the quartet, which typically implies improvisations though spontaneous structure is not anathema to these players. The appeal in these tunes, whether they be more pastoral or darkly mysterious, is the hookup between the leader and Surman, whose complementary approaches are born from the confluence of jazz and their respective folk influences, piano and drums serving primarily as the dainty rhythm for the textural ‘frontline’.

While the compositions are diverse and flavorful, particularly opener “When Face Gets Pale” (originally on Mountain in the Clouds) and Surman’s “Number Six”, which would become a staple of his repertoire, the accolades must go to the improvisations. The quartet is more cohesive in the individual contributions of the players and the results hew closer to the icy beauty one has come to expect from ECM, though that assessment is a chicken-and-the-egg phenomenon when dealing with albums like this one.

For more information, visit ecmrecords.com

PHIL PALOMBI - bass
KEITH HALL - drums
MATTHEW FRIES - piano

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- Downbeat Magazine

“This year’s finest jazz Christmas offering...”
- All About Jazz

“...guaranteed to be one of my all-time favorite piano trio holiday albums.”
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Annick Nozati (1945-2000) indefatigably demonstrated that remarkable vocal improvisations didn’t necessarily have to come from the jazz tradition… or even music. The French chanteuse’s spontaneous mutations were closely allied to her work in experimental theater plus her pointillist blending of textures and colors as a painter. Made about five months before her death, this CD—duos, trios and one Nozati solo—is evidently the only time the singer recorded with late German bassist Peter Kowald (1944-2002) or French baritone saxophonist Daunik Lazro (b. 1945).

A cappella on “L’invisible”, Nozati’s unique combination of whispering, davening and yelping arises spontaneously from her actorly persona. Emoting in an imaginary language, she appears to be playing all the dramatic parts herself, exposing a heroine’s soprano and a villain’s growls. Tellingly, her duets with Lazro are frequently so perfectly balanced between horn and throat that Billie Holiday’s sympathetic work with Lester Young is brought to mind, that is if you can accept a Lady Day whose shamanistic exposition moves from bel canto sweetness to off-center yodeling and a Pres whose accompaniment zigzags from altissimo shrills to rhino-like snorts. Kowald’s macho power on “Kow Noz” find the vocalist subordinating human emotions to use her multi-register voice as an affiliated instrument.

Both aspects of her work echo on the trio tracks. While the bassist’s voluminous string plucks and scouring create an ostinato that preserves motion, both Gallic improvisers express a multitude of technical feats. Referencing sounds ranging from rooster crowing to gargling reflux, Nozati’s chameleonic verbal role-playing challenges the others as it completes the aural picture with the equivalent of final brush strokes in a painting. Meanwhile, Lazro and Kowald’s one duet is both more buoyant and less pressurized. Instant Chavirés is a celebration of the talents of two departed improvisers and one still very much alive.

For more information, visit fou.records.free.fr

This is not your standard jazz octet. Strategies, especially openings, are definitely unorthodox, ranging from musicians warming up on sometimes partial instruments (mouthpieces) coalescing into longer phrases on “Slow” and the long-held tones and sustained horn chords of “Blues” to the burbling free horns ushering in the (surprise!) New Testament Basie swing theme of “Dirt Cheap”. Bassist Jason Roebke’s evocative, energized music is in the grand, big-shouldered tradition of forward-leaning Chicago jazz, from the AACM to another Windy City octet whose creative spirit Roebke’s shares: 8 Bold Souls. Like that Ed Wilkerson-led octet, Roebke’s boasts an unconventional lineup—alto and tenor sax joined by bass clarinet, along with cornet, trombone, vibraphone, bass and drums—and employs the instruments in a variety of unusual combinations and surprising pairs.

But he also utilizes and invigorates his charts with tried-and-true tropes and gestures, from pungent Ellington harmonies and swing-based shout choruses to raucous Mingus accelerations and postbop free-for-alls. “Dirt Cheap” best encapsulates it all in an eventful five minutes, as free brass burbles give way to a suave reeds chorus over heartbeat swing 4/4, brass answering reeds on a second chorus in echoes of Basie. Just when the swing groove seems comfortable, Jason Stein’s bass clarinet solo gets frisky, dirtying things up as Jeb Bishop’s muted trombone shadows him, until he roughs up his tone to cue a polyphonal wave of free horns soloing that recedes as quickly as it erupted, leaving us with out-choruses of the smooth theme. Another highlight is the lusty title tune, full of jagged horn blasts, tempo changes and slides, Dolphy-esque alto sax from Greg Ward, a Keefe Jackson tenor sax cadenza replete with harmonics and a climax that goes out in furiously swinging 4/4. Other tunes range from spiky postbop to silky ballads and cinematic narratives like the impressive trombone feature “Ten Nights”.

For more information, visit delmark.com
twists. The pianist’s Latin-flavored “Distant Hallow” is marked by Kozlov’s infectious bassline and Hart’s inspired percussion backing the brilliant solos by Cohen and Lynch. The duos are superb as well. The tantalizing take of “How Deep is the Ocean” is a true conversation, not just leader and accompanist, introducing new ideas into this time-tested work. Likewise, Cohen’s playing makes him sound like an established veteran in their heartfelt and hip treatment of “I Wish I Knew”. They shake around the chord changes to “Just In Time” in a playful manner, letting the listener figure out the theme. Lynch has long established his skills and expect to hear more in the near future from the talented Cohen.

For more information, visit hollisticmusicworks.com. Lynch is at Dizzy’s Club Dec. 2nd. See Calendar.

Both born in 1982 and alumni of the Wynton Marsalis-initiated jazz program at Juilliard, trombonist Michael Dease and drummer Ulysses Owens, Jr. are already nascent stars of jazz’ Millenial Generation and these new albums—each featuring the other—mark their further progress as musician-leaders. Dease, a veteran of prominent Big Apple-based orchestras, brings us his first big band album, featuring ten of his own arrangements, four of them originals. Owens, working in a variety of settings, presents a putative survey of his musical interests and associations to date.

Dease is nothing if not ambitious and may even be called Relentless in his CD title language, in presenting his big band vision. It encompasses up-to-date swing as well as post-swing, bebop, AfroLatin, bluesy funk and even a nod to jazz-rock fusion, as well as a closing track reminiscent of Woody Herman. While providing solo space for many of the bandmembers as well as himself, Dease also creates detailed, intricate and demanding arrangements, which include rubato intros, fanfares and codas, as well as numerous shout choruses, riffing and vamping sections behind and in interplay with soloists and even a handful of elaborate section soli. This is not a band that plays the easy ensemble theme and solos with rhythm format.

Duke Pearson’s “Is That So?”, the opener, is a good illustration of Dease’s varied approach to solo settings. A rubato intro ushers in the theme with trumpet and/or trombone in the lead, followed by trumpeter Greg Gisbert solosing over often dense brass and reed section backgrounds and riffing; Dease’s trombone enters to solo over just Linda Oh’s bass, eventually joined by piano and drums, and Diego Rivera’s tenor sax continues over the full rhythm section, later joined by trumpet. The rest of the ensemble roars back with a shout chorus with spaces for a solo from pianist Miki Kozlovya before a reprise of the theme, this time with tenor sax and a final trombone coda. The cyclical theme of the title track is emphasized by sections tossing around the theme and Owens re-creates the rolling patterns under the soloists. Andrew Swift’s phased shifted guitar and Oh’s electric bass bring a jazz-rock vibe to Randy Brecker’s “Roppongi”, trumpeter Alex Norris and Dease trading fours over a rocking backbeat. Dease’s “Webster Grooves” revives the chugging piston-drive beat and string of solos (Anat Cohen) and guitar (Gilad Hekselman) solos. Next Owens essays “SST”, a jagged postbop tune he and bassist Reuben Rogers have played with the West Coast quartet Middle Space Collective, joined by Cohen, Hekselman and pianist Christian Sands. The program bounces around with differing ensemble configurations and styles after that, including a perky “Samba Jam” with Cohen’s clarinet, bass and drums; Wayne Shorter’s “Fee Fi Fo Fum” deftly unfurled by a quartet featuring trumpeter Jason Palmer with guitar, bass and drums; and Michael Jackson’s hit “Human Nature”, given an Ahmad Jamal-inspired reading by a trio of Sands, Owens and bassist Matthew Ribicky. Dease and Owens co-wrote “For Nelson” in an elastic, postmodern mode and gospel music influences Owens and trumpetman Benny Benack III’s quasi-hymn “The Gift of Forgiveness”.

For more information, visit post-tone.com and usojazzy.com. Owens is at Smalls Dec. 4th, Village Vanguard Dec. 9th-14th with Christian McBride and Bar Next Door Dec. 19th with Barry Green. See Calendar.
Anna Webber’s work has followed two trajectories since 2001, but this is the first recorded documentation of their partnership. Both are veterans who have made a handful of recordings as leaders, but are probably better known for their stellar work as sidemen. Wilson, 58, has been a key member of Chick Corea’s Origin band, as well as ensembles led by Dave Holland, Dianne Reeves and many others. Nash, 56, is a first-call drummer who’s been featured with a who’s who of jazz legends. On Duologue, the sidemen step into the spotlight in a stripped-down setting that eschews bass and all chordal instrumentation. There’s no shortage of energy and imagination, though, as the pair create a sound that’s as rich and forceful as a full band.

Most of the tunes covered are familiar and solidly in the duo’s mainstream wheelhouse, though they venture a bit further out on a trio of Wilson originals and Ornette Coleman’s “Happy House”. But what’s most impressive is how they make standards like Duke Ellington’s “Caravan”, Jelly Roll Morton’s “Jitterbug Waltz” and a pair of Thelonious Monk medleys entirely their own, pushing the old tunes in fresh directions.

Wilson is a versatile performer who can hold his own in virtually any jazz setting. He channels the sweet, playful tone of Johnny Hodges on Ellington’s “The Mooche”, for example, while showcasing a more searching, freer side on the solo sax piece “Row Twelve” and the powerful “Black Gold”. Nash is a marvelously creative drummer who plays with such control and such a relaxed, refined touch that one rarely notices the absence of a full rhythm section. He hits all the right notes and then some while always avoiding the temptation to overplay. His best moment, among many, is a richly melodic and inventive take on Eddie Harris’ “Freedom Jazz Dance”, a master class in how to arrange and perform an extended drum solo.

Both play with a tremendous sense of control and patience, never stepping on each other’s toes, never trying to hog the limelight, never saying too much when just enough will do. Together, these two veterans, who have flown somewhat under the radar for years, make the case that less sometimes truly is more.

For more information, visit mcjazz.org. Wilson is at Village Vanguard Dec. 2nd-7th with Christian McBride, Smoke Dec. 18th with Freddie Bryant and Jazz at Kitano Dec. 31st with Nilson Matta. See Calendar.

A tenor saxophonist/flutist who studied music in Montreal, NYC and Berlin, she has an urban side—reflected in the cooperative Jagged Spheres’ emphasis on seamlessly combining composition and improvisation in its work—plus a rustic one that permeates her compositions on Simple, all written during a sojourn on Bowen Island, near Vancouver. With an identical number of tracks, the same instrumentation and recorded less than one year apart, divisions between Simple and Jagged Spheres aren’t excessively pronounced but the interaction on the former may be more complicated than on the latter.

Atmospheric, with sequences reminiscent of contemporary notated music, the key to Jagged Spheres is how jazz-based improvisations add warmth to the recurringly formal and frosty exposions that characterize the introductory “Jaggedsphere” and other tunes. In complete contrast, the group instant composition that is “Two And A Half” could be a carnival soundtrack, showing together Crazy Otto-like plunks from classically-trained Austrian pianist Elias Stemeseder, local drummer Devin Gray’s top-of-cymbal scratches and thrilling flute puffs for vibrating stimulation. Webber’s “For Erik” is almost viscerally theatrical, ominous piano chords set up Stemeseder’s lower-case glissandi, which, coupled with harsh percussion clip-clops, provide the connective ostinato as Webber circles through a collection of dramatically expressive tongue slaps and slurs. Even as atonal a piece as “Two”, with its disconnected piano and percussion clanks and vibrations, gains comforting humanity from Webber’s adjacent flute peeping and whistling.

There’s also a comforting skein of syncopated buoyancy that takes the formal edge off the CD’s nearly 20½-minute, multi-section showpiece, which in title alone, confirms the trio’s big city orientation: Gray’s “Getting Hit Off My Bike, By a Nice Cab Driver At 3:33 am In Williamsburg”. Hardbop tropes seem ease into limpid piano plinks and low-frequency flute chirps only to shift dramatically as sax shriills, sustaining key plucks and percussion crunches mirror the accident’s impact, until this agitation gives way to harmonic convergence of low-key drum and cymbal ruffles plus hollow-tube sax blowing from Webber. Stemeseder’s metronomic chording and Gray’s pseudo-processional drumming signal the accommodating conclusion.

Simple revolves around pianist Matt Mitchell and drummer John Hollenbeck’s preference for unusual textures. Especially notable are those instances where keyboard and drum sounds are conspicuously flattened, so instrumental identification is masked. This is something that works particularly well during the stop-time finale of “Simplify, Simplify”. More generic is a tune such as “Washington”, recalling Webber’s glimpse of the nearby state’s mountain from the island. At points coming ethereal flute lisps and drum-top wipes convey the lonely feeling of waves lapping against the shore. The concluding “Zigzag” crisscrosses through thematic confluence until it settles into a chromatic tune reflecting pastoral contentment.

On some of her other tracks, Webber used Morse code to determine pitches, swirling the results into cunning swing. Yet “1994”, for example, is more notable for her emotional Reed elaborations than any compositional trickery. Chamber-music-like keyboard fillips from Mitchell are contrasted by Hollenbeck’s irregular drum patterns. Webber’s upturned reed lines manage to blend individual parts into a harmonic finale. Despite its title, a track like “I Don’t Want to Be Hungry”, a hard swingers featuring pouty, piano and splashing drumbeats. When Webber adds sax split tones to the mix it demonstrates that there’s musical strength and sophistication even in a rural setting.

For more information, visit annakristineweber.com and skirilrecords.com. Webber is at SEEDS Dec. 3rd. See Calendar.
As one of the principal saxophone ensembles in creative music, the Bay Area's ROVA, founded in 1978 and named for its founders Jon Raskin, Larry Ochs, Andrew Voigt (replaced by Steve Adams in 1988) and Bruce Ackley, the group's structure allows for significant individuality within a loose group identity. However, as with a number of well-known improvisational collectives, the artists' singular vitality might appear secondary to the scope of the whole.

Tenor and soprano saxophonist Larry Ochs seems to be the most visible apart from ROVA; he's collaborated with and co-led numerous small groups over the last few decades, including work with saxophonist Glenn Spearman (1947-98), koto player Miya Masaoka, guitarists Fred Frith and Henry Kaiser, drummer Weasel Walter and harpist Zeena Parkins.

Ochs and drummer Donald Robinson have been working together since the early '90s when they performed as part of Spearman's Double Trio. That partnership continued with What We Live (a trio with Lisle Ellis on bass) and Sax and Drumming Core (with a second drummer in William Winant). Pared down to a saxophone-percussion duo, it's fitting that their debut disc, The Throne, starts with a dedication to Spearman, titled "Open to the Light". Ochs' tenor is hard-bitten and gritty, but sounds open against timber shoves from Robinson's kit. "Red Tail" has a boppish cut-and-run feel. Ochs letting fly with burred multiphonics and withering growls, staccato narrows kept buoyant by Robinson's athletic funk. "Song 2" is imbued with the toothy, bar-line avoidant blues that one might hear in a Charles Brackeen or Joe McPhee, set beautifully against the slap of brushes. In the nearly 48 years since Coltrane and Rashied Ali recorded Interstellar Space there have been quite a number of fine saxophone-drum duets, so it's a real pleasure to hear one that actually stands up to the most compelling examples—and in an honest, unassuming fashion.

The East-West Collective was founded as a trio by French cellist Didier Petit in 2009, bridging common aesthetics in European free music and East Asian classical music with the result of a specificity between two cultural art forms. By the time the group debuted in New York at the 2013 Vision Festival, its lineup had expanded to include Ochs, Masaoka, clarinetist Sylvain Kassap and Xu Fengxia on guzheng. Humeurs is the group's first official release and presents seven pieces (one by Ochs, the rest Petit's). Though Ochs and Kassap are powerful reed voices, one standout effect is a rugged blend of ricocheted strings—from the meaty grapple of koto to the lush particulates of guzheng (from Japan and China, respectively, the instruments are close relatives) and offset by Petit's throaty, tough lines. Ochs' "By Any Other Name (for William Kentridge)" begins with tenor and bass clarinet hanging in relief, the group splaying out into duets and trios as Kassap's hoary warble bounces across a multitude of raised flaps. A lowly bass metronome into harried strums that carry raspy flights through a microcosm of improvised unity.

Spectral presents a curious trio derived from the structural net-less format of groups like ROVA, some AACM ensembles and European ad hoc groups, combining reeds and brass absent a rhythm section. The group features Ochs and Chicagoan Dave Rempis on saxophones and Darren Johnston on trumpet (he has worked with ROVA as a guest). Sticking to alto for this date, Rempis' searing approach often seems built for a tough rhythm section and as he swirls upward with Ochs and a muted Johnson, one expects the immediate crash of a Frank Rosaly or Tim Daisy. The trumpet's exacting, clarion pucker and condensed, wet needling (check his vibrato on "Cheek and Bones") natures buttresses itself in the absence of rhythmic dictation. Therefore, it doesn't take particularly long—as well it shouldn't—for the ears to adjust to this bright chamber trio. As in the East-West Collective, Ochs does not predominate as a voice, rather providing a stalwart carpet or skirling counterpoint aside Rempis' tart bluster. Ostensibly 'free', the seven unscripted tunes are finely orchestrated, meaty and varied and Spectral gives the illusion of preexisting schema through credible cohesion.

For more information, visit rottwo.com, daverempis.com and rogueart.com. Ochs is at The Firehouse Space Dec. 5th. See Calendar.

Andthem
Scott Wendholt/Adam Kolker Quartet
(Fresh Sound-New Talent)
by Donald Elffman

Andthem is a no-star affair. Despite the fact that the quartet is comprised of smart and accomplished players, they work together in subtle and humble ways. The group ethos is strong and the playing assured. Something original is going on here.

Tenor saxophonist Adam Kolker has arranged Thelonious Monk's "Green Chimneys" and it emerges out of a repetition of single notes, which later comprise the tune's simple yet persuasive essence. Co-leader trumpet Scott Wendholt and Kolker take the theme and then breathlessly improvise together, each providing places for the other to explore. Bassist Ugonna Okegwo soon takes over for an eloquent, pulsing statement punctuated by the horns and, of course, the ever-textured and shaded drumming of veteran Victor Lewis.

Wendholt contributes four tunes, reflecting what Kolker calls an exciting, thoughtful and humble musical presence. The title track is a striking call in which, over a sometimes gentle, sometimes more emphatic rhythm, the horns intone a theme of delicate grace. Kolker and Wendholt play this music as friends and colleagues and Okegwo and Lewis give them the ballast they need. The trumpeter takes a heartbreakingly intimate solo complete with smears—short and to the point. On "Lucy", Wendholt rethinks that Beatles heroine and you'll recognize her but hear, in the waltz rhythm, how she might be seen in a changed setting. Kolker's "In or Out" is a beautiful march-like invitation, which relaxes into bluesy solos by both horns and quickly returns to the head.

All of the compositions here suggest an elemental quality and a fresh outlook. Lewis' "Buttercup" is a doefull ballad, the theme of which is emotionally provided by the horns, Kolker and Wendholt elegant in sadness. And Okegwo's "Once or Twice" also suggests melancholy—it feels like a sensitive recollection of the beauty in sadness even when the tempo increases.

For more information, visit freshsoundrecords.com. This project is at Smalls Dec. 5th-6th. See Calendar.
French saxophonist Stéphane Spira makes good on this Paris studio date with stateside bandmates and a New York underground vibe. Voices in this chordless quartet—Steve Wood’s bass, Johnathan Blake’s drums and Glenn Ferris’ trombone—speak genially in muted, quartet—Steve Wood’s bass, Johnathan Blake’s drums New York underground vibe. Voices in this chordless this Paris studio date with stateside bandmates and a ingredients in a low-key setting, invites revisiting. harkens back to Spira’s 2010 Tom Jobim tribute. The Brazilians Baden Powell and Vinicius de Moraes, harmonies. “Samba em Preludio”, a sweet paean by and Blake’s restless mallets neatly set up the horns on many tunes: the relaxed melody of “Dawn In Manhattan” with soprano and trombone in hesitant phrases; tenor and muted trombone on “A Special Place”. Longer tracks are deeply sustained ballads by diverse master composers. Ferris’ heart-stopping arrangement of Duke Ellington’s “Reflections in D” evolves out of sustained bowed bass of “In Transit” and is steeped in meditative hush—until its bright cymbal work and a warm bass solo by Christopher Tordini. “Template”, the third and shortest track, finds jazz forms, the interests that led him to Braxton and Lucier—and flips them like a Möbius nickel, turning stark piano music into a sparse jazz trio and demonstrating an interest not only in Feldman but Bill Evans as well. This easy-if-unlikely meeting ground is explored on the three shorter (seven to 20 minute) tracks as well, if not quite so overtly. Smythe’s still featured prominently and if the composer is at the drums here it’s very much a pianist’s album. The rest of the program remains slow and serene, but “Movement” does get almost toe-tappable and features some lovely, occasional interjections from the bass and drums. The piece, played beautifully by Cory Smythe, shows what might be seen as Sorey’s two concerns—classical and jazz forms, the interests that led him to Braxton and Lucier—and flips them like a Möbius nickel, turning stark piano music into a sparse jazz trio and demonstrating an interest not only in Feldman but Bill Evans as well. This easy-if-unlikely meeting ground is explored on the three shorter (seven to 20 minute) tracks as well, if not quite so overtly. Smythe’s still featured prominently and if the composer is at the drums here it’s very much a pianist’s album. The rest of the program remains slow and serene, but “Movement” does get almost toe-tappable and features some lovely, cymbal work and a warm bass solo by Christopher Tordini. “Template”, the third and shortest track, finds more discordance while retaining the unusual grace that permeates the album. Sorey has charted some difficult paths for himself in the past. His music is rarely easy but is generally rewarding. If some listeners have been torn about the different elements of Sorey’s work, Alloy shows that he can mix them quite capably. For more information, visit pirecordings.com. This project is at Roulette Dec. 10th. See Calendar.
Since his initial emergence in New York’s ’90s downtown scene, Medeski has maintained an eclectic musical presence, equally at home with avant-jazz projects as he is finessing a groove in jam-band contexts. Two recent releases reveal each of these aspects of his oeuvre.

**Juice**, the third effort by Medeski, guitarist John Scofield, drummer Billy Martin and bassist Chris Wood (the fourth if you include Scofield’s 1997 *A Go Go*), departs from 2006’s *Out Louder* and the subsequent live album in an emphasis on covers, including Eddie Harris’ “Sham Time” (from his 1967 album *The Electrifying Eddie Harris*), The Doors’ “Light My Fire,” Cream’s “Sunshine of Your Love” and Bob Dylan’s “The Times They Are A-Changin’.” “Juicy Lucy,” a collectively composed piece, borrows its guiding riff from The Kingman’s “Louie Louie” and Scofield’s “I Know You” is played with a bossa-boat beat reminiscent of Mongo Santamaria’s records. His “North London” sounds like something The Meters would do, with a hip five-beat over-the-bar accent pattern. “Sunshine of Your Love,” barely recognizable, is a notable departure, where the group stretches out over a reggae dub-style “riddim.” All of which contributes to a ’60s retro vibe, though Scofield and Medeski’s playful comping and soloing keep the music from becoming mired in predictable repetition. Their tandem comping on the outro of “I Know You” is a good example of their musical repartee and both are master phrasers, constructing musical statements that move and turn effortlessly, locked onto the pulse. Wood, favoring acoustic bass, and Martin, who layers a few tracks with cuica (Brazilian friction drum), talking drum and other percussion, keep it all bubbling along.

**Transmigration of the Magus**, John Zorn’s tribute to the passing of his friend/late The Velvet Underground guitarist Lou Reed, is the latest of many projects Medeski has manned, often as a member of what amounts to a dream band. A gentle, meditative work, the album has an instrumentation of two harpists (Carol Emanuel and Bridget Kibbey), two vibraphonists (Kenny Wollesen and Al Uw poseski, who also both double on bells), fronted by guitarist Bill Frisell and Medeski on organ. Zorn’s compositions, mostly diatonic, harmonized by slow-moving chords with ringing open strings, often laced with looped arpeggios in unison or light counterpoint, along with the chiming tones of the strings and metallophones, give the music a shimmering, translucent effect. When bells are used to knit out the chord changes, it enhances the soothing, cathedral-like atmosphere, like a cross between the music of Renaissance composerPalestina and Philip Glass. Frisell is the point man here, playing most of the melodies, switching between a blues-rock style and a more subdued delivery. Medeski, a consummate texturalist, provides just the right complement to the musical ambiance, adding subtle tones and accents. The final track of the cycle, “Three-fold The Howard”, has a mood swing, beginning with an ominous rumble, then the sound of birdings (a raven’s?) flapping, wolf-hows and unearthly moans, suggesting, perhaps, the dark crypt that lies just beneath the serene cathedral.

It’s great to see Blue Note reissuing classic titles as LPs. Some listeners have never gotten over their love of the format and many who already know these records well will be happy at the chance of replacing old vinyl. Those who don’t know them are in for a treat.

*Blue Train* is, of course, the best-known title here. Not only is it Coltrane, but it’s a record that he himself once called his favorite and many people consider the outstanding recording of his early period. It features great tunes, including “Moment’s Notice” and “Lazy Bird”, and an all-star lineup, with trumpeter Lee Morgan and trombonist Curtis Fuller joining Coltrane on the frontline and pianist Kenny Drew, bassist Paul Chambers and drummer Philly Joe Jones providing seamless support. Few would argue that it wasn’t Coltrane’s most ambitious pre-Atlantic recording, but it’s also somewhat overrated. Though Coltrane was happy with the incredible playing his sidemen turned in, some have noted over the years that it might not really be their best work of the time, simply because the other soloists seem to be trying to play as many notes as Coltrane does. One can’t really criticize Morgan, still a teenager, for his often breathtaking playing, but one can wish that he had taken a few more breaths. He had, after all, already shown that he understood the value of space on other records. Coltrane himself sounds strong and assured, no longer the brilliant but slightly tentative player who made waves with Miles a couple of years earlier. Certainly no one should be without *Blue Train*, but the same could also be said of many of Coltrane’s Prestige dates.

Though it is a simpler sort of record, Lou Donaldson’s *Lush Life* is a date that really could not be improved upon, though it’s also ambitious in its own modest way. The saxophonist was already a veteran by the time of this 1967 date, having begun as a Charlie Parker disciple and moved, as most boppers did during the ’50s, into the hardbop and soul-jazz fields. *Lush Life* is an anomaly in the Donaldson canon, entirely devoted to pretty ballads. He is the principle lead voice though Coltrane himself sounds strong and assured, no longer the brilliant but slightly tentative player who made waves with Miles a couple of years earlier. Certainly no one should be without *Blue Train*, but the same could also be said of many of Coltrane’s Prestige dates.

*Mode For Joe*, Joe Henderson’s (Blue Note) Black Note Records celebration is at Le Poisson Rouge Dec. 12th. Donaldson is at Blue Note Dec. 4th-7th. See Calendar.

For more information, visit bluenote.com. A Blue Note Records celebration is at Le Poisson Rouge Dec. 12th. Donaldson is at Blue Note Dec. 4th-7th. See Calendar.

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Di Gennaro is a pianist, improviser, composer, and arranger. He graduated from an Italian conservatory of music and studied with Franco D’Andrea, Rita Marcotulli, Enrico Pieranunzi. Master classes with Paul Bley, Kenny Barron, Barry Harris, Dave Liebman, Steve Lacy. He has performed live for many years, playing his own compositions.

December 9-13
DONALD VEGA trio/quartet
Classically-trained in his native Nicaragua, Vega came to the U.S. at 14 and began learning jazz from mentor Billy Higgins at The World Stage and later with bassist John Clayton at the University of Southern California. He graduated from Manhattan School of Music and Juilliard where he studied with Kenny Barron. Vega performs internationally as the pianist for Ron Carter’s Golden Striker Trio.

December 15-19
MANUEL VALERA trio/quartet
Based in New York City, Grammy-nominated artist, pianist and composer, Valera was born and raised in Havana, Cuba. Since arriving, he has become well known in the NYC, modern jazz scene, garnering national reviews and working with artists such as Arturo Sandoval, Patato Driscoll, Brian Lynch, Dafnis Prieto, Jeff “Tain” Watts, John Benitez, Samuel Torres, Joel Frahm, and Yosvany Terry among many others.

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Drummer Gerry Hemingway will forever be associated with the Anthony Braxton Quartet of the mid ’80s-mid ’90s, which blended intricate scores with rampant invention. Since then he has led his own quintet with distinction on a series of well-received albums but that’s not his only long-running outfit. Units such as The WHO Trio give prominence to albums but that’s not his only long-running outfit.

In existence since 1998, unlike previous efforts, Zoo, the WHO Trio’s fourth release, consists entirely of improvised pieces, spread across two CDs, which contrast acoustic and electric approaches. In truth, the differences are confined to pianist Michel Wintsch’s use of a synthesizer in conjunction with piano, as the same commitment to spontaneous composition and tonal exploration permeates both sets. The trio proves quite capable of creating extraordinary timbres without resorting to electricity, although Wintsch’s electronics considerably increase the palette of tonal color available. In a role reversal, Wintsch and bassist Bänz Oester often maintain momentum as much as Hemingway, who contrarily revels in a boisterous clatter. When Hemingway does contribute a pulse, it remains loosely defined, though lacking nothing in propulsive zeal. Hemingway makes full use of the resources at his disposal, even using his voice on the lengthy “Lamp Bowl” to add a childlike murmuring. At the piano, Wintsch proves imaginative, partial to preparatory modulations to modulate hammers on strings. He has a predilection for rhythmic patterns whatever the instrument; indeed on “Chilabreela” he seems as if he is playing variations on a Bach theme in his left hand.

Belching, bellowing tenor and alto saxophones, teeter-tottering guitar swells, mysterious wheezing accordion, Middle Eastern-ish melodies and throughout it all, the tootling reedclarinet of Tim Berne (alto) and Tony Malaby (tenor).

Still, there’s enough room, though they do enjoy a rampaging duet exchange to energized sequences where lyrical bass and propulsive zeal. Hemingway makes the most of his opportunity, whether on the unwieldy contrabass of the unbroken untitled track. Büyükberber makes the most of his opportunity, whether on the unwieldy contrabass clarinet, which stalks the opening minutes like a cross between a groaning behemoth and a motorbike revving up without a silencer, or on his more sprightly yelping bass clarinet. Hemingway manifests a wide dynamic range from the slightest ringing at the start to rolling intensity that avoids overt meter. The preternaturally talented Nabatov deploys thick waving lines recalling Cecil Taylor as he charges up and down the keyboard. The trio covers a wide terrain, from scratchy textural exchange to energized sequences where lyrical bass clarinet spews out notes atop careening piano and tub-thumping drums. Though only just over half an hour in length, it’s sufficient to show that this aggregation deserves to be more than a one-off.

For more information, visit gerrymemingway.com, hopscotchrecords.com and trytone.org. Hemingway is at Roulette Dec. 3rd with Matana Roberts, Korzo Dec. 9th, Ibeam Brooklyn Dec. 12th with Anthony Pirog and Scholes Street Studio Dec. 20th with Sarah Bernstein. See Calendar.

Belching, bellowing tenor and alto saxophones, teeter-tottering guitar swells, mysterious wheezing accordion, Middle Eastern-ish melodies and throughout it all, the pipey commentary of the performers, all of whom have been tested at the most demanding levels. Hemingway keeps loose time on the majority of the cuts, often aided by Dresser’s nimble melodicism, and frequently sets the direction, notably with his pattering intro to “Up If You Hate This”, Smith heatedly flips his brushes like they’re angry dual flyswatters. He makes his floor toms sing like tribal tympani in “One Long Minute”; later his mallet work has all the rolling motion of Elvin Jones. A singular drummer with a bizarre imagination, Ches Smith is just getting started.

For more information, visit fortune.pl. Smith is at Roulette Dec. 1st with Sarah Bernstein, later his mallet work has all the rolling motion of Elvin Jones. A singular drummer with a bizarre imagination, Ches Smith is just getting started.
undertook a mammoth US tour, with a notable stop at the now-defunct Brooklyn club Zebulon. Their set was a pithy 22 minutes, the musical equivalent of a gang initiation. Their latest album, _Seizures Palace_ (named for the deliciously punny Brooklyn studio where it was waxed), finds the trio on a ‘major’ label, if such things exist in the free jazz world. So how does the group hold up in relatively plush surroundings and across 45 minutes? Remember that vicious beating? You’ll get tired before Cactus Truck does.

There is nothing subtle about the band, which is just fine. Nearly 50 years after Brötzmann started shredding reeds, much has changed in the free jazz landscape but Cactus Truck seems to eschew fancy things like concepts, philosophy and mercy in lieu of one blowout after another. The not-so-secret weapon is Stadhouders’ switching between instruments. He just fine. Nearly 50 years after Brötzmann started shredding reeds, much has changed in the free jazz landscape but Cactus Truck seems to eschew fancy things like concepts, philosophy and mercy in lieu of one blowout after another. The not-so-secret weapon is Stadhouders’ switching between instruments. He

The opening untitled track is 14 seconds long, the closing nameless ditty just 6. In between are tunes like “Will to Power”, “Difference and Repetition” and “Fuck you Nash” (basketball player Steve?; botanist George Valentine?). But you won’t remember the names when dealing with post-concussion syndrome.

_Cactus Truck (Not Two)_
by Andrey Henkin

Add Cactus Truck to the list of bands like Machine Gun and Pulverize the Sound that let a listener know what he is in for before hitting play. Those aforementioned bands are close kin to the American-Dutch traffic accident that is Cactus Truck; the former was led by Peter Brötzmann, der pate of all free jazz saxophonists, while the latter also utilizes the brute force of electric bass as part of its onslaught.

Two years ago, Cactus Truck (alto/tenor saxophonist John Dikeman, electric guitarist/bassist Jasper Stadhouders and drummer Onno Govaert)
In the notes to Concert in Paris, veteran pianist Connie Crothers reflects on both the sense of the unknown and the spirit of self-discovery that permeated her first trip to Paris as a teenager. That same sense of discovery suffuses this 2011 concert at Z’Avant Garde Performance Space, Crothers’ first solo concert in Paris. Crothers has long carried on the special musical legacy of Lennie Tristano, sharing his compound commitment to improvisation, harmonic development and linear flow. The music springs simultaneously from Crothers’ thoughts and fingers, a series of long improvisations that take special inspiration from both memory and the immediate resonances of the piano and the room. There’s an exaggerated, dream-like presence here, as Crothers’ fondness for clusters finds additional resonance, vibration and symmetry within each handful of adjacent tones. The opening “Deuxième Naissance” bridges the watery chromatic impressionism of Debussy and teeming, echoing scales of Messiaen before turning from all those notes to the impressionism of Debussy and teeming, echoing scales of Messiaen before turning from all those notes to the immediate resonances of the piano and the room. It’s a fitting conclusion to a concert in which past and present forms continuously transform one another.

For more information, visit newartistsrecords.com. Crothers is at The Stone Dec. 27th with TranceFormation. See Calendar.

MARLENE VERPLANCK (Audiophile)
I Give Up, I’m In Love
by Marcia Hillman

Marlene VerPlanck adds to her reputation as a first-rate vocalist with this latest CD, once again choosing a special touch with cornet fills and a solo and also heard delivering a swinging solo with the big band on the title track. Allen enhances VerPlanck’s vocals on several tracks, especially smooth and sensitive on “How Little We Know”. Vincent shines with his tapdancing brushwork on “I Love The Way You Dance” and “Sleighride In July” while pianists Renzi and Firth (the latter with whom VerPlanck has worked many times) show off their talents for vocal accompaniment in their respective appearances.

For more information, visit jazzology.com. VerPlanck is at Saint Peter’s Dec. 17th and Jazz at Kitano Dec. 27th. See Calendar.

WILL CONNELL MEMORIAL WEEK:

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Music from the Legacy of Horace Tapscott
The Dark Tree Ensemble

Dec 26 *8 pm: Rocco John Iacovone’s I.C.E. - Improvisational Composers Ensemble
*10 pm: Sadhana w/Vincent Chancey

Dec 27 *8 pm: Jazz & Poetry Choir Collective
*10 pm: TranceFormation

Dec 28 *8 & 10 pm: Jorge Sylvester’s ACE Collective w/special guest Marvin Sewell

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“I Give Up, I’m In Love
Marlene VerPlanck (Audiophile)

I Give Up, I’m In Love

Marlene VerPlanck (Audiophile)

by Marcia Hillman

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TOM HARRELL is revered, not for playing high or fast, but for fashioning beautiful aural shapes with a tone of immense depth. Harrell is featured here with saxophonist MARK TURNER in his “experimental” quartet, called simply TRIP. Exciting playing & thoughtful compositions make this a must-have release.

HOUSTON PERSON: his big-boned sound and blues-drenched solos team with STEVE NELSON’s harmonic twists & effervescent artistry to explore the nooks and crannies of ten standards, some familiar, some obscure. The Rudy Van Gelder sonics highlight every nuance and inflection of the players.

ANDY BEY won a second Académie Charles Cros Coupe de Coeur Jazz Award for this, his latest HighNote release. Hear Andy Bey live at the historic MINTON’S JAZZ CLUB on December 12 & 13.

BILL O’CONNELL and the Latin Jazz Allstars are a group of veteran sidemen and leaders with CONRAD HERWIG on trombone and saxophonist STEVE SLAGLE adding their prowess to the mix. Mark the date: Bill O’Connell & the Latin Jazz Allstars at BIRDLAND - January 6, 2015.

You can always expect something fresh and unique from master song stylist FREDDY COLE – even when you thought you already knew everything about the blues. Hear Freddy Cole at THE JAZZ STANDARD - December 26, 27 & 28th.

The organ trio is a staple of small-group jazz, but MIKE LeDONNE has expanded its range and power by adding another voice, that of the superlative tenor saxophonist ERIC ALEXANDER. With LeDonne scorching the B3 and Alexander adding heat to the proceedings, this is an album that grooves emphatically from the outset.

Latin-jazz percussionist SAMMY FIGUEROA & Brazilian singer-songwriter GLAUCIA NASSER teamed up on an album with a perfect balance of great musicianship & soaring vocals. With Chico Pinheiro, Biaene Giupponi & Bernardo Aquilar.
In the remaining ten sections of the work piano and bass “play down the Stravinsky score with minimal improvisation” (according to Iverson) with drummer David King, freely interpreting the composition’s ever-shifting meters, beginning with the staccato rhythms of the portentously martial second section, “The Augurs of Spring”, adding tambourine and bells for tonal augmentation of his pounding drums and dinging cymbals. The racing-tempoed “Ritual of Abduction” has Iverson handling multiple right- and left-hand themes with Anderson introducing countermelodies upon which the piano expounds. The bass comes to the fore on “Spring Rounds”, King offering a shimmering cymbal underpinning to it as it enters a dialogue with piano on the piece’s powerful secondary theme. “Games of the Two Rival Tribes/ Ritual of the Ancestors” is marked by King’s funky drumming, giving it a Kurt Weill-ian character, contrasting with the delicate opening of the first part’s concluding section, “The Sage/Dance of the Earth”. The second, more conventionally melodic, part of the piece, “The Sacrifice”, has Iverson and Anderson performing the score with classical precision, King assisting with appropriate rhythmic accompaniment, then exploding for the climactic concluding section, “Sacrificial Dance”.

For more information, visit songmasterworks.com. This band is at Village Vanguard Dec. 30th-Jan. 4th. See Calendar.

The Rite of Spring
The Bad Plus (Sony Music)
by Russ Musto

No stranger to controversy, it’s not surprising to find The Bad Plus performing what was, at the time of its premiere a century ago, the most contentious debated composition ever to enter the classical canon. Although the recording is for the most part a faithful retelling of the iconic piece following Stravinsky’s score for two pianos, the band puts its own stamp on it, beginning with bass player Reid Anderson’s computer-generated electronics in the introduction to the composition’s first part, “Adoration of the Earth”, starting off with an amplified human heartbeat, which decays into Ethan Iverson’s pre-recorded piano prelude with electronic orchestration. The music unfolds organically with the pianist’s acoustic recital of the iconic melody (derived from a Lithuanian folk song) merging with additional ambient electronics during its discordant development of the theme until it becomes awash in a dense cacophony redolent of Conlon Nancarrow’s pieces for player electronics during its discordant development of the theme until it becomes awash in a dense cacophony redolent of Conlon Nancarrow’s pieces for player piano. Following a recapitulation of the initial theme, bass joins the fray, sounding much like a French horn in its molosid middle-register reading of a rhythmical countermelody.

Hailing from Yale, Oklahoma, Chesney Henry “Chet” Baker, Jr. is the posthumous beneficiary of two new albums of early material out around what would have been his 85th birthday this month. Stories of Baker’s troubled life (he died in May 1988 at 58) seem hard to believe when one hears the beautiful playing on these recordings, captured in his prime and both recorded in Europe, where he was a fixture.

On Italian Movies, Baker is with his longtime friend and popular Italian composer Piero Umiliani. The set is comprised of music from the films Audace Colpo Dei Soliti Ignotti, I Soliti Ignotti, Urritori Alla Scarra, Intrigo a Los Angeles and Smog and feature the interesting juxtaposition of Baker’s spare trumpet with unusual, often comic, arrangements. The music to Intrigo a Los Angeles stands out as the best selections: “Minorenne Cercasi” is a beautiful bossa nova with wood blocks, cowbell and humorous musical tricks, Baker doubling a flute melody while using an uncharacteristic Harmon mute for a very unusual timbre. On “Comunicazione Spaziale” there is even a very modern tape echo loop, not a sound one usually associates with Baker. “Hollywood Tonight” features Smog features vibraphone and the hilariously square scatting of a mixed chorus; the first solo is an uncredited baritone saxophonist who plays a great top lead followed again by the funny scatting of the possibly amateur chorus. The tune is furious and catchy and you will find yourself swinging along. Generally the music on this collection is very light and easy and blends well with Baker’s gentle style.

Lost Tapes features Baker in various settings overseas from 1955-59. One track, “Bochanall”, is with the rhythm section of pianist Dick Twardzik, bassist Jimmy Bond and drummer Peter Littman, a group not together long due to Twardzik’s untimely death from a drug overdose a month after this recording. Kurt Edelhagen, leading his brilliant orchestra, provides arrangements for five tunes from 1955 and 1956 and really seems to understand Baker’s style and writes with many band figure questions answered by the clipped phrases of the iconic trumpeter. This musical dialogue is very interesting to follow and constantly engaging for the listener. Singer Caterina Valente (who also plays guitar) has a few delightfully stark duets with Baker from 1956: on “I’ll Remember April”, she shows great scatting chops in trades with Baker on a bebop fugue while “Every Time We Say Goodbye” has her gentle statement of the melody followed by a gorgeously minimalist solo from Baker. On the swingers and upempo cuts with the big bands (four 1959 tunes are with the Tanzorchester des Südwestfunks, conducted by Rold-Hans Müller), Baker’s playing is more aggressive than on his US releases of the same period. He chips a riff right at the beginning of his solo on “Lullaby in Rhythm” (with Edelhagen’s band) but is swinging so hard no one cares. Throughout the solo he turns his little misses into brilliant motifs, which he continues to develop throughout the improvisation. It’s hard to believe that Baker had very little formal training when hearing him—he has such command of the melody, in contrast to reports by some jazz historians of him being confused by song forms.

Both albums feature Baker at the height of his powers, his trumpet playing assured, beautifully lyrical and hard swinging, in unusual musical settings that will delight his fans.

For more information, visit moochinabout.com and jazzhaus-label.com.

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Eric Reed first gained wide exposure during his stint with Wynton Marsalis, along with appearing on releases by Clark Terry, Wynton Gordon, Donald Harrison and others. Reed has led numerous CDs over the past quarter-century, establishing himself as a versatile mainstream performer and composer. These live performances were drawn from two days at Smoke with tenor saxophonist Seamus Blake, bassist Ben Williams and drummer Gregory Hutchinson.

Opener “Powerful Paul Robeson” is an original by the late tenor great Clifford Jordan, a gem from his 1973 album Glass Real Games. Reed has big shoes to fill but draws inspiration from the earlier band and delivers an emotional rendition, marked by Blake’s soaring tenor. Reed penned several originals heard in these sessions, starting with a bluesy tribute to several greats who passed away in 2013: Donald Byrd, Mulgrew Miller, Marian McPartland and Cedar Walton. Though the mood may be somber, Reed’s brisk Mulgrew Miller, Marian McPartland and Cedar Walton.

Giant” also honors Miller, a trio feature saluting both who have preceded him into his own style. “The Gentle tempo and intricate solo, fueled by walking bass, Walton. Though the mood may be somber, Reed’s brisk Mulgrew Miller, Marian McPartland and Cedar Walton.

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Not since the late Mabel Mercer has a vocal artist demonstrated such an intimate rapport with the nuances of a song, both words and music. But while Mercer came as close to reciting as singing the American Pop standards songbook, resulting in the description of her approach as “parlando”, Andy Bey glides and swoops from low baritone to high, falsetto-like tenor, creating musical sighs, moans and cries along the way while never grandstanding or breaking the bounds of a unique conversational intimacy he’s cultivated over a half-century of performing.

Bey is at his most personal, even conspiratorial, on this latest outing, a solo affair with just his piano. He’s divided 15 songs into four numbered pages, with each reflecting a particular theme, some not always immediately apparent. Each includes an original and they function like ent’reacute commentary closer to Mercer’s parlando than any of the songs and are equipped with pedagogical titles: “Jealousy”, “Bad Luck May Be Good Luck”, “Humor Keeps Us Alive” and “All That Glitter’s Not Gold”.

But it’s Bey’s probing, revelatory performances—exegeses really—of standards and unexpected gems that make this recital extraordinary. He brings a wistful anguish to achingly slow versions of “My Foolish Heart” and “How Long Has This Been Going On”; solemn intensity to “I’ve Got A Right to Sing the Blues” and heartbreaking intimacy to “Good Morning Heartache”. Bey rescues Cole Porter’s “Love for Sale” from banality with a startlingly dramatic version balanced on his spiky piano chords. While his piano is often spare, it can be a full collaborator too, most emotionally on a romantically full-blown “Everything I Have Is Yours”. Bey’s song-sleuthing here results in the little known “Worried Life Blues” and “Dog Eat Dog”, the latter a trifle from Saratoga, the flop musical by Harold Arlen and Johnny Mercer. And Bey not only comes up with alternate words to Billy Strayhorn’s “Take the ‘A’ Train” but ends with Allan Roy’s rare lyrics to Strayhorn’s “Lotus Blossom”, a sophisticated, clever love song titled “All Roads Lead Back to You”.

For more information, visit jazzdepot.com. Bey is at Minton’s Playhouse Dec. 12th-13th. See Calendar.

Alfredo Riccardo Plane, the concept will oscillate, the music seduce.

The Arts Desk

AN EVENING OF SUPERB MUSIC
BRITISH THEATRE MUSIC
THE CONCEPT WILL OSCILLATE, THE MUSIC SEDUCE
THE ARTS DECK

DECEMBER 2014
Woodstock, N.Y.-based Creative Music Studio (CMS), brainchild of Ornette Coleman, Karl Berger and Ingrid Sertso, has had an influence that continues to resonate past its physical presence from 1971-84. Dedicated to erasing the false barriers among different musics, its workshops and concerts not only helped spread freer sounds among players identified with jazz or so-called classical music, but with participants from overseas welcomed, helped birth a sophisticated variant of world music. The first volume of over 400 hours of hitherto uncollected performances and workshops CMS is making available through the library of CMS orchestra, the Roscoe Mitchell’s 14-minute untitled track is the most compositionally sophisticated. Irredescent ensemble harmonies accompany the sharp bites and barks from the composer’s alto saxophone plus skimming tongue flutters from Garrett List’s trombone in the foreground. Olu Daras’s three contributions come from a contradictory space. He segments Sun Ra-like grooves pushed by florid horn section riffs with slyly subtle from a percussive flute, clanking guitar, staccato piano chording and his own lead trumpet on one track; puffing harmonica and vocalizing on another song, he gets the ensemble to add drum backbeats and blues guitar licks, resulting in a big band variant on what could be a Sonny Boy Williamson II number. Oliver Lake’s tracks fall in between those of the other composers. As Michael Gregory’s near psychedelic guitar lines reference jazz-rock, the rest of the group clings to a basic big band structure on three 1976 tunes, encouraged by Lake’s brittle alto tone. Better recorded, 1979’s “Two by Two” adds the punch needed to achieve the uninhibited excitement missing from earlier tracks.

Moving to small groups, the four 1980 selections featuring drummer Ed Blackwell with soprano and tenor saxophonist Charles Brackeen are standouts, doubly precious since the drummer died in 1992 and Brackeen’s fitful career of the ‘70s and ‘80s has been stalled for years. Justly celebrated for his intuitive duo work with Dewey Redman, Don Cherry and others, Blackwell is appropriately matched by the saxophonist, who recorded in the reed chair of what eventually would become Old and New Dreams. If the drummer’s snappy clanks approximate a second line parade on “Moving to Small Groups,” the fiery nay tones appears a bit forced, two traditions producing exciting rhythmic parallels, but not quite meeting, like Coleman’s experiments with the Master Musicians of Joujouka of around that same time. Vol. 1 confirms that not all the CMS sounds captured were ready for prime time. Having said this, the good stuff captured here is very good indeed. The variety also suggests that many other unexposed musical gems are likely to show up on subsequent volumes.

For more information, visit innova.mu. Karl Berger is at ShapeShifter Lab Dec. 10th. See Calendar.

JAZZ AT SAINT PETER’S

WEDNESDAY 12/3 – MIDDAY JAZZ MIDTOWN – 1 PM
THERE SE GENEOCCO’S LITTLE BIG BAND

SUNDAY 12/7 – JAZZ VESPERS – 5 PM
ALL ARE WELCOME

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WEDNESDAY 12/10 – MIDDAY JAZZ MIDTOWN – 1 PM
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Relative Pitch

Eponymous

by Clifford Allen

As the geographic specificity of improvised music has become more fluid over the last few decades, musicians can define ‘place’ not so much as where they reside but with whom they work—as in their place in the community. For example, while alto saxophonist/clarinetist Frank Gratkowski’s sinewy Charlie Mariano-schooled lines find their roots in open, melodic sparring, where form is erased the false barriers among different musics, its past its physical presence from 1971-84. Dedicated to the commanding presence that would soon allow him to co-found the String Trio of New York. New music pianists Frederic Rzewski and Ursula Oppens play a version of Berger’s “Z in C,” formalist presentation and careful voicing connect the two as neo-Ragtime mixes with time suspension.

For more information, visit leorecords.com. Gratkowski is at Ibeam Brooklyn Dec. 8th and Roulette Dec. 11th. See Calendar.

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Lacy, who recorded stand-out albums of Monk covers,
Thelonious Monk tunes. Like his former teacher, Steve
Levy and drummer Smith Dobson, contains all
his continued mission to develop and refine his sound.
Joshua Redman and others. Two recent releases show
Nels Cline, Charlie Hunter, John Zorn, Myra Melford,
collaborations with Marty Ehrlich, Miya Masaoka,
For more information, visit ecmrecords.com. This project is
accessible while built to withstand greater scrutiny.
background. The music contained on
Mbókò—Sacred Music for Piano, Two Basses, Drum Set and Blankoméko Abakáu
David Virelles (ECM) by Kurt Gottschalk

There wouldn’t be anything exactly inaccurate about calling Mbókò AfroCuban jazz. It’s certainly jazzy, at least in parts. Pianist David Virelles himself is Cuban-born, although he lives in Brooklyn these days and the music is rooted in AfroCuban tradition, right down to the blankoméko drums played by Roman Diaz. So while there’s nothing exactly factually inaccurate about calling the album “AfroCuban jazz”, what it really is is a unique, sometimes swinging mediation on Cuban spiritual and musical tradition.

Mbókò: Sacred Music for Piano, Two Basses, Drum Set and Blankoméko Abakáu furthers the explorations of Cuban music that Virelles undertook on his previous album, 2012’s Continuum (Pi Recordings). It also continues the considerable slowing down of his playing, which might seem to some a waste of his prodigious talent but only serves to slow the music. The CD even begins, in fact, in silence, with about a quarter-minute of quiet before a soft rumble appears and two delicately placed piano notes at the one-minute mark. The blankoméko drums appear shortly thereafter but are slow to secure a footing. There is nothing about the opening “Wind Rose (Antrogofoko Mokoire)” that is in a hurry.

Things do pick up by the third track and Mbókò makes for a wonderful, well-rounded listen. It’s also an esoteric one. The concept behind the music references West African linguistics and cultural identity and Virelles’ own journey into his heritage. The Abakáu society in Cuba believes that sound itself was sacred and has a highly ritualistic system of music and dance from their implications. Levy sometimes doubles him, but more often finds complementary parts (some transcribed from Monk’s own playing), underpinning the harmonies with bass notes while simultaneously adding chord fragments and countermelodies in the guitar’s upper range in a style reminiscent of Jim Hall.

Dobson is less a timekeeper than a colorist, breaking up the beat and spreading across his drumkit. Highpoints from this worthy effort include the relaxed rigor of “Little Rootie Tootie”, capped by a thrice-repeated tag, and Goldberg’s excellent solo bolstered by empathetic group interplay on “Who Knows?”

Live at the Novara Jazz Festival finds Goldberg as part of a group of Bay Area musicians led by drummer Vijay Anderson, with Aaron Bennett and Sheldon Brown (reeds), Darren Johnston (trumpet) and Lisa Mezzacappa (bass). The recording is mixed to mirror the concert stage setup, with trumpet and tenor/baritone saxophone (Bennett) in the right channel and clarinet and alto saxophone/bass clarinet (Brown) in the left, drums and bass in the center. Anderson’s compositions utilize fairly straightforward, rock-based rhythms (though one is centered in five, another in seven), sometimes pitting two soloists against each other simultaneously, followed by two more, as on “Slippin’” or “Waldron”, other times creating complex four-part chorale textures with inner moving lines, as on “Delusions”, “The Last Good Kiss” or “Degrees of Gray”, the latter two performed as part of a medley. Goldberg shines on “Delusions”, where he plays high, clean, bluesy lines with subtle growl effects, and on “Swift Horse”, where he briefly tags on to the end of Bennett’s solo before going it alone with sweeping rhythms (though one is metered in five, another in seven), putting his own stamp on it even as he betrays its strong influence upon him. The setlist includes well-worn gems like “Trinkle Tinkle”, “Brilliant Corners”, “Crisis Cross” and “Crepuscule with Nellie”, along with lesser-known jewels like “Hornin’ In”, “Who Knows?”, “Shuffle Boil”, “Light Blue”, “San Francisco Holiday (Worry Later)” and “Little Rootie Tootie”. The recording atmosphere is relaxed (at the beginning of the first track we hear, “We’re rolling now”, followed by laughter) and the ensuing music unrolls nonchalantly, belying the complexity of Monk’s compositions. Goldberg tackles many of the melodies alone, rendering them faithfully or distilling them to more abstract elements and his solos never stray far from their implications. Levy sometimes doubles him, but more often finds complementary parts (some transcribed from Monk’s own playing), underpinning the harmonies with bass notes while simultaneously adding chord fragments and countermelodies in the guitar’s upper range in a style reminiscent of Jim Hall.

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Berkeley-based clarinetist Ben Goldberg has charted an eclectic career course since he emerged in the early ‘90s with the New Klezmer Trio, followed by collaborations with Marty Ehrlich, Miya Masaoka, Nels Cline, Charlie Hunter, John Zorn, Myra Melford, Joshua Redman and others. Two recent releases show his continued mission to develop and refine his sound.

Worry Later, a trio recording with guitarist Adam Levy and drummer Smith Dobson, contains all Thelonious Monk tunes. Like his former teacher, Steve Lacy, who recorded stand-out albums of Monk covers, Goldberg has a strong affinity for Monk’s music,
Performing and recording entire albums by past jazz masters is all the rage at the moment, but drummer Clarence Penn knows how to throw a curve into the copycat ballpark. Long a musician of both finesse and fire, of straightahead tradition and left-field surprises, Penn’s music is agility in action.

Writing in his liner notes to Monk: The Lost Files, “I got this idea to do Monk’s music, “I got this idea to do Monk’s music, “I got this idea to do Monk’s music, “I got this idea to do Monk’s music,” Penn then set about arranging Monk’s timeless music using the majestic melodies as rhythms, harmonies and selected strains to be juggled in various ways. It’s as if he’s fed Monk into a computer, dissected and mapped out his essence, then applied jazz moves and straightahead plug-ins.

Penn’s quintet eats up his Monk approach. Gerald Clayton’s Rhodes relays “In Walked Bud” with noirish spirit as Penn plays gentle cymbals and adds weird, glitzy computer effects. It’s twilight and trip-hop combined, Monk sailing overhead like a sprite. Funk slap-bass and Weather Report-styled sounds frame “I Mean You”, the odd-metered arrangement rolling and tumbling via Penn’s programmed congas and lithe (sometimes treated) rhythms. Clayton’s solo paints another nocturnal journey here as bassist Yasushi Nakamura plays spongy notes. Each song is a surprise, from the subtle software treatments (“Bemsha Swing” is a highlight) and mellow computer percussion to the musicians’ manhandling of Monk. The quintet tackles “Rhythm-a-Ning” traditionally at first, Penn fulminating over the head, then it’s nearly rubato in the solo sections. Clayton gently framing saxophonist Chad Lekfowitz-Brown’s solo as Penn follows with burnished cymbal support. Fait accompli.

Monk might have loved Penn’s fractured fairytale versions of his music and Penn is to be congratulated. When superlative artistry interprets timeless masters, everything old is new again.

For more information, visit origin-records.com. Penn is at Studio 151 Dec. 10th as part of the NuBlu Jazz Festival and The Appel Room Dec. 19th-20th. See Calendar.

Drummer Edward Vesala (1945-99) was a unique presence in Finnish jazz. In the ’70s, he developed a compositional style that drew on much of the jazz tradition and elements of world music, all of it distinguished by a special cognizance of traditional Baltic melodies. His recordings for ECM in the ’70s revealed a burgeoning Finnish scene alongside international partners like Charlie Mariano, Terje Rypdal and Tomasz Stanko.

One of Vesala’s enduring achievements is the band Sound & Fury. The group debuted as a tenet in 1989 with Ode to the Death of Jazz (ECM), a trenchant response to neo-conservatism, then played and recorded for a decade until Vesala’s death. The group, currently a nonet, reformed in 2010 and returns here with seven previously unrecorded Vesala compositions, arranged by his widow, Iro Haarla, as was their practice when Vesala was alive. It’s testimony to the band’s spirit that so many of its original members are here, including all of the hornplayers—trumpeter Matti Riikonen and reedplayers (all firebrands of Finnish free jazz) Jorma Tapio, Tane Kannoisto and Pepa Päivinen—and guitarist Jimi Sumen. They’re joined here by a second guitarist, Julius Heikkilä, bassist Sampo Lassila, drummer Ilmari Heikinheimo and percussionist Hannu Risku.

Vesala had a broad compositional palette and all of it is enlivened by the band’s committed energies, whether it’s the dense and shifting “Punk” or serene “Nattuggla”, wafting flutes reinforcing a traditional source. Sound & Fury is the furthest thing from a ‘ghost band’, a living, breathing ensemble whose teeming horns and driving electronic-sounding guitars fuse free jazz and rock band energies. Its thoroughly idiomatic command of Vesala’s broad vocabulary is highlighted by the joyous calypso of “I Tell You a Story”. While few of these musicians enjoy international reputations, they are consistently of the first rank.

For more information, visit ektrorecords.com.
This over-two-hour performance comes from the Dance Inn at Tivoli Gröna Lund in Stockholm, Sweden. The heralded sax section of Johnny Hodges, Russell Procope, Jimmy Hamilton, Paul Gonsalves and Harry Carney had been together for eight years while trumpeter Cootie Williams had returned after a 22-year absence the previous fall. Bassist Ernie Shepard was a new addition, bringing a bop-flavored sound.

The setlist blends old favorites and new compositions. Gonsalves takes a rhapsodic tenor solo in the chestnut “Laura”, adding a quote from “Pop Goes the Weasel” before becoming a back to the forefront of Ellington’s train blues “Main Stem”, backing Hodges’ masterful alto and Hamilton’s effusive clarinet. Billy Strayhorn takes the piano for an extended workout of his “Take the ‘A’ Train”, with Ray Nance reprising his trumpet solo from the original record. Williams was welcomed back to the fold with Ellington’s “New Concerto For Cootie”, his matchless, vocal-like muted trumpet engaging the band; Ellington features his muted horn again in “Tootie For Cootie”, though much of the spotlight is on the a beautiful piano.

To begin the second set, Ellington ruminates at the piano for “Intermission Music”, Shepard providing a soft background for this seemingly improvised performance. “I Didn’t Know About You” was a deliberate ballad that should have been yet another Ellington hit, but it wasn’t to be; Hodges’ emotional solo conveys the message of its unheard lyric. He is prominently featured in the next two pieces: “All of Me” and “Jee’s Blues”. Nance (on violin) and Gonsalves share a playful conversation in “Mr. Gentle and Mr. Cool” and there is plenty of banter among the band during Ellington’s introduction. While this concert doesn’t have the fidelity of commercially recorded performances of the era, it gives the feeling that was like experience the band in person.

For more information, visit storyvillerecords.com. Ellington
dances are at Apollo Theater Dec. 13th-14th, Lafayette
For more information, visit cuneiformrecords.com. This
project is at Ibeam Brooklyn Dec. 12th. See Calendar.

Palo Colorado Dream
Anthony Pirog (Cuneiform)
by Tom Greenland

A major mover in the Washington, D.C. music scene, guitarist Anthony Pirog leads a trio on Palo Colorado Dream with bassist Michael Formanek and drummer Ches Smith. Using the new group as a platform to reinterpret original compositions he’s developed over the years, Pirog brings formidable artistry to the project.

The album begins with the innocuous title track’s chiming bell-tone loops, which swell and fade, quickly segueing to “The Great Northern”, an anthemic piece built in the tradition of King Crimson with its fat-toned, slow-climaxing solo rife with exciting runs and unusual bends. “Minimalist” starts with stop-and-go, skipping-disc rhythms, morphing to 4/4 rock with quirky undertones and layered electronics before it crescendos to its highest alto-like register while others wallow in a reed exposition showcasing key percussion finally confirms the instrument’s identity.

There’s no question that saxophones are being played by Battle Trance; the question is how many. Travis Laplante wrote the three-part Palace of Wind so that all the players—Nelson, Jeremy Viner and Patrick Breiner are the other horns—become interlocking parts of one imaginary giant tenor saxophone. With no single tone predominating, the few solo sequences are usually cocooned within organ-like tremolos from the remaining reeds. All parts of the saxophones are constantly in play, with the narrative switching from barely audible whispers to fortissimo crescendos. Meanwhile, specific passages concentrate on the highest alto-like register while others wallow in a guttural, bass saxophone-pitched howling. With this ever-evolving theme constantly being deconstructed and rebuilt, impressionistic sequences succeed ferocious blowouts and vice-versa, although intricate, overlapping union playing is more prominent. Eventually the piece reaches a climax in the final minutes of the third and longest section as stentorian drones give way to a wispy reed airiness that deliberately sustains the horns’ lockstep harmonies.

For more information, visit tubapederecords.com and
newamrecords.com. Battle Trance is at Silent Barn Dec.
11th. See Calendar.

All of You: The Last Tour (1960)
Miles Davis Quintet (featuring John Coltrane) (Acrobat)
by Ken Dryden

Miles Davis had two major personnel changes by the time work was complete on Kind of Blue in 1959. Pianist Bill Evans departed, replaced by Wynton Kelly, while alto saxophonist Cannonball Adderley left to pursue a solo career. Before the trumpeter’s 1960 European tour, John Coltrane had already gone out on his own, but with Davis insisting he was essential for this tour, the saxophonist agreed to commit to the three-week schedule, even though he was beginning to lead his own groups in clubs and had recorded extensively under his own name, having recently waxed Giant Steps. Bassist Paul Chambers and drummer Jimmy Cobb rounded out the quintet.

The performances from this compilation have appeared on various labels over the years, sourced from a combination of broadcasts and soundboard tapes of varying degrees of quality. Several of the songs are repeated night after night, though the band isn’t taking any of the music for granted. The loping treatment of “Fran Dance (Put Your Little Foot Right Out)” features Davis, Coltrane, Kelly and Chambers in turn, a relatively quiet performance compared to most of the selections. The quintet had become comfortable with the leader’s modal compositions written for Kind of Blue thus “So What” benefits from a faster tempo than the original record, with fleet, compelling solos all around. The tempo for “All Blues” is close to the original record, though Davis’ piercing solos are full of fire. Coltrane’s extended solos outraged some European audiences, likely due to his frequent use of repeated lines, atonal passages and occasionally blurred, rapid-fire attack. The standard “Green Dolphin Street” is heard on three separate nights, with Coltrane’s fluid improvisations foreshadowing his later explorations on his own recordings. This historic collection should be considered essential for fans of both Davis and Coltrane.

For more information, visit acrobatmusic.net. Coltrane
trio are at Jazz Standard Dec. 9th-10th and Smoke Dec.
19th-Jan. 1st See Calendar.

Lower Bottoms
Matt Nelson (Tubapede)
Palace of Wind
Battle Trance (New Amsterdam)
by Ken Waxman

Picking up on the freedom that’s available as a fellow
recording emphasizes the metal and cork properties of a saxophone. Chalumeau tones appear to bounce through the air as early as “Sink.Cost” while flattened and smeared work up to affiliated sheets of sound. Eventually attaining overall stridency, the narrative includes mellow detours, as the exposition, which pans from one side of the listening space to the other, swells to include bagpipe-like respiration as well as percussive crashes. Other techniques such as circular breathing and bomb-detonation-­resembling sonic explosions are part of other tracks. “Sworn Enemies” unites pedal-processing delays with the metal percussion properties of the horn to such an extent that the resulting danceable beats could come from any blown source, until a reed exposition showcasing key percussion finally confirms the instrument’s identity.

On the album’s overdubbed effect is an illusion created by his adept use of loopers. “The New Electric” boasts a clean, surging guitar line over charged drums, enhanced by jet and rocket engine roars. “Goodnight Geen”, a brief acoustic interlude, is followed by “I’m Not Coming Home”, another acoustic number in 12/8, which sets up “Mortian”, a 1-2-3-4 feature for drums, bass and guitar, respectively. “Heads” is a bit of Thelonious Monk-ish swing, which builds to a collective white-noise climax with robotic noises à la R2D2 and other sounds from the final frontier. The album concludes with “Vicious Cricket”, a shred-fest that sounds like turbocharged bebop and features strong solos from Pirog and Smith.

For more information, visit cuneiformrecords.com. This
project is at Ibeam Brooklyn Dec. 12th. See Calendar.

For more information, visit storyvillerecords.com. Ellington
trades are at Apollo Theater Dec. 13th-14th, Lafayette
Avenue Presbyterian Church Dec. 14th and David
Ravenstein Atrium Dec. 30th. See Calendar.

In Gröna Lund 1963
Duke Ellington (Storyville)
by Ken Dryden

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QUINTONIC
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George Garzone (ts), Jerry Bergonzi (ts), Carl Winther (g), Johnny Arni (b), Anders Magnussen (d).

Ned Ferm
SPENT ALL THE MONEY
CD: STUCD 14081
Ned Ferm (ts, voc), Mads Hyne (ts, p), Palle Kjeldsen (g), Emanuele Maniscalco (b, p, org, wur- litzer), Nicolai Munch-Hansen (d), Jacob Haye (d) + Kira Skov, Marie Fisker, Jacob Bellens (voc).

Niels Vincentz
IS THAT SO
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feat. Walter Smith III
VARIATIONS IN BLUE
CD: STUCD 14112 / LP: STULP 14111
Jan Harbeck (ts), Walter Smith III (ts), Henrik Gunde (p), Eske Nørrelund (b), Anders Holm (d).

Marilyn Mazur
FLAMINGO SKY
CD: STUCD 14128
Marilyn Mazur (d, p, voc), Josefine Cronholm (voc, perc), Krister Jonasson (g, electronics), Klaus Hennemann (d, b - tracks 3 & 15).

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US Distribution: Solestide Distributors, Inc., Seth Fundeburn, info@solestide.com, 843-420-6077 office.
The dedicatee alto saxophonist Cannonball Adderley produced this session and plays on an alternate take of "Cherokee" added to later editions. Trumpeter Idrees Sulieman also makes an appearance for four tracks. But otherwise, this is a quartet date with regular sidemen of the time: Don Byas as co-leaders, supported by pianist Bud Powell and saxophonist Charlie Ramey) but also including drummer Buddy Rich (who had worked with Basie intermittently since the '40s and '50s). The drummer's leader released began a decade earlier and were occasionally recorded in Paris. Michelot's three tunes are the only originals, the program filled out by jazz and songbook standards.

The drummer's leader released began a decade earlier and were occasionally recorded in Paris. Michelot's three tunes are the only originals, the program filled out by jazz and songbook standards.
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**Sunday, December 7**

- Bertha Hope Quintet with Kim Clarke, Lucinda Padmore, Angelish
  - Mingus Playhouse 7:30, 9:30 pm $15
  - Nuja Jazz Festival: Musical Moments at The Brooklyn Museum, Anga Gonzalez, Gail Hoening, Gisel Hollinen;
    - Hoffman’s Time for a Drink, 11:00 pm $15
  - Jonathan Haffner’s Electric Band
  - Greenwich House Music School 8 pm $15

- Benito Gonzalez, Reggie Workman, Billy Hart
  - Blue Note 8, 10:30 pm $75
  - Dan Tepfer Sound: Alex Bird, Ken Mathews, Darius Jones, Karen Sharp, Adam Cognetta, Mike Block, Matt Mitchell;
    - Pereky’s Sound: Rafael Marquina, Bounce Cat, Matt Davis, Billy Milano, Matt Borton, John Zorn

- Giulio Carmassi
  - Manhattan School of Music Alumni Club Jazz Festival, Doug Black, Steve Lam, accordion; Peter Martin, Jack DeJohnette

- Ben Perowsky Trio with Adam Rogers
  - ShapeShifter Lab 8:30, 9:30 pm $8-12

- Lawrence Leathers, Tivon Pennicott
  - Smoke 7 pm $12

- Jessica Jones Quartet with Tony Jones, Stomu Takeishi, Kenny Wollesen
  - Metropolitan Church 3 pm $10

- Steven Whipple, Shirazette Tinnin
  - Jon Madaleno’s Jazz at the Newport Jazz Hall 8 pm $15

- Jonathan Haffner’s Electric Band
  - Bar Next Door 3:30 pm $12

- Monday, December 8

- James Weidman/Norie S
  - Dizzy’s Club 4 pm $45

- Duke Ellington Center for the Arts (Peabody Essex Museum), Michael Ernest, Michael Bloom, Kevin O’Shea, Joe CAD#: 1250 (7:30 pm)

- Denny Southerland Big Band
  - Dizzy’s Club 7:30, 9:30 pm $40

- Kate Cosco
  - Live Oak 7:30 pm $15

- George Guelax Quartet with Catalina Lewis, Victor Lewis, John Hshirt, Joel Friesen
  - The John Menegon Quartet presents

- Lou Donaldson Quartet with Randy Brecker, Steve Coleman, Steve Davis
  - The John Menegon Quartet presents

- Carmen Lundy Quintet with Krista Cruz, Wycliffe Gordon, David Cohen, Hall Johnson, Ross Gordon
  - The John Menegon Quartet presents

- Pat Metheny Unity Group with John Patitucci, Gary Husband,貔貅, Eric Harland
  - The John Menegon Quartet presents

- Giola Carmassi
  - Birdland 8 pm $40

- Christian McCullough Inside Straight with Steve Lacy, Walter Smith III, David Schnitter, Milford Graves
  - The John Menegon Quartet presents

- Lawrence Leathers, Tivon Pennicott
  - Mezzrow 8 pm $30

- Joseph Donaldson
  - The John Menegon Quartet presents

- Tommy Campbell Vocal-Eyes with Carolyn Leonhart, Miles Griffith
  - The John Menegon Quartet presents

- Fred Frith/No Man’s Land, Fred Frith/David Fray
  - The John Menegon Quartet presents

- Tiwon Pennicott, Yasushi Nakamura, McClenty Hunter
  - The John Menegon Quartet presents

- Brian Blade and the }</p>
**Saturday, December 13**

- **Elliott at Christmas**: David Berger Jazz Orchestra, Norm Lewis, Liz Wright, Priscilla Baskerville, Jameson Samuels Smith
  - The Apollo Theater 3:30 pm $35-65
- **Bob Stewart’s Double Quartet** with Roland Haywood, Nick Finzi, Craig Harris, Curtis Stewart, Jasmine Novel-Haywood
  - The Village Vanguard 8:30, 10:30 pm $25-35
- **Mary Halvorson solo**: The Lucky Chops Band, B.A. Wale, Industry City, 24th St 8 pm $25-30
- **Russ Lossing/Gerry Hemingway**: Pacific Time Quartet, B.A. Wale, Industry City 8 pm $25-30
- **Fred Frith/Sheila Hicks**: Fred Frith’s New Trio, B.A. Wale, Industry City 8 pm $25-30

**Nublu Jazz Festival: Leo Genovese and Grande Torno with Solange Prat, Jucuna Ochagui, Sergio Camaran, Arturo Prendez, Claudio Altesor, Noelia Fernandez;**

- **Christian McBride Trio with Christian Sands, Ulysses Owens, Jr.**
  - Dizzy’s Club 7:30, 9:30 pm $45
- **Evan Sherman Group**
  - Don’t Tell Me Where It’s Going, Bar Next Door 8:30, 10:30 pm $10
- **Ralph Peterson’s Trio**
  - Cafe Caribe 8:45, 10:45 pm $75-190
- **Michael Feinstein Happy Holidays: Swinging with the Big Band**
  - Birdland 8:30 pm $60-250

**Sunday, December 14**

- **Michael Utsukh GROUP with Mike Fixe, Billy Spaceman Patterson, Tayyor Ikawa, Al-Madou**
  - Drom 8 pm $30-60
- **Gabe Santoro**
  - Lullaby Band and 502 8 pm $10
- **Fred Frith Edition**: Fred Frith’s New Trio, B.A. Wale, Industry City 8 pm $25-30
- **Todd Sickafoos/Tony Restaford**: Tony Restaford with Jerron Jemmerson, Ben Goldberg, Kirk Knuffke, Eric USchack, Adam Lewy, Rob Litman, Carole Levy, Sherry Ray
  - The Village Vanguard 8:30, 10:30 pm $25-40
- **John Hebert**
  - Double Time: La Cueva 7:30 pm $25
- **Nublu Jazz Festival: Brian Blade and the Fellowship Band**
  - Village Vanguard 8:30, 10:30 pm $25-40
  - Village Vanguard 8:30, 10:30 pm $25-40
- **Tom Blatt Project**
  - Park Avenue Christian Church 8 pm $10
- **New South Wales Public Schools Jazz Orchestra of Australia with guest Chris Potter**
  - The Stone 8 pm $20
- **James Igenfritz Trio with Steve Swell, George Spanos**: Carl Testa/Liam Greenfist; Josh Diamond, Josh Donaldson, Joe McDonough
  - WhyNot Bistro 8 pm $20
- **Markus Hughes Trio with Charlie Bonadio**
  - Village Vanguard 8:30, 10:30 pm $25-40
- **Dana’s La’s Mother Octopus with Clara Kennedy, Mike McKinney, Jonathan Goldberg, Vinette Sparrergo**
  - The Pineapple Space 8 pm $10
- **Arnold Oake**
  - John J Belushi’s Saturday Night Live 8 pm $20
- **Melanie Goertz and The Blanco Martes**
  - The Village Vanguard 9:30 pm $20
- **Alex Frondi Group with Patrick Dudasik, Will Hotaling, Diego Gaeta**
  - Van Dusen Mansion 8:30 pm $20
- **Jody Redhage, Jacob Garchik, Tom Beckham, Arun Ponnambalam, Satoshi Takeishi**
  - The Stone 8 pm $20
- **WhyNot Bistro**
  - Sista’s Place 9 pm $20

**Monday, December 15**

- **Alison Miller's Boom Booom**
  - Blue Note 8 pm $75-110
- **Marika Dibba**
  - The Village Vanguard 9 pm $20
- **Cassie Friesen**
  - Cafe Carlyle 8:45 pm $65-165
- **Shane郎**
  - The Garage 8 pm $20
- **Roulette**
  - Cafe Carlyle 8:30 pm $20
- **Nora McCarthy Trio with Marvin Sewell, Donald Nice**
  - Birdland 8:30 pm $60-250
- **Jeff “Tawk” Waltz with Raw Company**
  - Birdland 8:30 pm $60-250
- **Michael Feinstein Happy Holidays: Swinging with the Big Band**
  - Birdland 8:30 pm $60-250
- **The Fraternal Order Of Jazz**
  - Birdland 8:30 pm $60-250
- **Linda Ceballos Trio with Mark Marden, Phil Palombi**
  - The Village Vanguard 8 pm $20
- **Lori Cappott Quartet**
  - Cafe Carlyle 8:45 pm $65-165
- **Andy Bey**
  - Cafe Carlyle 8:45 pm $65-165
- **Sista’s Place**
  - Sista’s Place 9 pm $20
- **Sista’s Place**
  - Sista’s Place 10 pm $20
- **Mezzrow**
  - Sista’s Place 10 pm $20
- **Somethin’ Jazz Club**
  - Sista’s Place 11 pm $20
- **Sista’s Place**
  - Sista’s Place 12 am $20
- **The Stone**
  - The Stone 9 pm $20
- **Ibeam Brooklyn**
  - The Stone 10 pm $20
- **Blue Note**
  - Blue Note 11:30 pm $35

**Tuesday, December 16**

- **David Douglas/LaCie**
  - Blue Note 8 pm $75-110
- **Ray Anderson, Typhon Sonic, Craig Brown**
  - Cafe Carlyle 8:45 pm $65-165
- **Jon Irabagon Trio with Moppa Elliot, Dan Monaghan**
  - Cafe Carlyle 8:45 pm $65-165
- **Kerry Norton**
  - Cafe Carlyle 8:45 pm $65-165
- **The Stone**
  - The Stone 8 pm $20
- **Ibeam Brooklyn**
  - The Stone 9 pm $20
- **Blue Note**
  - Blue Note 11:30 pm $35
- **Birdland**
  - Birdland 8:30 pm $60-250
- **Sista’s Place**
  - Sista’s Place 9 pm $20
- **Sista’s Place**
  - Sista’s Place 10 pm $20
- **Sista’s Place**
  - Sista’s Place 11 pm $20
- **Sista’s Place**
  - Sista’s Place 12 am $20

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**Celebrating Musician and Friend Will Connell**

**Fridays Dec. 12 and 19 at 8 pm**

**Afro-Cuban pianist Dayramir Gonzalez**

**New Year’s Eve gala**

**Wednesday, December 17**

- **Elliott at Christmas**: David Berger Jazz Orchestra, Norm Lewis, Liz Wright, Priscilla Baskerville, Jameson Samuels Smith
  - The Apollo Theater 3:30 pm $35-65
- **Bob Stewart’s Double Quartet** with Roland Haywood, Nick Finzi, Craig Harris, Curtis Stewart, Jasmine Novel-Haywood
  - The Village Vanguard 8:30, 10:30 pm $25-35
- **Mary Halvorson solo**: The Lucky Chops Band, B.A. Wale, Industry City, 24th St 8 pm $25-30
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- **Fred Frith/Sheila Hicks**: Fred Frith’s New Trio, B.A. Wale, Industry City 8 pm $25-30
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  - **Christian McBride Trio with Christian Sands, Ulysses Owens, Jr.**
    - Dizzy’s Club 7:30, 9:30 pm $45
  - **Evan Sherman Group**
    - Don’t Tell Me Where It’s Going, Bar Next Door 8:30, 10:30 pm $10
- **Michael Feinstein Happy Holidays: Swinging with the Big Band**
  - Birdland 8:30 pm $60-250
  - Birdland 9 pm $60-250
- **The Fraternal Order Of Jazz**
  - Birdland 8:30 pm $60-250
  - Birdland 9 pm $60-250
- **Linda Ceballos Trio with Mark Marden, Phil Palombi**
  - The Village Vanguard 8 pm $20
- **Lori Cappott Quartet**
  - Cafe Carlyle 8:45 pm $65-165
- **Andy Bey**
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- **Sista’s Place**
  - Sista’s Place 9 pm $20
- **Sista’s Place**
  - Sista’s Place 10 pm $20
- **Sista’s Place**
  - Sista’s Place 11 pm $20
- **Sista’s Place**
  - Sista’s Place 12 am $20
- **The Stone**
  - The Stone 8 pm $20
- **Ibeam Brooklyn**
  - The Stone 9 pm $20
- **Blue Note**
  - Blue Note 11:30 pm $35
- **Birdland**
  - Birdland 8 pm $60-250
- **Sista’s Place**
  - Sista’s Place 9 pm $20
- **Sista’s Place**
  - Sista’s Place 10 pm $20
- **Sista’s Place**
  - Sista’s Place 11 pm $20
- **Sista’s Place**
  - Sista’s Place 12 am $20

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“To say that Iyer produces extraordinarily subtle colors in works for solo piano, piano and electronics, and piano with string quartet understates the lustrous beauty of this music.”

—Chicago Tribune

VIJAY IYER:
Music of Transformation
Dec 18—20
Thursday, December 18

- Vijay Iyer’s Music of Transformation with International Contemporary Ensemble
  - Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra with Wynton Marsalis
  - Joe Lovano and hotel with the West Side Band; Shiny Objects; Greg Bandy
  - Sofia Rei
  - Alex Ritz
  - Charenee Wade, Chris Smith, Jamison Ross
  - Mary Halvorson, Dana Jessen, Terri Hron; Michael Hafftka/Charlie Rauh Duo
  - Edmar Castañeda, Ed Simon, Luques Curtis, Daniel Freedman
  - with Ian Hendrickson-Smith, Marcus Parsley, Ben Stivers, Jeff Hanley, Moses Patrou,
Thursday, April 9 at 8 PM

Chick Corea and Herbie Hancock

For more than half a century, Herbie Hancock and Chick Corea have been blazing their own paths of artistic innovation at the keyboard. In a rare and historic duo performance, jazz royalty reigns on the Carnegie Hall stage as they come together for a very special evening of music.

This concert is sponsored by Protiviti.

carnegiehall.org | 212-247-7800
Box Office at 57th and Seventh
**Monday, December 29**

- **Vernen Reid Power Trio**
  - **Imod 8:30, 10:30 pm $35**
  - **New York Festival of Cuban Piano, Eli Valtierra, Arturo O'Farrill, Manuel Valera, Omara Portuondo**
  - **Jean kerning Quartet**
    - **New York Festival of Cuban Piano, Eli Valtierra, Arturo O'Farrill, Manuel Valera, Omara Portuondo**
    - **Jean kerning Quartet**

- **Monday, December 30**

- **The Bad Plus** Ethan Iervose, Reid Anderson, Dave King
  - **Smoke 11:30 pm $275-475**
  - **Joe Bonamassa with Friends**
    - **Smoke Alcove 7:30, 9:30 pm $60**
  - **Jon Batiste & Staych**
    - **Smoke 10 pm $35-95**

- **Tuesday, January 3**

- **ASTRONAUT JAZZ ORCHESTRA**
  - **Bar Next Door 8, 10 pm $20-35**

- **Wednesday, January 4**

- **Stacy Rowles Trio**
  - **Bar Next Door 9 pm $35**

- **Thursday, January 5**

- **Friday, January 6**

- **ASTRONAUT JAZZ ORCHESTRA**
  - **Bar Next Door 8, 10 pm $20-35**

- **Saturday, January 7**

- **ASTRONAUT JAZZ ORCHESTRA**
  - **Bar Next Door 8, 10 pm $20-35**

- **Sunday, January 8**

- **ASTRONAUT JAZZ ORCHESTRA**
  - **Bar Next Door 8, 10 pm $20-35**

- **Monday, January 9**

- **Stacy Rowles Trio**
  - **Bar Next Door 9 pm $35**

- **Tuesday, January 10**

- **ASTRONAUT JAZZ ORCHESTRA**
  - **Bar Next Door 8, 10 pm $20-35**

- **Wednesday, January 11**

- **Stacy Rowles Trio**
  - **Bar Next Door 9 pm $35**

- **Thursday, January 12**

- **ASTRONAUT JAZZ ORCHESTRA**
  - **Bar Next Door 8, 10 pm $20-35**

- **Friday, January 13**

- **Stacy Rowles Trio**
  - **Bar Next Door 9 pm $35**

- **Saturday, January 14**

- **ASTRONAUT JAZZ ORCHESTRA**
  - **Bar Next Door 8, 10 pm $20-35**

- **Sunday, January 15**

- **ASTRONAUT JAZZ ORCHESTRA**
  - **Bar Next Door 8, 10 pm $20-35**

- **Monday, January 16**

- **Stacy Rowles Trio**
  - **Bar Next Door 9 pm $35**
(INTERVIEW CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6)

TNYCJR: ShapeShifter is an extension of that idea.

MG: Almost to a fault, actually, because it’s very dangerous what we’re doing. It’s funded by us and my desire has always been to be able to help folks understand what’s going on. Artists, we get into the scene we’re used to just working on the music and the projects and the stuff and you forget everything else, then it hits you in the face. So what’s happening here is that we’ve been pushing so much for artists to really kind of understand what’s happening, to take control, so it’s a sort of thing. Things and what I mean by “fault” is that sometimes those things don’t work out.

TNYCJR: Did you speak to anybody else who also was a musician and owned a venue?

MG: Not really because you want to know something interesting. A lot of folks that are part of that business, until you’re open and operational, are a little secretive. For example, I’m not going to say names but a few folks... but they’re cool, they’re cool now. But at the beginning... and some people never actually answered me. But it’s good because they don’t give you the opportunity to really understand and then you have to formulate your own ideas. Because some of the shit they would’ve said probably would’ve scared the shit out of us.

TNYCJR: What does a young bass player coming up today need in order to succeed?

MG: Don’t just focus on the bass if it’s about music. Don’t just focus on that instrument if it’s about instrumentation. If you can learn some guitar, or if you’re interested in piano, or a wind instrument, whatever it is. If you can sing a little bit focus on that. Have a few different things at work in that department. Move it over and now we’re talking about what has captured your fancy as an artist or a musician. What are you into? Into jazz? Okay, what does that mean exactly to you? Are you into classical music, are you into world, are you into music around the world? Whatever it is don’t just learn that one fuckin’ thing, please. If anything, of course, I would always suggest that jazz is not just focus on the bass if it’s about music.

For more information, visit garrisonjazz.com. Garrison is at 144 East 11th Street (between University Place and Broadway).
The following set by the Sylvie Courvoisier/Mark Feldman Quartet was less noisy yet more radical, continuously defying expectation. Actual complex notated themes played beautifully by Feldman on violin would lapse into silence, invaded by Courvoisier, who does not ‘play’ the piano but battles it with fists and forearms, propagating arcane, sonic phenomena. Sometimes Scott Colley flew away for headlong magisterial bass solos. Billy Mintz is a creatively perverse, hypnotic, minimalist drummer, dealing in Zen percussion riddles. His last solo, in the encore, patiently developed faint patterns into a crashing catharsis.

Charles Lloyd’s quartet, with new members Gerald Clayton (piano) and Joe Sanders (bass), played the Wild Man Dance Suite in Dom Sindikata, the only large venue the festival used, its 1,600 seats almost all occupied. The suite, commissioned by the Polish Jazztopad Festival and premiered there in November 2013, is Lloyd’s first long-form composition. It was a single rapt atmosphere for 80 minutes, an immersion in memory, a surrender to tides of emotion. Motifs floated to the surface and recurred in altered states. Lloyd played tenor saxophone throughout, in a seamless flowing. The spits of quietude usually came from Eric Harland’s drums or Clayton, who is a more explicit and lyrical pianist than his predecessor Jason Moran. His silken touch was perfect for the suite, which, despite its weight, was mostly gentle. Out of humanity and acceptance, it built to an electrifying release in Lloyd’s final long-held cry.

A few highly selective takeaways from the festival: Serbian guitarist Igor Misković has a promising new band called Hashima, an unusual confluence of classicism, Balkan folk forms, avant garde racket and lyricism. The mournful mysteries of Nils Petter Molvær’s trumpet lines can freeze you right in your chair. Max Kochetov, alto saxophonist from the Ukraine, and Petar Krstajić, bassist from Serbia, are two gifted young players with bright futures. Nils Wogram is a monster trombonist. After the wars in the former Yugoslavia, Serbia was a devastated pariah state. The country is gradually crawling out of that hole. Almost every event at the festival was a sell-out. Crowds are mostly young and they absorb jazz with hunger. Musicians feed off this passion and play their best in Belgrade. What more could a jazz festival ask for?  

For more information, visit belgradejazzfest.rs

(TAMPERE CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13)

Rulla’s early afternoon concert and Olavi Louhivuori, drummer of the stunning Liberty Ship quartet, which played an intense hour-plus group improvisation at Telakka. The collective understatement of the latter foursome (with Esa Pietilä: tenor saxophone, Aki Rissanen: keyboards, Antti Lötjönen: bass) was the festival’s most quietly intense set. Approaching (Eclipse, 2013) made this reporter’s “Best New Releases” last year (a two-CD set split between composed and improvised pieces) and given the success of Rissanen’s newly introduced electric element (as Telakka has no piano, he lavishly layered keyboards, laptop and effects), their sophomore effort might be as successful, their magisterial bass solos. Billy Mintz is a creatively perverse, hypnotic, minimalist drummer, dealing in Zen percussion riddles. His last solo, in the encore, patiently developed faint patterns into a crashing catharsis.

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A second line through the hall, a fitting and ecstatic conclusion to a memorable performance.

Veteran pianist Monty Alexander followed with his Harlem-Kingston Express—a jazz trio set up to the leader’s right and a reggae quartet to his left. The band alternates between the two styles, often within a single tune, playing separately, or, somewhat too infrequently, together. Between anecdotes about how he was discovered in the early ‘60s by Frank Sinatra while playing in a Miami club frequented by gangsters, Alexander delivered an energetic set that reached its pinnacle in a rousing version of Bob Marley’s “No Woman, No Cry”. Still, fans longing to hear more of Alexander’s celebrated straightahead jazz piano chops were left wanting.

Besides the headliners, the festival featured a wide variety of jazz, blues and funk acts in the clubs along Beach Avenue. Alethea’s, a restaurant in a stately Victorian hotel, hosted an overflow afternoon crowd for a winning set by the Aaron Parks piano trio, with bassist Ben Street and the great drummer Billy Hart. New York stalwart Johnny O’Neal brought his vintage swing and bebop piano and vocals to the same venue for an entertaining late-night show. Some unexpected highlights included the Feedel Band, a brass-heavy group of Ethiopian musicians playing Fela Kuti-inspired Afrobeat in the Boiler Room, a club in the basement of the historic Congress Hall hotel; and a straightahead quartet led by a pair of Rowan University jazz educators, guitarist Brian Betz and baritone saxophonist Denis DiBlasio.

While some more afternoon events and slightly more adventurous programming would be welcome, the Exit 0 festival is a great destination for metro New York jazz fans looking for a weekend getaway. Cape May is a manageable, walkable town with excellent restaurants, charming Victorian architecture and, on at least two weekends a year, some great jazz.  

For more information, visit exit0jazzfest.com

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The health of creative improvised music culture is dependent on a simple quid pro quo:

Artists create, venues provide a comfortable space, treat the musicians and audience with respect, and in return listeners show up, part with their hard-earned cash, tune in and after the better sets leave freshly illuminated and thirsting for more.

There’s a larger, more diverse audience out there hungry for fresh sounds. It’s time to find them.

If you’re a nonprofit organization presenting concerts on a regular basis, please view our online guide to determine your eligibility for funding in 2015.

Go to: rdbf.org/funding

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Join the conversation rdbf.org/blog