IN MEMORIAM: GERI ALLEN
1957-2017
Space certainly seems like the place these days. Not only do you get built-in entertainment with a full solar eclipse, you are hundreds of miles above the decidedly Earth-bound crisis enveloping this country. It could be theorized that Sun Ra (1914-93) used his claim of being from Saturn as a means by which to separate himself from Jim Crow-era repression in his ‘native’ Alabama. Little could Sun Ra predict that almost a quarter-century after his death, neo-Nazis and KKK members would again be rampant and, worse yet, emboldened by the U.S. President.

Marshall Allen (On The Cover) is the last direct link to the primordial days of the Sun Ra Arkestra, having been a member (and now leader) of the group since 1955. The 93-year-old is honored this month for his long achievement as part of the first annual Blank Forms Benefit Concert at Ukrainian National Home. The music of Amir ElSaffar (Interview) comes with its own cultural signifiers, mating Iraqi heritage with love of modern jazz. He works alongside Brooklyn Raga Massive this month at Lincoln Center’s David Rubenstein Atrium. And Melissa Aldana (Artist Feature), appearing at Birdland, is herself a cultural pioneer as both the first female instrumentalist and Latin American to win the Thelonious Monk Competition.

In 1974, Sun Ra said “There Is A Change In The Air”. He could never have meant this...
Women’s Raga Massive is a project of the Brooklyn Raga Massive collective and share an aesthetic steeped in Indian music without being bent on tradition. The larger group has recently released an album of interpretations of John and Alice Coltrane’s music, for example, and will soon issue their take on Terry Riley’s seminal minimalist composition In C. The women’s group also isn’t beholden to the implications of its name: the nonet assembled at Joe’s Pub (Aug. 8th) was neither entirely of Indian descent (guitar/sarod player Camila Celin hails from Colombia) nor even all women. Their blend of Asian and Western influences, of traditional ragas, open improvisation and poetry, even of languages, could be off-putting to the purist, but there was a strong sense of community among the players (the enthusiasm of the audience suggested the group was on to something). One person in the audience, wearing a bindi and appropriate attire—switched between nylon-string guitar and sarod, showing that the tradition is vibrant and evolving. The pieces were generally centered on a pair of talented singers: Roopa Mahadevan was deep and soulful while Priya Darshini Rigby and bassist Aidan O’Donnell, a raunchy, full-energy level. The second set gathered the entire BJU septet—adding pianist David Cook and bassist Anne Mette Iversen—to perform originals by Howard, Iversen, Scheffer and Kolker, plus a few covers, culminating with Howard’s arrangement (based on Quincy Jones’) of Dizzy Gillespie’s “The Champ”, which featured a rapid-fire solo by Smith, a compelling drum solo by Garcia and Howard, each man dovetailing with tenor saxophonist Dan Pratt, guitarist Nate Radley, bassist Gary Wang and Garcia, showcasing the leader’s fusion-edged writing and well crafted high-speed solos. ©ENIDFARBERFOTO

Approaching 80, pianist Herbie Hancock nevertheless retains the curiosity and stamina of a young man. His recent Beacon Theatre concert (Aug. 7th) revisited the funky electric fusion he has been refining for 40 years even as it hinted at future developments. Two bandmembers played key roles in these developments: guitarist Lionel Loueke, whose synthesized guitar functioned like an additional keyboard, and Terrace Martin, who, in addition to playing melodies on alto saxophone, added much to the harmonic, rhythmic and timbral textures of the music with his vocoder, keyboards and electronic manipulations. While bassist James Genus and drummer Vinnie Colaiuta laid a firm but flowing rhythmic foundation, Loueke and Martin added in layered accompaniments. Most of the extended improvisation was left to Hancock, who moved between acoustic piano, keyboard and shoulder-slung keytar. Sequencing short motifs across the keys in cross-cutting accent patterns, his ideas and delivery were invariably exciting, invigorating well-worn hits like “Chameleon” and “Cantaloupe Island” and lesser-known pieces like “Actual Proof”, “Come Running To Me” and “Secret Sauce”. His comping was equally exciting; Several sections forefronted Loueke’s distinctive vocals over catchy melodies enhanced by tongue clicks and synthesized vocal harmonies. He, Hancock and Martin all experimented with vocal harmonizers, creating unusual soundscapes that were both earthly and alien. —Tom Greenland

The seven-member Brooklyn Jazz Underground (BJU) celebrated its 11th year with a two-day festival presenting each bandleader’s group plus one collective set. The first part, held at ShapeShifter Lab (Aug. 6th), began with a student quartet performing Real Book tunes, soon to be joined onstage by vocalist Tammy Scheffer, trumpeter David Smith, tenor saxophonist Adam Kolker and drummers Rob Garcia and Owen Howard to play a few more standards at a considerably higher energy level. The second set gathered the entire BJU septet—adding pianist David Cook and bassist Anne Mette Iversen—to perform originals by Howard, Iversen, Scheffer and Kolker, plus a few covers, culminating with Howard’s arrangement (based on Quincy Jones’) of Dizzy Gillespie’s “The Champ”, which featured a rapid-fire solo by Smith, a compelling drum solo by Garcia and Howard, each man dovetailing and developing the other’s gestures. The third set, an intimate four-song duo by Adam Kolker and David Cook, achieved its most eloquent moments on Kolker’s composition, a medley of material by Miller's band, to be followed by a Beaches ballad “Miller’sville”, to be followed by the final song, an audience request for “Children of the Sun”, with tenor saxophonist Jason Rigby and bassist Aidan O’Donnell, a raunchy, full-swinging affair. Fifth and last was Smith’s quintet with tenor saxophonist Dan Pratt, guitarist Nate Radley, bassist Gary Wang and Garcia, showcasing the leader’s fusion-edged writing and well crafted high-speed solos.
Let one thing be established unequivocally: guitarist Vernon Reid is incapable of taking a solo anything less than epic, notes attaching themselves to your jaw until it scrapes the floor. There were only a couple at David Rubenstein Atrium (Aug. 3rd) but they were almost enough to make one forget the real purpose of the evening. Reid and poet Carl Hancock Rux had convened a gaggle of musicians—rhythm section, horns, percussion, vocalists, DJ—to fête the influence of author James Baldwin in an evening dubbed “Tones of a Native Son”, a day after what would have been his 93rd birthday. In front of a photo montage, including a portrait of Reid as a young man, the band explored an array of material, whether a Peter Tosh-inspired setting of spiritual “Go Tell It On The Mountain” the title of which Baldwin used for a 1953 novel), thick funk carpet of “Nappy Hair” or straight version of Lee Morgan’s “The Sidewinder”. The latter was described by Reid as “A diversion. This whole thing has been a diversion. Life is a diversion.” If Reid melted faces with his playing, especially in his attention to detail as backing musician, Rux provided the audience with a chewy baritone that sounded like it came directly from the depths of the earth. It would be impossible to address Baldwin’s influence without politics being in the forefront and during the extended jam of “Go Tell It On The Mountain”, Reid exhorted the audience to chant so loudly “I want them to hear in Mar-a-Lago!” —Andrey Henkin

Celebrating the centennial of iconic composer Tadd Dameron, Joe Lovano brought his nonet into Village Vanguard to play the music of his fellow Cleveland native. Dameron, perhaps best known for his dissonant harmonics of Slagle’s alto flute and Lalama’s tenor dialogue between Lovano and George Garzone, was out front with trombonist Larry Farrell on “Hymn”. Lovano was at the spotlight on trumpeter Barry Ries, alto saxophonist Steve Slagle and tenor saxophonist Ralph Lalama, who blew boppishly over pianist James Weidman’s steady chordal comping. Slagle’s full-bodied flute was also heard on Dameron’s lovely “Whatever Possess’d Me”. Detouring off from the Dameronian repertory the band launched into Lovano’s “Streams Of Expression”, a kaleidoscopic excursion beginning with a chattering tenor dialogue between Lovano and George Garzone and moved through disparate moods, from the dissonant harmonics of Slagle’s alto flute and Lalama’s clarinet to the fiery swinging of Gary Smulyan’s potent baritone saxophone. Back in the Dameron songbook, Lovano was out front with trombonist Larry Farrell on “Soultrane”. The night ended with a steaming version of “Hot House” and incendiary round-robin solos by the horns. —Russ Mastro

While puppy love may be exciting in the short-term, it can’t compare to the slow, seemingly telepathic burn of a lengthy committed relationship. So it is with Sex Mob, 20 years strong and still nuzzling in the corner like teenagers. That doesn’t mean, however, that a bit of novelty isn’t welcome. The quartet of Steven Bernstein (slide trumpet), Briggan Krauss (saxophones), Tony Scherr (basses) and Kenny Wollesen (drums) invited a couple of guests to join their lovefest at City Winery (Aug. 9th). Organ player John Medeski is a previous collaborator (check out the monumental live disc from the 200th Willmuss Jazz Festival on Thirsty Ear) while guitarist Nels Cline, though a friend of the band, is a new element. It was the latter who started the concert actually, playing a set of solo vignettes that mixed the urban and pastoral landscapes of Americana. After performing Annette Peacock’s “Touching”, Cline went into a fuzz-painted noise explosion as, one by one, the quartet and Medeski joined the unholy squall, possibly the gnarliest and deepest 12 minutes to be heard in 2017. If bands could be polyamous, Sex Mob should exchange vows with Medeski and Cline right now. After a set break and a lengthy, typically brash set by the quartet and Medeski, replete with Bernstein’s inimitable stage banter about his relationship with former Knitting Factory founder/ City Winery impresario Michael Dorf, Cline rejoined for a 28-minute ska-drench groove, rising higher and higher towards ultimate group climax. (AH)

This year’s annual summer engagement at Dizzy’s by bassist Ben Wolfe afforded the former Wynton Marsalis/Dianna Krallollar the opportunity to showcase his exceptional skills as a composer. He was leading a sextet that featured a guest, veteran trumpeter Randy Brecker, along with rising stars, vibraphonist Joel Ross and saxophonist Ben Solomon, alongside his stalwart rhythm section partners, pianist Luis Perdomo and drummer Donald Edwards. Opening up a four-night stands on his birthday (Aug. 3rd) Wolfe got things started with his “Contraption”, a soulful opus with Solomon blowing Coltrane-like over Edwards’ Elvin Jones-esque drumming and Brecker spinning out long virtuosic trumpet lines. Ross was featured with Wolfe on the latter’s “Untitled Two Step”, mellowing the mood before the group took off on a pair of way-up-tempo romps, swinging mildly on “Interlude” and straightahead on his “Heroist”. Solomon switched to soprano on the former and on tenor for the latter, which had Ross skillfully navigating the racing rhythm of fast walking bass as the crowd cheered him on. Soloists played pretty tender backed by the trio on what Wolfe called “New Ballad (But Not My Newset)”. The episodic “The Minnick Rule” opened with Ross laying down a mechanistic march, Brecker playing outside-in and Perdomo lyrical and funky. Ross was out front on the boldly rhythmic “Edged”, then the horns returned to close with a pensive reading of the standard “All The Things You Are”. (RM)
Trumpeter, santur player, vocalist and composer Amir ElSaffar has made more than one mark on contemporary jazz. Borrowing from his background and studies of Arabic music (his father is originally from Iraq), ElSaffar has developed his own techniques for playing quarter-tones on the trumpet. Extending that cross-pollination, he has released a series of beautiful and evocative records combining Arabic and Western approaches and instrumentation. We spoke with him as he was concluding a composer’s residency in France and gearing up to present his large ensemble Rivers of Sound at the Newport Jazz Festival.

The New York City Jazz Record: First off, tell us what you’re doing in France.

Amir ElSaffar: I’m composing for an ensemble called Locus, a contemporary music ensemble based in Brussels. They’re really fantastic, renowned in Europe in contemporary music circles. I’m writing a piece using the maqam [Iraqi devotional song] language and some of the microtonal stuff I’ve been discovering. We have a retuned piano, a retuned vibraphone, but it’s further out, it’s not like the usual maqam tuning. We’ve gone several steps beyond. There’s four string players and two woodwinds, it’s an octet plus me. We just had a week of rehearsals and it was pretty intense. It was hard at the release concert to ignore the audience it felt very significant. I’m constantly aware of that contradiction, I guess, in working and presenting art and music in that neighborhood.

TNYCJR: Have you ever felt a response of political tension to the work you’re doing, combining these two musical traditions?

AE: Perhaps it’s there but to me, I’m at a point where I don’t see them as being separate. For me it’s about the conversation between sounds and between personalities and individuals and having this idea of how we can create something beautiful. I don’t see Eastern and Western or U.S. and Arab and Islamic culture. Those at this point are so far from the way I’m seeing and hearing the music. It’s really a question of how can we make these frequencies work together, teaching people who have never played E-half-flat and then when they do play it and when they really feel it, then they connect to something deep and it’s not just external but it’s something that resonates very deeply within the individual. And similarly when we get into a rhythmic pattern or the energy of collective group improvisation or something that’s more akin to what’s found in jazz of the last 50 or 60 years, that also somehow there’s an energy, the oud players will get excited and get engaged. I’m really thinking more about these energies and the interaction of vibration, whether it’s sonic or rhythmic, or personalities and that conversations being had. So if anything it’s being able to present that in the midst of where people are in this very heightened state of anxiety. I think that music and art have a very particular place right now.

TNYCJR: The new record [Not Two, New Amsterdam] is beautiful. The release concert that you did at the River to River festival was just great.

AE: Thank you, yeah, the music keeps getting better every time we play it.

TNYCJR: How many times have you played it?

AE: We premiered it April 15. I think eight total. Newport will be our ninth.

TNYCJR: It was hard at the release concert to ignore geographically where we were, right in the financial district and just a few blocks from Ground Zero. I don’t want to project meaning onto it but certainly sitting in the audience it felt very significant.

AE: Oh yeah? That’s interesting. I guess I’m used to it because Alwan [for the Arts, where ElSaffar is music curator] is down in that neighborhood so I’m in that neighborhood all the time and we have concerts there a few times a month. I didn’t think about it, actually. Although maybe being in this Chase Plaza and all that, it’s a very corporate part of town. I’m constantly aware of that contradiction, I guess, in working and presenting art and music in that neighborhood.

TNYCJR: The new record is on New Amsterdam, a new label for you. Do you see that helping you reach a new audience?

AE: Yeah. New Amsterdam is really well known in contemporary classical music circles and I think jazz is an important element, but the ideal venues are concert halls. When we play at the Kimmel Center or Kreeger Museum of Art or the Walker, those type of venues seem to really hold this music well. The Newport Jazz Festival will be our first jazz festival gig and I’m curious to see how the music fits in that space. The responses I’m getting are already starting to indicate a shift toward that demographic.

TNYCJR: How did you end up connected with New Amsterdam?

AE: It was actually through [composer] Darcy James Argue, who’s a friend I’ve worked with several times and we’ve hung out over the years. He made the connection and knowing the fresh attitude and approach they have toward music and the wide genre-defying artists that they have, I felt that that was kind of an ideal fit for what I’m doing right now.

(continued on page 42)
Winner of the 2013 Thelonious Monk Saxophone Competition, Melissa Aldana has come a long way since she first picked up a horn in her native Santiago, Chile. “I’m coming from a musical family,” she says. My grandfather was a saxophone player and my father is a saxophone player. So I grew up seeing him teaching at home and practicing since I was born. When I was around six he asked me to play in one of his classes because he needed one more horn just to play three notes. So he gave me my grandfather’s alto and showed me how to play the harmony part to a Brazilian tune called ‘Brazil’. I completely fell in love with the instrument.”

Listening to many albums, it was Sonny Rollins #4 that precipitated her switch from alto to tenor. As a result her father gave her his father’s classic Selmer Mark VI horn, which she has been playing ever since. Live performances by American artists were rare in Santiago, but the few Aldana witnessed had a profound impact. “I remember seeing maybe three concerts there growing up. One of them was the Wayne Shorter Quartet, which was an important event in my life. Then I remember seeing the Dave Holland Quintet with Chris Potter, which blew my mind. Also saw Ingrid Jensen with her sister Christine. For me seeing two women playing the instruments that they did really inspired me. They really motivated me to move to the U.S. and keep making music.”

It was the Shorter concert that set into motion the events that would profoundly change Aldana’s life: “I met Danilo Pérez when he came to Chile with Wayne Shorter. He was married to one of my dad’s former students, Patricia Zarate. So I introduced myself to him and he came to see me play. He invited me to the Panama Jazz Festival where I had the chance to meet a lot of people who would later help me apply to Berklee College of Music. So they gave me the chance to move to the U.S. with a full scholarship.” She remembers one of her first lessons was with Joe Lovano. “For me it was like meeting one of my heroes... Also the other teacher I had back then was George Garzone, who became a strong influence on me. He was my main mentor when I was at Berklee, one of the best teachers I ever had.” She continues, “I also got the chance to perform with Terri Lyne Carrington, who was mentoring one of my students.” Another was drummer Ralph Peterson. Peterson fondly recalls, “Melissa came to an audition for one of my ensembles, which back then was fashioned like a huge cutting session. Althoughsoft-spoken, she showed amazing fire and fluidity.” Peterson appeared on Aldana’s debut recording Free Fall, released on Greg Osby’s Inner Circle Music. “Greg was an important person in my career, a big inspiration and a big supporter since the beginning,” Aldana says. Osby remembers Aldana’s early days at Berklee saying, “During my initial encounters with Melissa back in 2008 I recognized in her those veryproverbial instinctual characteristics that all exceptional players possess. I witnessed, first hand, her development into the powerhouse player that she is today.”

Not only musicians recognized Aldana’s nascent talent. “One of the first important people in my life when I moved to Boston was Emilio Lyons,” she proclaims. “I remember I went to him and told him my saxophone was not working. He heard me and he fixed my saxophone for free. Since then we became really close.” It was through Lyons that Aldana would meet the next important person in her musical life. “When I moved to New York the first person I met was George Coleman. This was through Emilio,” she says. “The first week I moved there I gave him a call. He gave me a lesson for free.” Impressed with her ability, Coleman would invite Aldana to sit in with his band. Smalls proprietor Spike Wilner booked her to appear with her own band and soon she was working regularly with her Crash Trio. Performing in a group without a chordal instrumentalist called further attention to Aldana’s distinctive tone and improvisational lines. She explains her choice. “The first thing that I had in mind when I chose that is playing trio is not easy. I thought that would be a great way for me to become stronger with the melody and with what I want to say harmonically.”

It was that rapid development that won Aldana the 2013 Monk Competition. Judge Jimmy Heath says, “Melissa plays the tenor completely from the bottom to the top. She’s a very prolific performer who is able to create great lines all over the horn.” Reflecting on the her winning of the competition Aldana says, “I know how important it is because I grew up hearing about it from my father. I know that being the first female [instrumentalist] and the first Latin American was a big deal. Even though for me being a female or being from Latin America or anywhere else doesn’t make a difference because music isn’t about genders or where you are from, it’s about who you are as a person and music should transcend those things.”

Aldana acknowledges the enormous effect winning the competition has had. “It has opened up a lot of doors. I’ve been given the chance to travel all around the world and play so much with my band.” This summer she toured Europe with the allstar band Woman to Woman with Cecile McLorin Salvant, Ingrid Jensen, Anat Cohen and Renee Rosnes. Rosnes declares, “Melissa Aldana is one of the most natural talents I’ve ever encountered. Her tone is rich and nuanced, she has a highly developed rhythmic sense and she swings. She’s heard her improvise with driving virtuosity and also play with courageous vulnerability. In short, she’s got it all.”

In the face of all of the acclaim Aldana remains characteristically humble. “My main ambition is to keep growing and to find what it is that I want to say in music... Who is Melissa?” she asks. “I want to continue to develop myself as a human being, as a musician, as an artist, as a composer.”

Recommended Listening:
• Melissa Aldana – Free Fall (Inner Circle Music, 2010)
• Melissa Aldana – Second Cycle (Inner Circle Music, 2012)
• Simona Premazzi – The Lucid Dreamer (Inner Circle Music, 2012)
• Melissa Aldana – Melissa Aldana & Crash Trio (Concord, 2013)
• Melissa Aldana – Back Home (Wommusic, 2015)
• Jure Pukl – Doubtless (Inner Circle Music, 2017)
Nothing happens the way you would expect during a Sun Ra Arkestra performance. The Arkestra’s musicians “play from the heart and spirit,” says 93-year-old jazz master saxophonist Marshall Allen, who leads the legendary Sun Ra Arkestra. The performers, in the spirit of what is now called AfroFuturism, are dressed in space-like Egyptian costumes.

“Everything is space,” says trumpeter Heru Shabaka-Ra, one of the Arkestra’s youngest members. “We are space. There’s a lot of space to explore. Explore the space inside yourself. Explore the space outside yourself.” And while the Arkestra’s music may seem otherworldly, it may just as well remind you of something you’ve ever heard before. “Sometimes I use 10, 12, 15 [musicians],” says Allen. “Sometimes I use 25. Everyone has to pay attention and be part of it and that’s what you call team work—like with a football team and a basketball team. Everybody has to make vibrations of the day together so we create something and we don’t even know what it is.”

This edition of the ensemble goes into the crates for original, seldom-heard Sun Ra songs. For its upcoming New York performance, the band will have some Sun Ra compositions that have not been played much, says Allen. The reintroduction of the bass clarinet is part of this effort to expand the usual Sun Ra repertoire. Allen has been leading the Arkestra since 1995, after two years under the baton of John Gilmore, following Ra’s death in 1993. “Marshall Allen is my teacher,” says Shabaka-Ra. “Sometimes you have to sit there and go through that phrase [you’re struggling with] over and over again and if Marshall is pushing you, talking to you like a child or like a student then you’re a child! So even if you’re 60 you’re 30 years younger than him. If you think you know something as a musician, you have to forget it all.”

Detroit-based electronic music producer Mike Huckaby, who will be sampling some of Sun Ra’s music before this month’s performance at the Ukrainian National Home, admires Allen deeply. He is the last standing original member of the Arkestra, he says. “There have always been a lot of musicians coming and going with the Arkestra,” says Huckaby. “Marshall Allen had to be a special type of person for the discipline that Sun Ra embraced. And it takes a very special reunion. For the project, Allen did some conducting and his first-ever recordings on piano and on the bass marimba,” says Robinson. “We had Marshall—probably the last surviving member of the original session—and also the original engineer from 1965, so that was a very special reunion.” For the project, Allen said he was “travel[ing] all the time from planet to planet,” says Allen. The Arkestra started in Chicago in 1955 and is still going strong. After two European tours this year, the band is touring the U.S. with stops in at least five different states. For Allen, the Sun Ra Arkestra has become the quintessential band in the world of improvised music “because we are projecting happiness in a world filled with sadness and confusion and because we are projecting a better music for a better planet. If you feel like singing, sing!” For Allen, it’s also about “put(ting) on a show.”

The upcoming New York performance of the Arkestra promise to be new transcendent experiences. “It’s all about innovation, expansion, evolving as a spirit, as a musician, as a worker, as an artist, as somebody who walks down the street,” says Shabaka-Ra. “You move forward. You progress.” Ultimately, performing Sun Ra’s music is a way to “achieve things in our lives.”

“Sun Ra is a spirit. They are not making it happen, but rather, it is happening to them. ‘And then,’ Robinson says, ‘You dance what you are and what you are hearing.’ Allen says. “If you feel like dancing, dance! If you feel like singing, sing!” For Allen, it’s also about “putting on a show.”

For more information, visit sunnarrkestra.com. Blank Forms honors Allen and the Sun Ra Arkestra, which will also perform, at Ukrainian National Home Sep. 12th. See Calendar.

Recommended Listening:
• Sun Ra – The Futuristic Sounds Of (Savoy, 1961)
• Paul Bley Quintet – Barrage (ESP-Disk’, 1964)
• Sun Ra – Heliocentric Worlds of Sun Ra (Vol. 1-3) (ESP-Disk’, 1964)
• Sun Ra – Space Is the Place (Blue Thumb-Impulse, 1972)
• Sun Ra Arkestra (Under the direction of Marshall Allen) – A Song For the Sun (El Ra, 1988)
• Marshall Allen/Lou Grassi – Live at the Guelph Festival (Cadence Jazz, 2001)

That’s where you get better in your music. When you have discipline, in your life and your spirit and your music, then you have precision, in your life and your spirit and your music.”

And the best music happens when you stop thinking about it, says Robinson, adding that all creative musicians know what it feels like to reach the point where they are experiencing the music—as if they are not making it happen, but rather, it is happening to them. “And then,” Robinson says, “You say: ‘Holy Crap! I never heard that come out before.’ I know that feeling and it only happens in those rare moments. That’s what we’re addicted to. We’re chasing that feeling all the time. I think Sun Ra was so plugged into that. That’s almost all he knew—the unknowable.” Allen believes in the multifaceted aspects of music. “Music makes you cry, music makes you happy, music makes you sad and other things,” he says. “Music is a language.”

Instead of calling it an “Orchestra”, Sun Ra called his band an “Arkestra” because it “alluded both to the Egyptian god Ra’s ark, his solar boat and to the ark—literally a box—which held the covenant,” biographer John Szwed explains in his book Space Is The Place - The Life and Times of Sun Ra (Da Capo Press, 1998).

The ideas of ritual and community and ceremony are also fundamental to the Sun Ra Arkestra’s performances. For Allen, “you’re dealing with sounds so there is a Sound Body Sound Mind.” Sun Ra used to lead the Arkestra in a line dance around venues as they played, which made for memorable and unique performances. “You dance what you are and what you are hearing,” Allen says. “If you feel like dancing, dance! If you feel like singing, sing!” For Allen, it’s also about “putting on a show.”

The upcoming New York performance of the Arkestra promise to be new transcendent experiences. “It’s all about innovation, expansion, evolving as a spirit, as a musician, as a worker, as an artist, as somebody who walks down the street,” says Shabaka-Ra. “You move forward. You progress.” Ultimately, performing Sun Ra’s music is a way to “achieve things in our lives.”

“You’ve got to awaken your spirit with what you know,” says Allen, “and then you can create.”

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Experience this genre-defying opera that combines spoken word, contemporary movement, video projection, classical, R&B and jazz influences. Inspired by the 1985 MOVE crisis in Philadelphia where a standoff between police and a Black liberation group resulted in the deadly bombing of a residential neighborhood, *We Shall Not Be Moved* explores that legacy today through five Philly teens who find power in family and resistance.
Tenor saxophonist Fred Staton holds a truly unique distinction—at 102 he’s the oldest working jazz musician in the world. Still gigging several times a year, Staton is a living history of jazz.

Born in Pittsburgh, PA on Valentine’s Day 1915, Staton has known and worked with top jazz players. His first encounter with greatness was with a precocious young pianist named Billy Strayhorn, a fellow graduate of Westinghouse High School. The two worked together in a 1933 revue put together by Staton and again in a 1935 show, where Staton recalls that Strayhorn debuted “My Little Brown Book”. While “Swee Pea” was destined for New York and fame with Duke Ellington, Staton remained in Pittsburgh, supporting a family. “I lost track of Billy when he went to New York,” he recalls, seemingly satisfied to have known him once upon a time.

Pittsburgh in the ‘30s-40s was thriving, a robust center of African-American culture and commerce, incubating some of the most influential jazz artists of the day. Working a day job, Staton gigged on weekends, rubbing elbows with Earl “Fatha” Hines, Roy Eldridge, Billy Eckstine, Chu Berry, Kenny Clarke, Art Blakey, Erroll Garner and Ray Brown, among others. He absorbed the ethic of the Swing Era, influenced, he says, by Coleman Hawkins and Ben Webster. Of his style, pianist Danny Mixon, who would occasionally sit in by Coleman Hawkins and Ben Webster. Of his style, pianist Danny Mixon, who would occasionally sit in with Staton’s group Sounds of Deliverance, says it closely follows Gene Ammons. “Fred’s is a classic sound you’ll never hear again,” he says. Earlier in his career, Billy Eckstine, Chu Berry, Kenny Clarke, Art Blakey, Erroll Garner and Ray Brown, among others. He absorbed the ethic of the Swing Era, influenced, he says, by Coleman Hawkins and Ben Webster. Of his style, pianist Danny Mixon, who would occasionally sit in with Staton’s group Sounds of Deliverance, says it closely follows Gene Ammons. “Fred’s is a classic sound you’ll never hear again,” he says. Earlier in his career, Mixon had worked with Staton’s famous singing sister, the late Dakota Staton, never knowing she had a saxophone-playing brother. In Pittsburgh, Staton was most associated with the Fred Avreute Orchestra, opening for the band with his group, The Three Tempos.

Staton’s start in music was in singing at his local Baptist church. Dr. Al Vollmer, founder of the Harlem Blues and Jazz Band, with whom Staton plays, notes the importance among musicians of that era of having roots in the church. “The church experience was fundamental for these players,” he says. “It formed their basis.” Staton intersected with instrumental music in 1928 with an opportunity to become part of a youth band. He began as a drummer, influenced by the spectacle of Ellington star Sonny Greer surrounded by an elaborate array of percussion instruments and drums. He switched to the saxophone when he found that he was still packing up his instrument while his fellow players were off socializing with their dates.

In 1952, approaching 40 and deciding on a midlife change, Staton moved to New York City. He continued to work a day job, shifting to the restaurant business, gigging on Saturday nights—enough to grow his reputation as a solid jazz player in The Big Apple. He began playing with top-rated musicians and in 1968 was hired to orchestrate the original music for a 16-minute anti-drug short, “LSD: The Trip to Where?”, produced by WABC-TV Channel 7. He was awarded an Emmy for his work. Retirement around 1980 allowed him to pursue music full-time. He toured Scandinavia with sister Dakota and established groups of his own, such as the Jazz Gents. In April 2002, Staton became a member of the Harlem Blues and Jazz Band upon the death of the group’s tenor player, Bubba Brooks. Vollmer had been aware of Staton for some time and was impressed with the musician’s focus. “Fred has an amazing intellect,” Vollmer says. “He’s very organized and capable.” These qualities aided Staton in his activities with the Friendly Fifty Club, a society of musicians formed in the 1950s. “Fred was an officer of the club for many years,” Vollmer adds. He identifies Staton’s playing as classic swing, the kind of music heard at the Savoy Ballroom. “He has a sense of melody and doesn’t lean on technique,” Vollmer says. “Musicians who rely too much on technique can run out of musical ideas. That’s never Fred’s problem. He’s rooted in melody.” In 2012 Staton was featured in an as-yet unreleased documentary about the Harlem Blues and Jazz Band, We Will See Tomorrow.

Claude Thornhill can be thought of as one of the originators of Cool jazz. Haunting ensembles, unusual tone colors, concise solos, a quiet rhythm section and subtle surprises were all part of the Thornhill Orchestra sound. His music and arrangements acted as an inspiration for Miles Davis’ Birth of the Cool nonet and West Coast jazz of the 50s.

Thornhill was born Aug. 10th, 1909 in Terre Haute, IN. He began playing piano when he was ten and studied at the Cincinnati Conservatory and the Curtis Institute in Philadelphia. After short stints with the big bands of Austin Wylie and Hal Kemp, he settled in New York in the early ‘30s. He recorded as a pianist, including sessions by Benny Goodman, Louis Prima, Ray Noble, an early Glenn Miller pickup group, Russ Morgan, Bud Freeman, Dick McDonough, Chauncey Morehouse, and Billie Holiday. He also led two sessions of his own in 1937. Most notably, Thornhill was singer Maxine Sullivan’s musical director at the beginning of her career, encouraging her to record lightly swinging versions of Irish folk songs, including her hit “Loch Lomond”.

All of this was a prelude to him forming his big band in 1940. From the start the Claude Thornhill Orchestra had a distinctive sound: long floating tones; ensembles that utilized little or no vibrato; and a six-piece reed section at a time when most swing bands had four saxophonists. Thornhill often wrote arrangements that had all of his reeds switching to clarinets; on one session he had eight clarinetists. In 1941 his big band added two French horns, which was very unusual during the Swing Era.

During the 1940-42 period, the Claude Thornhill big band was often classified as a “sweet” rather than a swing band due to its emphasis on slow ballads and soothing vocalists; his theme song, the picturesque Irish folk song, including her hit “Loch Lomond”.

As to favorite moments in his long career Staton says, unsurprisingly, “There are lots.” One that does stand out occurred several years ago while he was guesting with Vince Giordano and the Nighthawks at the Apollo Theater. Staton received a standing ovation, overwhelming him with a feeling of “having done something worthwhile with my playing.” A recent achievement was recording on Danny Mixon’s CD Pass It On (s/r, 2013). “Fred still gets the sax to vibrate from high to low to middle,” Mixon says. “It’s a sound young players today don’t work with. But it’s part of the foundation. You have to bring that history with you when you play.” Staton was also featured on Catherine Russell’s Harlem On My Mind Jazz Village, (2016).

Fred Staton is a case study in the remarkable and momentous. His legacy can be summed up by Loren Schoenberg, saxophonist/historian/Artistic Director of the National Jazz Museum in Harlem: “Fred Staton is the last man standing from an era when giants roamed the jazz earth. There’s something in his sound and phrasing— in him—that can never be replicated. We’re so fortunate to have this wonderful man around to celebrate!”

Claude Thornhill and His Orchestra — Snowfall
• Claude Thornhill and His Orchestra— Snowfall (Hep, 1940-41)
• Claude Thornhill and His Orchestra— Snowfall (Hep, 1948)

Recommended Listening:
• Claude Thornhill and His Orchestra — The Rare Columbia Recordings (Columbia-Collectables, 1937-47)
• Claude Thornhill and His Orchestra — The Rare Columbia Recordings (Columbia-Collectables, 1937-47)
• Claude Thornhill and His Orchestra — The Rare Columbia Recordings (Columbia-Collectables, 1937-47)
• Claude Thornhill and His Orchestra — The Rare Columbia Recordings (Columbia-Collectables, 1937-47)
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• Claude Thornhill and His Orchestra — The Rare Columbia Recordings (Columbia-Collectables, 1937-47)

A Thornhill tribute with Steven Richman Harmonie Ensemble
New York is at Saint Peter’s Sep. 20th. See Calendar.
FOU
BY STUART BROOMER

The first thing to notice about Fou Records, the French label launched by Jean-Marc Foussat in 2012, is the name: “It’s French for “mad”. Of course, you have to be a little crazy to start a CD label in the age of the burgeoning download and the resurgence of vinyl, but Fou presses its own limits. It’s intimately connected on every level to Foussat’s musical world, releasing his own ensemble of European free music Foussat recorded decades ago and issuing recent works from veteran players and new voices alike. Sometimes the voices are literal and even literary, speakers as well as singers, with a special interest in the intersection of early modernist poetry with improvised music. Foussat’s own remarkable music, employing early analogue synthesizers and voice and never brought adequately to the fore, also figures prominently.

Bassist Joëlle Léandre declares, “Fou is just ‘fou’. Jean-Marc is not only one of the best sound technicians in Europe but a very good musician. His label is one of the more adventurous. It’s rich and original in French creative music and with creative music around the world, not only here and now but with some unique meetings and concerts he recorded in the ’80s, ’90s and 2000s. Another longtime friend and associate, saxophonist Daunik Lazro, recalls, “As far as I can remember, the majority of my Parisian concerts, almost 40 years ago, were recorded by Jean-Marc with the antique technology of those times. We soon became friends, indeed! I knew that he was a musician, having played piano for years, but it’s only relatively recently that he decided to come on stage with his synthesizer and also to launch Fou, after he made so many historic recordings for prominent labels like hatHUT, Incus and others.”

Foussat was born in Algeria in 1955. Moving between Algeria and France, he was introduced to radical jazz when he was very young, hearing Sun Ra at the Théâtre des Amandiers in Nanterre in 1969. He recalls first hearing Derek Bailey and Joe McPhee in 1975 and then “in 1980, a little by chance, I decided to go to the Pisa festival organized by CRIM [Center for Research on Improvised Music]. I was charmed. I met all the musicians who would become my friends later. There was Derek Bailey, Steve Lacy, Evan Parker, Carlos Zingaro, Paul Lovens, Paul Lytton, Roger Turner, Maggie Nicols, Phil Minton...and all the others, the fine flower of improvised music emerging at the time, all found together to create a terribly free and wonderful music.” Foussat returned the next year, this time recording all he could and “exchanging my recordings for the records already made by Incus, Potorch...the momentum started.”

The evidence of Foussat’s ears and skills as a recording engineer is apparent on recordings on numerous free music labels, recording activities that developed alongside interests in musique concrète, synthesizer, guitar and piano. Eventually he became associated with Jacques Oger in the label Potlatch from 1997-2001. Still active, Potlatch has released few recordings and frequent masterpieces: during Foussat’s tenure he recorded the duo of Derek Bailey and Joëlle Léandre’s No Writing and Evan Parker and Keith Rowe’s Dark Kaje. That Potlatch association revealed the depth of Foussat’s personal archive with Bailey and Steve Lacy’s Outcome, recorded in 1983.

While Foussat pursued his own music in the 2000s, family tragedy compelled him to launch Fou in the most personal of ways: “In 2012, my son Victor died. In memory of him, who always told me to take care of myself—my recordings, my music, my photos—I decided to create Fou, which started with a solo disc, and then with No Comment, a sort of requiem for him.” Foussat remarks, “The choices of the music published on Fou are exclusively those of the heart. I publish my music, the music that I record or that I have recorded...and that of my friends. There must be a necessity.”

That sense of heart is larger than style. One of the most beautiful recordings on the label is Soul Eyes by trumpeter Jean-Luc Cappozzo and his pianist daughter Cécile: it’s a heartfelt exploration of classic themes by Charles Mingus and Mal Waldron, an anomaly on the label, possessing lyrical depths unknown to the contemporary mainstream. Another release that plays against expectation is the young clarinetist Jean-Brice Godet’s very subtle, tight-knit Majó with a New York quartet of alto saxophonist Michael Attias, bassist Pascal Niggenkemper and drummer Carlo Costa. Godet says, “I don’t feel an age gap with Jean-Marc. We shared a lot of music, conversations and food together, before even thinking about releasing Majó on his label. The main thing to me is that I can trust him.”

...CONTINUED ON PAGE 42

THE NEW YORK CITY JAZZ RECORD | SEPTEMBER 2017 11
Joe Fields, the producer who began his career with Columbia in the ’50s, went on to found Muse in the ’70s and then established the sister labels HighNote and Savant in the late ’90s, run with his son Barney, to go along with reissue producing credits for Savoy and Vogue, died Jul. 12th at 88.

Fields was born in Jersey City, NJ in 1929. His first job was the Brooklyn sales beat for Columbia Records, followed by a spot with London Records in their singles division. After that was a position with Creed Taylor-era Verve, during the period when the label was riding high on the success of Stan Getz and Jimmy Smith. Fields’ peripatetic ways eventually brought him to Prestige. “I worked with Bob Weinstock at Prestige for about five years,” he recalled in a biography put together by HighNote. “Had a No. 1 Billboard single with ‘Misty’ by Richard ‘Groove’ Holmes. It was the beginning of the soul-jazz era.” It was during this time that Fields met Neil Bogart of Casablanca Records. “In the back of my mind what I wanted to do was start a jazz label,” Fields said. “An 8-track tape company came along and they approached Bogart. They made a deal to crank out so many packages per year for x number of dollars. That had Neil scuffling around, looking for talent. My response was to put together a label for Neil called Cobblestone. We recorded people like Pat Martino, Jimmy Heath, Al Cohn and Zoot Sims, recorded George Wein’s Newport in New York jazz series.”

Cobblestone morphed into Muse Records after Fields bought out Bogart’s share and was aided and abetted by producer Don Schlitten, fellow alumnus of Prestige (who would go on to found Xanadu). “I rubbed two matchsticks together with no financing to get ourselves off the ground,” Fields recalled. The label helped sustain the careers of some legends while offering opportunities for lesser-known artists. Its catalogue was vast and eclectic, with releases ranging from Donald Byrd and Pat Martino to the Creative Construction Company and Robin Kenyatta.

After 25 years Fields sold the Muse masters and took some of his roster to a newly formed venture, HighNote Records. Fields’ relatively hands-off approach continued with HighNote: “I’m no Creed Taylor. What am I going to tell Tom Harrell? Nothing. So what you do is give ‘em the ball and get out of the way.” The roster of HighNote and sister label Savant features such luminaries as Harrell, Andy Bey, George Cables, George Freeman and Freddy Cole to young stars like Wayne Escoffer, J.D. Allen, Jeremy Pelt and Eric Alexander. Fields’ mission was and will continue to be simple: “What we do here at HighNote is promote the artists, give them visibility. We work very hard on the print, Internet and promotion side of things, both here and overseas, and we work with our distributors very closely.”
Südtirol Alto Adige has two names because everything in this northernmost province of Italy bordering Austria has two names, one German, one Italian. By any name, Südtirol is one of the best organized, most picturesque, boldest jazz festivals in Europe.

Its organizational achievement is to manage the logistics of 20,000 people attending 70 concerts (Jun. 30th-Jul. 9th) in 60 locations spread throughout the South Tirol region, including some at 7,000 feet. As for beauty, the emerald green Dolomites, with their terraced vineyards and chalets clinging to their sheer slopes, are from a fairy tale. This festival is embedded into its physical environment. There are concerts on platforms cantilevered out over deep mountain valleys. There are performances in haylofts, cloisters, alpine trains and meadows only reachable by cable car. In the base city of Bolzano, there are concerts on rooftops and some on level ground in planetariums, museums and parks.

The boldness starts with Klaus Widmann. Unlike most jazz festival directors, he rarely books famous names. He sees his festival as an outlet for talented new emerging players. Public and corporate support gives him the luxury of going with his instincts. Of the 70 concerts, approximately 55 were free. Widmann may have made his most daring programming decision in 2017. He made Reinier Baas, a young Dutch guitarist and composer, Südtirol’s artist-in-residence. He bet his festival on an unknown musician.

It worked. Baas kept imprinting himself on the festival. The only event on opening night was his ‘mostly instrumental opera’, Reiner Baas vs. Princess Dicsembobulatrix. It had premiered at the North Sea Jazz Festival in 2015. Baas composed a new epilogue for Südtirol. The opera was performed by 11 players, Public and corporate support gives him the luxury of going with his instincts. Of the 70 concerts, approximately 55 were free. Widmann may have made his most daring programming decision in 2017. He made Reinier Baas, a young Dutch guitarist and composer, Südtirol’s artist-in-residence. He bet his festival on an unknown musician.

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Anticipation was largely met by the festival’s bigger draws. On the beautiful stage of the Royal Danish Playhouse, Brazilian pianist Eliane Elias presented her tribute to the samba with bassist Marc Johnson and drummer Rafael Barata. The trio bobbed and weaved through meaty arrangements of Antônio Carlos Jobim, João Donato, Roberto Menescal (an epic take on his “Vocé” being a highlight of the set), João Bosco (his “Coisa Feita” being another), along with a smattering of the tried and true, including “The Girl from Ipanema”, one of three encores.

Erykah Badu plied her soulful trade to a boisterous audience at Tivoli Gardens, where she preached some of the ‘jazziest’ creeds of the festival. Decked in ebony from head to toe and with a drum machine ever-present at her left hand, she and her airtight band dipped healthily into the songbook of her New Amerykah duology. She allowed plenty of room for improvisation and her bandmates even took part in one of the legendary after-hours jam sessions at Copenhagen’s La Fontaine later that night.

Higher expectations, however, made for lower returns in the case of guitarist Jakob Bro, who offered an even-keeled set with a sizable band that included drummer Andrew Cyrille and saxophonist Mark Turner. But while the music showed artful restraint and Cyrille proved his mastery in a memorable solo, Bro never really acknowledged the audience. Furthermore, Turner’s presence felt wasted, as his brilliance was subdued in favor of breathy long tones in a role that was rarely more than supportive.

It was on the wings of Copenhagen’s local talents that the most surprising flights took place. Whether in the blues-tinged art rock of guitarist Mikkel Ploug and his tight rhythm section or the appropriately named I Think You’re Awesome, led by bassist Jens Mikkel (CONTINUED ON PAGE 43)
We lost a great pianist, mother and human being.

— DAVID MURRAY, SAXOPHONE

Geri Allen was a musician’s musician. Geri was a creative genius. Geri was beautiful. Geri was lovely. Geri was respectful. Geri was strong. Geri could play any style of music/she moved fluidly through all genres. I remember her coming to one of my recording dates with her little son, asleep in a baby pouch on her stomach. I said Geri, “what if he wakes up and spoils the recording?” She replied “Oh he won’t, he’s accustomed to it” and believe me, she was right, not a sound. Geri was a loving mother. I also remember her first New York gig, after she moved from Detroit, was with my band Jump Up. Geri and I made plenty of music together. Geri was amazing. Geri my dear friend, I love you.

— OLIVER LAKE, SAXOPHONE

Geri Allen was one of the greatest most influential pianists of the ’80s Renaissance and in all the history of our music. She influenced several subsequent generations of pianists, composers and forward-thinkers of music.

I was blessed to have her on four of my first six recordings and her playing on Triangular helped set, maintain and raise the standard for the music that followed. She was a gentle, peaceful loving spirit, a dutiful mother and the world is a better place because of her. Long live the music and Legacy of Geri Allen...Jazz Warrior Queen.

— RALPH PETERSON, DRUMS

Geri Allen was a great and broadly-scoped musician, as testimony to her wide brilliant musical career is known. She is another in the line of the great pianists from the Detroit, Michigan region such as Hank Jones, Tommy Flanagan, Roland Hanna, Barry Harris and others who have given so much to this music.

In 1984, I, along with bassist Anthony Cox, had the honor of making Geri’s first recording, The Printmakers on MinorMusic (Germany). Thereafter, in the years that have followed, I’ve had the pleasure of recording with Geri in other musical formations and playing club dates and concerts with her here and abroad. I miss and will miss her greatly.

— ANDREW CYRILLE, DRUMS

Queen Geri Allen was one of the most original pianists of our time. She remained pretty much peerless due to her deep understanding of the blues, swing, bebop and postbop eras and her desire to continuously push the envelope and push herself. She exemplified what is important and necessary to be a great artist, therefore becoming an important influence across genres and generations. I met her when I was in my early teens while she was attending Howard University. This was the beginning of a long-standing friendship and musical camaraderie. Geri’s soft-spoken nature was underscored by her ferocity at the piano. She took no prisoners. I learned many things from Geri, but the most evident were how to graciously be a fighter, how to be artistically edgy and fearless and how to be a musician-mom. Geri’s standards were high and she created value with everything she did in life, therefore she leaves us with a supreme legacy.

— TERRILYNE CARRINGTON, DRUMS
Geri Allen revealed the jewel in the lotus that warriors aspire to attain. A thrilling incarnation clad in the fragility of a nocturnal flower yielding itself to dawn. Moons assailed her with unveiled craters of envy. Prevailing in a parallel universe of deed and yearning, her teetering on greatness and humility, scored the two imposters as the same. She filled our cups to the brim and willed a legacy of harmonic convergences. No one could doubt her beauty, yet few could cultivate her flame. Oneness of purpose became her. And within this sonorous lineage of musing we will surely, though shyly, venerate her name.

GERI ANN ALLEN

Geri and I first played together in Dwight Andrews’ band Deja Vu in 1977. She was the sub for Nat Adderley Jr. The band also included Pheeroan akLaff, Brian Toward, Greg Osby, Chris Andromedas. Geri and I also worked together with James Newton and Oliver Lake. Geri recorded on my albums Live in Greenwich Village and Greenwich. I loved Geri like a sister, as did everybody. Our musical bond was so deep that we would often laugh at our musical telepathy. One time, when we were touring Europe with James Newton in 1987, we all were exhausted from traveling. In those situations, musicians often hit their hardest because the pure energy of the music overrides the exhausted normal instincts. Geri’s performance was outstanding and the audience went totally bonkers over her. Afterwards, I told her that I had to think of her differently: previously I had thought of her as my younger sister who could really play the piano; after that experience, I had to understand her as an innovator of prophetic proportions. Ten years later, we were in the studio with Oliver Lake, Belden Bullock and Cecil Brooks. She had recently given birth to her son and was nursing him between takes, when he would sleep. At one point, Wally was completely out of it right before we were going to do a take after a hot rehearsal of the tune. We all wanted to record immediately but figured that Geri would have to take a break. She said: “No, I have it covered.” She nursed Wally in a snuggly while we did the take. And this was on an uptempo tune, where she played an AMAZING solo. I said to her afterwards, “Geri, that was one of the most amazing things I’ve ever seen. How do you do that?” She said: “You just have to do what you have to do.” I love you forever, Geri Bop. May God bless your soul and the lives of your children and other loved ones still here.

— PHEEROAN AKLAFF, DRUMS

Geri took flight and left us here to contemplate the long, wending trail of beauty she left behind. She was a tender explorer and idealist who brought a purity of intent, focus and fierce determination to her music and life.

Geri was a poet on the keyboard—her genius can be heard in her beautiful, elevated palette and harmonic concept. Her respect for the tradition we come from was deep and sincere while her vision of the “now” was always looking forward. We first met in 1982 at Montreux—she was a young wisps of willow—we jammed on “Well You Needn’t”. Many years later, she became a member of my quartet. It was my honor to have shared a sacred, tonic communication with Geri Allen. All this is that.

— CHARLES LLOYD, SAXOPHONE

The world has lost an incredible human being. I first met Geri when she was a student at Howard University in Washington, DC. She would take the train up to my house in Brooklyn for lessons. Even then it was apparent that Geri heard some things musically that others did not. In 1994 we performed a duo piano concert at the Caramoor Festival in New York and I realized how fearless she was and at the same time how focused she was. It was a lesson that I took to heart. Geri is not only a great musician, composer and pianist. She is a giant and will be sorely missed.

— JACK DEJOHNETTE, DRUMS

Geri Allen exists in her absolute truth for her entire life. In leading by example, she continuously inspired her fellow creative spirits to work towards authenticity and excellence. Her legacy of music and the piano. I was so impressed with her artistry. She conjured sonic rainbows, beaming new color spectrums out of plain black and white keys, her music revealed new aspects of that constant creative sun at the center of her mighty musical orbit. Geri tirelessly spread that wondrous multi-faceted light to audiences, bandmates and students. She was the kind of person that I feel so fortunate to have had the opportunity to bask and share in her glow. Far sooner than we ever imagined, she has moved on, to merge—I’m sure in her own original way—with the eternal source of all art and light. Though her departure has left a gaping absence in the music, and the hearts of everyone who knew her, Geri’s life-sound will emanate forever...increasing and enlightening the musical expanse of our shared humanity.

— CASSANDRA WILSON, VOCALS

Geri Allen was a deeply valued and much loved member of the Motéma family and the jazz community at large. Her singular creativity and astonishing pianistic expression exemplifies all that we hope to stand for: unlettered creativity, undeniable authority, an exploration of the infinite beauty of fearlessness, individuality, creative freedom, rich complexity, powerful simplicity, dedication to justice and freedom for all and, most of all, an ability to embrace me, calling me, through music, the grace that connects us all.

— ESPERANZA SPALDING, BASS/VOCALS

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— JANA HERZEN, MOTÉMA MUSIC
The CD begins with Bobby Hutcherson’s relaxed and charming song “The Littlest One Of All”. Nelson is a major asset on this piece, Hutcherson’s best-known original (“Little B’s Poem” with Ralph Rainger-Leo Robin’s “Easy Living”, which he has as his showcase. Of the trio numbers, Chestnut’s transformation of “Chopin Prelude” into a lightly swinging piece a bit reminiscent of John Lewis’ “Penzel” is a delight. Miles Davis’ “Nardis” features intuitive interaction between the three musicians along with a fine bass solo. Chestnut’s one original, “CDC”, is a Latin jazz swinger. A change of pace is offered on the Thom Bell-Linda Creed R&B tune “You Make Me Feel Brand New”, which becomes a medium-tempo jazz ballad uplifted by the use of three background singers (Charlotte Small, Keesha Gumbs and Djoj Nance). In addition, the musicians clearly had a good time swinging hard on Thelonious Monk’s “Rhythm-A-Ning”. The pianist embraces Williams’ “Christina” and the Doris Akers gospel title track as solo pieces.

Chestnut has yet to record an unworthy album. Like his earlier CDs, this one is heartily recommended.

For more information, visit jazzadop.com. This project is at Jazz Standard Sep. 1st-3rd. See Calendar.

Loneliness Road (with Iggy Pop) 
Jamie Saft/Steve Swallow/Bobby Previte (RareNoise) by John Pietaro

On this latest release by the ensemble affectionately known as the New Standards Trio, pianist Jamie Saft, electric bassist Steve Swallow and drummer Bobby Previte continue to seek new ground for the song form yet to be compiled in fake books. Indeed, it’s a style so embedded in free music that the borders cloud. These original works of Saft contain a rare melodic quality, even when his themes are engulfed in the kind of counter-rhythm and counterpoint that only veterans of more than one generation of ‘new jazz’ can supply. Listening carefully, one can’t help but hear strains of Vincenzo Guaraldi alongside McCoy Tyner, Burt Bacharach, Béla Bartók and Kurt Weill. The purveyance of Major 9 harmonies lift, dazzle and vex.

With Loneliness Road, the trio elevates the exploration of song form to another plane, incorporating a guest vocalist on three numbers. But they didn’t seek out a denizen of jazz standards in the quest; instead it is proto-punk vocalist Iggy Pop. For purists who may have stumbled across this review, Iggy Pop came to prominence leading The Stooges (no connection to Moe Howard’s operation), then began crafting some of the most vital music bridging the glam and punk movements as a solo artist. His dry, gutural baritone is employed excellently and he also helped to compose the songs on which he is featured.

The opening cut, jazz waltz “Ten Nights”, establishes the first of the melodic themes that catch the ear with maddening déjà vu. A hummable, enveloping tune over rows of parallel chords speaks of summers well out of reach. All the while Swallow and Previte lead the waltz song with muscle, pulling the sweet refrain out of itself masterfully. Yet on the lamenting “Little Harbor”, Saft paints an evocative melody as Previte beautifully incorporates tambourine thumb rolls into free and airy drumming. The band is nothing if not versatile. On the title track, Pop’s vocal glides over Saft’s bluesy, possibly modal piano. Iggy’s trademark vibrato is here but then so is a sha-la-la-la section reminiscent of his Last For Life days. It also offers a moving Swallow solo and Previte’s wonderfully lazy brushes. A later instrumental track, “Gates”, manages to echo bits of Floyd Cramer’s 1960 “Last Date” most impressionistically.

The “Downtown” Previte arrived in decades ago partnered with post-punk musicians in very special experimentation, so Iggy out front of this trio isn’t quite so radical. Love the edge and the near-recollection of days past. This album is well above “standard”.

For more information, visit rarenoiserecords.com. Swallow is at Birdland Sep. 5th-9th with Steve Kuhn, The Stone Sep. 24th and Mezzrow Sep. 26th. See Calendar.

There’s A Sweet, Sweet Spirit 
Cyrus Chestnut (HighNote) by Scott Yanow

It is easy to take Cyrus Chestnut for granted. While not part of the cutting edge, he has consistently created music in his own voice, melodic, soulful, inspired by his background in gospel music and swinging. Long one of the leaders of the modern mainstream of jazz piano, he has mostly been heard at the head of trios. Chestnut’s latest effort features him on five numbers in a trio with bassist Buster Williams and drummer Lennie White, on three songs with vibraphonist Steve Nelson making the group a quartet and in the spotlight during two pieces as an unaccompanied soloist.

The CD reviews
Bruce Williams isn’t afraid to loosen his seams and let rawness seep through and nowhere is this so true as on the alto saxophonist’s fourth album. In the opening punctuations of “Mata Leon”, the organic nature of his compositional grammar is revealed, as are his interlocking relationships with a roving cast of bandmates, shuffled throughout to fit the needs of individual tunes. While the initial vibe is fragmentary and searching, the title track that follows has a brighter, classical energy actualizing the album’s core concept: squeezing hardship until essential oils of affirmation trip into the bell of his horn. Likewise in “Promonitions”, which, despite its airiness, speaks incisively through the leading voices. Williams on soprano and trumpeter Josh Evans spin webs of future possibility, only to sever them with ferocious retrospection.

Williams is unafraid to ask probing questions metaphorically, but also titularly in “Forever Asking Why?” Such is his quest for resignation by means of a tone which, despite its airiness, speaks incisively through the leading voices. Williams on soprano and trumpeter Josh Evans spin webs of future possibility, only to sever them with ferocious retrospection.

Though haunted by memories of a father who took his own life nearly 30 years ago, this is music of survival when all the heart wants to do is curl up in obscurity.

For more information, visit passinthru.org. This project is at Dizzy’s Club Sep. 5th. See Calendar.

Jaco Pastorius, dying 30 years this month, is back in the wings.

From the first caustic ensemble passage of “Invitation”, driven by an impossibly complex bassline, the listener is consumed. The rapture of Jaco Pastorius, dying 30 years this month, is back through his triumphant 1982 performance at the Kool Jazz Festival.

Jaco was the visionary of the electric bass. That was a controversial statement in the ‘80s, but history has stacked the argument in his favor. His was a bassline of perpetual motion, all-encompassing, melodic, contrapuntal and seductive. Sliding into motifs, twisting impossible double-stops and harmonics from his instrument, his genius was audacity. In a music forever skewed by the wholesome theft of the Black American experience, splintered by factions, commercialization, struggles for survival, Jaco was one more victim of an industry hell-bent on maintaining stasis. Wielding a battle-scarred fretless ax and shoulder-length hair, dancing atop amplifiers, vocalizing over the din, Pastorius defied ‘70s expectations of what a jazz bassist was. He brandished the influence of R&B, Jimi Hendrix and The Beatles as much as Bird and Duke.

By the time he hit the stage that hot June night, all eyes in the music business were on Pastorius. He’d just left Weather Report. In 1981, near the end of his tenure, he’d released the astounding Word of Mouth, which featured a large ensemble of acclaimed musicians. The bassist’s decision to bring this album to life was no mean feat. At barely 30 years old, he stood as star and heretic. His core band was comprised of Bob Mintzer (tenor and soprano saxophones), Randy Brecker (trumpet), Othello Molineaux (steel drums), Don Alias (percussion) and Peter Erskine (drums). The larger horn section was comprised of Bob Stein, Lou Marini, Frank Wess, Howard Johnson, Randy Emerald, Alan Rubin, Lew Soloff, Jon Faddis, Ron Tooley, Kenny Faulk, David Taylor, Jim Pugh, Wayne Andre, John Clark, Peter Gordon and David Bergeron, each a vital section voice. And at several prominent points, a stool out front was occupied by guest harmonica soloist Toots Thielemans.

Mintzer’s solos were volatile, but joyously so. Brecker showed inspired intensity. Thielemans adds soulful, fluid harmonica to the unique mix. He elevates “Three Views of a Secret” and his duet with Jaco, “Sophisticated Lady”, is striking. Commanding the groove throughout the concert, the bassist led by aerial counterpoint on overdub; this band required no chordal instrument. Molineaux’ steel pans were as close as it came and the top off phrases with stunning originality. His ability seemingly to bend hammered metal craters into blue notes was unmatched. Alias’ fiery passion is captured pristinely here, congas and bata threaded through a rhythmic storm with Peter Erskine.

The music that summer night was wondrous, yet Jaco’s fervor would tragically engulf his very being not five years later.

For more information, visit resonancerecords.org

Afro-Caribbean Mixtape
Nicholas Payton (Paytone)
by Matthew Kassell

Trumpeter Nicholas Payton’s Afro-Caribbean Mixtape functions on, basically, three levels: autobiographical, summoning the spirit of his Garifuna roots; a nod to his musical forebears in jazz (though Payton thinks that four-letter word, as Max Roach once described it, is basically meaningless), featuring recorded snippets from the likes of Roach, Dizzy Gillespie, Art Blakey, Miles Davis and others; and, on a practical level, a summation of what’s been going on in his head over the past half-decade. Payton writes in the notes that he’s “been conceptualizing this album and its title for about the past five years,” adding, “I’ve been collecting these themes for at least that amount of time and beyond.”

The album is slow-simmering and pulsing with funk, heavy on synthesizer and Fender Rhodes and turntable with a dense web of percussion. It sounds like something Miles Davis might have recorded combined with one of Herbie Hancock’s fusion albums from the ‘70s and a touch of Medeski, Martin & Wood. Payton’s dry, somewhat languid trumpet tone always manages to come to the forefront and he takes a number of excellent, extended solos, as on “Kimathi (Cotton Gin & Tonic),” the eighth track on this two-disc set. Payton wrote or co-wrote every song on the album, which features Kevin Hays (keyboards), Vicente Archer (bass), Daniel Sadownick (percussion), Joe Dyson (drums) and others. Payton also plays a number of instruments aside from trumpet, including drums, keyboards and acoustic bass, which he pulls out for a lovely duo on the tune “Mamaways Ayiti” (get it?) with Hays. Payton sings, too—though perhaps “chants” is a better way of putting it—as on “La Gaujira”, an infectious cha-cha-cha.

At times, the recorded snippets scattered throughout the album feel a bit didactic, too on the nose, but mostly they do a good job of grounding Payton’s album in a historical context. The clearest summation of Payton’s new record—and perhaps his whole ethos—can perhaps be found in a prophetic line from Dizzy Gillespie, featured on “#BAMboula”, the fourth track on the first CD. “Playing an instrument,” Gillespie intones, “is a form of worship.”
Harmonica player Toots Thielemans, guitarists LABtrio, deriving its title from the members’ Belgium. There are far more lesser-known Belgian Fred Van Hove are some of the jazz innovators from Django Reinhardt and Philip Catherine and pianist emanant, conveys a depth beyond its lightness, the lower-middle. Cambré’s sound, restrained yet down the bottom, Cambré in the upper-middle, in its demarcated sound registers: Verbist holding to collaborate with him. This hour- saxophonist Lieven Cambré and bassist Piet Verbist, (set) are especially interesting and the dramatic climax in B minor” and “Variation 15” from the Goldberg rhapsodic. Two J.S. Bach covers (“Prelude and Fugue and forward. De Looze fills in cracks between the is everywhere else, now soft and subtle, now loud and upward. De Looze fills in cracks between the covers, hands working independently, tinking and rhapsodic. Two J.S. Bach covers (“Prelude and Fugue in B minor” and “Variation 15” from the Goldberg set) are especially interesting and the dramatic climax to De Looze’s “Ihor” is a highpoint.

Mamutrio (Origin) Primal Existence Nature City LABtrio (Out Note) Mamutrio (Origin) Nounemon Raphael Malifiet (Ruweh) by Tom Greenland

Dayna Stephens is an exuberant and passionate yet preternaturally mellow and mature saxophonist. Every track on Gratitude seems as serenely laid back as a ballad, even if it isn’t slow, thus a prayerful and unhurried atmosphere prevails. Stephens has a distinctive sound on each instrument and each note played emerges beveled—considered, rounded and complete. Less rippling muscle-man than limber dancer, Stephens applies a stylistic approach that is pensive but not wistful, rather enchanted and occasionally hypnotic. He widens his palette occasionally by shading ensemble backgrounds with EWI pastels and susurrant synthesizer textures, which sound pinned on Pat Metheny’s “We Had A Sister” and blessed out on “Clouds”, a conjoining of tunes by Massimo Biolcati and Louis Cole.

Stephens exhibits a warm persona and an exceptional ear for unusual compositions: Aaron Parks’ “In A Garden” is low-key Zen-trane; Rebecca Martin’s “Don’t Mean A Thing At All” is a ringing chorale. Only the highly emotive, arching “The Timbre of Gratitude” is an original, as Stephens exhibits a Ben Webster-ian, sweep-the-table tenor solo. Buttery baritone comes out for a chorus or two of Billy Strayhorn’s “Isfahan”.

The present copacetic ensemble of standout musicians—bassist Larry Grenadier, drummer Eric Harland, guitarist Julian Lage and pianist Brad Mehldau— is identical to Stephens’ 2014 release Peace. They often function as a quartet: Mehldau up front on the first half, Lage on the back end. The former, a consummate professional, packs power and nuance into his solos, Michelle Amadó’s “Amber Is Falling” being especially gentle and subtle after Stephens’ energizing tenor romp. Lage chips in a lanky, folksy walze, criss-cross and several pearly solos.

This keeper grows over time; I suspect Stephens’ others do as well.

For more information, visit daynastephens.net. Stephens is at Smalls Sep. 6th-7th as a leader and Sep. 22nd-23rd with Jean-Michel Pilc, Mezzrow Sep. 10th with Julian Shore, Cornelia Street Underground Sep. 16th as a leader and The Jazz Gallery Sep. 27th with Eden Ladin. See Calendar.

Cultural Capital Sexmob (Origin)

According to French sociologists Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron, sounding smart when you speak (i.e., both what you say and how you say it) opens doors to status and power. That’s cultural capital. Enter Sexmob composer/slide trumpet/ enonce Steve Bernstein, a man whose vernacular speech rhythms belie his deep knowledge of and skill in music and, well, life. Cultural Capital, the group’s ninth CD, comes in a plain brown (cardboard) wrapper, its capital accruing entirely from the contents within.

In contrast to previous releases, which featured covers of pop hits—from ABBA and The Beatles to Prince and Nirvana—this is an all-original date. There are some catchy riffs and themes (“Syrup” and “Valentino”, for example), but more often the ‘tunes’ rely on cued gestures, slide-trumpet and Briggan Krause’ alto saxophone harmonizing slow-moving lines that come alive in the context of Tony Scherr’s incisive but unobtrusive bass and Kenny Wollesen’s ebullient drums. New also are overdubbed electric guitars (by Scherr and Krauss) on “Valentino” and “Golden House”, funky tracks that sound like New Orleans’ The Meters at a San Francisco Acid Test. Despite the spontaneous atmosphere of the date, careful listening reveals a bit of studio sleight-of-hand: many tracks are mixed to segue directly into each other; Bernstein and Krauss overdub additional horn parts in places; and the end of “Hear You” creates the illusion of Wollesen having a duet with himself, drumkit versus marimba. On “Step Apache” and “Bari Si”, both of which could be ’60s TV themes, Bernstein’s horn sermonizes with soulful authority. On “San Francisco”, the band turns traditional quartet logic on its head: the horns are background, bass (and especially) drums up front.

Fans may miss the familiarity of covers, but the new music sustains high interest through its frequent transitions to contrasting sections, close interactions among the quartet and the group’s unorthodox mix of old-school grooves and avant-experimentalism, the latter chiefly provided by Krauss.

For more information, visit stevenbernstein.net. Steven Bernstein is at Dizzy’s Club Sep. 6th. See Calendar.

Cultural Capital Sexmob (Origin) Gratitude Dayna Stephens (Contagious Music) by Fred Bouchard

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Cultural Capital Sexmob (Origin) by Tom Greenland

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In his introduction here, producer Norman Granz remarks, “Every year I come here with Jazz at the Philharmonic and every year I say the same thing and every year it’s right. This is the greatest thing in jazz... Miss Ella Fitzgerald.” Amen. On the occasion of her centennial, Dutch Jazz Archive celebrates with this never-before-released joy. Recorded at Amsterdam’s Concertgebouw, the aptly named ’S Wonderful is a pairing of 1957 and 1960 concerts capturing Fitzgerald’s voice at its most glorious peak.

The sets coincide in time with the period when Fitzgerald’s now historic Songbook series was being released on Granz.’ Verve imprint. Many of the songs on these sets were then relatively new to her repertoire. It lends a still-getting-acquainted freshness to gems like Cole Porter’s “Love for Sale”, Richard Rodgers-Lorenz Hart’s “Dancing on the Ceiling” and the Gershwin’s “Our Love is Here to Stay.”

On the first set Don Abney’s piano keeps close company, never more so than on “Love for Sale”. Bassist Ray Brown joins them with his guitar-like virtuosity, radiating a fundamental soulfulness. On “He Dances Overhead” Herb Ellis (guitar) and Abney join the limpid purity of Fitzgerald’s voice to make the small hours of night come alive. On “Roll ‘Em Pete” from the 1960 set, Paul Smith’s piano is the warmest of company joined by Jim Hall’s genius guitar, Gus Johnson’s drums and Fitzgerald’s in-the-moment, endlessly creative improvisational skill.

Whether a ballad or uptempo number, there was no limit to Fitzgerald’s rhythmic inventiveness as she took firm possession of the American Songbook. No matter how many of her recordings you have, this one becomes endlessly creative improvisational skill.

For more information, visit capricerecords.com. This project is at Birdland Sep. 10th. See Calendar.

For more information, visit jazzarchief.nl. A Fitzgerald tribute with Brianne Thomas is at Dizzy’s Club Sep. 7th. See Calendar.

Off Beat
Katie Thiroux (Capri)
by Robert Bush

One could safely describe bassist/vocalist Katie Thiroux as “old-school” in the best possible sense. As an instrumentalist, she favors a pure sound that cradles each quarter note with equal devotion and as a vocalist she concentrates on solid intonation and lyrical clarity with a marked lack of melisma or gymnastics.

Her sophomore effort on Capri Records represents a fully realized Thiroux, poised to take the mainstream jazz world by storm. Featuring a lineup comprised of veteran reed weightheavies Ken Peplowski and Roger Neumann with rising stars Justin Kaufflin (piano) and Matt Witek (drums), Off Beat hits hard and often.

It’s a pleasure to hear someone play ‘time’ with such joy and conviction and from the opening strains of the title track the listener is transported back to the era of Ray Brown, Sam Jones and Percy Heath. As a singer, Thiroux is all about the phrasing and her intonation is spot on. Especially intimate is the duo of voice and piano on “Why Did I Choose You”, where her smoky alto delights, or the intimate is the duo of voice and piano on “Why Did I Choose You”, where her smoky alto delights, or the intimate is the duo of voice and piano on “Why Did I Choose You”, where her smoky alto delights, or the...
Mike Richmond’s beautiful new recording—his 11th as a leader—is the first on which he plays cello exclusively. The tunes are by Oscar Pettiford, godfather of jazz cello playing, and Richmond and his quartet of seasoned players give the music a ‘singing’ quality, something Richmond seeks in all his playing. The leader comes out singing and swinging on the opening title track. He plays the gentle, but substantial boppish changes in a solo seamlessly following the opening statement of the melody. The rhythm section is right in the groove and buoyant Richmond’s solo so that all feels breathtakingly natural. Pianist Peter Zak tells a smart, brief tale with his solo and then bassist Jay Anderson, in a spot usually reserved for Richmond, has his own perfect story to tell.

These Pettiford compositions cover a lot of ground yet Richmond and his cohorts the knack for making all the territory part of a soulful whole. "Two Little Pearlys" is a glorious ballad that becomes deeper, darker and more poignant. "Laverne Walk" and "Tricotism" are two of the more familiar Pettiford works. Cello and bass play the jaunty theme of the latter with quiet accenting by bass and drums (Billy Drummond) and then Richmond is back with high tones and a groove much like Duke’s. "Take the A Train"; Ellington is also suggested as "Laverne Walk" reflects a "Don’t Get Around Much Anymore" feel. Why Not? That’s What." was Pettiford’s response to Miles Davis’ "So What", this version featuring a soul jazz vibe and an opening melody statement by Anderson.

Richmond’s vast experience and innate musicality creates both a loving homage to the past and glowing future of such music in the hands of masters.

To anyone who heard the revitalized Steely Dan, the virtues of Potter’s playing were far from secret and he has only fulfilled the promise of those earlier days. Take that sparse solo in “Sonic Anomaly”, where he’s playing intercalate blues licks, Eric Dolphy-fashion, merging decades of historical development in a few expertly timed gestures. To follow the Dolphy thread, listen to the title track’s opening solo passage, an absolutely breathtaking display of bass clarinet virtuosity on a delightfully small scale.

Amok Amor is a fresh, distinctive band finding and mining its own terrain.
Drummer Matt Wilson has been leading singularly, creative ensembles—mostly quartets—since the '90s. Here he expands his conception to a unique quintet, with a vocalist who plays electric guitar, Dawn Thomson. He also enlists Jeff Lederer (reeds plus harmonium); bassist Martin Wind, who plays, for the first time on record, acoustic bass guitar; and cornet player Ron Miles. He has also added musicians he admires reciting verse by Carl Sandburg. Wilson's approach is omnivorous, ranging from the sounds of Bo Diddley and country rock to folk, gospel, marches, swing and samba.

There are voices on every one of the 18 tracks here, ten providing recitations of Sandburg poetry cueing or interacting with music. Christian McBride's declarative authority on "Anywhere and Everywhere People" emerges out of a stentorian two-beat-driven tandem dialogue between tenor saxophone and cornet. Most of the recitations are straight readings, but Jack Black adds dramatic dimensions to "Snatch of Sliphorn Jazz", accompanied by a spirited duologue from drums and soprano. And Joe Lovano drily stresses the pun of "Paper I" in beat/hipster fashion. That Bo Diddley beat shows up on "We Must Be Polite", John Scofield's deadpan reading of the two verses interspersed with exuberant R&B rhythms and a honking tenor solo.

Some of the most striking tracks are the eight fashioned into songs, seven featuring Thomson, whose flexible approach ranges from pure gospel-folk of "Bringers" to folk-pop—replete with country-style guitar and harmonium—of "Offering and Rebuff", a poem so perfectly encapsulated as a song it would be at home on a Top 40 chart. She sings "Night Stuff" over a processional beat, cornet and bass clarinet adding to the ritual feel. Two of the most rousing tracks are "Choose", Thomson leading a chorus over a Yankee Doodle-like band march, and infectious closer "Daybreak", the lyrics strutting over a prancing samba rhythm in between celebratory clarinet and cornet soloing. Matt Wilson has created one of the most successful unions of jazz and poetry ever recorded.

For more information, visit palmetto-records.com. This project is at Jazz Standard Sep. 19th-20th. See Calendar.

Dear Blossom, A Tribute to Blossom Dearie
Nicki Parrott (Arbors)

Bassist/vocalist Nicki Parrott has fashioned a luminous homage to Blossom Dearie (1924-2009), a vocalist and songwriters, alas, not that well-known outside of vocal jazz and Great American Songbook interpreters' spheres. Dearie had a light, lilting, virtually elfin voice and a seemingly effortless sense of swing. Parrott, whose resumé includes work with Les Paul, Harry Allen and David Krakauer, does not try to emulate her style but her willowy, honey-textured voice makes for both a nice matchup with and contrast to Dearie's catalogue.

Opener "I Wish You Love" is a kiss-off/farewell-type of song but Parrott sings with such kindness and compassion and the song is borne upon a bossa nova flavor that the sting of goodbye is (sweetly) assuaged. "Peel Me a Grape", a wry tribute to the good life, is sung with a brooding, smoky, late-night candor and savor is lent by the muted, oh-so-elegant, trumpet of Warren Vaché. "Devil and the Deep Blue Sea" is a perkily swingin' instrumental featuring the moderately rollicking clarinet of Engelbert Wrobel. When he plays in unison passages with vibraphonist Chuck Redd, this track recalls the crystalline small-group side of Benny Goodman. The title track, a heartfelt ballad salute, is an original by Parrott and her husband Brian Wittman and the most somber selection herein.

If this set has a flaw, it is that a few of the songs' lyrics are a bit overly coy perhaps to modern ears. In "I'm Hip", the line "as soon as possible I intend to get into narcotics" may have been risqué and oooh-scandalous in 1966 when Dearie debuted it, now seems, well, corny. That aside, Parrott's singing is excellent and her band is sterling and understated. Get hip to both Parrott and Dearie here, hepcats.

For more information, visit palmetto-records.com. Parrott is at Cavatappo Grill Sep. 21st. See Calendar.
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Guitar virtuosos from Mahavishnu Orchestra and Widespread Panic.
Now is a good time to be a listener of jazz. Not only is she bursting on the scene at the start of the decade, Cécile McLorin Salvant has won widespread acclaim as the most promising young jazz singer of her generation. Still in her 20s, the Florida-born daughter of French and Haitian parents continues to live up to all the hype with her new release, a two-CD set split between a live session from the Village Vanguard with her trio (a superb young group led by dynamic pianist Aaron Diehl) and studio selections of mostly original material featuring a string quartet.

Salvant possesses a remarkably crisp, clear voice, whether singing at a whisper or a shout and exceptional range, both operatically and dramatically. She’s somewhere, at such a young age, distilled the lessons of the iconic jazz singers into a style all her own, one that bears obvious nods to her idols (mainly Sarah Vaughan and Billie Holiday) without ever sounding anything but original, even when singing familiar standards by the likes of Irving Berlin, the Gershwins and Richard Rodgers-Lorenz Hart.

While the recordings with strings and the more free-wheeling trio sides don’t mesh completely, Salvant is adept at whatever material she covers, whether artier tunes like the originals she composes with bassist Paul Sikivie and the Kurt Weill-Langston Hughes number “Somehow I Never Could Believe” or the raunchy old blues tunes she performs as feminist anthems. Along with digging up and reanimating long-buried blues, Salvant is also an adept curator and educator, giving a sextet reworking. “Broken” is misterioso with Noriega’s bass clarinet limning Pavone’s basslines. Pavone opens it up harmonizing the melody line with a fractured groove that gives force to the solos of Ballou and Malaby with a lovely, limpid clarinet solo. Drummer Mike Sarin brings a lot to this date. He’s a masterful drummer and colorist, keeping the music’s impetus open and flowing, a continuous rhythmic orchestration. Pavone has written compositions that showcase the trio in different ways. “Glass 10” is propelled by an insistent piano figure that skews the rhythm section, making a lopsided triangle. “Continuing” is about as straightforward as this trio gets (although it too has its curves) and let’s hope the title refers to this trio’s future as well. It’s interesting that a bassist has turned in one of the best piano trio albums so far this year.

Vertical expands on Pavone’s work with larger ensembles, in this case a sextet featuring four horns: Dave Ballou (trumpet), Tony Malaby (saxophones); Oscar Noriega (clarinet) and Peter McEachern (trombone). “Ellipse” is reprised from Chrome and Pavone opens it up harmonizing the melody line with Noriega’s bass clarinet limning Pavone’s basslines. “Suitcase In Savannah” is another Dialect Trip piece given a sextet reworking. “Broken” is misterioso with Pavone and McEachern stating the theme, succeeded by Noriega with a lovely, limpid clarinet solo. Drummer Mike Sarin brings a lot to this date. He’s a long-time collaborator of Pavone’s and knows the ins and outs of his music. “Start Oval” works with a fractured groove that gives force to the solos of Ballou and Malaby (on soprano). There’s a lot to listen to on Vertical. It’s original and full of subtleties and invention, which has always been a hallmark of Pavone’s music.

For more information, visit playscape-recordings.com and cleanfeed-records.com. Pavone’s sextet is at Cornelia Street Underground Sep. 30th. See Calendar.
In his three-plus-decade career, bassist David Finck has been in demand, having played with Dizzy Gillespie, Herbie Hancock and Tony Bennett, in addition to being André Previn’s bassist for jazz gigs.

For Low Standards, Finck assembled a quartet of old friend Joe LaPole (vibraphone), Garry Versace (piano) and Carl Allen (drums). Jim Saporito subbing on three songs), plus alto flute player Ali Ryerson and vocalist Alexis Cole guesting on two tracks each.

The breezy setting of Thad Jones’ “Three And One”, a classic bop vehicle, takes on a lighter tone with alto flute and vibraphone in place of horns. Finck takes the lead voice in the infectious setting of Antônio Carlos Jobim’s bossa nova gem “Brigas Nunca Mais”, Ryerson adding some colorful backgrounds. Cole’s sincere vocal in Finck’s original ballad “The Way He Captured Me” reveals another dimension of the bassist. Earl Zindars “How My Heart Sings”, long a favorite of Bill Evans, is revamped with aggressive vibraphone, an understated bass solo and inspired piano. “Breezin’ Along the Breeze” is another lost chestnut, with bass taking the place of a vocalist in a playful interpretation. Warm arco bass provides both a fitting introduction and a lush backdrop for Cole in Johnny Mandel’s timeless “A Time For Love”. Finck’s masterful solo feature of Irving Berlin’s “They Say it’s Wonderful” should be required listening for bass students.

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Rossano Sportiello is a superior swing pianist with a style wider-ranging than one may expect. Born in Italy 43 years ago and a professional musician by the time he was 16, he was first discovered by the jazz world when he played with trombonist Dan Barrett in 2002. Sportiello began performing in the United States the following year and has been based in New York since 2007. This solo album finds Sportiello not only displaying the influence of Art Tatum, Teddy Wilson and Dick Hyman but also his classical background. From the start of the opener “All Through The Night”, there is never any doubt that Sportiello is a brilliant player. This rendition is filled with sophisticated chords, rapid ideas and effortless swing. Three of the performances are medleys. A swinging “Like Someone In Love” (which includes some basslines worthy of Dave McKenna) is sandwiched by a Grieg melody, “Arietta op. 21”, taken as an out-of-tempo ballad. “Lush Life” is also surrounded by a dreamy melody, in this case Debussy’s “Doctor Gradus ad Parnassum”, while a pretty version of “A Time For Love” serves in the same function for a heated “Close Enough For Love”. The other selections include a pair of classical melodies (“Waltz From Masquerade” and “Voglia e Turna”), tasteful versions of “Dancing In The Dark” and “When I Fall In Love” that keep the melody close by, a beautiful original melody (“Hymn”) that sounds like Americana from 1910, a soft-spoken ballad (“Dedicated To George Shearing”) on which Sportiello surprisingly does not sound at all like the dedicatee and a hard-swinging “Nobody Else But Me”. In addition, two numbers (Red Callender’s title track and “That’s My Kick”) give Sportiello an opportunity to pay tribute to Erroll Garner.

Even with the hints at some of his predecessors, the most impressive aspect to Pastel is that Sportiello sounds very much like himself.

For more information, visit arborsrecords.com. Sportiello is at Mezzrow Sep. 22nd-23rd. See Calendar.

Incidentals

Tim Berne’s Snakeoil (ECM)
by Tyran Grillo

French philosopher Roland Barthes once faulted music criticism for relying on adjectives. The music of Snakeoil is such that adjectives do leave much to be desired. In that spirit, purged are all adjectives that could be used to describe it: slipstream, epic, implosive, chameleonic. For this ECM leader date, number four for Berne, the alto saxophonist reteams with clarinetist Oscar Noriega, pianist Matt Mitchell, guitarist Ryan Ferreira and drummer/percussionist Ches Smith. In the fray is producer David Torn, contributing his guitar to two tracks. “Hora Feliz” showcases the craftsmanship of everyone involved, by which electronics nestle against acoustics as mountains meet sky. Torn sets the scene before the theme jumps into frame. Such awakening, a Berne staple, keeps listeners in check. As the interconnectedness and independence alike of these musicians develop, one comes to see shadow and light in Snakeoil not as opposites but as twins. Smith is a wonder to encounter. He lends no credence to grooves, taking his time, as in “Incidentals Contact”, to mark a beat, thereby furnishing Noriega with a fulcrum. He extemporizes at the margins while Noriega flaps his wings with abandon. “Stingray Shuffle” is another metropolis of sound, which, like “Prelude One/Sequel Too” (the album’s closer), keeps Ferreira’s fire in play around a reverie of higher notes before Berne commands his way to the finish line. But it’s “Sideshow” that gives us the goods and then some. Being the conclusion to a piece that began with “Small World In A Small Town” on this album’s predecessor, You’ve Been Watching Me, it has a past from which to draw. Mitchell does most of the lifting through its 26 minutes, responding as much as anticipating. Poetry shares breath with prose at every turn. Whether in Noriega’s sensitivity or Berne’s physicality, Smith’s blast of timpani or Ferreira’s finesse, the band demonstrates the ability of jazz to open doors you never knew you had. The truth of mastery lives on.

For more information, visit ecmrecords.com. This project is at Jazz Standard Sep. 13th. See Calendar.
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Although drummer Tom Rainey boasts a long and illustrious career, until recently sessions under his own name were rare. So if you want to hear him at length you need to search out his dates with other leaders. While Rainey resides at the center of a stellar local scene, one of the reasons his discography is so extensive is his openness to connections outside of that locale.

German wowsome pianist Stefan Schultz and tenor saxophonist Peter Ehwald enjoy an extended partnership stretching back to college days, so when they pair up a simpatico outing is guaranteed. By recruiting Rainey to complete the trio on Behind Her Eyes they have ensured that the ambience doesn’t become too relaxed. Of the 11 cuts, 6 emanate from the pen of Schultz, 3 from Ehwald while the remaining pair are group improvisations. Their tunes avoid the obvious and at their best take unexpected turns like the mix of stop-start motion and choppy open interludes in “Capucine” and isolated keystrokes and clusters and splintered harmonies—codifying the leader—whose raw and organic personal timbre is always compelling—into the stratosphere. Drury keeps the live-wire aesthetic going and Filiano closes with a formidable string bass soliloquy.

Violinist/violist Jason Kao Hwang’s new quintet comes out swinging on Sing House, a freebop anthology reflecting his tenures with Anthony Braxton, Henry Threadgill and other modern thinkers. The band features a frontline with trombone master Steve Swell and a rhythm section of Ken Filiano (bass), Chris Forbes (piano) and Andrew Drury (drums).

The disc opens strong with “No Such Thing”, a spasmodic lurch that marches toward an early release punctuated by Drury’s ecstatic break. Hwang and Swell make for an effective melodic force and each player contributes dramatic and bluesy features, inspiring an in-kind exposition from Forbes. But Filiano’s a cappella solo practically steals the show—next time you hear him hum, you will think of yourself as he delivers a statement with enough wood in the tone to leave splinters.

The aptly titled “Dream Walk” begins with the leader’s pizzicato leading the full band into a gauzy, surreal atmosphere spooky enough to function as the soundtrack to a vampire movie. Five minutes in, a new form emerges, gathering kinetic energy that uncoils with violent asides from Swell and Forbes before returning to the original theme.

Swell’s X-rated gurgling on “When What Could” leads the band into a free-wheeling discussion before everyone settles on a wicked ostinato that springboards the leader’s pizzicato leading the full band into a gauzy, surreal atmosphere spooky enough to function as the soundtrack to a vampire movie. Five minutes in, a new form emerges, gathering kinetic energy that uncoils with violent asides from Swell and Forbes before returning to the original theme.

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Marital drum cadences provide the groove engine powering “Inscribe”, offset by sawing bass arco in a moment reminiscent of Braxton’s “69 C” from Performance (Quartet) 1979—high praise indeed. Forbes releases his best solo of the session—full of jagged clusters and splintered harmonies—codifying a marvelous outing of like-minded individuals.

For more information, visit jasonkaohwang.com. Hwang is at Children’s Magical Garden Sep. 10th. See Calendar.
The first thing one notices about this quartet co-led by cornet player Bobby Bradford and saxophonist Hafez Modirzadeh is the close relationship to the early music of Ornette Coleman. It’s perfectly natural: Bradford played in Coleman’s quartet in the mid-’60s and replaced Don Cherry in 1961. Modirzadeh spent decades synthesizing a musical language that embraced both jazz and Persian forms before meeting Coleman and finding affinities in his concept of harmolodics. Modirzadeh’s exclusive choice of alto here, eschewing his tenor, emphasizes a certain timbral link at times as he moves from a sweet, even sound to an expressive, vocalic-pitch-bending part-Iran, part-Ornette. His sheer commitment to this language, like Bradford’s, takes it far beyond any mere imitation. Recorded live in Los Angeles in 2013, the performance seems at times to be occupying the air and breath of the Coleman band some 55 years before.

Emphasizing slow and medium tempos, Bradford and Modirzadeh are joined in this kind of free blues trance by bassist Mark Dresser and drummer Alex Cline, the former often creating sparse, resonating fundamentals while the latter adds subtle metallic embellishment with rustling snare and cymbals. Cline’s opening “Steadfast” has loose dovetailing lines in which keening alto and sometimes muttering cornet play constantly, eliding theme, leads and obbligati into a rich continuum. Modirzadeh’s “Facet 5” opens with the two horns spiralling upward to a long silence before the thematic dialogue begins, eventually reaching a tautly explosive conclusion suggestive of another 1960 band with L.A. roots: Charles Mingus’ quartet with Eric Dolphy. On Modirzadeh’s “HA^BB”, Bradford literally vocalizes after chanting the title, bursting briefly into words, making explicit the role of the griot, storyteller, musician, keeper of the tradition. Dresser’s solo piece, with the literalist title “Dresser Only”, has polyphonic elements of kora and mbiri while Bradford’s sole composition here, “Song for the Unsong”, first appeared on the 1969 debut of the West Coast cool jazz scene based in California: saxophonists Bud Shank and Bob Cooper. The ’60s album compiles individual duos Mangelsdorf recorded with six musicians, including three Americans, during that decade.

Although its title includes “featuring Tony Scott”, the American clarinetist only appears as a guest on one track of the CD’s seven, albeit by far the longest one: “Yesterdays”. Scott energetically plays the melody and takes the first solo, followed by Cooper’s tenor saxophone, trombone, Shank’s alto and Attilla Zoller’s guitar. Scott jumps in again as the piece accelerates into double-time, solos following the same order, plus a then-21-year-old Gary Peacock (bass) and Karl Sanner (drums) adding to the round before Scott takes the tune out with a closing chorus of the melody. Throughout the album, Mangelsdorf contributes distinctive solos that reflect a comment of his from that era: “I’m trying to do on trombone what Lee Konitz is doing on alto sax.” His playing is bop-influenced while remaining distinctive, especially through his rich, deep tone and easy, relaxed phrasing. The Sextet, which did a tour of Europe that year, reflects the cool aesthetic in its pianoless rhythm section and often light, airy ensemble playing and polyphonal interplay. The West Coast cool feel is heightened on three of the tracks where Cooper plays oboe and Shank flute. And there’s a perfect cool-bop finale in a fast, brushes-driven “Scrape from the Apple”, with solos from saxophone, trombone and guitar that end in trades with Sanner.

A standout track on the And Friends album is with drummer Elvin Jones. “My Kind of Time” features a typically kinetic, rolling Jones churning up polyrhythms behind Mangelsdorf’s assertive open trombone, reminiscent of John Coltrane’s duets with the drummer. “My Kind of Beauty”, with pianist Wolfgang Dauner, exposes the trombonist’s romantic side, as he develops a three-note motif and dialogues lyrically with the pianist on the CD’s only overt ballad. The closest rapport of the set, unsurprisingly, comes on “Al-Lee”, with Konitz’ alto and trombone interweaving lines as if both came from the same mind. There’s also close rapport on “Outox” with Zoller and “Way Beyond Cave” with vibraphonist Karl Berger, both displaying Mangelsdorf’s ironic sense of humor. That sense is outright comedic on “I Dig It - You Dig It”, with Don Cherry on cornet, as the two devolve from playing their horns to just mouthpieces and finally only vocal sounds, including the title phrase.

Albert Mangelsdorff, who was born 89 years ago this month and died in 2005 at 76 in his hometown of Frankfurt, was a leading light of the European modern and avant garde jazz movements, famous later in his long career for helping to devise multiphonics (simultaneous notes) on his trombone. But these two albums were made earlier in his career, in 1957 and the mid-to-late ’60s, when he was more closely associated with the mainstream modern jazz styles that came out of bebop and cool jazz. The earlier sextet album features two stars of the West Coast cool jazz scene based in California: saxophonists Bud Shank and Bob Cooper. The ’60s album compiles individual duos Mangelsdorf recorded with six musicians, including three Americans, during that decade.

For more information, visit nobusinessrecords.com. Modirzadeh and Mark Dresser are at The Stone Sep. 17th. See Calendar.

The Jazz-Sextet feat. Tony Scott
Albert Mangelsdorff (Moosicus)
And His Friends
Albert Mangelsdorff (MPS)
by George Kanzler

Albert Mangelsdorff, who was born 89 years ago this month and died in 2005 at 76 in his hometown of Frankfurt, was a leading light of the European modern and avant garde jazz movements, famous later in his long career for helping to devise multiphonics (simultaneous notes) on his trombone. But these two albums were made earlier in his career, in 1957 and the mid-to-late ’60s, when he was more closely associated with the mainstream modern jazz styles that came out of bebop and cool jazz. The earlier sextet album features two stars of the West Coast cool jazz scene based in California: saxophonists Bud Shank and Bob Cooper. The ’60s album compiles individual duos Mangelsdorf recorded with six musicians, including three Americans, during that decade.

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TetraWind

Maria Grand (s/v)
by Mark Keresman

Saxophonist Maria Grand was born in Switzerland and is now based in New York. She studied under Von Freeman and Billy Harper and has played with Steve Coleman, Craig Taborn and Doug Hammond. The self-released mini-album (29 minutes) TetraWind is her debut as a leader, all selections composed by her.

Grand has a deep, gutsy, surging, not-quite-rumbling tone in the manner of Harper—exultant, powerful but never overwhelming. Stylistically, TetraWind hovers between postbop and early fusion. The opener “East (Land of the Living)” finds Grand testifying with restrained fervor over the brightly shimmering keys of David Bryant, rippling bass of Kashaan Carter and clattering swing of Craig Weinrich’s drums. “North (Self: Real Power)” has Grand alternating between saxophone and vocals; the latter melodiously and slightly parsed, former velvety yet assertive. This is a ballad not to comfort but to provoke gently.

Román Filí’s lithe, slightly bittersweet alto saxophone adds another layer of mystery, both countering and complementing Grand. “West (Shut Sun)” is driven by a cyclic, angular riff underpinned by snaky bass and march-like drums. Here Grand and Filí engage in some call-and-response and a bit of playful thrust-and-parry, intertwining in exhilarating fashion. “South (Quantum)” is more restless balladry, with the addition of a woman’s voice giving commentary on sexism in music (and elsewhere) and our uncertain, sometimes violent events and emotions running rampant in post-whatever America. Grand’s aching saxophone has the richness of the great breathy tenors of jazz history—Coleman Hawkins, Ben Webster, Gene Ammons—but she gives it an elegiac focus that makes this a statement of awareness and sorrow.

TetraWind is cerebral, yet heartfelt, political without being didactic. There’s plenty of individual expression, but it holds together as a complete work unto itself.

For more information, visit mariakimgrand.com. Grand is at Jazz Museum of Harlem Sep. 26th, The Jazz Gallery Sep. 28th and SEEDS Sep. 29th, all with Steve Lehman. See Calendar.
The Call of the Wild and Peaceful Heart
The Cookers (Smoke Sessions)
by Scott Yanow

The Cookers was formed in 2010 by trumpeter David Weiss. From the start, the group looked back towards the postbop jazz scene of the late ’60s when hardbop interacted with aspects of the avant garde to result in an exciting musical synthesis. Rather than recreate the past and revile older songs, the band consistently seeks to extend the earlier approach with new pieces and dynamic solos. The septet features five jazz greats from the era: trumpeter Eddie Henderson, tenor saxophonist Billy Harper, pianist George Cables, bassist Cecil McBee, and drummer Billy Hart. In addition to Weiss, the group also includes alto saxophonist Donald Harrison, who succeeded Craig Handy.

The Cookers’ most recent recording has the group performing three originals by Harper, two apiece from Cables and Hart and one by McBee. Harper, who is now 74 has not lost a thing through the years in his large sound and intensity. In fact, all of the veteran musicians are still very much in their musical prime.

The lengthy title cut (one of three pieces that clock in at over 11 minutes), with its ominous out-of-tempo beginning, dense ensembles and passionate solos, serves as evidence that these musicians do not believe in coasting. Henderson recalls Freddie Hubbard a bit on the modal piece “Beyond Forever” while Harrison’s brief but passionate solo is the highpoint of complex ballad “Third Phase.” “Teule’s Redemption” with its stormy ensembles, explosive Harper, Weiss and Cables solos and assertive drumming, is one of the set’s highlights. The second half of the CD keeps the momentum flowing with some outstanding playing by Henderson on Harper’s ballad “If One Could Only See” and in his lead-off solo during Cables’ “Blackfoot.” Fine statements by Weiss and Harrison on “Oceans Of Time” precede lengthy closer “Thy Will Be Done,” a brooding Billy Harper ballad.

This CD succeeds at creating music that is both fresh and fiery.

Cross My Palm With Silver
Avishai Cohen (ECM)
by Tyran Grillo

One can always count on being in the moment when experiencing an Avishai Cohen record. The Israeli trumpeter proved as much when he made his ECM debut with 2016’s Into The Silence, from which he now journeys forth with this set of five originals. Cohen calls the quartet assembled here—pianist Yonathan Avishai, bassist Barak Mori and drummer Nasheet Waits—his “dream team” and the distribution of energies throughout Cross My Palm With Silver confirms it.

Although politically engaged, Cohen’s style of personal reflection takes two inward glances for each outward. The result is that he and his bandmates invariably end up in vastly different places from where they began. They carry impressions to lucid ends, all the while achieving delicate infusions of seeking and finding. “Will I Die, Miss? Will I Die?” epitomizes this philosophy in an intimacy deepened by engineers Gérard de Haro and Nicolas Baillard. One may choose to focus on the melodic convergence of trumpet and piano, but greater subtleties are found beneath: bass is the heartbeat of this musical organism, drums its neural pathways.

The declamatory tenderness of “Theme For Jimmy Greene” feels all the more heartfelt for setting up the pianoless “340 Down.” The latter stumbles but never falls, balancing its tray of motific possibilities all the way to the finish line. “Shoot Me In The Leg” bleeds with Cohen’s most dynamic playing on the record. He moves through changes as organically as fast-forwarded footage of clouds. Waits works off Cohen’s fluttering cells, as bass and piano move with varying degrees of angle. The backing trio has a gorgeous aside before Cohen finishes by himself. “50 Years And Counting” finishes with enervating openness, giving Cohen all the space he needs to work out his expansive alchemy. All of which makes the album’s title that much more enigmatic, for his tone, if anything, is golden.

Queen of Bebop: The Musical Lives of Sarah Vaughan
Elaine M. Hayes (HarperCollins)
by Kevin Canfield

For Sarah Vaughan, the summer of 1946 was at once wonderful and terrible. That July, the jazz press devoted many column inches to the 22-year-old vocalist, heralding her “ethereally pure tone” and comparing her to Ella Fitzgerald. The following month, Vaughan and several other black musicians had to fight off epithet-spewing racists after a West Village show. Vaughan’s talents had made her a budding star, even as the color of her skin rendered her a target for the worst America had to offer.

In Queen of Bebop, her perceptive new biography, first-time author Elaine M. Hayes celebrates Vaughan’s artistry and explores the impediments she overcame on the way to success. The book’s earliest chapters are its best, chronicling Vaughan’s formative musical experiences in Newark church choirs and her knockout performance during Amateur Night at the Apollo. Before she was 20, Vaughan was touring with a band that included Dizzy Gillespie and Charlie Parker. Together they withstood harrowing discrimination, especially in the Jim Crow South.

In subsequent decades, Vaughan’s career was marked by creative breakthroughs and financial setbacks. Her first two husbands mismanaged her money and though she had a signature hit with “Broken-Hearted Melody”, Vaughan wasn’t always afforded material that matched her gifts.

Hayes’ book would benefit from a more accurate title; she’s far more interested in telling Vaughan’s life story than in casting her as the “queen” of a particular era. There are other missteps. In the last chapter, for instance, Hayes reports that one impresario considers (ed) Vaughan the most difficult artist he worked with.” This comes as a shock, because up till this point, Hayes hadn’t spent much time on the more complex aspects of Vaughan’s personality.

This is a gratifying portrait of a musician whose protein talents inspired some of today’s greats. As Diane Reeves puts it, Vaughan, who died in 1990, was “a teaching artist, the finest compliment you can pay to a performer.”

For more information, visit harpercollins.com. A Vaughan tribute with Camille Thurman and Charenee Wade is at Dizzy’s Club Sep. 13th-14th. See Calendar.
In November 2011, pianist Chick Corea booked a month-long stand at New York’s Blue Note jazz club in celebration of his 70th birthday. Over the course of nearly 50 sets, with 10 different bands, he explored multiple facets of his music. This boxed set features recordings by all the groups assembled for this epic self-celebration, as well as a documentary featuring interviews with many of the participants, yet somehow manages to make it more like a buffet than an exercise in gluttony. The nearly 50-page booklet is divided into two sections: The Thelonious Monk biographer Robin D.G. Kelley’s essay on the boxes, and an interview with Corea himself. Kelley’s essay is a deep dive into the history of Modern Jazz Quartet, Return to Forever, and the many musicians and groups that he has worked with over the years. The interview with Corea is particularly insightful, as he talks about his love for Miles Davis and his early days in New York City’s jazz scene.

The documentary includes portions of other performances, as well as an interview with Corea about the early days of Return to Forever. In celebration of his 70th birthday, Corea booked a month-long stand at New York’s Blue Note jazz club in November 2011. Over the course of nearly 50 sets, with 10 different bands, he explored multiple facets of his music. This boxed set features recordings by all the groups assembled for this epic self-celebration, as well as a documentary featuring interviews with many of the participants, yet somehow manages to make it more like a buffet than an exercise in gluttony. The nearly 50-page booklet is divided into two sections: The Thelonious Monk biographer Robin D.G. Kelley’s essay on the boxes, and an interview with Corea himself.

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Despite the photo of Miles Davis and Chet Baker on the cover, this album does not feature the trumpeters together, nor is it either of their dates. Rather it is a live recording from the famous Lighthouse in Hermosa Beach with members of the Lighthouse All-Stars led by bassist Howard Rumsey. Davis plays two tunes with trumpeter Freddie Hubbard, saxophonists Bud Shank, and drummer Max Roach. Baker is on one with pianist Russ Freeman, Rumsey and Roach; and Roach performs one tune solo.

The career of pianist Duke Pearson, now perhaps more known for his tunes that became jazz standards, was spent mostly with Blue Note, whether via his own albums or many sideman appearances. This release comes towards the end of his performing life (his last decade was spent suffering from M.S.), an octet with Freddie Hubbard (trumpet), Garnett Brown (trombone), James Spaulding, Jerry Bergonzi and Stanley Turrentine (saxophones), Gene Taylor and Grady Tate joining the leader. The rhythm section for six Pearson originals.

For a band with such a generic name, finding its raison d'être as a veritable super-group was a short-lived sextet of Ahmed Abdullah (trumpet), Marion Brown (alto), Billy Bang (violin), Sirone and Fred Hopkins (basses) and Andrew Cyrille (drums). This is their sole release, a live recording from the equally short-lived Jazz Center of New York, released 26 years after the fact when a cassette was found by Abdullah. The five-tune program is music by Butch Morris, Charlie Mingus, Miriam Makeba, Brown and Bang.

On This Day

BIRTHDAYS

September 1
Art Pepper 1925-82
Willie Ruff b.1931
Kewa Harris 1933-2000
Wayne Horvitz b.1953
Esai Cuesta b. 1956
Wolter Wierbos b.1959
September 2
Hiroko Silver 1928-2014
Clifford Jordan 1931-93
Kadil Davis 1936-2017
Bio John Zorn b.1933
Jonah Kallman b.1978
September 3
Mickey Roker b.1932-76
Peter Van Huffel b.1978
September 4
Kendall Wilson 1918-2014
Larry Ridgeway 1978-2000
Ossie Allen Bumba 1949-2019
Venerable Wooton 1956-60
Peter Bernstein 1961-76
Denny Scher 1968-76
September 5
Ali Brind 1920-60
Germano 1930-76
Lonnie Plaxico b. 1960
September 6
Ashley Redden 1877-1921
Richard Ross 1906-79
Peter Van Huffel b.1978
September 7
Mas Kamaguchi 1928-68
Ramond Brown 1935-2019
James Jam 1928-66
Cecilia Coleman b.1962
September 8
Wheelie Waye 1922-74
Marc Wilson 1922-74
Elvin Jones 1922-2004
Walter Benitez 1930-2000
Zbigniew Namyslowski b.1959
September 9
Frank Coughlan 1904-79
Ray Charles 1928-2004
Clifford Jordan 1931-93
September 10
Graeme Bell 1914-2012
September 11
Prince Lasha 1928-2008
September 12
Earl Coleman 1925-95
September 13
Art Pepper 1925-82
Alfons Schuch 1925-82
September 14
Cecilia Coleman b.1962
September 15
Kacper Cas 1966-2015
September 16
Haim Schochet 1965-2015
September 17
Catherine B相机 1965-2015
September 18
Yoshizawa improvising solo on three album, recorded live in Tokyo, finds
September 19
Macleish Richard Alborns 1930-31
September 20
Mike Birbiglia b.1965
September 21
Jim总资产 b.1977
September 22
Andy Ochs b.1980
September 23
Herman Autu 1968-76
September 24
Bill Bradley 1967-76
September 25
Maree Haines b.1946
September 26
Hendrik van Eden 1946-76
September 27
Christian Otter 1967-76
September 28
Susan Williams 1968-78
September 29
Mike Carson b.1968
September 30
Malcolm Griffiths b.1941
Rolf Kühn b.1929
September

Crossword

ACROSS
1. With 1 Down, a tune composed by 19 Across
2. Possible tune composed by 19 Across
3. German Swing Era big band leader Paul
4. Formal address to the drummer of Germany’s Top Cats
12. Component notes of Dm9 or Fmaj13 chord
13. Japanese Nu Jazz bassist Katsuhiko
14. Component notes of Dm9 or Fmaj13 chord
15. Longtime Ahmad Jamal bassist Jamil

DOWN
1. See 1 Across
2. The mil. org. ’s Dixieland Jazz Band was founded in 1970
3. Artie Shaw/Harry James/Howard Wern ger reed player Herbie
4. Karimani Usabhi has a song named for this smog-based Godzilla combatant
5. Home town of Russian reed player Sergey Letov
6. Jazz critic Fuller
7. Longtime Ahmad Jamal bassist Jamil
8. Squirrel Nut Zippers have a tune named for this mythical Norwegian coastal monster
9. Loc. of An Die Musik jazz club
10. With 22 Down, a tune composed by 19 Across
11. French improvising vocalist Nicolas
12. Sleepytime ____ Museum band of which Carla Kihsehldt is a member
13. Ivo Perelman/Jay Rosen tune “What’s Your Favorite Dealer?”
14. A type of gong
15. Bread
16. True Blue
17. Archie Shepp (Venus)
18. Archie Shepp, tenor and political figure in nowhere to be found on this CD. Instead, it is the kinder and gentler version, leading a fine quartet of pianist John Hicks, bassist George Mez and drummer Billy Drummond on an eponymous facade and Charles Trenet alongside Shepp’s own “Little surprise for the lady”. Hicks and Mrz had worked with Shepp a hundred times while this was Drummond’s first recording with the saxophonist.
# Calendar

## Friday, September 1
- **Winard Harper Quintet**: Brooklyn Circle (Stacy Dillard, Diallo House, Ismail Lawal, Jeremy Manasia, David Williams, McClenty Hunter) (Tavares 7:30, 10:30 pm $30)
- **Helen Sung, Lonnie Plaxico, Billy Drummond**: (Tavera 8:30, 10:30 pm $30)
- **Juanma Trujillo, Christoph Knoche, Juan Pablo Carletti**: (Tavera 7:30, 10:30 pm $30)
- **Fakerdinova Aisuluu, Kubanychbek Kydykbaev, Eleman Kanybekov, Aleksandr Sokolov, Dinara Kamasheva**: (The Stone 9 pm)
- **Roy Hargrove**: (Birdland 6:30, 10 pm $30, 11:30 pm $30)
- **Ken Millikan**: (Birdland 9:30 pm $30)
- **Kurt Rosenwinkel Quartet with Mark Whitfield, Hendrik Louis, Dori Ghezzi, Marcus Gilmore**: (Dragonscale 7:30, 10:30 pm $30)
- **Cyrus Chestnut Trio with Buster Williams, Lenny White**: (Smyth 8 pm $30)

## Saturday, September 2
- **Smokes**: (Loring 7, 9, 10:30 pm $30)
- **Smalls**: (7:30, 10:30 pm 1 am $20)
- **Dizzy's Club**: (7:30, 9:30 pm $45)
- **Birdland**: (6 pm $30)
- **The Stone**: (9 pm $20)
- **Nublu**: (9 pm)
- **North Square**: (12:30, 2 pm)
- **Tomi Jazz**: (6:30, 8, 11 pm $10)
- **The Stone**: (8:30 pm $20)

## Sunday, September 3
- **Erinkeo Kiyukdeva**: (Jazz at Kitano 8, 10 pm $17)
- **Kubanychbek Kiyukdeva**: (Jazz Standard 7:30, 9:30 pm 10:30 pm $30)
- **Michelle Vebell, Motonori Kobayashi**: (Tavares 7:30, 10 pm $30)
- **Bill Charlap Trio**: (Birdland 7 pm $30)

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## Monday, September 4
- **Gladi Helsken Group**: (Bar Luluana 8, 10, 11 pm $30)
- **Dizzy's Club**: (7:30, 9:30 pm $40)
- **Birdland**: (8, 10 pm $40)
- **The Village Vanguard**: (8:30, 10:30 pm $30)
- **The Jazz Standard**: (7:30, 9:30 pm $30)
- **Iridium**: (8, 10 pm $35-45)
- **Dizzy's Club**: (7:30, 9:30 pm $40)
- **Birdland**: (8, 10 pm $40)
- **Bar Next Door**: (6:30, 8:30, 10:30 pm $12)
- **Bryant Park**: (12:30 pm)
- **Silvana**: (6 pm)

## Tuesday, September 5
- **Mark McNairy with Adam DeWinton**: (Birdland 6, 8, 10 pm $30)
- **Steve Kuhn Trio**: (Birdland 6:30, 9:30 pm $30)
- **Ken Millikan**: (Birdland 9:30 pm $30)
- **Eric Lewis**: (Birdland 9:30 pm $30)
- **Ella Sang the Blues**: (Birdland 8, 10 pm $30)
- **The Stone**: (8:30 pm $20)
- **Champian Fulton**: (Birdland 8, 10 pm $30)

## Wednesday, September 6
- **Battle in the Bronx**: (Eric Alexander and Vincent Herring)
- **Steve Kuhn Trio with Steve Swallow, Joey Baron**: (Birdland 6, 8, 10 pm $30)
- **Ken Millikan**: (Birdland 9:30 pm $30)
- **Ella Sang the Blues**: (Birdland 8, 10 pm $30)
- **The Stone**: (8:30 pm $20)

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## Wednesday, September 7
- **Alváro Benavides’ Cuban Salsa**: (Bar Luluana 8, 10, 11 pm $30)
- **Ashley Stirling Trio with Thelonious Monk**: (Birdland 6, 8, 10 pm $30)
- **Gato Loco**: (Birdland 7 pm $30)
- **Tame Hendarman Trio with Marco Panaccio**: (Birdland 8, 10 pm $30)
- **Steve Kuhn Trio with Steve Swallow, Joey Baron**: (Birdland 6, 8, 10 pm $30)
- **Kurt Milikan**: (Birdland 7 pm $30)
- **Herb Alpertelli III**: (Carlisle 4:30 pm $10-15)
- **Kun Mikami**: (Carlisle 4:30 pm $10-15)
- **Kun Mikami**: (Carlisle 7, 8 pm $10)
- **Eugene Snow Quartet**: (Carlisle 7:30 pm $10-15)
- **Ismail Lawal**: (Carlisle 8, 10 pm $10-15)
- **Bill Charlap Trio with Peter Washington, Kenny Washington**: (Birdland 7, 9 pm $30)

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**Friday, September 8**

- Brian Woodcraft
  Telephone: 7:30 pm
- Mike Rood Trio with Sam Misra, Jared Lippi
  Bar Next Door: 7:30, 9:30 pm $12
- Steve Kuhn Trio with Steve Swallow, Joey Baron
  Birdland: 8:30, 11 pm $40
- Kemeth Ruffins and The BBQ Swingers
  Blue Note: 8, 10:30 pm $45
- Kuni/Mikami
  Bryant Park: 12:00
- Herb Alpert/Lee Hall
  Cafe Carlyle: 8:45 pm $70-135
- Manuel Vela Trio with guest John Ellis
  The Cave at St. George's: 7:30, 9:30 pm $20
- Libby Richmond Trio
  Cleopatra's Needle: 8 pm
- Gualchua: Leo Genovese, Tony Maldy, June Booth, Francesco Melo
  Commedia Street Undergrund: 8:30, 10 pm $10
- Outside (byidja): Amir ElSaffar and Brooklyn Raga Massive
  Dizzy's Club: 7:30 pm
- Harold Mabern Trio with Nat Reeves, Joe Farnsworth
  Dizzy's Club: 7:30, 9:30 pm $40
- Marquis Hill
  Dizzy's Club: 11:15 pm $10
- Ken Fowser Quintet, Mark Whitfield
  The Django at Rony Hotel: 7:30, 10:30 pm
- Dida Peller: Antoine Dye Seept, Avi Rothbard
  Fox Cafe: 10:30 pm $15
- Band Of Other Brothers: Jeff Bailey, Norvo, Jeff Cofin, Will Lee, Keith Carlock
  Island: 9:30 pm $27.50
- Jamie Baum and Short Stories with Gregoire Maret, Joe Martin, Jeff Hirshfield
  Jazz at Miller: 8, 10 pm $32
- Elvin Jones 90th Birthday Celebration: Jeff "Tain" Watts, Eric Claviker, Steve Wilson, Charnett Moffett
  Jason/boot: 7:30, 9:30 pm $15
- Sean Smith/David Halstein
  Knickerbocker Bar & Grill: 9:30 pm $35
- Aaron Jones Quartet with Steven Feikes, Cole Dow, Nicolo Koly
  Metropolitan Room: 9:30 pm $15
- Aaren Goldberg; Johnny "O" Neale
  Mazeum: 8, 10 pm $20
- Festival of New Trumpet Music: High and Mighty Brass Band, Slavic Soul Party
  New School Glass Box Theater: 8:30 pm $20
- Jacob Varrain Quartet
  Shavas: 8 pm
- Rick Hollander Group
  Small's: 7:30 pm $20
- Steve Wilson and Wilsonian's Grain with Orrin Evans, Ugonna Okegwo, Bill Stewart
  Smoke: 7, 9:30 pm $48
- Hercos Quartet: Dave King, Chris Speed, Chris Lightcap, Craig Taborn
  The Stone: 8, 10 pm $20
- Takenos Nishitaka
  Tom Jazz: 8 pm $10
- Bill Chapman Trio with Peter Washington, Kenny Washington
  Village Vanguard: 8, 10 pm $30

**Saturday, September 9**

- Will Bernard
  Bar LavaBox: 8, 90 pm $10
- Patrick Cornelius Trio with Rick Rosato, Kyle Poole
  Bar Next Door: 7:30, 9:30, 11:30 pm $12
- Blackbird: Lucian Ban/Abraham Burton
  Barbès: 8 pm $10
- Benny Benack III Quartet with Emmenah Cohen
  Birdland: 5:30 pm $30
- Steve Kuhn Trio with Steve Swallow, Joey Baron
  Birdland: 8:30, 9:30, 11 pm $40
- Kemeth Ruffins and The BBQ Swingers
  Blue Note: 8, 10:30 pm $45
- Herb Alpert/Lee Hall
  Cafe Carlyle: 8:45 pm $70-135
- William Parker/Cooper-Moore; The Daves: Dave Sewelson/Dave Hofstra;
  John Pizzarelli, Grammy-nominated guitarist and singer
  Commedia Street Underfund: 8, 10 pm $10
- Harold Mabern Trio with Nat Reeves, Joe Farnsworth
  Dizzy's Club: 7:30, 9:30 pm $40
- Marquis Hill
  Dizzy's Club: 11:15 pm $10
- Ken Fowser Quintet, Mark Whitfield
  The Django at Rony Hotel: 7:30, 10:30 pm
- Dida Peller: Antoine Dye Seept, Avi Rothbard
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  The Stone: 8, 10 pm $20
- Takenos Nishitaka
  Tom Jazz: 8 pm $10
- Bill Chapman Trio with Peter Washington, Kenny Washington
  Village Vanguard: 8, 10 pm $30

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“It’s a joy to create jazz in such a positive atmosphere and to be so close to the people too! Enjoying a great bowl of pasta to be so close to the people too! Enjoying a great bowl of pasta and lettuce is the only way to go.”

JOHN PIZZARELLI, GRAMMY-NOMINATED GUITARIST AND SINGER

**MONDAYS WITH ROGER LENSO SOLO PIANO**

**7-10PM NO COVER**

**SEPTEMBER 5TH - 8-10 PM $10 COVER**

**GENE BERTONCINI & PAUL MEYERS DUO**

**SEPTEMBER 7TH - 9-11 PM $10 COVER**

**RALPH LALAMA QUARTET**

**SEPTEMBER 12TH - 6-8 PM $15 COVER**

**BUCKY PIZZARELLI TRIO**

**SEPTEMBER 14TH - 9-11 PM $10 COVER**

**GABRIELLE STRAVELLI TRIO**

**SEPTEMBER 19TH - 8-10 PM $5 COVER**

**JAM SESSION HOSTED BY MIKE SAILORS (MUSICIANS BY INVITE ONLY)**

**SEPTEMBER 21ST - 9-11 PM $10 COVER**

**NICKI PARROTT TRIO**

**SEPTEMBER 26TH - 8-10 PM $10 COVER**

**DENNIS JOSEPH QUARTET**

**LUCA’S JAZZ CORNER AT CAVATAPPOL GRILL**

1712 FIRST AVENUE - (212) 987-9260

LUCASJAZZCORNER.COM
Sunday, September 10

- Katie Thiroux Quartet with Ken Peplowski, Justin Kauflin, Matt Wilkie
  Birdland 6:30 $30
- Kevin Harris Project with Will O’Ryan, Tony Malaby, Aaron Parks
  Smoke 7:30, 10:30 pm $20

Monday, September 11

- Michael Bates’ Sandwiches with Yoshele Schacter, Myk Freeman, Tim Keiper
  Birdland 8 pm $40
- Cole Davis Trio with Vaughn Stroby, Rodney Green, Alina Maicu Trio with Roi Noic, Matt Morand, Cory Conron
  Smoke 8 pm $25

Tuesday, September 12

- Tony Jones, Bob Stewart; Yoni Kretzmer Trio with Shayna Dulberger, Robert Edwards
  Smoke 8:30 pm $20
- John Merrill
  Birdland 10 pm $50

Wednesday, September 13

- Ari Hoenig/Chris Potter
  Smoke 8:30 pm $25

Thursday, September 14

- Hot Springs; Evan Felts, Elizabeth Bogard, Jason Prover, Nick Myers, Mike Salim, Alex Raderman
  Smoke 9 pm $25

September 12th Claire Daly Group

September 19th Enrico Granafel and Friends

New York Baha’i Center
53 E. 11th Street
(between University Place and Broadway)

Open Mic Sessions
8:30 & 9:30 PM
Gen Adm: $15 Students $10
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“OFF BEAT”
A FIRST RATE BASSIST AND REGULATING VOCALIST. “THE NEW YORKER
“THIS BASSIST-VOCALIST-COMPOSER IS FLAT OUT PHENOMENAL.” ALLABOUTJAZZ.COM

“IN ADDITION TO HER PLAYING, HER SINGING WAS NATURAL, UNFORCED AND HARMONICALLY DELIGHTFUL.” LA TIMES

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CAPRI RECORDS
36 SEPTEMBER 2017 | THE NEW YORK CITY JAZZ RECORD
Mark Dresser / Stone Residency

9/12 TUESDAY • 8:30 PM
Mark Dresser 7
Nicole Mitchell (flutes), Marty Ehrlich (clarinets), David Morales Boroff (violin), Michael Dessen (trombone), Joshua White (piano), Jim Black (drums), Mark Dresser (bass/compositions)

9/13 WEDNESDAY • 8:30 PM
Craig Taborn, Peter Evans, Earl Howard, Mark Dresser
Craig Taborn (piano), Peter Evans (trumpet), Earl Howard (live electronics/sax), Mark Dresser (bass)

9/14 THURSDAY • 8:30 PM
Deep Tones for Peace Bass Ensemble
Rufus Reid (bass), Mark Helias (bass), Linda Oh (bass), Jorge Roeder (bass), Ratzo Harris (bass), Ken Filiano (bass), Lisa Mezzacappa (bass), Trevor Dunn, (bass), Dave Phillips (bass), Thomas Helton (bass), Sarah Weaver (conductor), Mark Dresser (bass/composition)

9/15 FRIDAY • 8:30 PM
Jane Ira Bloom, Denman Maroney, Michael Sarin, Mark Dresser
Jane Ira Bloom (soprano sax), Denman Maroney (piano), Michael Sarin (drums), Mark Dresser (bass/compositions)

9/16 SATURDAY • 8:30 PM
Mark Feldman, Sylvie Courvoisier, Ned Rothenberg, Mark Dresser
Mark Feldman (violin), Sylvie Courvoisier (piano), Ned Rothenberg (reeds), Mark Dresser (bass)

9/17 SUNDAY • 8:30 PM
Hafez Modirzadeh, Diane Moser, Vijay Anderson, Mark Dresser
Hafez Modirzadeh (reeds), Diane Moser (piano), Vijay Anderson (drums), Mark Dresser (bass). Compositions by all the players.
Saturday, September 23

- Alex Wintz Trio with Dave Baron, Jimmy McBride
  Bar Next Door 7:30, 10:30 pm $12
- Veronica Swift
  Birdland 6:30 pm $20
- Cohane Revitalized: Eric Alexander, Jaleel Shaw, Steve Kuhn, Lonnie Plaxico, Steve Smith
  843 5th Ave 7:30 pm $40
- Chick Costes/Steve Goldberg Band with Steve Wilson, Lionel Loueke, Carlos Del Puerto, Luisito Quintero
  Blue Note 8:30, 10:30 pm $55
- The Latin Side of Dizzy: Arturo O'Farrill and George Cohan
  Bogart's Mansion 7:30 pm $39.95
- Joshua Leeds Trio
  Copacabana: Needle 8 pm $30
- Richard Bone Mandaquin Cubana
  Club Bandeau 7:30, 9:30 pm $30
  Shrine 6 pm $30

Sunday, September 24

- Gabrielle Stravelli Quartet with David Cook, Pat O'Leary, Eric Halvorson
  Birdland 6:30 pm
- Jazz Triangle 65-77
  Blue Note 11:00 am and 1:00 pm $30.90
- Red Hot Jazz Festival: Irru Orin's Duo with Dave Smith, Jeremy Powell, Allan Montgomery, Tommies Moore Quartet with Dan Kurka
  2989 7th Ave 1:00 pm $35
- Abraham Mennen Faire, Zachary Swanson, 41t:eenth Jazz, Jacob Sacks, David Ambrosino, Vinnie Speranza, Stephon Cherry's Borderline Trio + 1 with Kris Davis, Eric McDermott, Matt Laule and the 12 House Orchestra with Ros Mochene, Lee Odom, Charles Warren, Mary Cherry, Nicole Davis, Ray Meg, Ming Montgomery
  Art Baron, Ana Ima Lisa, Chris Forte, Sana Nakano, Jack DeSilva, Anders Nilsen, François Grillit, Reggie Sylvester
  Cabaret Green Urban Meadow 8:00 pm $10
- Mary Stallings and Mike LeDonne Trio with Ed Cherry, Mary Brown
  Dizzy's Club 7:30, 9:30 pm $40
- Terry Waldo's Guthrie City Band: Brandon Lewis/Renee Cruz Jam
  Fat Cat 5:30 pm $10
- Ingrid Laubrock/Tom Rainey; Miriam Parker/William Parker; Melanie Dyer Quartet with Michael Formanek, Tony Malaby, Kris Davis, Dan Weiss
  Smoke 7, 9, 10:30 pm $38

Monday, September 25

- Evian Opalov's Tone Collector with Tony Malaby, Jeff Davis
  Birdland 8:30, 10:30 pm $10
- David Kuhn Trio with Jasper Dotz, John Joosander, Melissa Stylianou Trio with Jesse Lewis, Kei Sturm
  Bar Next Door 6:30, 9:30 pm $10
- Jeremy Pellet Quintet with Victor Goud, Vincent Archer, Jonathan Barber, Jacqueline Acoza, Tim Drake
  Blue Note 8:30, 10:30 pm $40
- Jon Weber
  Birdland 5:00 pm
- The Pandeton Eric Mabou Lecquen Orchestra with Jose Miranda, Johnny Rodriguez, Mitch Frohman, George DeAungs, Pete Miranda, Pete Haden, John Walsh, Jerry Marotta, Sonny Brilliant, Rio Rodriguez, Marco Minnelli, Frank Van Breuk
  Dizzy's Club 7:30, 9:30 pm $40
- Super Ballads: Gyan Riley/David Cassini; Tiny Rhymes: Sharon Mek/Tom Kubal
  The Jazz Gallery 7:30, 9:30 pm $10
- Ricardo Grill Quintet with Mark Turner, Kevin Hays, Joe Martin, Eric Harland
  Birdland 7:30, 9:30, 11:30 pm $30
- Dorian Devins; Toroko Oomura
  Tom's Jazz 8:30, 11:30 pm

Tuesday, September 26

- Jean-Michel Pilc Trio with Sam Minske, Jared Lippin
  Birdland 8:30 pm
- Joey Lamb Trio with Perrin Grace, Jose Roberts, Steve Picciocchio with Daan Klein, Noah Gundersen
  Birdland 6:30, 8:30, 10:30 pm $20
- Pharoah Sanders Quartet with William Henderson, Nat Reeves, Johnathan Blake
  Birdland 9:00 pm
- Chick Conlon/Steve Goldberg Band with Steve Wilson, Lionel Loueke, Carlos Del Puerto, Luisito Quintero
  Smoke 8:30, 10:30 pm $30
- No BS! Brass Band
  Birdland 8:30, 11:30 pm $30
- Jon Weber
  Birdland 8:30, 11:30 pm $30
- Andrew Cyrille/Bill McHenry
  Julian Leon
  Smoke 7:30, 9:30 pm $30
- Hector Martinson's Bandora Grandi
  Smoke 8:00 pm
- Saul Ruth, Zetab; Ira Kinos and Gato Gorda; John Benitez Latin Bop
  Smoke 9:30, 11:30 pm $30
- Takakai Otomo solo
  Jazz at the Lake 8:00 pm
- Steve Lehman Quartet with Maria Grand, Matt Brewer, Damien Reid
  Jazz at the Lake 8:00 pm
- El Drubi Quintet with Tom Ore, Tamir Shmerling, Evendar Shervia
  Smoke 9:30 pm
- Julian Lage/Steve Swallow; Miki Yamanaka/Yasui Moezki Pasal Jam Session
  Birdland 9:30 pm
- Ellis Wood Duo
  Smoke 8:00 pm
- Lucaze Honeita; Amon Barieti Quartet
  Small's 7:30, 10:30 pm $30
- Darin Jones/Kush Abadri
  The Stone 9:30 pm
- Arun Kana/Alfonsi
  Smoke 9:30 pm
- Cecile McLorin Salvant/Sullivan Fortner
  Dizzy's Club 8:30, 10:30 pm $30

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Jeff Driskill / Bob Summers / Doug Tornquist / arranged by Nick Lane

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ALL ABOUT JAZZ

THE NEW YORK CITY JAZZ RECORD | SEPTEMBER 2017 39
**HARMONIC EXPLORATIONS II**

**Featuring**
Bill Stevens - Trumpet / Blindfold Philharmin - Tenor
Harry Miller - Piano / Luca Rosenberg - Bass / Garry Fogel - Drums

**Saturday, September 30, 2017**
7:30 pm $15 cover charge
(3/4 set with special guest Lucia Rosenberg Trio)

*70 Flushing Avenue, Brooklyn*
they’re coming from different traditions. There’s a sort of shared history and the sounds are sympathetic to one another. But a major part of the choice of instrumentation was actually the individuals. I chose people who I believe can really listen to one another. Each person has a very particular, unique sound that I resonated with and their personalities I get through and they’re people that I consider to be friends. They’re all musicians I’ve worked with, some for more than 20 years in different contexts. Everybody that I wanted in this band was available. They were all my first pick, which is kind of amazing. And each person in the group represents a different era or a different ensemble or a different place in my life. Like [vibraphonist] Jason Adasiewicz and I played together in high school and college. [Reed player] JD Parran and I played together in Cecil Taylor’s large ensembles. Mohammed Saleh, the oboe and English horn player, and I were working with Daniel Barenboim in his West-Eastern Divan Orchestra in 1999. And then, of course, my sister, who kind of introduced me to Arabic music more than 20 years ago. So with each person, there’s a resonance there.

TNYCJR: You can really feel the connection.

AE: Absolutely. I am actually now finding a way to compose a new piece for the group. The first goal was imagining and in the process of rehearsal trying things and finding out how this instrumentation could work together. Now that the sound has become clear, there’s all kinds of new ideas and I think there’s a lot more potential for this group. Wheels are turning. And regardless the group is going to continue to tour. We have dates through 2018.

TNYCJR: Last question: Define the word “river”.

AE: The idea of two rivers was of course a reference to the Tigris and Euphrates in Iraq, but it was also about joining the streams of jazz and Iraqi music when I first started this project in 2006. But I started to think about it as bloodlines and my own blood and being part Iraqi and part American. There was this idea of currents and traditions in the beginning, this continuity that a river and part American. There was this idea of currents and traditions in the beginning, this continuity that a river

For more information, visit amirelsaffar.com. ElSaffar is at Lincoln Center’s David Rubenstein Atrium Sep. 8th and Union Hall Sep. 28th. See Calendar.

Recommended Listening:
• Amir ElSaffar – Two Rivers (Pi, 2007)
• Amir ElSaffar/Hafez Modirzadeh – Radif Suite (Pi, 2009)
• Amir ElSaffar Two Rivers Ensemble --- Inana (Pi, 2011)
• Hafez Modirzadeh – Post-Chromatic Out! (Pi, 2012)
• Amir ElSaffar – Alchemy (Pi, 2013)
• Amir ElSaffar Rivers of Sound – Not Two (New Amsterdam, 2015)

and when we disagree on something, we can talk about it and find a way together. That includes music, food and business. Jean-Marc is one of the warmest people I know in this network of creative music.”

Mixed among the other titles are some with black backgrounds and stark red and white lettering, Foussat reaching back for previously unissued recordings. The first of these, 28 Rue Dorgis, published 82, documents the first quartet meeting of Derek Bailey, Evan Parker, Joëlle Léandre and George Lewis, a crucial intersection of major voices and an edgy, mercurial example of its explosive times. Another in the series is Enfances à Djerba, a 1984 recording with Léandre and Lewis. It’s a fresh view of Lazro’s early work, a 57-minute concert that contributed 21 minutes to Lazro’s two-LP Sweet Zee on hatHUT in 1985. As Léandre explains, “Fou is a pure historical treasure and I hope Jean-Marc will again and again produce more of the old tapes that I know he has in his ‘Ali Baba cavern’!” Lazro and Léandre are also represented on more recent works. The former recently appeared on Marguerite D’Or Pâle, a subtle sonic exploration with pianist Sophie Agnel. Léandre’s documentation is more extensive, including both No Comment, drawn from 1994-95 solo concerts, and Si, lence is blu, ish, an explosion of mad joy from 2016 with singer Phil Minton.

Voices are a key part of Fou, whether improvising or reading poetry. On the label’s second release, Violeta other. Foussat also forged a duo, Aliquid, with saxophonist Sylvain Guérineau, represented in a trio with McPhee (Quod). Foussat continues to develop as a rare synthesist in improvised music, whether playing advanced free jazz (the quartet Barbares), free improvisation (En Respirant with vocalist Marialuisa Capurso) or forming Département d’Éducation Psychique (Live at Ohm) with the techno drone duo Dynamo Dreesen, melding improvised music and rave.

What’s next for Foussat and Fou? He is planning a double-LP of his own music, called Hors contrôle, as well as a CD with Chinese musician Bao Luo. From a 1998 Paris concert comes an LP with Pauvros’ opening solo and an excerpt from the Sonic Youth performance that follows. Meanwhile, Foussat is moving to the Loire Valley.

For more information, visit fourecords.com. Artists performing this month include Irene Kept at Downbeat Music Group Rec., September 24th and Joëlle Léandre at Zürcher Gallery Sep. 27th. See Calendar.
Hendricksen’s muted trumpet lines like vapor trails. Westerhus, created deafening, appalling electronic Warped Dreamer, with the unhinged guitar of Stian both riveting drummers. 5) Arve Hendricksen’s quartet on opposite ends of the amplitude spectrum, but are Enrico Morello (loud) and Guilhem Flouzat (soft) are soprano saxophonist (Christophe Panzani) off the stage intonation and reflexes. She threatened to blow a Paceo’s French band Circles) possesses extraordinary 3) Vocalist Leila Martial (who appeared with Anne re-in his fondness for the gimmicky and the cute. blend of chops, bent wit and technology. He needs to Badenhorst, Siegmar Brecher and Lutz Streun are known for his work in Enrico Rava’s latest quartet. He among the bright lights of Italian jazz.) Diodati is best known for his work in Enrico Rava’s latest quartet. He takes some of the most suspenseful, mysterious guitar solos in current jazz. His band is about solos. It is about the collective discovery of ensemble form. His original “Here and Now” provided one of the festival’s stunning moments. It repeated a three-note figure, slowly, insidiously, obsessively, until the trance was broken by an explosive crescendo.

Further observations from this free-wheeling festival: 1) Bass clarinet is a primary instrument in European jazz. In addition to Roelofs, Joachim Badenhorst, Siegmar Brecher and Lutz Streun are bass clarinet badasses. 2) Pianist David Helbock is a unique blend of chops, bent wit and technology. He needs to rein in his fondness for the gimmicky and the cute. 3) Vocalist Leila Martial (who appeared with Anne Paceo’s French band Circles) possesses extraordinary intonation and reflexes. She threatened to blow a soprano saxophonist (Christophe Panzani) off the stage but instead decided to join him in seamless unisons. 4) Enrico Morello (loud) and Guilhem Flouzat (soft) are on opposite ends of the amplitude spectrum, but are both riveting drummers. 5) Arve Hendricksen’s quartet Warped Dreamer, with the unhinged guitar of Stian Westerhus, created deafening, appalling electronic soundscapes that sometimes fell silent except for Hendricksen’s muted trumpet lines like vapor trails.

For more information, visit suedtiroljazzfestival.com

 contrast, strummed thick blocks of sound that opened for finely traced single-note lines. Heaviness alternated with nimbleness, strange chords with melodic clarity, unpredictability with a reassuring sense of overall form.

Another Baas project, “Music for Brass and Guitar”, sounded like the work of someone deeply grounded in the classical academy. His formal education has been in jazz guitar but, he says, “There is so much information available today that it is hard not to listen to everything.” He names Prokofiev, Django Reinhardt and Jimi Hendrix as influences. Over 10 days, Baas appeared at least 12 times. He played by himself, with Monk in duos and trios; did jam sessions; accompanied singers; improvised in the festival’s experimental “Jazz Labs”; and aided and abetted the madcap routine of his former boss, drummer Han Bennink (a rare elder statesman at Südtirol). In free settings he sounded like the voice of reason. In more conventional ones he found ways to break standards wide open.

The other major impact player at the festival was also a guitarist. Francesco Diodati performed twice with his band Yellow Squeeds, plus guests, (Trombonist Filippo Vignato, pianist and vibraphonist Enrico Lento and tuba player Glaucio Benedetti are among the bright lights of Italian jazz.) Diodati is best known for his work in Enrico Rava’s latest quartet. He takes some of the most suspenseful, mysterious guitar solos in current jazz. His band is about solos. It is about the collective discovery of ensemble form. His original “Here and Now” provided one of the festival’s stunning moments. It repeated a three-note figure, slowly, insidiously, obsessively, until the trance was broken by an explosive crescendo.

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14TH ANNUAL OSPAC JAZZ FEST
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OSCAR PEREZ / BILL CHARLAP
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CITRUS (YOUTH BAND)
NAT ADDERLEY, JR. / VINCE ECTOR
OSPAC
4 BOLAND DRIVE
WEST ORANGE, NJ. 07052

and standout guitarist Alex Jønsson, pleasant surprises abounded. Vocalist Mads Mathias was another noteworthy act. Though often compared to Harry Connick Jr., Mathias showed refreshing lucidity and a sense of humor all his own.

This year also marks the 150th anniversary of Denmark’s diplomatic relations with Japan and the festival did its commemorative part by inviting a range of Japanese artists, including MoGoToYoYo. This brilliant project of drummer Yasuhiro Yoshigaki, by its debt balance of play and patience, was on par with the Art Ensemble of Chicago, an obvious influence.

The Aarhus Jazz Festival (Jul. 15th-22nd) was an altogether different experience. Bassist and vocalist Kristin Korb, backed by pianist Magnus Hjorth and drummer Snorre Kirk, set the tone for the Aarhus journey, making the city’s sunlit Concert Hall foyer that much sunnier. In addition to playing tunes off her 2016 tribute to Johnny Mercer, Beyond the Moon, Korb gave insight into her globetrotting personal life, belting out life-affirming energy with tact and hospitality. Two days later, singer/songwriter Madeline Peyroux headlined in the Concert Hall proper with guitarist Viggo Herlængen and bassist Barak Mori, slamming a politically savvy program by way of her sly yet heartfelt delivery.

The choicest action went down under the auspices of 12 Points, a roving festival-within-a-festival. Featuring 12 acts from as many countries, it was a veritable cross-section of the future of European jazz. Danish pianist Lars Fjil kicked off 12 Points with his aptly named group, Frit Fald (Free Fall); much of the music was through-composed, but gave leeway to free interpretation. Other composition-leaning groups were Norway’s Significant Time (a hodge-podge ensemble featuring wordless vocals); cinematically inclined Marie Kruttli Trio from Switzerland; Louis Sclavis-inspired Post K of France; and SCHNTZL, a keyboard-and-drums duo from Belgium.

The atmospheric Kirke Karja Quartet from Estonia was especially on point. Featuring the Terje Rypdal-esque stylings of guitarist Kalle Pilli, the quartet played mature arrangements of Karlheinz Stockhausen’s “Waage (Libra)” and Bill Frisell’s “Hangdog”, as well as original tunes. Other groups were more improvisation-heavy. The Francesco Orio Trio from Italy, for example, built Giovanni Guidi-like bodies around fragmentary organises of melody. The best balance between these two soft extremes was struck by chuffDRONE of Austria. Backed by the instrument drumming of Judith Schwarz and brought into unexpected directions by soprano saxophonist Lisa Hofmanninger, chuffDRONE achieved a welcome balance of cloud and sky. Another highlight was Tommy Moustache. This savvy quartet of unabashed Dutch gentlemen brought verve and high-octane precision to their humorous yet rigorous blues.

The remaining bands were rooted in noisier soil. These included Ireland’s Big Spoon and Lithuanian outfit Sheep Got Wax. The latter trio of alto, guitar and drums (along with an array of electronics) was another zenith and brought about an energy rarely produced since the heyday of John Zorn’s Naked City. The festival closed with a set from UK act Taupe, produced since the heyday of John Zorn’s Naked City. Another Baas project, “Music for Brass and Guitar”, sounded like the work of someone deeply grounded in the classical academy. His formal education has been in jazz guitar but, he says, “There is so much information available today that it is hard not to listen to everything.” He names Prokofiev, Django Reinhardt and Jimi Hendrix as influences. Over 10 days, Baas appeared at least 12 times. He played by himself, with Monk in duos and trios; did jam sessions; accompanied singers; improvised in the festival’s experimental “Jazz Labs”; and aided and abetted the madcap routine of his former boss, drummer Han Bennink (a rare elder statesman at Südtirol). In free settings he sounded like the voice of reason. In more conventional ones he found ways to break standards wide open.

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THE NEW YORK CITY JAZZ RECORD | SEPTEMBER 2017 43

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STEPHEN SCOTT piano
CURTIS LUNDY bass
LEWIS NASH drums

STEVE DAVIS
Think Ahead
STEVE DAVIS trombone
STEVE WILSON saxophones & flute
JIMMY GREENE tenor saxophone
LARRY WILLIS piano
PETER WASHINGTON bass
LEWIS NASH drums

PETER BERNSTEIN
Signs LIVE!
PETER BERNSTEIN guitar
BRAD MEHLDAU piano
CHRISTIAN McBRIEDE bass
GREGORY HUTCHINSON drums

HAROLD MABERN
To Love and Be Loved
HAROLD MABERN piano
ERIC ALEXANDER tenor saxophone
NAT REEVES bass
JIMMY COBB drums
with special guests
FREDDIE HENDRIX trumpet
CYRO BAPTISTA percussion

JOHNNY O'NEAL
In the Moment
JOHNNY O'NEAL piano & vocals
BEN RUBENs bass
ITAY MORCHI drums
with special guests
ROY HARGROVE trumpet
GRANT STEWART tenor saxophone

VINCENT HERRING
Hard Times
VINCENT HERRING alto saxophone
CYRUS CHESTNUT piano
YASUSHI NAKAMURA bass
CARL ALLEN drums
with special guests
NICOLAS BEARDE vocals
RUSSELL MALONE guitar
STEVE TURRE trombone
BRAD MASON trumpet
SAM DILLON tenor saxophone

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