

MAY 2020—ISSUE 217

YOUR FREE GUIDE TO THE NYC JAZZ SCENE

NYCJAZZRECORD.COM



THE NEW YORK CITY JAZZ RECORD

EUGENE
CHADBOURNE
NEW DIRECTION

DIGITAL
ONLY
EDITION

MICHELE
ROSEWOMAN

SULLIVAN
FORTNER

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MAY 2020—ISSUE 217

ON THE COVER : EUGENE CHADBOURNE

3

BY JOHN PIETARO

NEW YORK@NIGHT

4

INTERVIEW : MICHELE ROSEWOMAN

6

BY ANNA STEEGMANN

ARTIST FEATURE : SULLIVAN FORTNER

7

BY KYLE OLEKSIUK

ENCORE : DOUG HAMMOND

8

BY MARILYN LESTER

LEST WE FORGET : JACKIE MCLEAN

8

BY GEORGE GRELLA

LABEL SPOTLIGHT : FAMILY VINEYARD

9

BY ERIC WENDELL

VOXNEWS

9

BY SUZANNE LORGE

OBITUARIES

10

BY ANDREY HENKIN

FESTIVAL REPORT

12

ALBUM REVIEWS

14

MISCELLANY

28

BY ANDREY HENKIN

It is hard to believe that New York City has ONLY been under lockdown for 40 days. Seems more like 40 years and that we are with Moses, wandering through the desert, looking not for the Promised Land but an actual, in-person concert. Of course these protocols have been necessary to save as much life as possible and there have been online concerts, online record-listening sessions, online workshops, etc. to fill the void.

This is our second digital-only edition; we hope to resume our physical self soon. As was the case in our April edition, our planned coverage has all been cancelled, from a week at The Stone at The New School with guitarist Eugene Chadbourne (On The Cover), pianist/composer/bandleader Michele Rosewoman (Interview) at Dizzy's Club and pianist Sullivan Fortner (Artist Feature) at The Jazz Gallery. The same goes for most of our CD Review coverage. We hope that you support us by continuing to read and these musicians, now all struggling, by buying their music.

At some point, we will responsibly flock to the clubs and embrace one another musically. Until then, please stay safe and healthy so that day can come sooner rather than later.

On The Cover: Eugene Chadbourne (Peter Gannushkin/DOWNTOWNMUSIC.NET)

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EUGENE CHADBOURNE

NEW DIRECTION

BY JOHN PIETARO

"That's nice that you want to put me on the cover," said Eugene Chadbourne during our interview, "especially with so many glamorous options available." Glamour, like beauty, is subject to the beholder's eye and the expressionist guitarist exudes a charm of innovation that soars well above this year's fashion. In fact, he's held that distinction for decades.

Born in Mount Vernon NY, 1954, but raised in Boulder, Colorado, Chadbourne was moved by the powerful changes in rock 'n' roll during his formative years, but just as inspired by the country and blues he encountered in record store bins. "The first song I learned to play was 'I'm Not Your Steppin' Stone'." Tellingly, Chadbourne was drawn not to the pop hit by The Monkees, but the raucous version by Paul Revere and The Raiders. Though the budding guitarist's major influence was Jimi Hendrix, a grittier, proto-punk inspiration was prominent and remains with Chadbourne still. And then there was the innovative guitarist Lee Underwood. "I went to see Tim Buckley when I was 16. He performed without his band, just Underwood, who played something I hadn't heard before. The scales he was playing on the fretboard in conjunction with Buckley's harmonies—you could hear the root chord, but it sounded like you could play anywhere and make it work."

Moving to Calgary, Canada ("to avoid the draft") offered Chadbourne unforeseen opportunities for artistic growth. After encountering the music of Ornette Coleman, he sought out free jazz in local record stores. And, "I saw Captain Beefheart and his Magic Band play in Calgary. Most of the audience wanted to kill them, but his bass clarinet sounded particularly good to me. All that music jelled in my head around the same time, but it took a long time to translate it to the guitar. There were a few guitarists [playing this music] but not many you could imitate. Hendrix was like the Coltrane of guitar, so that took decades to absorb."

Chadbourne made fast friends with the few local musicians of a similar mindset and became active in Calgary's Jazz Society. While seeking performance opportunities, he quickly recognized that within such surroundings a scene needed to be grown, so began organizing shows. "The Jazz Society branch in Edmonton brought up the Sam Rivers Trio, so I presented Oliver Lake, among many others. And Anthony Braxton had a relationship with the *Coda* [magazine] guys. I finagled the University of Calgary to bring him up for a solo concert," which began an important professional relationship with the revolutionary saxophonist.

Chadbourne also became a music writer with *The Calgary Herald*. "The entertainment page had been doing poorly as no one knew anything about music. So, when I got that job, they assigned me reviews of these big rock concerts. But I was only listening to free jazz and roots music, so of course I panned Kiss, Queen, all of them!" Taking on this harsh critical persona inspired a flood of hate mail while providing much needed attention to the paper. "The editors kept giving me raises, so I kept writing these reviews." Even as he did Chadbourne was recording for his own

Parachute Records (*Solo Acoustic Guitar, Volume One and Two*, 1976) and curating events while making relevant industry contacts. His efforts proved successful. "When I began, there were like three copies of *Interstellar Space* there," but communication with the artists brought Calgary a wide array of new jazz. Simultaneously, Braxton was encouraging Chadbourne to focus entirely on his guitar playing, leaving journalism behind. "The timing was right," he recalled.

Moreso, President Carter issued amnesty for ex-pats who had left to avoid a war many viewed as highly immoral, if not illegal. Chadbourne relocated back to the U.S., touring through the Midwest and into New York in a most fertile period. "I can't recall when people started calling [NYC's experimental arts scene] 'Downtown', but a certain kind of crowd were living downtown and a lot of the rehearsing went on there." Voraciously absorbing his surroundings, Chadbourne developed important accomplices in both Frank Lowe and John Zorn. "John and I had so much in common, but he'd played almost nowhere except in college and then in his apartment [where Zorn had established a performance series]. I'd traveled across the country playing anywhere I'd made connections with my records. I read how Steve Lacy would knock on doors asking to play in delis. So I said, 'Let's go door-to-door to find new venues.'" That year he put out two more records while also performing with Zorn, Lowe, Lake and more. Simultaneously, punk rock was exploding with a cross-pollination of no wavers, free improvisers, performance poets and contemporary composers. "Everything was really splintered up. I recall someone forming a free band with a funk beat. That didn't appeal to me, but the songs and their meaning—the content and the essence—that meant a lot." As opposed to the edgy scene at CBGB's, Chadbourne sought to fuse the roots music he loved with underground jazz. A step in this direction was meeting the former Mothers of Invention drummer Jimmy Carl Black. "Jimmy was the first drummer I worked with who played blues and rock so expertly. I'd played with great drummers before but Jimmy said, 'I'm here to make you sound good.' And it reminded me that I really like playing rock." But Chadbourne decided to take it further, seeking to develop a true hybrid. "The roots music wasn't embraced in New York back then. Most people associated it with mechanical bulls."

The guitarist also began teaching at Karl Berger's Creative Music Studio in Woodstock, NY. There he met electric bassist Mark Kramer and drummer David Licht, who joined him in the formation of Shockabilly for which Chadbourne coined the genre "LSD C&W". "Most critics didn't get us. One said we sounded like Hank Williams on LSD, another went so far as to call us Frank Zappa on LSD! They kept writing that we were deconstructing songs, but we were actually creating" original music and fascinating adaptations of trad and rock. *The Dawn of Shockabilly* (Rough Trade, 1982) featured Chadbourne's blistering guitar as overtly as his satirical, affected lead voice. But for the level of musicianship, such profound reimaginings of The Beatles and Tammy Wynette may have been relegated to mere punk-era mocking.

The complex arrangements, unexpected tempo changes, sudden tacits and improvisational forays instead cast post-modernism at 33 1/3 rpm.

By 1985's *Vietnam*, the activism of the band became central with radical songs and a piece with poet Ed Sanders towards a "freely improvised left-wing country bebop". Over the next few years, Chadbourne released solo and collaborative multiple recordings and forged a partnership with alternative rockers Camper Van Beethoven. During the '90s, some 21 recordings under Chadbourne's leadership could be found in his catalogue and into the 2000s his already astonishing list of collaborators grew vastly: Billy Bang, Tom Cora, Wadada Leo Smith, Joseph Bowie, Steve Lacy, Evan Parker, Charles Tyler, John Carter, Peter Brötzmann, Anthony Coleman, Misha Mengelberg, Cooper-Moore, Derek Bailey, Marc Ribot, Davey Williams, Fred Frith, Gary Lucas, Henry Kaiser, Elliott Sharp, Charlie Haden, William Parker, Sunny Murray, Philip Wilson, Bobby Previte, Chris Cutler, Warren Smith, Han Bennink, Susie Ibarra and Shelley Hirsch. Likewise, Chadbourne's instrumental arsenal grew to include banjo, dobro and his homemade electric rake.

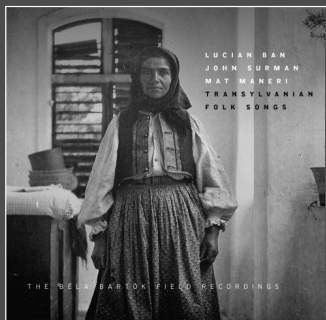
The music-making, like the sense of adventure, has been tenacious. Most recently, Chadbourne scheduled an array of global dates, which were suddenly cancelled. "I'm sorry that my Stone at The New School performances have to be postponed until who knows when," he said, painfully aware of the work required to book this expansive tour. "But this period has been devastating for so many. Imagine if we had a system that doesn't let idiots like this [Trump] get elected and that our economic system wouldn't fall apart as soon as we have a problem. There's nothing in it that protects anyone."

This year, Chadbourne released a pair of CDs containing both new and old material and, in response to the lockdown, established digital downloads on his website's archive, allowing for a deep glimpse into his fascinating repertoire. But, as always, the guitarist can't help but look far afield. "I'm also in the process of setting up a broadcast studio behind my house in Greensboro. It's been a recording studio for years, but I'm expanding it for internet performances. This is a longterm plan, but at this point, it may very well be the direction we all need to go in." ♦

For more information, visit eugenechadbourne-documentation.squarespace.com. Chadbourne was scheduled to be at *The Stone at The New School*.

Recommended Listening:

- Eugene Chadbourne—*The Lost Eddie Chatterbox Session* (s/r-Corbett vs. Dempsey, 1977)
- Eugene Van Beethoven—*69th Sin Funny* (Fundamental, 1989)
- Eugene Chadbourne/Hellington Country—*The Hellingtons* (Intakt, 1997)
- Zu & Eugene Chadbourne—*The Zu Side of the Chadbourne* (Felmay-House of Chadula, 1999)
- Aki Takase—*Plays Fats Waller* (Enja, 2003)
- Eugene Chadbourne—*Monks Dream with Words* (House of Chadula, 2017)



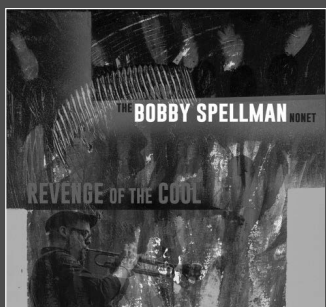
SSC 1580
Releases on 5/15.20

LUCIAN BAN-JOHN SURMAN-MAT MANERI TRANSYLVANIAN FOLK SONGS THE BELA BARTOK FIELD RECORDINGS

In the early 1900s Bartók was introduced to the folk music of the Romanian people in Transylvania. His immediate infatuation with the music led him to a lifelong pursuit to record and catalog these beautiful regional pieces. Bartók spent eight years traveling the Romanian countryside recording and transcribing these pieces, which he would spend the rest of his life collating into six catalogs containing over three thousand tunes, simply entitled Romanian Folk Music. The composer's own compositions would be influenced at every level by his folk studies.

A century later, these three outstanding improvisers – Mat Maneri, Lucian Ban and John Surman – draw fresh inspiration from the music that fired Bartók's imagination, looking again at the carols, lamentations, love songs, dowry songs and more which the composer collected, in the period between 1909-1917.

Lucian Ban grew up along Bartók's collecting path in Transylvania and by the end of the '90s he would leave Romania to pursue his career in jazz music in New York City. But the music of his native land continued to inspire his work, most notably in his own compositions as documented on the Songs from Afar (Sunnyside, 2016) or the classical music of Romania's famed composer George Enesco on Enesco Re-Imagined (Sunnyside, 2010) but also with his work alongside Maneri on Transylvanian Concert (ECM, 2013).



SSC 1586
Releases on 5/22.20

BOBBY SPELLMAN REVENGE OF THE COOL

Miles Davis's *Birth of The Cool* sessions, were recorded in 1949 and 1950 and released in 1957. More than fifty years later, when young trumpeter Bobby Spellman purchased a CD of these recordings, he became enchanted with the music. Spellman's fascination with these performances led him to chase that same spirit for his own collection of nonet recordings, *Revenge of the Cool*.

To build his nonet, Spellman looked toward many of his NEC peers, including baritone saxophonist Tyler Burchfield, alto saxophonist David Leon, bassist Andrew Schiller, trombonist Tim Shneier, drummer Evan Hyde, pianists Ben Schwendener and Eli Wallace. Spellman's wife, alto saxophonist Emily Pecoraro (who is featured on the first track), introduced Spellman to French horn player Kyra Sims, whom she met in New York and who shares the duty with her friend Justin Mullens. Tubist Ben Stapp is another New York addition to the group.



www.sunnysiderecords.com

This month, covering the 'live' jazz scene gained a whole new aspect due to citywide club closures spurred by the COVID-19 outbreak. Fortunately there were options. Billing itself as "the world's first fully live-streamed jazz festival", the "Live From Our Living Rooms" series offered a week's worth of fundraisers by and for out-of-work musicians. The first night (Apr. 1st) included a relaxed performance by vocalist/guitarist **Margaret Glasby** and guitarist **Julian Lage**. Seated at home, a few old black and white family photos visible on the wall behind them, the pair played original material, in tandem or solo, in a short but satisfying set. There were the inevitable technical glitches, particularly if one's wi-fi wasn't running at optimal speed (as your correspondent's wasn't), resulting in frozen or pixilated images. Several viewers posted complaints of the muffled "fishbowl" sound, presumably due to a noise-gated microphone. All of which could have been a bummer, but really wasn't. Here we sat, alone but together, privy to Glasby and Lage's most intimate musical and personal rapport, our number rapidly escalating from two to over 800 people, generating an incessant stream of rabid onscreen commentary. You couldn't hear any shouting or clapping, but you could certainly sense the excitement. "We'll be together soon," promised Lage at last. "In the meantime, this suffices." And we rejoiced that our collective jazz spirit had prevailed over the specter of COVID-19.

—Tom Greenland



Margaret Glasby & Julian Lage

The second night (Apr. 2nd) of "Live From Our Living Rooms", the live-stream festival/fundraiser organized by local musicians Thana Alexa, Owen Broder and Sirintip, included a marvelous solo concert by guitarist **Bill Frisell**. There was a delay because, as we found out later, the Crowdcast virtual platform had crashed under global overload, so the scheduled 8 pm hit didn't start until 45 minutes later, when Frisell, sporting an unfamiliar close-trimmed beard, was unfortunately cut off only 12 minutes later, right in the middle of a mouth-watering medley of "Nature Boy" and "Crepuscle with Nellie". He didn't reappear online until another 45 minutes had passed, by which time the logged-in crowd had swelled to 2,000, its appetite now fully whetted, chiming in from locales as disparate as Edmonton, Inverloch, Guanajuato and Buenos Aires. No one was disappointed. In what turned out to be one long, continuous medley, Frisell masterfully worked his way from "Someone to Watch Over Me" through what sounded like a new wrinkle on his tune "Worried Woman" to "New York, New York" (with a hint of "Nature Boy" thrown in), two Billy Strayhorn tunes ("A Flower Is a Lovesome Thing" and "Lush Life"), "What the World Needs Now", The Beatles' "In My Life" and finally the Civil Rights anthem "We Shall Overcome" with a quick taste of "Someone to Watch Over Me" at the very end. He didn't say much, but he didn't have to. The song titles and especially his playing, said it all. (TG)

The Sun Ra Arkestra of the '70s would have been ideally suited for musical life in the era of COVID-19. Most of the band lived in the same house in the Germantown neighborhood of Philadelphia and could have live-streamed cosmic music 24 hours a day in keeping with Ra's constant rehearsals. Alas, now most musicians are stuck alone at home and the concerts being broadcast across myriad platforms are somewhat lonely affairs. Quarantine jazz is a thing now but one hopes not for too long, as musicians need an audience as much as we need them. Alto saxophonist **Miguel Zenón** gave a solo recital (Apr. 12th) on Instagram and Facebook Live, though the latter didn't work. By the end of the shortish performance, there were about 80 people in the 'room' and Zenón spoke encouraging and thankful words in both English and Spanish, plus a guest appearance by his daughter to say hello. While the intent was good, for those listeners easily distracted (such as this reviewer) the medium muddles the message. It felt less like a concert than spycam voyeurism into Zenón's practice regimen (kudos to his rehearsal space, however, and the cheerful drawings festooning its walls) and certainly the lag-time issues didn't help, nor did the stream of comments and love balloons. Things worked better on a cellphone than on a computer and while Zenón dueting with himself slightly out of phase did have its appeal, it was hardly the point. If this really is the new normal, we will adjust but we don't have to like it. —Andrey Henkin



Miguel Zenón

Lucky are the musicians living together, at least in terms of online concerts (though one feels for an entire household bereft of income streams). This reviewer had planned on attending the duo concert with harpist **Brandee Younger** and bassist **Dezron Douglas** at Miller Theatre scheduled for the end of March before New York City was shut down. So it was great that the pair were still able to perform (Apr. 7th), just now from the confines of their living room (nice plants). Unfortunately the technological aspect left much to be desired—quarantine jazz is years behind cam-porn—but it was fulfilling to hear and see (sort of) musicians interacting with one another. The harp's delicacy and mystical nature pairs well with the bass' stolid woodiness (my cats liked it) and Younger and Douglas have been honing their craft together on regular brunch broadcasts on Facebook. They began with a tune from those sets, the timely-titled "TP Romance". Erroll Garner's "Misty" followed and it felt like one was floating down a Venetian canal at sunset. "Games" (from Dorothy Ashby's 1968 album *Afro-Harping*; being at home was good for research) found deep spirit within each and enormous power together. Douglas essayed Charlie Haden's "For Turiya" solo, Younger quipping that the quarantine had led to more solo bass concerts than ever. The pair managed to call up the soul bounce on Marvin Gaye's "I Want You" and closed with Younger's indie-pop-like "Reclamation". I can hardly wait to hear this duo in person. (AH)

Shut out from its decade-old residency at Jazz Standard, the tradition of Mingus Mondays took to the internet for a series of solo concerts; the second of which featured guitarist **Freddie Bryant** (Apr. 6th). A 20-year veteran of the Mingus Orchestra, where his chords fill out the rich harmonies of the late bassist's compositions, Bryant played by himself from the Caribbean island of Providenciales (forced to remain there since the onset of coronavirus pandemic), settling into a predominantly blues-based program highlighting Mingus' earthy melodicism. Opening with "Devil Woman", which he retitled "Devil Virus" for the occasion, the guitarist gave a sensitive reading of the song Mingus sang in a gritty voice on his *Oh Yeah* album. He followed with the New Orleans-tinged "Jelly Roll", digging into its rhythmic drive. Describing it as a disguised blues, Bryant continued with a stirring rendition of "Goodbye Porkpie Hat", which he dedicated to virus victims Ellis Marsalis, Bucky Pizzarelli and Wallace Roney, as well as the recently departed Mingus Orchestra bassoonist Janet Grice, calling for a moment of silence afterwards. Reaching into the more obscure recesses of the Mingus repertoire, the guitarist resumed by performing the Brazilian-flavored "Eclipse", giving a shout out to Sy Johnson for his inspired orchestral arrangement of the composition. The one-man show concluded back in the blues mode with a funky extended take of "Better Git It In Your Soul".

—Russ Musto



Freddie Bryant

On the night that they were scheduled to appear at Dizzy's Club (Apr. 4th) playing together as part of the American Pianists Association's celebration of the past and present awardees of its Cole Porter Fellowship, **Sullivan Fortner** and **Aaron Parks** met up in cyberspace for "music and musings" on the APA's Facebook page. In what could be described as extreme social distancing that took them away from their usual bases, Parks streamed from his mother's house in upstate New York while Fortner performed from the Florida home of the parents of his vocalist duo partner, Cécile McLorin Salvant. The pair began by discussing the less-than-perfect tuning of their respective upright pianos, before getting down to making music. Fortner started, playing a deliberately delivered rendition of Bud Powell's "I'll Keep Loving You", after which Parks followed appropriately with Porter's "I Love You", picking up the tempo on the second chorus as he improvised utilizing altered harmonies. The pair then engaged in a discussion of their admiration of each other's different styles. Noting that the passing of Ellis Marsalis had him in "ballady" mood, Fortner continued with his melancholy "Elegy". A discussion of the writing process inspired Parks to play a new untitled original he said he's been working on for a while. More talk of Marsalis prompted Fortner to play the late pianist's "Swingin' At The Haven". Parks then played his "Solace", a classically-tinged song of hope. Fortner closed out with a spiritual, "The Solid Rock".

(RM)

This month our live reviews are redefined as New York continues through the coronavirus lock-down. While this writer mourns a return to reality as we once knew it, the concept of live-to-internet becomes the new normal. And with that in mind, the "Live From Our Living Rooms" series allows for an array of performing artists to make their statement—and raise funds for the creative community—in the face of the Great Quarantine. Saxophonist **Joe Lovano** and vocalist **Judi Silvano** have been an item for many decades and their shared telepathy is apparent. Broadcasting a highly improvisational live session (Apr. 4th), the pair floated through original compositions and a unique adaptation of Monk's "Reflections", with the Jon Hendricks lyric, which well exhibited their musical skills and then some; Silvano painted an abstract piece inspired by the music during points away from the microphone. Though the spirit and sense of unity carried the concert, of course, the barrier of the computer screen was apparent (though we tried on this end, with cocktails and finger foods!). The static camera and lack of proper sound balancing were not friendly to the performance, unfortunately, though Lovano's mastery of the tenor and soprano, as always, was more than obvious. And Silvano's seemingly limitless range and innate swing are his perfect match, allowing for vibrant call-and-response segments, which enlivened this digital soundscape and crafted a real Saturday night of it.

—John Pietaro



Joe Lovano & Judi Silvano

In an effort to offer live performance (Apr. 20th) during this lockdown period, master guitarist and Django Reinhardt specialist **Stephane Wrembel** established a series of daily remote mini-concerts, fascinating educational performances, broadcast in both French and English through May 1st. Instead of simply playing the rarely heard solo compositions of Reinhardt (as heard on his recent release *Django L'Impressionniste*), he offers an analysis of each piece each day and then plays the classic work in his inimitable fashion. Wrembel has an amazing command of his instrument (yes, his guitar is one of the oval sound hole models; what did you expect?!) as well as the stylistic inventions and structures that Reinhardt gave to the music. "He loved mixing major and minor harmonies—this leads you to never knowing exactly where you are. These were the visions of Debussy brought to life." Wrembel explained the patterns and harmonic inventions of the renowned Gypsy guitarist that were used in his riveting "Improvisation #1", a work that seemed to capture all of Reinhardt's breathtaking twist, turns, fills and melodies of brilliance. "He loved to reharmonize the chords, adding chromaticisms leading to an anchor point. The outline of the chords is very subtle." Wrembel is actually the very first Reinhardt interpreter to perform all of Django's solo works, so his analysis is vital to the canon. His grasp on these works is undisputed and any jazzbo worth his or her salt needs to tune in.

(JP)

WHAT'S NEWS

Roulette is partnering with **Bang on a Can** for a six-hour marathon on May 3rd, presenting new music composed specifically for the event and performed by musicians including Vijay Iyer, George Lewis, Miya Masaoka, Moor Mother and Mary Halvorson. For more information, visit roulette.org.

The inaugural class of **Philadelphia Hometown Heroes** has been named and it includes several jazz musicians: Marshall Allen, Terrell Stafford, Orrin Evans, Pat Martino, Diane Monroe and the recently departed McCoy Tyner.

Record Store Day, celebrating independent record shops and originally scheduled for April 18th, will be held through a series of "RSD Drops", taking place on three Saturdays spread across three consecutive months: Aug. 29th, Sep. 26th and Oct. 24th. For more information, visit recordstoreday.com.

The **Jazz Journalists Association** has named its 2020 Jazz Heroes, "honoring significant achievements in jazz music and journalism". Local recipients are Matthew Garrison and Fortuna Sung of ShapeShifter Lab, Susan Cohen Brink of Sanctuary for Independent Media and Roberta Alloway, booker of many Harlem jazz venues. In addition, nominees for the 2020 JJA Jazz Awards have been named (including this gazette for Print Periodical/Website of the Year). For more information, visit jjazzawards.org.

The **Monterey Jazz Festival** has announced the results of its 2020 Next Generation Jazz Festival, which took place virtually last month. Winners are scheduled to appear at the festival in September. For the complete list, visit montereyjazzfestival.org.

Jazz Club of Sarasota presented its Satchmo Award to Rachel Domber and her late husband Mat of **Arbors Records**, the award honoring those that have "made a unique and enduring contribution to the living history of jazz".

The 18th Annual **Independent Music Awards** have named their nominees for this year's awards. For the complete list, including jazz-specific categories, visit independentmusicawards.com.

The **Jazz Gallery's** online schedule will continue in May: May 1st: Melissa Aldana; May 4th: Jen Shyu; May 6th: Dezron Douglas; May 7th: Becca Stevens; May 8th: Johnathan Blake; May 11th: Orrin Evans; May 13th: Matt Brewer; May 15th: Kevin Hays; May 18th: Dayna Stephens; May 20th: Vijay Iyer; May 22nd: Tivon Pennicott; May 25th: Jaleel Shaw; May 27th: Jason Lindner and a special tribute to the recently departed Lee Konitz on May 3rd. For more information, visit jazzgallery.nyc

Academy Records has opened up an eBay store (ebay.com/str/academyrecords) and an Amazon portal (amazon.com/s?me=APGAAMQYMI9EL&marketplaceID=ATVPDKIKX0DER).

Submit news to info@nycjazzrecord.com



MICHELE ROSEWOMAN

BY ANNA STEEGMANN

Pianist, composer and educator Michele Rosewoman, a pioneering artist in her field, has created a distinct musical experience by digging deep into acoustic modern jazz, sophisticated funk, dynamic electric fusion and elements of Cuban folkloric music. Her command and rich vocabulary expands the horizons and boundaries of jazz while remaining firmly rooted in tradition. With a 40-year history, Rosewoman stands out in her class as a visionary pianist, composer, bandleader and gifted performer. She has performed with many of the finest musicians from both the jazz and Cuban traditions and is regarded as one of the most ingenious composers and prolific bandleaders of her generation.

The New York City Jazz Record: This is a difficult time for musicians. Clubs and concert halls are closed, festivals have been cancelled. How do you cope?

Michele Rosewoman: We all have to figure this one out as we go through waves of disbelief and realization and settle into this new reality. I'm taking stock of my life up to now and, little by little, figuring out how to proceed. Letting things reset spiritually, trying to stay positive and applying for financial assistance as opportunities become available. Looking forward to what might be creatively born of such a time.

TNYCJR: Critics have said that you unite players with distinct personalities into a communal voice. Your latest recording *Hallowed* is with Alex Norris on trumpet and flugelhorn, Román Filiú on alto and soprano saxophones and flute, Stacy Dillard on tenor saxophone, Chris Washburne on trombone, bass trombone and tuba, Andrew Gutauskas on baritone saxophone, Gregg August on bass, Robby Ameen on drums, both Román Díaz and Mauricio Herrera on batá, congas and vocals, Rafael Monteagudo on batá, congas and Nina Rodríguez as the lead vocalist. You contribute piano, Fender Rhodes and vocals. Talk about bringing the musicians for this project together. What was your inspiration? What makes *Hallowed* special?

MR: For all my ensembles, the cast of musicians has always taken its own shape as needed, evolving through the years and one configuration leading naturally to the next. The current ensemble members have been with me for many years. It feels like family. They are more bilingual than in the past, in that both Latin and jazz feels more natural for all, which makes my musical presentation work best.

Hallowed consists of a suite presented as the first ten tracks, plus two other very different tracks. The instrumental suite "Oru de Oro" (Room of Gold) is compositionally built around sacred Batá language—rhythmic patterns in a set sequence that call forth various entities/energies [Oru Seco or Oru del Igbo]. We dance around THEM. Soloists are hitting hard as written and improvisational elements interact. The Batá and its tradition are central and fully intact.

This appears to be a first—a fully orchestrated and

intact Oru Seco. Those familiar with the form say it's groundbreaking. It requires that one be equally immersed in both jazz and Cuban folkloric language and traditions and have the propensity to take a journey deeply into an oral tradition that masters teach to those they deem worthy. I didn't learn jazz in a classroom either, have had to do "the deep hang" in more than one world. Track 11, "The Wind is The First To Know", is built around traditional vocals and batá in a series of prayers and cantos [songs]. Horn interludes and solos lead into and out of Nina Rodríguez' beautiful lead vocals. This track is a complete contrast to all other tracks on this recording, as the final track is also purely instrumental. I first contributed "Alabanza" as pianist and composer to a Latin-Grammy-winning release by the Afro Latin Jazz Orchestra [led by Arturo O'Farrill] that we recorded in Cuba in 2014.

TNYCJR: Tell me about your beginnings as a musician. Were you raised in a musical family?

MR: I first touched a piano at age six when my folks brought an old upright home. I never really had this thought until now, but how did they know? That piano felt like Christmas every day. I started exploring. After a few years, I took lessons and learned to read music. My parents were very artistic and politically active.

TNYCJR: How did your love for jazz develop? Who did you listen to? Who were you musical heroes?

MR: My first love was old school R&B. I loved The Temptations, Stevie Wonder, Marvin Gaye, The Stylistics, Aretha [Franklin], Ray Charles, Smokey [Robinson], Curtis Mayfield, The Dells. My folks listened to a lot of traditional jazz: Ella, Duke, Oscar Peterson, Sarah Vaughan, Billie Holiday. I also heard music from around the world: Calypso, Brazilian, music from the mountains of Chile, East India, Africa. Spiritually-based music moved me. I was drawn to music that had detail, surprise, mystery, depth and to improvisation. The harmonic colors in jazz, the intricate melodies and rhythmic intricacies, I was hearing things and trying to play them. When I was in my early teens I read a book by Martin Williams about the social and political significance of jazz as America's indigenous music. This music that compelled me so was now tapping my intellect and emotions on another level. Eventually, I began to have musical heroes: Monk, Coltrane, Lee Morgan, Bobby Timmons, Miles, Art Blakey, Wayne Shorter, Elvin Jones, Oliver Lake, Baikida Carroll, Julius Hemphill, Bobby Bradford, Dewey Redman, Nikki Giovanni, Betty Carter...

TNYCJR: You studied both jazz piano and percussion. Talk about your teachers and how they shaped you.

MR: I met the great pianist/organ player Ed Kelly

when I auditioned for the Laney Junior College big band in Oakland and got in. Everything jumped off from there. Ed became my true mentor, my greatest direct influence and a beloved friend until his passing in 2005. He was a hands-on piano teacher. He made everything his. He was a completely original voice and a stone-cold traditionalist at the same time. He would play in the styles of Earl 'Fatha' Hines, Oscar Peterson, Bud Powell, Thelonious Monk, look up over his glasses and ask, "Who's this?" And then he'd hit some secret dissonant bell-tone chord and let it ring while we felt the air transform. Without saying a word, he taught us that music is sound. His playing was a slow boil; he would build it up and then burst out with incredible originality. He was full of humor, musically and personally. I hung, learned, jammed, started playing with R&B and jazz groups in nearby clubs.

I saw a sign on a street post on the Laney campus offering a summer class in AfroCuban percussion. Marcus Gordon was the instructor. He was blessedly put in my path. We went straight into various forms of rumba and spiritually-based Cuban folkloric music. As I often say, my musical path was born right then and there, although I did not know it at the time. Master vocalist and percussionist Orlando "Puntilla" Rios arrived in New York from Cuba in 1980 and brought ancient traditions here that had not been accessible before. Many of us attribute any depth of knowledge and experience to having been invited into his world. We found in him our most valuable and profound foundation for all to come.

TNYCJR: What were significant early milestones in your career?

MR: Becoming next-door neighbors [1975-78] in San Francisco with the great trumpeter/composer Baikida Carroll, through whom I met and played with Julius Hemphill, Oliver Lake, Julian Priester. Meeting and hearing BAG and AACM members who stayed with him during those years. Creating and performing with the great cornet player, composer and conductor Butch Morris. Jimmy Lyons of Cecil Taylor's group telling me I should move to New York. Playing at The Keystone Korner on a double bill with my mentor Ed Kelly right before moving to New York. Oliver Lake giving me my first important performance opportunity in New York at Carnegie Hall in 1979. Performing with my own group for the first time in NYC at P.S. 41, featuring Baikida on trumpet, Abdul Wadud on cello and Skip Bernie on percussion. Meeting Puntilla; he became the central figure around which I built my New Yor-Uba ensemble. Recording with the Cuban songo group Los Kimy. My first European tour with Billy Bang. Receiving an NEA grant in 1983 for the birth of New Yor-Uba. *New York Times* and *DownBeat* rave reviews. A three-week European tour in 1984 with my 14-piece New Yor-Uba playing the major festival circuit. Coming home to a letter saying I had received an ASCAP Meet the Composer Grant for Emerging Composers awarded by Dizzy Gillespie, Marian McPartland and Lester Bowie, leading to performances by the Brooklyn Philharmonic plus quintet of improvisers. Release of my first recording as leader, *The Source*.

TNYCJR: Critics have compared you to Charles Mingus and Duke Ellington. Others felt you were influenced by Randy Weston, Cecil Taylor, Thelonious Monk, McCoy Tyner and Billy Strayhorn. Are they right? How would you describe your influences?

MR: Every name, a profound influence on me. Cuban folkloric musical traditions and 'the funk' are strong musical influences as well. I let them all freely be a part of how I play, write and present the music. McCoy gave me the ways and means to launch as a piano player. Monk's playing and writing, Mingus and

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 13)



SULLIVAN FORTNER

BY KYLE OLEKSIUK

Sullivan Fortner is a talented pianist whose career has lately been on the straight-up ramp: in the last few years he was Cécile McLorin-Salvant's duo partner on the Grammy-winning album *The Window*; contributed to Paul Simon's 2018 album *In The Blue Light*; released his own second album *Moments Preserved* (Impulse!); and headlined for a full week at the Village Vanguard. At only 33, the sky's the limit for Fortner. But like most people, musical or not, the coronavirus quarantine has put his career on hold.

He had been scheduled to perform an original six-movement suite at The Jazz Gallery this month. Fortner wrote it years ago [the first three movements were recorded on his 2015 debut album for Impulse, *Aria*], but with large gatherings in New York on hold, he won't be performing it for several months, if at all. Nonetheless, Fortner says that he is revising the suite. "I don't think [the performance] is happening," he says "but since I have some downtime, I'm changing some things...it's interesting looking back at it and thinking, 'I would never do that now!'"

Fortner looks back with similar interest, and some surprise, at the beginnings of his musical career. Like many people, he is struck by the combination of random coincidence and important relationships that led him into his profession. It all started when, at the age of four, little Sullivan fell in love with the organ player at his local church choir. "She was always really sweet to me," Fortner says, "and one day she sat me on her lap and she showed me how to press a note on the organ. And I thought 'Oh, it does this? This is really cool!' So at home I would climb on the top of the television and the bannister and beat out the rhythms that I heard in church."

He showed such enthusiasm for the instrument that his mother bought him a Fisher-Price piano, so small that it didn't have any half-step keys. Fortner inadvertently discovered his musical talent when "one day, the *Jeopardy* theme song came on television and I played it back." His mother was astonished, Fortner says, because he knew to leave out the half-steps in the theme song, which he couldn't play on the half-stepless Fisher-Price piano. "That scared her more than playing it back." Within a few years, Fortner was playing the piano seriously as a staff musician for his church and, despite not knowing how to read music or even play a major scale, was accepted to the New Orleans Center for Creative Arts.

At the time, he still did not plan to, or even want to, become a jazz musician. "I wanted to be a church musician, because that was all I knew," Fortner says. "A teacher gave me a few [jazz] albums and...I went to him and said, I don't understand, this music sucks. Then he gave me an album and he said, 'okay, this is Erroll Garner's *Concert by the Sea*. If you don't like jazz after this, you don't have to play it.'" Needless to say, he liked the album. "I still go back to that record... To me, it's still perfection in terms of the amount of joy that Garner exudes when he plays. And the risks and

the amount of love that's there and how accessible it is, but how complex it is also. That's something that I strive for when I play." He also expresses affection and admiration for albums like Art Tatum's *20th Century Piano Genius*, Ella Fitzgerald's *Live at Zardi's* and Bud Powell's *Bud Plays Bird*. Over the years, Fortner's love for records like these led him to earn a BA and MA in jazz performance, at Oberlin and Manhattan School of Music, respectively.

While he was living and performing in Manhattan, two fellow pianists helped Fortner make his next career leap: Jonathan Batiste, Fortner's fellow student at the New Orleans Center for Creative Arts, and Rodney Kendrick, a bandmate of Roy Hargrove's, watched Fortner play weekly at Cleopatra's Needle. Several months after Kendrick began watching Fortner play, he had to back out of a tour with Hargrove at the last minute. As his replacement, he recommended Fortner. Fortner says that Kendrick "gave my number to Ragman, who was Larry Clothier, Roy's manager. But Ragman's like, 'I don't know who this kid is. Who the hell is this kid? I'm not going on your recommendation. Let me get somebody else.'" Clothier then happened to call Jonathan Batiste, who also recommended Fortner. "So he's like, okay, well Rodney recommends you and Jonathan recommends you, we'll give you a shot." Fortner played the tour, became a sub, then went on to become Hargrove's full-time pianist for about seven years. "Still to this day," Fortner says, "I learned more playing with Roy than I did going to any school. He taught me so much, he gave me so much." A great compliment to Hargrove, considering that Fortner attended two of the most famous music schools in America.

This takes us almost to the present moment in Fortner's career: he played with Hargrove's band until 2017. In 2018, there was the Salvant (of her, he says: "Cécile is an amazing artist and an amazing person...I'm inspired by her all the time") and Simon albums and Fortner releasing his own second album, *Moments Preserved*, which he says was inspired by his interest "in the older masters, the stride [piano style] guys: Fats Waller, James P. Johnson. I had a period where I'd research piano players that everybody talks about and then research their teachers...trying to figure out what made this music up in the past and what makes it up now. That was the theme for *Moments Preserved*." And this year, he and bassist Rufus Reid released a duo album on LP, *Always In The Moment*, as part of Newvelle Records' subscription series.

And although the music world has outwardly come to a standstill in 2020, he has much more planned. Alongside his Jazz Gallery suite, Fortner has plans for a solo album and for a grant-funded trip to West Africa to study percussion. His goal for the trip, he says, is to "pursue a different sound. My mind has kind of been wrapped around the sound and I'm not entirely sure what it is yet, but I know that it's there." Fortunately or not, Fortner now has some time to figure it out. Like most people's plans, his are up in the air. ❖

For more information, visit sullivanfortnermusic.com. Fortner was scheduled to be at The Jazz Gallery.

Recommended Listening:

- Theo Croker — *In The Tradition* (Arbors, 2008)
- Sullivan Fortner — *Aria* (Impulse!, 2014)
- Sullivan Fortner — *Moments Preserved* (Impulse!, 2017)
- Lage Lund (with Sullivan Fortner, Larry Grenadier & Tyshawn Sorey) — *Terrible Animals* (Criss Cross Jazz, 2018)
- Cécile McLorin Salvant — *The Window* (Mack Avenue, 2018)
- Rufus Reid/Sullivan Fortner — *Always In The Moment* (Newvelle, 2019)

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VELHO CONTINENTE

ARTISTS:
CLAUDIA CARVALHO, PIERO DELLE MONACHE

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SAINT PETER'S CHURCH

Dear jazz community friends,

It is a trying time for all of us in New York, the country, and the world. What we need more than ever is the healing power of music and prayer.

As of this writing in late April, Saint Peter's is closed, as are all other houses of worship in the city. We will be open again as soon as we are able.

In the meantime, we will roll out jazz (and other) content via our Facebook page in the coming weeks. We have a rich archive of services and concerts that we will "premiere" on Facebook so that we can watch them together. You can also sign up for our emails via our website: saintpeters.org. That's the surest way to be notified of our plans.

We'll get through this together. Please take care of yourselves and be safe. Peace and courage!

Amandus J. Derr, Senior Pastor
Ike Sturm, Director of Music for Jazz
Ronny Whyte, Midday Jazz Midtown Producer
The Saint Peter's Congregation and Staff

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DOUG HAMMOND

BY MARILYN LESTER

There are individuals, polymaths, in whom the creative impulse is so strong it seeks multiple outlets to express itself. Such a one is Doug Hammond, who shines as a composer, writer, poet, percussionist, singer, producer and coordinator. Of his various interests he says, “Doing all of these activities is living a complete life where all needed realities are available. The work is there if one has the passion, and I mean passion, to do the work wholeheartedly.”

This multi-partite journey has taken him far and wide internationally, working with and alongside giants of the music/jazz world, such as Betty Carter, Chet Baker, Smokey Robinson, Sonny Rollins, Charles Mingus, Kenny Dorham, Nina Simone and many more, in styles ranging from blues and bop to soul jazz, free funk and avant garde. Since 1989, Hammond has split his time between Detroit, MI and Linz, Austria where he taught drums, composition and ensemble at Anton Bruckner Private University. Although he retired from that position in 2008, he remains a part-time resident, working with European-based musicians.

Hammond was born on Dec. 26th, 1942 in Tampa, Florida to ballroom dancer parents who introduced him early on to the music of the day. “Jazz was ever present,” he says. “My mother and father were also tailors of the highest grade. My father made me a three-piece pin-striped suit when I was three or four and took me to see them dance to the Count Basie and Duke Ellington orchestras.” Hammond originally felt drawn to the violin, but of necessity was first directed to the trombone and eventually wound up with drums in junior high. He’s said about drums that rhythm is the key—since rhythm is the basis of life. His music composition training started then as well, under the

tutelage of Thomas J. Simpson. “My first composing was for the snare drum,” he relates. “A few passages and short sketches, which I showed to the drum teacher.” The feedback was critical, noting that young Hammond was trying to be too complex. “He was right,” Hammond adds. “He said to me, compose like a rhythm melody and as simple as possible.” Hammond took his advice and began composing cadences for the school’s marching bands, adding tympani to his repertoire.

Privately, Hammond studied for four years with Don Templeton of the Tampa Metropolitan Symphony, which prepared him for a classical career that was never realized, one reason being the color barrier of the time. This issue was not the case in the Motor City, where Hammond headed in 1965. There he formed Focus Novii with James “Blood” Ulmer, Patrick Lanier, John Dana and William T. Wiggins. The group undertook dramatic presentations interweaving music, text, poetry, song and dance in styles from blues, jazz, R&B and spirituals to modern classical forms. Hammond also became a founding member of the Detroit Creative Musicians Association, serving as vice president and coordinator. He also became associated with Tribe Records, an independent black label with a focus on black independence, socio-political commentary and musical experimentation, founded in the early ‘70s by Phil Ranelin and Wendell Harrison.

Around that time Hammond composed “Moves”, which was eventually recorded by Charles Mingus on the *Mingus Moves* album, with Hammond, joined by Honi Gordon for a vocal duet. (Hammond joined Mingus’ band while living for a short time in New York City.) He also composed the more commercially oriented “Wake Up Brothers” and “For Real,” both protests against the Vietnam War. These three compositions were included in Hammond’s seminal work, *Reflections in the Sea of Nurnen* (a reference to the J.R.R. Tolkien *The Lord of The Rings* epic), which was recorded in 1975 after Hammond’s move to California. His thoughts about the album reveal Hammond’s lifelong pursuit of creativity out of the box, especially avoidance of the commercial. He says, “I composed ‘Wake Up Bothers’ and ‘For Real’ with hope the band

would go on and make work for themselves, because that was never a direction I could embrace as a career.” The album (on Tribe Records) featured Hammond on vocals, drums, melodica and ARP synthesizer, co-leading with David Durrah on piano, Fender Rhodes, Moog and ARP synthesizer. Charles Metcalf on bass violin and electric bass, Otis Harris on alto saxophone, Thomas Traylor and Fredrick Boon on percussion and Trevis Mickleel and Charles Burnham on violins completed the band, which delivered both acoustic and electric sounds in a free-funk rhythmic mix. “I grew up in funk country – the south,” Hammond explains. “Tampa is where Ray Charles, Cannonball Adderley grew musically.”

Hammond returned to Detroit in the ‘80s but had already been cultivating a presence in Europe, especially Germany. He credits Mingus’ recording of “Moves” as the key to recognition abroad. “Everyone knew that song and so many doors were opened,” he says. In Traisa, Germany he recorded *Perspicuity* with the Original Doug Hammond Trio, a work that has since become a rarity. Two other recordings from the ‘80s now also deemed classics are *Folks* with bassist Cecil McBee (1980) and *Spaces* (1982) with alto saxophonists Steve Coleman and Byard Lancaster and cellist Muneer Abdul Fataah.

Asked if over the years he’d developed a philosophy about his work, he responded, “I don’t have a philosophy on drumming. Playing music is what I do, something words have never been possible to describe. All of it is sometimes satisfying when it is played well enough.

“Music is not a lazy person’s vocation,” he says, “No work, no real creative result. Craftiness, slickness will not compensate for total commitment.” His work continues to include forays into experimentation, such as the 2007 release, *A Real Deal*, with pianist Kirk Lightsey, Hammond on vocals, drums and kalimba. He wrote and conducted *Acknowledgement Suite* in 2010 and has more recently been working in Europe with Bologna-based hardbop artists bassist Nikola Matosic and trumpet player Mirko Cisilino; Swiss-French tenor saxophonist María Grand, alto saxophonist Stephane

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 13)

LEST WE FORGET



JACKIE McLEAN

BY GEORGE GRELLA

Jackie McLean, who died in 2006 at 74, is one of the titanic figures in jazz, yet his essential contributions to the history and direction of the music and sheer beauty and expressive power of his playing were nearly lost to the exigencies of time—or better put, money and the marketplace.

McLean was born (1931) and grew up in New York City. He was raised with jazz; his father played guitar in Tiny Bradshaw’s big band and the young McLean lived near and picked up tips from the likes of Charlie Parker and Bud Powell. As a teenage musician, his bandmates included Sonny Rollins and Kenny Drew and by 20 he was recording with the Miles Davis Sextet.

From there, McLean shot upward, joining Art Blakey’s Jazz Messengers and Charles Mingus’ Jazz Workshop, both in 1956. His debut album as a leader, *Presenting*, was the debut (only?) release from independent Ad Lib label in 1955. A series of Prestige albums followed; *4,5 and 6* and *A Long Drink of the Blues*

established McLean as a hardbop leader. His enormous, urgent sound, its tart, slightly sharp timbre and the deep-rooted blues and soul in his style were the next logical step from Parker. From Prestige then onto Blue Note during the ‘60s he not only led more than two dozen sessions but appeared as a sideman on albums by Davis, Blakey, Mingus, Sonny Clark, Donald Byrd, Mal Waldron, Tina Brooks, Freddie Redd and Lee Morgan—dozens of albums that alone would have cemented his reputation as a major figure (he also hired the then-16 year old drummer Tony Williams). McLean was a heroin addict during the ‘50s and into the ‘60s and because of that lost his cabaret card and could only make music in the studio.

His playing changed in the ‘60s and he became a great modernist, forging a bridge between the mainstream and the avant garde. Blue Note albums like *New Soil*, *Let Freedom Ring!*, *Destination...Out!* and the summit meeting with Ornette Coleman, *New And Old Gospel* (Coleman playing trumpet), are a detailed document of his progress. His ‘60s albums are a gestalt of that tumultuous musical era, even touching political and spiritual themes with *Bout Soul*. But this was something of a secret history. He recorded *Action*, *Hipnosis*, *Demon’s Dance*, *Jackknife* and *Consequence* in the mid-late ‘60s, but these stayed in the Blue Note vaults for a decade or more before they were released. By that time, he had long since been dropped by the label.

Starting in 1968, McLean turned toward teaching

as his main career, at the Hartt School of Music at the University of Hartford. There he created the University’s BA degree in Jazz Studies and what is now called the Jackie McLean Institute of Jazz.

He continued playing and recording in the ‘70s, this time on SteepleChase, including several strong sets caught live in Europe with Dexter Gordon. His playing on these records shows some consolidation into more conventional form, perhaps because his bands included more mainstream players like Drew and bassist Niels-Henning Ørsted Pedersen. McLean was named an NEA Jazz Master in 2001. His legacy lives on in his son René and many former students currently making up the modern jazz pantheon. McLean is buried, along with other jazz greats, in Woodlawn Cemetery. ❖

A tribute to McLean led by Eric Person was scheduled to be at Sistas’ Place.

Recommended Listening:

- Jackie McLean—*Jackie McLean & Co. (Introducing Ray Draper)* (Prestige, 1957)
- Jackie McLean—*Bluesnik* (Blue Note, 1961)
- Jackie McLean—*Let Freedom Ring* (Blue Note, 1962)
- Jackie McLean—*One Step Beyond* (Blue Note, 1963)
- Jackie McLean/Michael Carvin—*Antiquity* (SteepleChase, 1974)
- Mal Waldron/Jackie McLean—*Left Alone ‘86* (Paddle Wheel-Evidence, 1986)

FAMILY VINEYARD

BY ERIC WENDELL

Improvisational music is a search for beauty, a rumination on what is between the spaces and subsequent cracks between sonic forces. Indianapolis-based Family Vineyard has dedicated itself to documenting said cracks by expressing a love for improvisational and free jazz characteristics. Family Vineyard proudly states its motto as “newfangled and archival sounds aged to perfection”, which is a fitting exclamation to its output. With a roster of artists including Loren MazzaCane Connors, Chris Corsano, Akira Sakata and others, Family Vineyard showcases what the midwest has to offer on the modern jazz scene.

Since its inception in 1999, Family Vineyard has received acclaim from notable periodicals. Additionally singer/songwriter John Darnielle in his blog *Last Plane to Jakarta* sang his praises for the label by stating, “Family Vineyard occupy a particular corner of the music universe, serving up equal parts talent, ambition and pretension from people who don’t shrink from the word ‘artist’ and who make honest, blood-leaking efforts to be worthy of the name.”

The genesis of Family Vineyard began with the establishing of a different label. In 1996, Eric Weddle, while a student at Indiana University, co-founded the label Secretly Canadian with three friends. Weddle and Co. modeled the label based on the punk ethos of independent labels such as Touch & Go, K and Dischord. As Weddle states, “We were drawn to artists who held

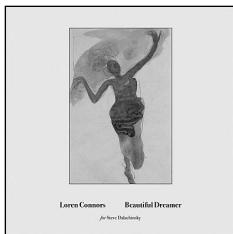
an unquestionable vision. A few years later I started Family Vineyard as a means to release more avant garde music.” Family Vineyard’s first two releases came out in 1999. The first was *Strict* by Bruce Anderson and Dale Sophiea. It traversed the thin line between experimental rock music and noise textures. The website *Aural-Innovations* in their review said, “this is an intriguing set that will appeal to fans of experimental guitar landscapes that straddle the border between ambience and noise.” The second was *The Lost Mariner* by Darin Gray and MazzaCane Connors. In his review in *AllMusic*, Dean McFarlane states, “proving that delicate and pensive moments can exist in even the most challenging diversions of avant garde music, *The Lost Mariner* is a beautiful slow-motion study of the small corners music which could only be achieved by a duo with mastery in improvisation.” In their review, *The Wire* stated, “there are hints of turbulence, half-repressed shivers of feedback, but the dominant mood is one of desolate beauty set against the backdrop of a vast horizon.” Speaking on the two releases, Weddle states, “Musically, both albums stand as some of the best work by all the artists involved. I love both dearly. Subsequently, we probably should have released *Strict* under the band name O-Type, which those guys all had used previously and eventually we did on later releases.”

Some of the early lessons that Weddle had to learn was the idea of biting off more than you could chew: “You fall in love with a record you’re releasing and believe rightly so that everyone else should love it too. That can lead to spending too much money on promotion and getting everyone involved expecting a big splash and there isn’t one. I think anyone releasing records can relate to that. It is important to be

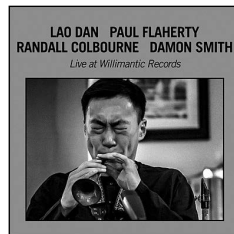
straightforward with what the label can provide an artist, especially very small labels like Family Vineyard. I am always learning lessons as the music industry and listeners, no matter what level you are operating at, change every few years.” Most of the challenges comes from balancing work and life. Weddle points out that “operating the label has never been a full-time endeavor. I’ve worked as a journalist for almost the entire period of the label. Finding the right balance of time to manage everything is an ongoing challenge. In the past few years the frequency of releases has slowed in relation to the time available.”

As a one-man operation, Weddle’s passion for the music is what keeps him wanting to work with artists on a consistent basis. “Truly, it’s what speaks to me musically and the artistry of the musician. I generally ask an artist or people I’ve already worked with share new recordings or projects to see if it would be a fit. Sales potential, publicity, streamability are not really considered when I decide to work with an artist or release a particular album.” Amid the uncertain times that we currently see ourselves in, Weddle is unsure of where Family Vineyard will be in the foreseeable future. “All of the record stores I love are shuttered. Most of my friends are without jobs. Tours, festivals are cancelled. The neighborhood bar I see bands at is no longer open. I have four manufactured titles—two LPs, two 10” records—and I’m unsure when each will be released due to all of this.” Whatever is on the horizon for the label, Family Vineyard has firmly placed a footprint on the modern avant garde community with a musical yield that is unlike any other. ❖

For more information, visit family-vineyard.com



Beautiful Dreamer
Loren Connors



Live At Willimantic Records
Lao Dan



Safe And Sane
Jim Sauter & Kid Millions



The Departing of a Dream, Vol. VII
Loren Connors/Daniel Carter



Proton Pump
Akira Sakata with Masahiko Satoh

VOXNEWS

ISLANDS IN THE STREAMING

BY SUZANNE LORGE

NEA Jazz Master **Sheila Jordan**, now 91, always has a smile at the ready. Since the beginning of the NYC lockdown, her Facebook feed has been active as friends, instrumentalists and singers check in and she’s been quick to respond with cheery messages of hope. One of the more popular posts is a video of her “The Crossing”, from the 1986 Black Hawk album of the same name, from a May 2010 duo performance with Jordan’s longtime bassist Cameron Brown; in this simple format, Jordan’s frank words about how she overcame alcohol and drug addiction stand all the more exposed. The tune’s timely message: music encourages us in the face of seemingly intractable hardship. As of this writing, Jordan is scheduled to participate on May 6th in the National Jazz Museum in Harlem’s version of “Desert Island Discs”, lectures in which jazz greats discuss the eight albums they’d bring with them into total isolation. Renowned jazz journo Ted Panken leads the discussion. It’s too soon for ironic observations, but one can appreciate the topical relevance of the exercise. (Check museum website for event changes.) Unfortunately, the Made in New York Jazz Competition Gala at the Tribeca Performing Arts

Center—originally planned for May 16th as a centennial celebration of Charlie Parker’s birth, featuring Jordan as host—is postponed until May 15th, 2021.

Portuguese word *saudade* describes the melancholic longing for things past, a sentiment rife these days. Drawing on this, last month award-winning vocalist **Alexis Cole** launched an online video series, “Saudade de Sauna”; each day she presents a different music video taped—you guessed it—in a sauna. (great acoustics, she says.) Swathed in one demure towel, she sings standards like “For All We Know”, “Give Me The Simple Life” and “A Beautiful Friendship”. This last she dedicated to the late guitarist Bucky Pizzarelli, who succumbed to the coronavirus. In 2015 Cole and Pizzarelli had partnered on an album named after that tune; her a cappella tribute to the legendary guitarist swings with warmth, gratitude and a respectful amount of saudade.

Singer **Jocelyn Medina** continues to host her Vocal Jazz Jam for Room 623, Harlem’s newest speakeasy, via Zoom on Facebook each Sunday. The structure of the real-life edition remains unchanged: a headliner, followed by a jam for singers at all levels of expertise. Props to Medina for figuring out how to do this. She debuted the virtual jam on Mar. 22nd—the first day of the New York lockdown—and celebrated the jam’s five-year anniversary and the club’s one-year anniversary on Apr. 5th remotely (Cole was the headliner that evening, sans sauna). The event maxed out at the Facebook limit of 100 attendees, bringing together self-quarantined

musicians and listeners from all around the world.

Pandemic notwithstanding, album releases continue unabated, even with live events rescheduled or on hold for the foreseeable future. Vocalist **Kat Edmonson** had to cancel the tour for *Dreamers Do* (Spinnerette), which included an April run at Birdland Theater. But she, too, has been reaching out to fans via social media, Reddit and Facebook specifically. On the latter, you can watch her perform tracks from the new album, including lilting waltz “Is It Too Late To Dream”, the original that inspired the album. On this tune’s impromptu, DIY video, taped in Edmonson’s Brooklyn apartment over the deliciously orchestrated track, the singer holds up handwritten cards that talk about heartbreak, wanting to give up and soldiering on. The rest of the album is similarly endearing: 19 other tunes present dreaming as their theme and uplift as their mission.

Concord just released *Ella 100: Live At The Apollo!*, the 2016 concert memorializing what would have been **Ella Fitzgerald**’s 100th birthday. The album reverberates with top-tier vocal talent on renditions of Fitzgerald classics, singers **David Alan Grier**, **Patti Austin**, **Andra Day**, **Lizz Wright**, **Ledisi**, **Monica Mancini** and **Cassandra Wilson** among them. Two vintage recordings of Fitzgerald in her prime bookend the program—her winning Apollo performance of “Honeysuckle Rose” and a scat-free “People”, the Jule Styne-Bob Merrill heart-breaker. The album closes with Fitzgerald’s improvised lyrics: “I’m so lucky I got people like you,” she sang. ❖

McCoy TYNER

BY ANDREY HENKIN



ALAN NAHIGIAN

McCoy Tyner, the legendary pianist, one-quarter of one of the most famed groups in jazz, the 1960-65 John Coltrane Quartet, and having his own impressive discography, died Mar. 6th at 81 after a long illness.

Tyner was born Dec. 11th, 1938 in Philadelphia. In an interview with our own Russ Musto, Tyner recalled early exposure to Bud Powell: "He got an apartment around the corner from me and they didn't have a piano. So my mother did hair and the lady who was the superintendent's wife said, 'There's this guy around here and he's a great pianist but he doesn't have a piano. Can he play on your son's piano?' ...So, I lunged. I said, 'Sure he can come around anytime he wants.'"

Tyner was only 21 when he waxed his first session, Curtis Fuller's *Imagination* (Savoy, 1959). He toured and recorded in early 1960 with Art Farmer/Benny Golson's Jazztet but didn't accept an invitation to continue because he had already pledged himself to Philadelphia transplant John Coltrane; as he recalled to Musto, "I had already played with John when I was 17 and we knew each other, like family, it was really that close."

Tyner's first work with Coltrane came in the summer of 1960 and he and Coltrane entered the studio for the first time together on Sep. 8th, 1960 to record *Like Sonny* (Roulette) with bassist Steve Davis and drummer Billy Higgins. Elvin Jones filled the drum chair in October 1960 and Jimmy Garrison (who was on Tyner's aforementioned recording debut) took over for Reggie Workman on bass in early 1962, completing a band that competes with the Miles Davis Quintet as the most significant group of the decade. With Coltrane, Tyner waxed such seminal recordings as *My Favorite Things*, *Coltrane's Sound*, *Africa/Brass*, "Live" *At The Village Vanguard*, *Crescent*, *A Love Supreme*, *Kulu Se Mama* and *Ascension* yet still found time during that period to record under Freddie Hubbard, Art Blakey, Joe Henderson, Wayne Shorter, J.J. Johnson, Grant Green, Stanley Turrentine and Milt Jackson.

Tyner debuted as a leader for Impulse in 1962 with *Inception*, followed by several more dates, then an acclaimed series of albums, first for Blue Note (1967-70, again in 1988-93) then Milestone (1972-80), Columbia (1981-82), Timeless (1987), Impulse once more (1995-97), Telarc (2002-03) and Half Note (2006-07) as well as work with Lee Morgan, Donald Byrd, Bobby Hutcherson, Flora Purim, The Manhattan Transfer, Frank Morgan, George Benson and Michael Brecker.

Discussing with Musto his often-imitated style, with heavy emphasis on left-hand chording, Tyner said, "I'm lefty, so don't mess with me, man. I got that left hook and uppercut. That could have been. One thing I did kind of say is our mind is very unique. One side of your mind operates one side of your body and the other side of the mind operates the other side of the body. So, why not think of each hand as a mind?"

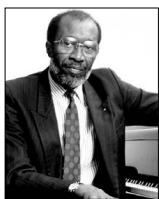
*died from complications of COVID-19



***MANU DIBANGO** (Dec. 12th, 1933-Mar. 24th, 2020) The Cameroonian saxophonist, long based in France, had dozens of albums since the late '60s on Philips, Buda Musique, Blue Moon and other labels and guest spots with Fania All-Stars, Kora Jazz Band, Gino Sitson and European pop acts. Dibango died Mar. 24th at 86.



LYN CHRISTIE (Aug. 3rd, 1928-Mar. 28th, 2020) The Australian bassist moved to the States to practice medicine but continued a parallel jazz career, recording with Mike Mainieri, Toshiko Akiyoshi, Clark Terry, Don Friedman and Mike Longo. Christie died Mar. 28th at 91.



WRAY DOWNES (Jan. 14th, 1931-Mar. 19th, 2020) The Canadian pianist had albums on Sackville and Justin Time after a 1952 credit with Bill Coleman and then '70s-90s recordings with Peter Magadini, Buddy Tate, Peter Appleyard, Archie Alleyne, Charles Biddle and others. Downes died Mar. 19th at 89.



STEVE ELIOVSON (1954-Mar. 15th, 2020) The South African acoustic guitarist made a single recording, the 1981 ECM album *Dawn Dance*, in duo with percussionist Collin Walcott (of Oregon fame) but after an accident postponed his second ECM session, disappeared from music entirely. Eliovson died Mar. 15th at 65.



KARL THEODOR GEIER (Jan. 31st, 1932-Mar. 21st, 2020) The German bassist recorded with The Modern Jazz Group Freiburg, Barney Wilen, George Gruntz, Metronome Quartet, Chet Baker and René Thomas, Gil Cuppini, John Lewis and Albert Mangelsdorff, Joki Freund and others. Geier died Mar. 21st at 88.



JANET GRICE (Oct. 2nd, 1955-Mar. 31st, 2020) The bassoonist worked in both classical and jazz, particularly Latin, with six leader or co-led albums, plus credits with Mingus Orchestra, Karl Berger, Butch Morris, Leroy Jenkins, Julius Hemphill and others. Grice died Mar. 31st at 65.



***OLLE HOLMQVIST** (Nov. 14th, 1936-Mar. 26th, 2020) The Swedish trombonist was active since the '60s with Quincy Jones, Bengt-Arne Wallin, Nils Lindberg, Sveriges Radios Jazzgrupp, Arne Domnérus, Monica Zetterlund and Lars Gullin plus a leader release in 2000 fétting ABBA, big-band style. Holmqvist died Mar. 26th at 83.



***MIKE LONGO** (Mar. 19th, 1937-Mar. 22nd, 2020) The pianist and curator of the Jazz Tuesdays series at NYC Baha'i Center recorded for Clamike in the '60s, Mainstream, Groove Merchant and Pablo in the '70s and then his own Consolidated Artists Productions (which also released albums by Andrea Brachfeld, Andy McKee, Fabian Zone, Jay D'Amico, Mark Sherman and others) from the '80s well into the new millennium, worked with Dizzy Reece, Astrud Gilberto, James Moody, Lee Konitz and others and had a long association with Dizzy Gillespie, playing in his groups and appearing on his records, a favor the trumpeter returned (playing congas and singing) on Longo's 1976 Pablo album *Talk With The Spirits*. Longo died Mar. 22nd at 83.



RAY MANTILLA (Jun. 22nd, 1934-Mar. 21st, 2020) The legendary percussionist had hundreds of credits across a wide spectrum of jazz from the '60s onwards, including dates with Herbie Mann, Max Roach, Ray Barretto, Art Blakey, Gato Barbieri, Jeremy Steig, Michal Urbaniak, Jack McDuff, Joe Farrell, Joe Beck, Cedar Walton, The Pentagon, Larry Coryell, Joe Chambers, Freddie Hubbard, Volker Kriegel, Ernie Krivda, M'Boom, Richie Cole, Takehiro Honda, Kazumi Watanabe, David Amram, Mickey Tucker, Charles Mingus, Mickey Bass, Muhal Richard Abrams, Amina Claudine Myers, James Spaulding, Bobby Watson, Kenny Burrell, Billy Taylor, Lou Donaldson, John Hicks, Joe Farnsworth and many many others to go along with his own dates for Inner City, Red, Jazz Today, HighNote and Savant. Mantilla died Mar. 21st at 85.



BOB OJEDA (Sep. 1st, 1941-Mar. 26th, 2020) The trumpeter/valve trombonist and arranger worked with Stan Kenton, Joe Morello, Les Hooper, Hank Jones, The Manhattan Transfer, Count Basie Orchestra, Lena Horne and others. Ojeda died Mar. 26th at 78.



KRZYSZTOF PENDERECKI (Nov. 23rd, 1933-Mar. 29th, 2020) The Polish composer had great renown, particularly in the U.S. for his music used in such films as *The Exorcist* and *The Shining*, and jazz cred via musicians ranging from Don Cherry, Maciej Fortuna, Mats Gustafsson and others playing his works. Penderecki died Mar. 29th at 86.



***MARCELO PERALTA** (Mar. 5th, 1961-Mar. 10th, 2020) The Argentine saxophonist was a leader or co-leader of Los Saxópatas, Grupo De Improvisacion Tercer Mundo, ¡ZAS! Trío and DixFuncional Brass Band, albums on Mellopea Discos and has the tragic distinction of being the first known jazz musician death from COVID-19. Peralta died Mar. 10th at 59.



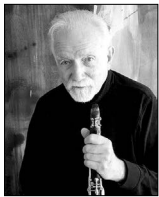
***FREDDY RODRIGUEZ** (Feb. 9th, 1931-Mar. 25th, 2020) The saxophonist was a member of trumpeter Tommy Peltier's The Jazz Corps in the late '60s, known for a 1966 Pacific Jazz LP featuring Roland Kirk (and two volumes of '60s live recordings released by Cadence Jazz in 1999 and 2001), and for decades a fixture of Denver's jazz scene. Rodriguez died Mar. 25th at 89.



***WALLACE RONEY** (May 25th, 1960-Mar. 31st, 2020) The trumpeter (brother to saxophonist Antoine, ex-husband to late pianist Geri Allen, father to fellow trumpeter Wallace, Jr. and uncle to drummer Kojo) and Miles Davis protégé began his career in the mid '70s in the Afrikan Liberation Art Ensemble, continued in the '80s and beyond on sessions led by Chico Freeman, Andy Jaffe, Tony Williams, Errol Parker, Marvin "Smitty" Smith, Cindy Blackman, James Spaulding, Kenny Garrett, Joey DeFrancesco, Art Blakey, Super Blue, Kenny Drew, Jr., Dizzy Gillespie, Geri Allen, Cody Moffett, Miles Davis, Randy Weston, Vincent Herring, Herbie Hancock, Donald Harrison, Bob Belden, Antoine Roney, Bill Evans, Rodney Whitaker, Chick Corea, Makoto Ozone, David Sanborn, Ricky Ford, Terri Lyne Carrington, Will Calhoun, Wayne Shorter, Steve Turre and others to go along with over two dozen albums made for Muse, Landmark, Warner Bros., Stretch and HighNote. Roney died Mar. 31st at 59.



SIMEON SHTEREV (Oct. 24th, 1973-Mar. 26th, 2020) The Bulgarian flutist worked in both jazz and classical spheres, released albums on his country's state label Balkanton and later PolySound, was a member of the famed Jazz Focus 65 band alongside pianist Milcho Leviev and drummer Peter Slavov (father of bassist Peter Slavov) and recorded with Leviev, Václav Zahradník, Bosko Petrovic, Debrecen Jazz Group, Dinamit Brass Band and Pliva Jazz Laboratory among others. Shterev died Mar. 26th at 76.



BILL SMITH (Sep. 22nd, 1926-Feb. 29th, 2020) The clarinetist and composer embodied the title of his 1974 CRI album *Two Sides Of Bill Smith* as William Overton, noted classical composer from the late '50s onwards with albums on Stereo, Fantasy, RCA Victor, Cambridge, Contemporary, CRI, Crystal, New World and Ravenna and Bill, jazz clarinetist with credits under Dave Brubeck (1948, 1950, 1959-61, 1982-87, 1991-93), Red Norvo, Barney Kessel, Shelly Manne and American Jazz Ensemble in the '50s-60s and, decades later, Anthony Braxton, Christian Asplund and Tom Collier. Smith died Feb. 29th at 93.



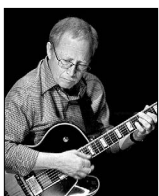
BUBBHA THOMAS (1937-Mar. 28th, 2020) The drummer began as a session musician, then released several albums in the '70s with his Lightmen (which included at times Ronnie Laws, Doug Harris and Hugh Ragin, among others) on Judnell and his own Lightnin' imprint, which also released his 1985 boogie album. Thomas died Mar. 28th at 82.



DANNY RAY THOMPSON (Oct. 1st, 1947-Mar. 12th, 2020) The reed and wind player was a member of the Sun Ra Arkestra from the late '60s to the present day (fired in the late '80s and returning several years after Ra's death), appearing on over 100 albums, including such seminal dates *It's After The End Of The World - Live At The Donaueschingen And Berlin Festivals* (MPS, 1970), *Space Is The Place* (Blue Thumb, 1973), *In Egypt* (Praxis, 1983), *Reflections In Blue* (Black Saint, 1987) and *Blue Delight* (A&M, 1989) and managing the band for a period, as well as a couple of non-Ra credits with Phil Alvin and Scott Robinson, plus a co-led record with fellow Arkestra member Marshall Allen, trombonist Roswell Rudd, keyboard player Jamie Saft, bassist Trevor Dunn and drummer Balázs Pándi for RareNoise, *Ceremonial Healing*, released in 2019. Thompson died Mar. 12th at 73.



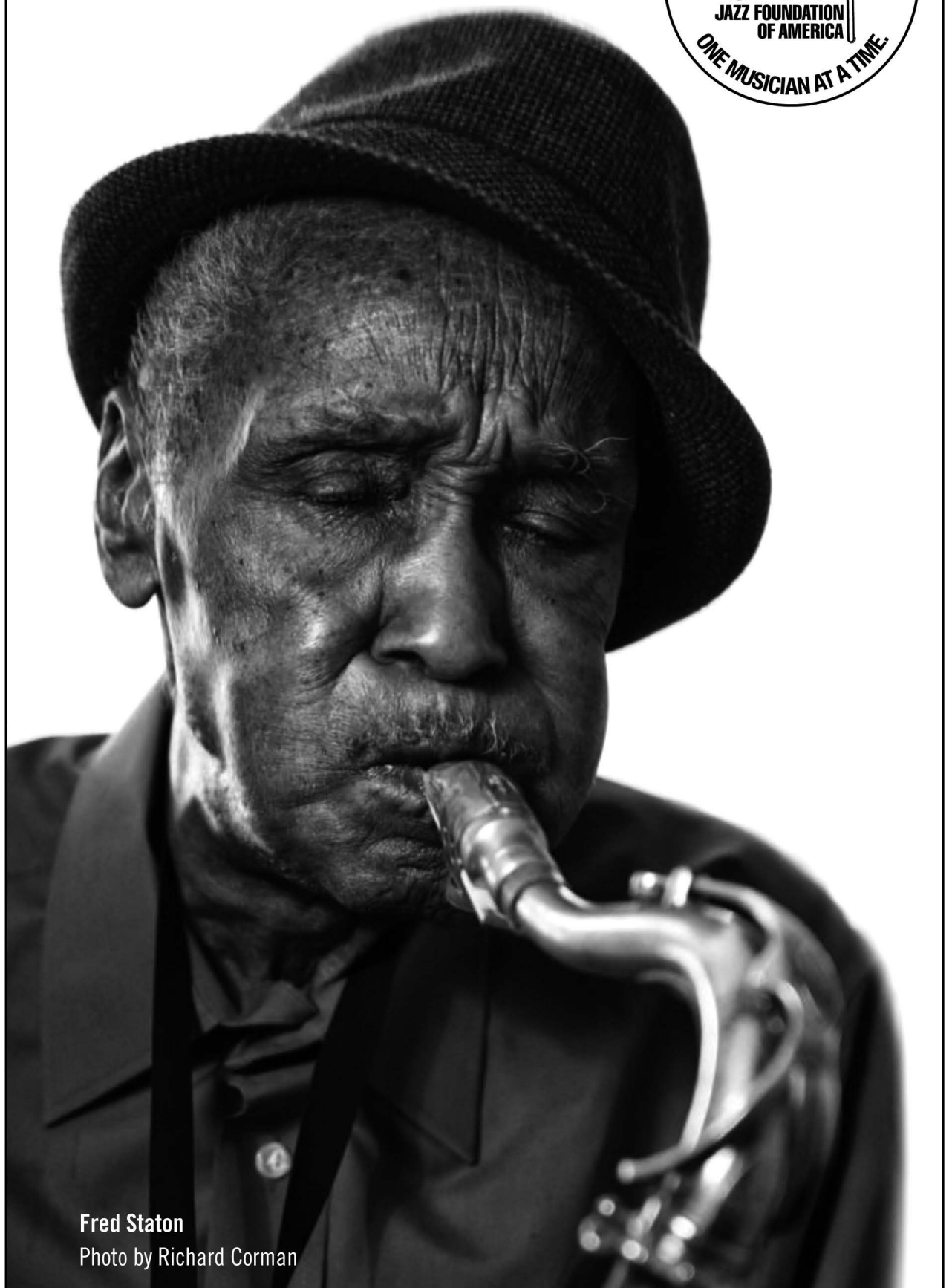
SUSAN WEINERT (Jun. 24th, 1965-Mar. 2nd, 2020) The German fusion guitarist had several albums to her credit since the '90s on Select, Intuition, Skip and her own Tough Tone label, most with her bassist husband Martin Weinert. Weinert died Mar. 2nd at 54.



BARRY ZWEIG (Feb. 7th, 1942-Mar. 15th, 2020) The guitarist had a single leader session, *Desert Vision* (Jazz Chronicles, 1978), but after time spent in the army and performing as part of the NORAD "Commanders" Orchestra, recording credits with Buddy Rich, Willie Bobo, Dave Pell, Bill Holman, Herb Alpert, Bill Elliott, Frank Capp and, in the world of children's music, John Lithgow's *Singin' In The Bathtub* (Sony Wonder, 1999) and Alvin and The Chipmunks' *A Chipmunk Christmas* (RCA, 1981). Zweig died Mar. 15th at 78. ❖

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Fred Staton
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TAKTLOS

BY JOHN SHARPE

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Mark Feldman & Sylvie Courvoisier

She's been such a fixture on the downtown scene that it's easy to forget Brooklyn-based pianist Sylvie Courvoisier's Swiss origins. But it meant she was perfectly placed to curate an exciting mix of American and homegrown acts for the 34th edition of the Taktlos Festival (Mar. 12th-14th) in Zürich, held in the roomy surroundings of the Kunstraum Walcheturm, within the city's old arsenal complex.

That the event was such a success—and indeed happened at all—owed much to the improvisatory skill of the organizers in adapting to the changes wrought by the rapidly developing coronavirus pandemic on both availability of musicians and social climate. Courvoisier both opened and closed the festival, affirming her status as one of the most complete creative musicians.

For the first set she paired with longtime collaborator violinist Mark Feldman in an unscripted, restless, uncompromising but nonetheless spellbinding duet. From the outset, the level of interaction was preternatural as if they were conversing in a deeply personal secret language. Feldman's querulous wisps floated into the air, before Courvoisier answered by running her thumbnail along the edge of the keys. Feldman moved between whistling glissandos, vinegary sawing and plucked notes rounded off with the bow while Courvoisier reveled in the sonic possibilities, whether generating cascades of clusters by applying the backs of her hands and forearms, or effortlessly integrating preparations to sound both primitive and modern. At one point she alternated between modifications at opposite extremes of the keyboard, contrasting a curiously dampened, almost metallic treble against a twanging bottom end and a full-voiced middle. Feldman's responses were never predictable, except that he hardly ever echoed, resulting in a music strange and ambiguous, but still full of drama.

Courvoisier returned for the final set of the Festival with her trio. It was to be the first date of a much longer tour but with coronavirus restrictions and cancellations multiplying by the day, it didn't make sense for drummer Kenny Wollesen to fly in from New York for a single gig. Instead she and bassist Drew Gress were augmented by the already present Tom Rainey on drums. One of her most potent settings, the trio allows full rein to her rhythmic drive without sacrificing the complexity and risktaking that makes her work so enthralling. They began with the rolling vamp, suspenseful pauses, intricate interlocking parts and abrupt hairpins of "Double Imprint", with space for Gress to step forward woven into the fabric and Rainey picking up accents, swinging forcefully but still sensitive and alert to sudden switches of mood.

Whether on the brooding timbral adventure of "Nightmare", the explosive "Just Twisted" or the bright bounce of "Éclats For Ornette", astonishing three-way interplay within the contours of Courvoisier's slyly crafted charts formed the touchstone of a wonderful closing set.

Courvoisier's bookending appearances weren't the only highlights. With prospective partner Japanese pianist Aki Takase grounded on doctor's orders, saxophonist Ingrid Laubrock reconvened Sleepthief, her improvising outfit with Rainey and British pianist Liam Noble that has released a pair of albums on local imprint Intakt. While Rainey and Laubrock enjoy a near-telepathic communication, Noble plays with them much less frequently, but his richly voiced percussive presence, repeating motifs and blocky counterpoint fulfilled a key role in this unit, helping set off Laubrock's shifts between reflective multiphonics, choppy skronk and breathy impressionism while Rainey engineered contrasts and juxtapositions as the three elements meshed in unexpected ways.

As well as being a groundbreaking electric guitarist, improviser and composer, Fred Frith also teaches at the Basel Academy of Music, an hour's drive to the west. He conducted the 19-strong student ensemble entitled Sonic Space through his Samuel Beckett-inspired composition "Failing Better". Among the staggered rhythmic layers of a largely notated piece, two accomplished vocalists, Lara Miriam Süß and Marie-Louise Schneider, declaimed the text in a manner recalling Kurt Weill or even Henry Cow while controlled eruptions of improvisation within the overall architecture showcased scratchy rasping cello, bowed percussion and a thorny oud/cello duet, among others. The prevailing vibe was disciplined and elegant, the outcome superb.

Pianist Cory Smythe gave a captivating and slightly unsettling solo performance, which resided at the interface between contemporary new music and free improvisation. What was remarkable was how Smythe subtly used an array of electronics and implements to alter or supplement the sound, without in any way suggesting that what we were hearing was anything other than piano. One of two Midi keyboards situated within the body of the grand enabled microtonal flourishes, making it seem that Smythe was flexing the tonality of the instrument. Towards the end, in apparently surreal anticipation of the looming pandemic, Smythe donned a gas mask with a tube linked into the electronics, which made it possible to give sustained tones a vocalized shape. Add to that passages of spectral resonance and crashing thunder and the whole recital took on a dream-like, otherworldly dimension.

Feldman's Maniac was comprised of Courvoisier and Swiss guitarist Dave Gisler instead of the absent Uri Caine, alongside the leader, Gress and Rainey. With Maniac, the classical feel that permeates other parts of Feldman's work was tempered by the metrical cut and thrust of the writing. They opened at a jazzy lilt, before toggling between bristling extemporizations from the pairing of the leader and Gisler, and the piano, bass and drums threesome, until uniting in a quickstepping refrain. Feldman was as virtuosic as ever, moving from unnerving squeals to mournful airs and everything in between. In a continuous set Feldman guided his comrades through capricious twists and turns, which encompassed swinging sections, emphatic cadences, romantic coloration and a perky hoedown, while also unfurling opportunities for spiky abstract improv.

Gress also took to the stage alone for a rare unaccompanied bass outing, spotlighting the interwoven strands of melodic and propulsive invention that have made him such a sought-after accomplice. Across four extemporizations he maintained a rich stream of ideas, sometimes establishing a conversation between opposing voices, rejoicing in singing bow work, exploring staccato

outbursts and even seeming to paraphrase "Lush Life" at one juncture.

Among the Swiss acts, from behind a custom-assembled kit, drummer Julian Sartorius joined in percussive tandem with the synthesizers of Hans-Peter Pfammatter in a darkened auditorium, invoking variously a gamelan orchestra and industrial noise. Spidery patterns rubbed shoulders with trancy beats, percolating electric piano sonorities and dial-twiddling swooshes in a set that touched on both minimalism and metal.

Two groups of young Zürich-based musicians blended electronic and acoustic sources in co-operative communion. No Flores comprised Gisler, alto saxophonist Tobias Meier and drummer Jonas Ruther, with guest Ramon Landolt on keyboards; without solos they gradually built to a thumping crescendo, from which they slowly withdrew. Similarly selfless, Special Circumstance also included Landolt in their number along with his brother guitarist Dominik, saxophonist Tapiwa Svosve, accordion player Tizia Zimmermann and drummer David Meier to display impressive shared restraint across similar but more open terrain. Initially delicate with sporadic flare-ups, none of the instruments appeared constrained to their customary roles, an approach that continued even when they took an aggressive turn into a synchronous beat with a middle eastern modality.

Two days after the festival finished, the Swiss authorities prohibited all public gatherings, restrictions that have now covered most of the continent. It now seems to belong to another time. But when normality is restored, Taktlos should figure highly in anyone's concert calendar. ❖

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(INTERVIEW CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6)

Ellington's orchestrations and compositions; I live there, am home there. Phillip Elwood, a Bay Area jazz critic, out of nowhere, asked in '73 if I wanted to be a guest at the Keystone Korner to hear Cecil Taylor. I went four out of six nights. I realized months later that I had been deeply transformed as a pianist. Randy Weston I heard later in life. When I did, I was struck by what felt like heavy parallels. His angularity, rhythmic orientation, synthesis of idioms and influences add up to something I feel very close to. He loved Duke and Monk and Billy Strayhorn, as I do I. We became friends. I had the dream to play duo with Randy.

TNYCJR: What does/did it feel like to be a female bandleader in a male-dominated field? Is it/was it difficult? Has it changed over the years?

MR: Of course, it has had its challenges and I do have stories to tell. I started my own groups because I was ready to go—writing and ready to play—but wasn't getting calls. So that was not a bad thing ultimately. When I was 18-19 and realized my position as a woman in this society, damn straight I was mad. That was a part of my necessary process and good for me. But I identified with the jazz field as a whole as well as all others who were wronged, mistreated, left out. In hindsight, many things happened that I just felt puzzled about but I moved on. When I look back, I can say, "oh yeah, that probably went down like that because I'm a woman." I had my strategies and avoided many pitfalls. I've learned to surround myself with all the right people, feeling nothing but love and support from ensemble members and my advocates and allies. It's changing but in some ways maybe never will. Racism and sexism go deep. Once the 'quota' is met, you are dispensable. Only so many of us are allowed through at one time.

TNYCJR: You performed with many notable jazz artists: Jimmy Heath, Billy Hart, Reggie Workman, Celia Cruz, Paquito D'Rivera, to name a few. Do you have special memories, interesting anecdotes you want to share with readers?

MR: Jimmy Heath smiled at me on stage throughout all of my solos. Billy Hart, incredibly humble, serious and funny, quirky and deep. When Reggie Workman and I played duo he kept calling tunes I didn't know. I was truly embarrassed and apologetic and said so afterwards. He looked angry and said, "You ain't 'SPOSED to have that all memorized. You're a composer and busy creating your OWN musical standards." In all honesty I might have taken that too much to heart. I could stand to have a greater repertoire of memorized standards.

TNYCJR: Let's talk about some of your recordings. Your first recording was as a pianist and arranger for the Cuban group Los Kimy in 1981. What is it about Latin, especially Cuban music, that fueled your lifelong passion?

MR: Can't fully put it in words. Once it touched me, it never let go. And it has followed me as much as I have followed it. I don't believe that we come to this life as a blank slate, besides the fact that my roots include ancestry from Spain and North Africa and Cuba IS Spain and Africa. The Los Kimy band members found me. That was a crazy and exciting time in my life. I love this recording to this day.

TNYCJR: *The Source*, released in 1984 on Soul Note, was your debut album. *DownBeat* at the time compared you radiance and ingenuity to that of Charles Mingus. Was this album instrumental for your rise and reputation?

MR: That was a deep compliment. A first recording as leader is always a landmark moment, to the public as well. It garnered my first major reviews. I chose to record in an uncompromising way, not knowing if the broader public would receive it well, as it was quite avant garde from beginning to end. For me, it represents early stages of development.

TNYCJR: Talk about your ensembles and recordings. Who were your most important collaborators?

MR: I mainly presented trios and my Quintessence and New Yor-Uba ensembles. Trios with masters Rufus Reid, Billy Hart, Freddie Waits. My first trio recording was with Rufus and Ralph Peterson. Later, I had the ongoing trio with Kenny Davis on bass and Gene Jackson on drums that recorded *Spirit* live at the Montréal Jazz Festival. They were the rhythm section for my Quintessence ensemble for a lot of years and we were so connected.

TNYCJR: Talk about the five albums you recorded for Enja with Quintessence. The first one, *Quintessence* from 1987, continues to be recognized as one of the best jazz recordings of the decade. In 2006, *The In Side Out* was released. Describe your musical journey over the years with this ensemble.

MR: Quintessence was my main vehicle as pianist and composer for creating and presenting unique, challenging music. This ensemble always had a two-horn original voice frontline including Greg Osby, Steve Coleman, Gary Thomas, Steve Wilson, Mark Shim and Miguel Zenón. The rhythm section players and approach were equally vital to the ensemble sound I strived for.

TNYCJR: What about your work with New Yor-Uba from the beginning to your latest album *Hallowed*? This has been a journey of more than 35 years.

MR: New Yor-Uba is my longest-standing ensemble, having debuted in 1983. Puntilla was with me for 25 years. He brought Pedrito Martinez and Román Díaz in. So when he passed in 2008, they became central. We forever play in Puntilla's honor. We finally released our debut recording, *New Yor-Uba, 30 Years!*, in 2013. Two original members are on it, Oliver Lake and Howard Johnson, and it features Pedrito Martinez on vocals and Román Díaz, Pedrito and Abraham Rodriguez on batá, Freddie Hendrix and Mike Lee filling out the horn section, Yuniór Terry on bass and Adam Cruz on drums. We garnered the #1 NPR Latin Jazz recording of the year and made many #1 and best of the year lists.

Hallowed, our second recording, was born of a Chamber Music America commission and was recently released. I worked closely with Román Díaz. He is a deep collaborator. He interacts with the soloists and all the other energies in the ensemble while remaining rooted deeply in tradition at all times. Román brought in the two other monster percussionists. It just keeps going. Through the years, many great musicians from both musical worlds have been a part of this ensemble: [recently departed] Andy Gonzalez, Billy Harper, Antonio Hart, Gary Bartz...the list goes on. ❖

For more information, visit michelerosewoman.com. *Rosewoman* was scheduled to be at Dizzy's Club.

Recommended Listening:

- Billy Bang Quintet—*Rainbow Gladiator* (Soul Note, 1981)
- Michele Rosewoman Quartet—*The Source* (Soul Note, 1983)
- Michele Rosewoman—*Quintessence* (Enja, 1987)
- Ralph Peterson Quintet—*Art* (Somethin' Else-Blue Note, 1992)

- Michele Rosewoman—*Spirit* (Somethin' Else-Blue Note, 1994)
- Michele Rosewoman's New Yor-Uba—*30 Years!: A Musical Celebration of Cuba in America* (Advance Dance Disques, 2013)

(ENCORE CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10)

Payen and tuba player Jon Sass; and Czech avant garde bassist Jiří Slavík. In 2010, after a 16-year run, Hammond ended his work as Coordinator of the Jazz am Berg series in Linz, Austria for world-class, international jazz and blues artists. As for poetry, which he began writing as a schoolboy, his works include *In This Maze of Seeming Wonders* (1974), *Lonely Music Man* (1982), *Times on the Planet Earth* (2000), *The Offer* (2001) and e-book *The Dope of Power* (2011). About his artistry he concludes, "One defining fact—99 percent of my work is not about me or my attitude or personality. It is only about the music and creative input and much more, which words cannot describe. There is no commonality even in one area. If there is such, it is for the listeners to enjoy." ❖

For more information, visit doughammond.org

Recommended Listening:

- Doug Hammond & David Durrah—*Reflections In The Sea of Nurnen* (Idibib/Tribe—Pure Pleasure, 1975)
- James "Blood" Ulmer—*Revealing* (In+Out, 1977)
- Doug Hammond—*Folks* (Idibib-Manufactured, 1978/1980)
- Doug Hammond Trio—*Perspicuity* (L+R, 1981-82)
- Doug Hammond—*Spaces* (Idibib-Manufactured, 1982)
- Doug Hammond—*New Beginning* (Blue Marge, 2009-10)

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Avant Scena, February 2020

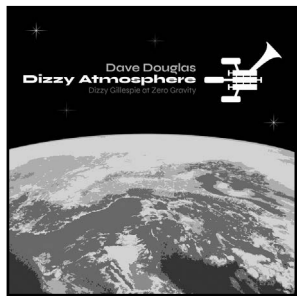
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ALBUM REVIEWS



Dizzy Atmosphere (Dizzy Gillespie at Zero Gravity)
Dave Douglas (Greenleaf Music)
 by Phil Freeman

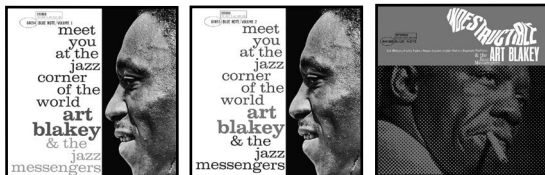
Most jazz tributes take the logical, if uninspired, approach of assembling a band to perform the music of a noted artist. Sometimes the rearrangements can be quite radical, as on trumpeter Nate Wooley's 2015 CD (*Dance to the Early Music*, on which he interpreted and paid tribute to the early '80s work of Wynton Marsalis. Too often, though, they're just wan imitations.

Trumpeter Dave Douglas prefers a different method. In February 2018, he prepared a concert program, presented by Jazz at Lincoln Center and showcasing a band of Ambrose Akinmusire on second trumpet, Bill Frisell on guitar, Gerald Clayton on piano, Linda May Han Oh on bass and Joey Baron on drums. They performed a few Gillespie compositions, but most of the music was written by Douglas, with Gillespie as inspiration. This studio album features an almost entirely different ensemble. Dave Adewumi is in the second trumpet spot; Matt Stevens, who has worked with Esperanza Spalding and Christian Scott, is on guitar; Fabian Almazan is on piano; and Carmen Rothwell is on bass. Baron is still behind the kit.

The album includes versions of Gillespie's "Pickin' the Cabbage" and "Manteca". The former, with its shuffling beat and old-timey growling horn riffs (it was written when Gillespie was a member of Cab Calloway's band), has an off-kilter exuberance that brings to mind the Ghost Train Orchestra; the horns go at each other hard, the guitar has real bite and when Baron takes a solo before the final head, he drags the whole thing straight into the gutter. The latter embraces the energy of Latin jazz while dodging all the genre's clichés; Stevens' solo recalls Marc Ribot's work with Tom Waits. Among the original tunes, "Cadillac" has a spacious warmth not unlike the music of Douglas' recent quintet; the call and response of Gillespie's "Swing Low, Sweet Cadillac" are affectionately hinted at, but not mimicked.

Ultimately, this is an album that stands on its own—if it draws more attention to Dizzy Gillespie's vast body of work, great, but you could come to it cold and hear a batch of genuinely inspired music by living masters and that's great too.

For more information, visit greenleafmusic.com. This project was scheduled to be at Jazz Standard.



Meet You at the Jazz Corner of the World, Volume 1
Art Blakey & The Jazz Messengers (Blue Note)
Meet You at the Jazz Corner of the World, Volume 2
Art Blakey & The Jazz Messengers (Blue Note)
Indestructible
Art Blakey & The Jazz Messengers (Blue Note)
 by George Kanzler

These three reissued LPs present two versions of the early '60s Jazz Messengers that featured trumpeter Lee Morgan and tenor saxophonist Wayne Shorter, who were 22 and 27, respectively, when the live *Jazz Corner of the World* sessions were recorded at Birdland on Sep. 14th, 1960. Drummer/leader Art Blakey was the

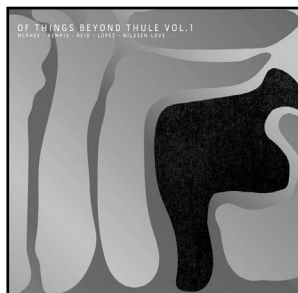
elder at 40 while recently departed bassist Jymie Merritt was 34, pianist Bobby Timmons, 24. So three 20-somethings were the main soloists in what is considered one of the classic editions in the over-three-decades of Jazz Messengers history. Morgan and Shorter were still on board over three years later when the studio album *Indestructible!* was recorded in April 1964, adding Curtis Fuller, 29, on trombone and featuring pianist Cedar Walton, 30 and bassist Reggie Workman, 26. Since taking the Jazz Messengers from a collective to his own band in 1956, Blakey was already establishing it as a jazz "finishing school" for young musicians, something it would remain for the rest of his life.

Reissues of vinyl LPs like these have pluses and minuses. On the plus side is the rich, vibrant sound quality of the discs themselves, the sound unmediated by digital alteration. But that also makes the sound more ambient, especially in the case of live on-site recordings like the two *Jazz Corner of the World* ones. Unfortunately Birdland wasn't an ideal location for live recordings and the sound, while immediate and very alive, also includes such distractions as an out-of-tune piano and horns that don't always face the microphones. *Indestructible!* is much better; recorded by Rudy Van Gelder at his studio, it is a completely satisfying aural experience.

But what distinguishes these LPs most is the high quality of the music. The Jazz Messengers heard at Birdland had just returned to Blakey's Big Apple base from a European tour and a week on the West Coast. The repertoire was well seasoned and the performances are assured, everything clicking in place with rhythmic panache. The Birdland session (the whole night in two volumes) displays the breadth of the band's command, from the bluesy mood of Hank Mobley's "High Modes", featuring a rare Harmon-muted Morgan solo, to a "Round Midnight" adapting aspects of Gil Evans' chart for Miles Davis' 1956 recording, but shifting the coda to an intro. Turnarounds and tempo shifts also occur effortlessly on "The Breeze and I" and Shorter's "The Summit", with the aplomb only a constantly working band can execute perfectly.

The studio sessions on *Indestructible!*, obviously not as well known as the Birdland repertoire, is just as flawlessly played. Fuller is fully integrated—Shorter was the musical director—and he contributes two originals, including a "Sortie" enlivened by polyrhythmic 12/8 time shifts by Blakey, whose drumkit rallies, pushes, cheers and goads soloists. Walton's "When Love Is New" also demonstrates that although the Jazz Messengers were a hard-driving, swinging unit, they could also caress a ballad with proper tenderness.

For more information, visit bluenote.com. A Blakey tribute was scheduled to be at Jazz at Lincoln Center.



Of Things Beyond Thule, Vol. 1
**Joe McPhee/Dave Rempis/Tomeka Reid/
 Brandon Lopez/Paal Nilssen-Love (Aerophonic)**
 by John Sharpe

Sometimes the best things happen almost by accident. Saxophonist Dave Rempis assembled the starry crew of improvisers on *Of Things Beyond Thule* at Chicago's Hungry Brain for a one-off meeting when he found them all either in town or available in December 2018. While some connections existed between reedplayer/trumpeter Joe McPhee, cellist Tomeka Reid, bassist Brandon Lopez and drummer Paal Nilssen-Love,

Rempis was the common denominator. The resultant collective improvisation, culled from the encounter and spread across two sides of limited-edition vinyl, belies the intensity you would expect from this roster... at least to start.

As the piece ebbs and flows, it moves through a series of moods, but without anyone attempting to light the blue touch paper. Nilssen-Love issues periodic bursts of power, but as isolated moments rather than a stream of plot points. Rempis' plaintive baritone piping strikes a similarly restrained note, only combusting briefly to wail in tandem with Reid's wiry sawing. It's not until the 10-minute mark that McPhee appears, at which juncture his pocket trumpet flurries bicker with the heftier horn as strings and drums churn. The first peak soon follows, as McPhee interrupts his lively blues-infused brass with exuberant whoops and the band congeals into a lurching groove.

Although McPhee guides and authors some of the finest passages, it's nonetheless group music. Baritone murmurs supply the segue to the second side, which begins with a timbral patchwork of creaks, susurrations and mutters. Once again pocket trumpet leads the surge, abetted by interwoven arco strings, before McPhee switches to tenor, at which point both saxophones braid in loose consonance. Then comes the zenith. After an episode of darkly bowed cello, McPhee takes center stage alone in Ben Webster-ian guise, conjuring an emotional charge by supplementing his spiritual-informed cry with vocal overtones. A free anthem chorus ensues for a tumultuous but uplifting finale. A second volume is due to be released this month. Lucky us.

For more information, visit aerophonicrecords.com. McPhee was scheduled to be at 244 Rehearsal Studios.

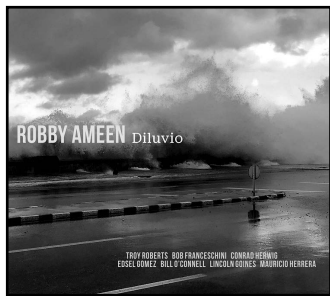
RECOMMENDED NEW RELEASES

- Ahmed Abdullah Diaspora Meets AfroHORN – *Jazz: A Music of the Spirit (Out of Sistas' Place) (s/r)*
- Kat Edmonson – *Dreamers Do (Spinnerette)*
- Erroll Garner – *Gemini (Octave Music-Mack Avenue)*
- Alexander Hawkins/Tomeka Reid – *Shards and Constellations (Intakt)*
- Sigurd Hole – *Lys/Mørke (s/r)*
- Irreversible Entanglements – *Who Sent You? (International Anthem)*
- Karuna Trio (Adam Rudolph/Ralph M. Jones/Hamid Drake) – *Imaginary Archipelago (Meta)*
- James Brandon Lewis/Chad Taylor – *Live in Willisau (Intakt)*
- Mike McGinnis – *Time is Thicker (Open Stream Music)*
- Rufus Reid/Sullivan Fortner – *Always in The Moment (Newvelle)*

Laurence Donohue-Greene, Managing Editor

- Yoon Sun Choi/Jacob Sacks – *I Should Care (Yeah Yeah)*
- Elephant9 – *Psychedelic Backfire I (Rune Grammofon)*
- Peter Evans Being & Becoming – *Eponymous (More is More)*
- Fire! Orchestra – *Actions (Rune Grammofon)*
- Ella Fitzgerald – *The Complete Piano Duets (Verve)*
- Luca T. Mai – *Heavenly Guide (Trost)*
- Rufus Reid/Sullivan Fortner – *Always in The Moment (Newvelle)*
- Sun Ra – *Haverford College 1980 (Solo Rhodes Piano) (Sun Ra LLC)*
- John Tchicai Quartet – *Live at The Stone (Minus Zero)*
- François Tusques/Sunny Murray – *Intercommunal Dialogue 1&2 (Ni-Vu-Ni-Connu)*

Andrey Henkin, Editorial Director



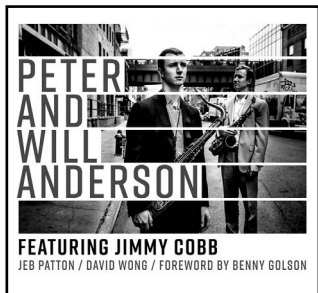
Diluvio
Robby Ameen (Origin)
 by Russ Musto

Robby Ameen's leader work showcases his distinctive drumming, applied to a wide array of musical contexts, from straightahead and fusion to pop and rock. *Diluvio* (Spanish for flood), his third effort, finds him in the company of saxophonists Troy Roberts and Bob Franceschini, trombonist Conrad Herwig, pianists Edsel Gomez and Bill O'Connell, electric/acoustic bassist Lincoln Goines and conguero Mauricio Herrera.

The music, predominantly Ameen's compositions, is jarring in its originality, both rhythmically and harmonically much unlike anything else heard today. The opening "Fast Eye" lives up to its title, rapid-fire drumming and insistently ringing cowbell driving the two tenors in their harmonically distinctive directions. Franceschini's use of electronic effects conjures Eddie Harris and Rahsaan Roland Kirk, before Herwig swings straightahead, introducing a series of exchanges between the horns and drums followed by a Fender Rhodes interlude, the exchanges continuing to an exhilarating finish. "Cremant" is a funky tipico outing with a steady conga beat underpinning soulful solos by Herwig, Franceschini (again utilizing effects) and Gomez (now on piano) and Goines (on electric), which kicks off the ensuing "Tempest Dance", a melodic Caribbean-tinged excursion with a climactic drum solo.

Ameen's beautiful arrangement of Bach's "Herr Jesu Christ, wahr' Mensch und Gott, BWV 127: Aria" has intertwining soprano saxophones in an ascendant dialogue over the slow cadenced foundation of the rhythm section. O'Connell joins the fray on Fender Rhodes, in tandem with Gomez' piano, for "The Drifter's Plan", reminiscent of Herbie Hancock's *Headhunters*. He then takes over the piano chair for the remainder of the date, beginning with "Mixology", a two-tenor quintet romp through rhythm changes culminating with a lyrical acoustic bass solo. "Into The Clear" is a lithely waltzing ballad that features Roberts' brawny tenor and Ameen's sensitive brushwork. The soulful arrangement of Gerry Mulligan's "Line For Lyons" has trombone and baritone (Franceschini) filling out the frontline with tenor (Roberts). The date comes to an exciting finish with Roberts' arrangement of "Impressions", on which he overdubs several harmonized horn parts on top of a tenor-drums duet.

For more information, visit originarts.com. This project was scheduled to be at Nublu 151.



Featuring Jimmy Cobb
Peter and Will Anderson (Outside In Music)
 by Marilyn Lester

Identical twins Peter and Will Anderson are versatile reed masters, the former specializing in tenor saxophone and clarinet, the latter alto saxophone, clarinet and flute. They were mentored by giants of the

reed, chiefly Joe Temperley, Benny Golson (who wrote the liner notes) and Victor Goines. For their latest album, their tenth, they concentrate strictly on their respective saxophone talents, applied to a mix of standards and new tunes (many of them contrafacts).

Their choice of Jimmy Cobb respects tradition. There's no heavy lifting required of the drummer, but his steady, creative work undergirds the totality of the ten tracks. His brief solos on "Rhythm in F" (Peter Anderson) and "Jeannine" (Duke Pearson) demonstrate his prodigious chops the best. These two pieces are the most adventuresome and energetic, cooking with fast-paced bop tempos and creative phrasings and riffs. By contrast, two ballads, "Autumn in New York" (Vernon Duke) and "Polka Dots and Moonbeams" (Jimmy Van Heusen-Johnny Burke), are gently played works and don't drift too far from the melody but still include enough creative ideas to make the pieces fresh.

What's remarkable is the synergy between the brothers, paradoxically individualistic in their playing and yet at the same time eerily similar in their voicings. Beyond receiving the same training, this phenomenon is likely due to that psychic bond that twins often share. Hence, when they harmonize together, notably on "Pick Your Spot" (Will Anderson) and "Jeannine", the sound has a special, soulful quality. Another high point is Will Anderson's "Hot and Cold", a contrafact of that favorite jazz standard "Body and Soul" (Johnny Green), transmuted into an uptempo romp with Will's facile and expert fingering driving the work forward to a satisfying conclusion.

Aside from the steady, solid presence of Cobb, the rhythm section is rounded out by pianist Jeb Patton and bassist David Wong. Both expertly provide supportive backup. Their playing never overwhelms, yet is an audible presence complementing the brothers in their duets or solos.

For more information, visit outsideinmusic.com. The Andersons were scheduled to be at Birdland and Dizzy's Club.



The Complete Night: Live at The Stone NYC
The MacroQuartet (Out Of Your Head)
 by George Grella

This is an odd record, though that's not a pejorative. This live set was recorded back in 2007, not so distant a point in history that one cannot recall the period, the exhaustion of what had then been only six years of war, growth of the surveillance state, contempt for humanity shown through torture and the neglect of New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina. Yet nothing about the playing sounds like 2007, nor any era in particular from 1959 on.

Weight and a kind of churning feeling are the hallmarks. Improvising live, the quartet—twin trumpets of Dave Ballou and Herb Robertson, Drew Gress on bass and Tom Rainey at the drums—seems at an aesthetic distance from the listeners. They're not trying to fire anybody up or, refreshingly, are there any gestures meant to manipulate a response. The band makes music of dark beauty, something that they seem to surround and leave for the listener to approach.

There are two added quirks here in that Ballou and Robertson have unfortunately receded somewhat from the scene and this album is a document of the group's first public appearance (a two-disc set, the first is a reissue of *Each Part Whole*, a 2009 Ruby Flower release, while the second disc has never been heard before).

The playing has a remarkably consistent emotional and intellectual tenor (free music throughout). There are individual titled tracks, but each blends together with an unstoppable flow that maintains the same pace for the duration of both discs—heard digitally, it is close to two hours of what seems like a single piece. It's close to Ornette Coleman's *Free Jazz* in the way it courses along with an intuitive naturalness. That album was more like the Jackson Pollock painting used on the cover; this is more like watching ripple after ripple course through a pond.

For more information, visit outofyourheadrecords.com. This project was scheduled to be at Greenwich House Music School.

UNEARTHED GEM

intercommunal
dialogue
françois tusques
sunny murray

1

dans la jungle des villes
les fleurs du grand crotone
dans la jungle des villes (suite et fin)
l'acrobate
dérivée 1&2
circospection
crescuscio with nelli
enregistré en public au triton, les lilas
20 septembre 2007

intercommunal
dialogue
françois tusques
sunny murray

2

sérénité
brûle brûle brûle
portrait ericka huggins
le grand-mère
au chat qui pêche
le 13ème doigt de bud powell
piget
recorded live at le triton, les lilas
20 septembre 2007

Intercommunal Dialogue 1 & 2
François Tusques/Sunny Murray (Ni-Vu-Ni-Connu)
 by Pierre Crépon

After his release from prison in 1970, Black Panther Party co-founder Huey P. Newton introduced his theory of intercommunalism: America was an empire directly or indirectly spanning the globe and standing in dialectical contradiction with the real units of a post-nations world—communities. Newton's theory had an unforeseen posterity in the work of French pianist François Tusques. This new archival release featuring a live 2007 duet with drummer Sunny Murray clearly references—up to the cover's typography—Tusques' 1971 masterwork *Intercommunal Music*. Recorded for the Shandar label with Murray and five other Americans-in-Paris, that 1971 date was not originally supposed to be an octet affair. It is easy to imagine that it is in a "what if" spirit that the 2007 duet was organized and filmed for Antoine Prum's Murray documentary *Sunny's Time Now*.

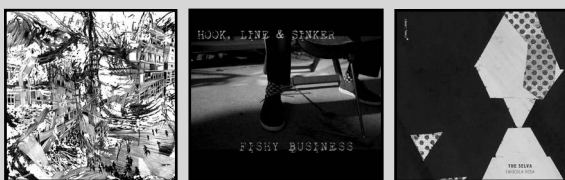
Although identified with free jazz' heydays, Tusques has always been a composer first. His great strength has been to constitute a deep but unaffected repertoire of personal, often blues-based compositions offering enough contact surface to work anew in many contexts. "Au Chat qui pêche" is titled after the Paris club where Don Cherry perfected the suite form heard on *Complete Communion*. Tusques is one of the rare musicians who carried on Cherry's approach, segueing from theme to theme with an improvisational ease, magnifying them into renewed assemblages.

It is the *modus operandi* used here, on four ten-minute walks through a dozen Tusques pieces, plus a Monk tune that feels at home. Murray is mostly in the accompanist's role, focusing alternately on different parts on the kit, playing his unique take on cymbal swing, classic left-foot hi-hat free pulse and compact solos. The one direct musical nod to *Intercommunal Music* is "Portrait of Ericka Huggins", a wonderful theme that had slipped out of Tusques' repertoire. The side on which it is featured is where the duo is at its best, notably providing the opportunity to hear Murray's low-intensity playing in excellent sound quality.

By 2007, Huey Newton had been dead—shot by a crack cocaine dealer—for almost two decades, the Black Panther Party was a distant memory shrouded in the shadows of COINTELPRO and music just wasn't made as it used to in 1971. But it continued to be something else, and a great something at that.

For more information, visit nivuniconnu.bandcamp.com

GLOBE UNITY



Su Mimmi non si spara!
Francesco Guerri (RareNoise)
Fishy Business
Hook, Line & Sinker (Relative Pitch)
Canícula Rosa
The Selva (Clean Feed)
 by Tom Greenland

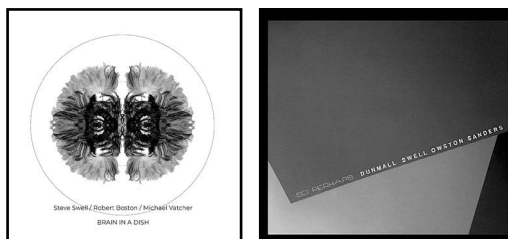
Cellists making jazz often come to it through the filter of classical music. Italian Francesco Guerri, Portuguese Ricardo Jacinto and American ex-pat Tristan Honsinger all had conservatory training, but the similarity ends there, as each has taken a unique path to develop his improvisational style.

Hearing the opening strains of Guerri's "Lucy", the overture to *Su Mimmi non si spara!*, his third album, one can't help but think of Johann Sebastian Bach's solo cello suites and certainly Guerri's prodigious command of contrapuntal textures evident throughout (listen to "Medusa" for a prime example) is another nod to the Baroque maestro. The range is impressive, from the transcendent moments of "Minosse" and "Your Beginning" (a third nod to Bach, played in alternate tuning) to prepared timbres of "Paper" and electronic soundscapes of "My [ha] ND". Although they sound improvised, the tracks are a series of freely interpreted through-compositions, spontaneous seeds that Guerri has germinated then cultivated over time into fully blossomed pieces.

There could only be one Honsinger. And if you've only just been introduced to Burlington-born-yet-Europe-resident-since-the-early-'70s cellist/vocalist through Hook, Line & Sinker's new album *Fishy Business*, you'll realize that you've got to go see him in person, because it's immediately obvious that he and trumpeter Axel Dörner, tenor saxophonist/clarinetist Tobias Delius and bassist Antonio Borghini are four- or even five-dimensional performers. Based in Berlin, the quartet has evolved into what may be called an avant-cabaret style based around Honsinger's *Sprechstimme*/spoken-word vocal style and kinetic body language, balanced by the powerful yet empathetic contributions of the others—a style that, on tracks like "Grasshoppers on Their Way Home" and "Unjustifiably So", seems literally to explode off the stage in four or five different directions. You'd wish you'd been there.

The Selva is an entirely different kind of group. Taking its name from the dense Amazonian rain forest, the sound of the Lisbon trio is similarly dense, fecund, cloud-covered and polychromatic, eschewing any harsh angles or rigid architecture. On *Canícula Rosa*, its sophomore opus, Jacinto, bassist Gonçalo Almeida and drummer Nuno Morão stray even further from any ties to classical chamber music, heading deep into the jungle of trance and flow. The tracks are short but leisurely, slow to develop, their chief interest lying in the details, the subtle shifts of light, as if a tropical sun were trying to break through the clouds and forest canopy to the acousto-electro drone and hum of the instruments underneath. Modal, musing, many tracks arise from the murmuring open strings (often D) of the bass and cello, their tones colored and thickened with wide vibrato, hammered ornaments, multiphonic bowing and electronic sound effects, spinning out in slowly looping patterns like musical Möbius strips.

For more information, visit rarenoiserecords.com, relativepitchrecords.com and cleanfeed-records.com



Brain In A Dish
Steve Swell/Robert Boston/Michael Vatcher (NoBusiness)
So Perhaps
Paul Dunmall/Steve Swell/James Owston/Mark Sanders (FMR)
 by Steven Loewy

Steve Swell continues to record at a rapid clip, a function of his continuing growth as a musician. In fact, now in his mid 60s, the trombonist is at a high point in his career. These two recordings are wonderful examples of his ability to rise to challenges in small groups alongside performers with whom he does not perform regularly.

Brain In A Dish is a fine trio outing with the highly compatible Robert Boston on piano and organ and Michael Vatcher on drums. While the group plays tightly with strong synchronicity, the focus, for the most part, is on Swell who, unsurprisingly, is stellar. Those who have watched the trombonist's evolution through the years will be particularly pleased with the range of his performance on this recording.

The 11 tracks are fully improvised. The title opener strikes early, Swell's rough-hewn splats, swooshes and bursts covering much of the horn's range. He is in good form as he dips and bends, curves and strikes, machine-gun-like patterns interspersed among little sounds. Vatcher adds a strong kick while Boston lightly fills in the holes. On the following "New Use for Old Neurons", the latter switches to organ, his classical training contrasting with Swell's slick lines. "Feed Me" and the closing "Psychopath in a Church Pew", each with their overpowering sounds, drive triumphantly, Vatcher coming to the fore and Boston offering delightful, quirky bursts on the latter. Swell is particularly impressive on these pieces, his distinct growls and jagged clusters a trombonist's delight. Swell alters his tone with mutes on "Tastier than Oranges", "Trepanation Trepidation" and "How Do You Like Yours?" while on "Fried and Roasted?" he toys with swooshing plunges, toy sounds and blubber notes, while Vatcher lays low before becoming an aggressive foil. Boston serves softballs on organ on "Neurons", over which Swell swerves and splats deliciously like a drunken sailor. *Brain In A Dish* could just as easily be called "The Many Sides of Steve Swell", as the recording capitalizes on many of the extended techniques of which he is a master. It will satisfy his fans and, due to its diversity, is also a good entry point to his music.

On *So Perhaps*, Swell joins British saxophonist Paul Dunmall in an exhilarating frontline backed by young bassist James Owston and the saxophonist's longtime colleague, drummer Mark Sanders. Recorded in Birmingham, England and released on FMR, Dunmall's label of choice (where he appears on more than 70 CDs!), the four lengthy pieces allow the players to stretch out. Dunmall and Swell are extremely compatible, often anticipating each other's thoughts.

Dunmall and Swell take the lead throughout, although there are some integral contributions from Owston and Sanders, with the latter pushing the horns hard and filling in the gaps. Owston's rich tone is in evidence on "Maybe Inspires", which opens with an outstanding, though short, bass solo. The two horns bounce off one another with complex, energetic, winding lines on "Even It Should"; Swell is clearly inspired by Dunmall's squawks and rough rapid-fire blasts. Sanders drives relentlessly so that Swell and Dunmall are wound up in a Dionysian mélange, exuding pure energy and producing some of their best

work on the album. From the pointillistic opening and exhausting intensity of the horns to the changing combinations of instruments, "Maybe Inspires" is an outstanding example of free improvisation. "Like a Very", the closing piece, begins as a fabulous feature for Swell, who opens with a feathery sound, then morphs to an encyclopedic exposition of trombone technique: scratches, vibrating tones, flutters, winding lines and much more. By the time Dunmall joins in halfway through the piece, followed by bass and drums, there is electricity in the air, in a totally persuasive finale.

For more information, visit nobusinessrecords.com and fmr-records.com. Swell was scheduled to be at 244 Rehearsal Studios.



We Are On The Edge: A 50th Anniversary Celebration
Art Ensemble of Chicago (Pi)
 by Robert Bush

The mere fact that the Art Ensemble of Chicago (AEC), the revolutionary band of singular instrumental and conceptual icons, continues to survive 51 years after its inception—despite the loss of founders Lester Bowie (trumpet) in 1999; Malachi Favors (bass) in 2004; and Joseph Jarman in 2019 (woodwinds)—should not come as a surprise. Bowie himself envisioned the expanded lineup that populates *We Are On The Edge* (19 musicians, plus conductor Stephen Rush at its most fulsome iteration). The trumpet visionary told *Musician Magazine* back in 1994, "I know it's going to take another 20 years...it will be world music by then. We are talking about the Art Ensemble of Mexico."

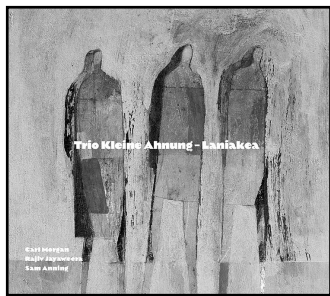
The sole survivors of the post-Europe version of the quintet, founder Roscoe Mitchell (saxophones) and Famoudou Don Moye (percussion), have swollen the group to include singers (Rodolfo Cordova-Lebron, Christina Wheeler), a spoken word artist (Moor Mother), two trumpeters (Hugh Ragin and Fred Berry), flutist (Nicole Mitchell), string ensemble (violinist Jean Cook, violist Edward Yoon Kwon and cellist Tomeka Reid), three bassists (Silvia Bolognesi, Jaribu Shahid and Junius Paul) and three new percussionists (Dudu' Kouate, Enoch Williamson and Titos Sompá).

We Are On The Edge is a double-disc set featuring a studio album and a 2018 live concert from Edgefest, the annual festival in Ann Arbor, Michigan, some 250 miles east of the group's titular home. Moor Mother (Camae Ayewa) does not appear on the live disc.

Excellent music pervades throughout. Mitchell's "Variations and Sketches from the Bamboo Terrace" is chock full of gorgeous orchestral implications done in AEC fashion. The full-on percussion explorations that appear on so many classic albums of the past are represented with "ChiCongo 50" and "Saturday Morning", which appear in both studio and live settings. Bowie's "Villa Tiamo" is a highlight on the studio album and Reid also delivers on Mitchell's "Fanfare and Bell" from that same session.

The musical zenith occurs on the live disc during an absolutely stunning large ensemble reading of the Favors-penned "Tutankhamun". It's a tour de force that clocks in at almost 20 minutes and each one of those moments feels vital to the process and a righteous celebration of the AEC motto: "Great Black Music—Ancient to the Future".

For more information, visit pirecordings.com. This band was scheduled to be at Brooklyn Academy of Music.



Trio Kleine Ahnung: Laniakea
Carl Morgan/Rajiv Jayaweera/Sam Anning
(Earshift Music)
 by Elliott Simon

Guitarist Carl Morgan's Berlin locale and an ECM ethos influence Trio Kleine Ahnung's *Laniakea* and Morgan begins this release with a solo "Intro", which declares the session's emphasis on harmonics, timbre, dynamics and space. From the symphonic fusion of the regal "Datameta" to the session's celebratory but unresolved "Outro", bassist Sam Anning and drummer Rajiv Jayaweera capably expand upon and support Morgan's ethereal coolness. In between, loops, echo, dynamic shifts and overdubs create a consistency that is surprisingly amenable to curiously harmonious explorations.

All three musicians hail from Australia, share a variety of stylistic influences and are informed by a European aesthetic. Several styles are apparent on close listening but they are adapted to the band's more meditative approach: "Kleine Ahnung (Little Idea)" is unhurried space-jazz featuring fellow Australian Sean Wayland on synth; a chordal take on the German hymn "Gott Liebt Diese Welt (God Loves this World)" delicately portrays the song's lyricism; and the title cut, which refers to a Hawaiian word for "open skies", is a forum for the trio to interact within its gorgeous melody. The real strength on these cuts, however, is built on Morgan's facility with lyricism and space. Through distinctive and subtle combinations new three-dimensional figures and perspectives are created without losing sight of the tune.

"Ripples" features Morgan skillfully tossing in notes that resonate and slowly alter over what is the session's steadiest beat while "Losdy", despite Anning's best attempts, does not find its groove. Recorded in Morgan's home studio, *Laniakea* is welcoming and with a warmth often absent in music that relies on electronics to shape its sound. But Morgan doesn't overdo it and the listener is easily in touch with, if not drawn into, the music. With its aversion to swing and a veneration of sway *Laniakea* flows as a complete trip.

For more information, visit earshift.com. Jayaweera was scheduled to be at Birdland.



Chimes of Freedom
Lynne Arriale Trio (Challenge)
 by Donald Elfman

To the jazz tradition of addressing social issues—think Charles Mingus, Billie Holiday and more—pianist Lynne Arriale adds this brilliant and subtly impassioned set. *Chimes of Freedom* speaks to the issue of immigration but also, by extension, gets to where we live in 21st Century America. Arriale is a virtuoso whose technique is always about telling a real story.

The recording opens with a dark rendering of the

spiritual "Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child". Arriale, bassist Jasper Somsen and drummer E.J. Strickland roil and take on all the power of that song and its poignancy at this moment. "Journey" suggests a trip towards sanctuary with a more uptempo sense of hope, Arriale fluid as she works in the pulse of the rhythm section and travels around the keyboard until Somsen finds that power in his thrumming solo. Strickland understands this as well and his solo is quick and very much to the point.

Movement is very much a theme. "3 Million Steps" are what refugees have to slog from Guatemala to the southern border of the U.S. It's a slow but hopeful trek. "The Dreamers" is a wistful and deeply moving narrative of the immigrant children who got stuck in America. "Hope" is what underlies all of this, smart and a little sad with the composer's stunning transparency above the rhythm and Somsen's beautiful solo.

The album is about courage as well. Bluesy "The Whole Truth" drives hard at the power of hearing that reality. "Reunion" is the most joyous tune, inspired by Caribbean rhythm and painting a picture of families brought back together. "Lady Liberty" is a glorious hymn to what could and should be in our country.

The two covers that close the album are now part of our collective consciousness and soar thanks to the heartbreakingly beautiful vocal of K.J. Denhert. The Bob Dylan-penned title tune is done in a striking 12/8 meter while Paul Simon's "American Tune" is a melancholy but decidedly unsentimental finale. Lynne Arriale brings us powerfully to where we are in our country at this moment.

For more information, visit challengerecords.com. This project was scheduled to be at Birdland Theater.



Life Goes On
Carla Bley/Andy Sheppard/Steve Swallow (ECM)
 by Tyran Grillo

For its third ECM outing, pianist Carla Bley's trio with saxophonist Andy Sheppard and bassist Steve Swallow mixes up an antidote for these times of uncertainty and quarantine. The title suite is the first of three comprising the program. Given that "Life Goes On" came out of a recent brush with illness, it's fitting that Bley should begin in the dark whimsy of the blues. Her left hand plows fertile soil before leaving Sheppard and Swallow to sow their thematic crop. Years of experience and collaboration funnel into Swallow's intimate rapport with Bley and into Sheppard's unforced, spiritual playing. The latter, whether breathing through tenor or soprano, takes two steps forward for every retreat.

A sardonic humor assumes center stage in the three-part "Beautiful Telephones". The title, quoting a certain leader of the free world, speaks of dire political circumstances, which, like the dial tone of a nation on hold, keeps us hopeful for something that may never come. The central movement reveals some of the deepest conversations and finds Sheppard in an especially soulful mood. The jagged finish is about as astute a commentary as one could pen on the current state of things without words.

The trio saves its most lyrical for last in "Copycat", another threefer that holds a candle to some neglected parts of the human condition. There's so much beauty in the opening "After You" that only the vessel of the playful title section is big enough to contain it. Setting a tongue in every cheek, it coaxes us with a promise of

better times.

Holding it all together is an almost photorealistic approach to life. Like the score pages above Bley's face on the cover, time feels suspended at just the right moment to reveal a smile of hope beneath it all.

For more information, visit ecmrecords.com. Bley and Swallow were scheduled to be at Town Hall.



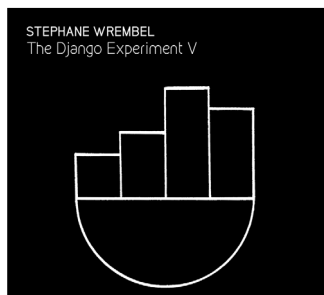
Solo: I Surrender Dear
Peter Brötzmann (Trost)
Fifty Years After
Peter Brötzmann/Alexander von Schlippenbach/
Han Bennink (Trost)
 by Andrey Henkin

In March 2021, Peter Brötzmann turns 80. Fans, start saving up for the traditional gift: diamonds. This gemstone represents unconquerability and endurance, characteristics the German saxophonist has in spades. His discography is in the hundreds, with as many collaborators. Albums like *Machine Gun* (BRÖ-FMP, 1968), *Hot Lotta* (Blue Master Special, 1973), *The Nearer The Bone, The Sweeter The Meat* (FMP, 1979), *The Atlanta Concert* (Okka Disk, 2001) and *Krakow Nights* (Not Two, 2015) and bands such as Die Like a Dog, Full Blast, Last Exit and Chicago Tentet reveal Brötzmann's many facets.

While Brötzmann has not applied himself as steadfastly to the solo saxophone exposition as his longtime collaborator/aesthetic foil Evan Parker, he has returned to the format with some regularity since 1976's *Solo* (FMP). While that album and the several that followed found Brötzmann on an assortment of reeds, *I Surrender Dear* is simply Brötzmann and his tenor saxophone in the studio and this arrangement is reflected by the unusual program, improvisations over themes written by himself, Misha Mengelberg, Bach and a number of jazz and Great American Songbook standards (the Gershwins, Sonny Rollins, two versions of the Harry Barris-Gordon Clifford title track, et al.). There is an appealing weariness to the playing, culled from three days of recording. While that term sounds pejorative it refers more to a laconic style not often heard from Brötzmann, as if he is saying exactly what he means to with as little notes as possible and has no time to explain himself if you don't get it.

What is most amazing about *Fifty Years After...* is not that the three principals—Brötzmann, countryman pianist Alexander von Schlippenbach and Dutch drummer Han Bennink—had been working together for a half-century by the time of this 2018 Bremen concert but that this obvious-after-the-fact trio took so long to make it on disc. Brötzmann's exhaustive website discography lists 20 entries of he and Schlippenbach recording together, 35 with Bennink and 7 for all three but this, now the eighth for the latter category, is the first document of them solely in each other's company. And while Schlippenbach was 80 at the time, Brötzmann 77 and Bennink 76, this reunion is hardly senior citizens on a cruise playing shuffleboard. For just over an hour, in five improvs of descending length (from almost 21 minutes to just under 4), the trio show how players with remarkably different modus operandi honed over decades can coalesce through communication and shared experience. What comes through most clearly is urgency and focus. Too much free jazz has one or the other (or neither) so this is a gift they gave to themselves and the lucky audience and, now, to the world.

For more information, visit trost.at. Brötzmann was scheduled to be at Issue Project Room.



The Django Experiment V
Stephane Wrembel (Water Is Life)
 by Kyle Oleksiuk

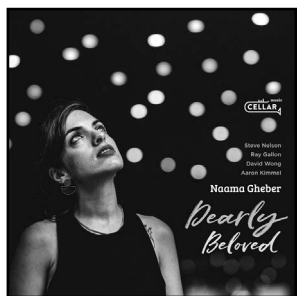
In the December 2019 issue of this gazette, Stephane Wrembel was asked how Django Reinhardt, Romani-French guitar master, became aware of Flamenco and Spanish classical music. Wrembel responded: "In 1914 his mom took him and his brother to Spain and North Africa. But who knows?... My personal feeling is that the Spanish sound that he found on the guitar is connected to a childhood memory and to his imagination and his world of dreams."

Wrembel expands on this personal feeling to explore a world of dreams, imagination and childhood memory on *The Django Experiment V*. Wrembel introduces a seemingly whimsical tempo to each song and the atmosphere that he creates, by means of technically incredible but playful guitaring, is like a waking dream. This album clears your head, fires up your imagination and makes you feel like a kid again.

The songs, although they come from various composers and traditions, are skillfully blended into a harmonious whole. Alongside compositions by Reinhardt are songs by American jazz giants Duke Ellington and Fats Waller and a trio of lesser-known composers, cabaret accordion player Tony Muréna and vaudevillians Chris Smith and Harry Akst, whose tunes give the album theatrical flair.

This is the best of the Experiment series so far, improving upon its predecessors by doubling down on the promise of those albums: that working within the tradition of Reinhardt's style could create new possibilities for modern music (or why else would Wrembel have covered Reinhardt's "Nuages" four times in five albums?). Wrembel also reaps the rewards of working steadily with a regular band—Thor Jensen on guitar, Ari Folman Cohen on bass, Nick Driscoll on saxophone and clarinet and Nick Anderson on drums—all of whom have grown together as an ensemble. The addition of Daisy Castro on violin, particularly on a chilling arrangement of Ellington-Juan Tizol's "Caravan", is also a major step forward.

For more information, visit stephanewrembel.com. Wrembel was scheduled to be at Town Hall.



Dearly Beloved
Naama Gheber (Cellar Music)
 by Scott Yanow

Naama Gheber, who makes her recording debut on *Dearly Beloved*, was born and raised in Israel although spent four years in Baltimore as a child. While she had ten years of classical piano lessons, what she really wanted to do was sing jazz and classic American standards. She did not have an opportunity until she was a senior in high school but has made up for lost time with extensive studying. She moved to New York in 2015 to attend the New School. Since graduating in

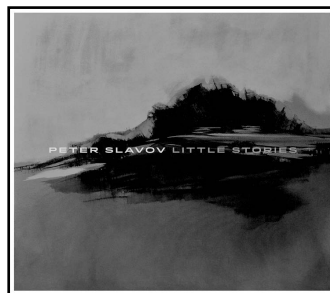
2017, Gheber has worked at venues around town. She has a fairly high and attractive voice, swings at each tempo and improvises with subtlety while displaying a consistent smile in her voice.

Gheber is joined by pianist Ray Gallon, bassist David Wong, drummer Aaron Kimmel and sometimes Steve Nelson on vibraphone. She starts off the program with a challenging arrangement of the Jerome Kern-Johnny Mercer title track, which alternates every eight bars between 5/4 time and a cooking 4/4, a device that makes the song fresh and surprising. Cole Porter's "So In Love" is also given a surprising treatment, taken very slowly and given a passionate interpretation. The singer shows her versatility on an uptempo version of the Gershwins' "'S Wonderful" and a soulful rendition of Buddy Johnson's "Since I Fell For You" which has a particularly strong piano solo.

Other selections include swingers, a surprisingly slow version of Porter's "Get Out Of Town", an atmospheric take on Nacio Herb Brown-Gus Kahn's "You Stepped Out Of A Dream", a quiet duet with Gallon on Bob Haggart's "What's New" and the closer, George Motola-John Marascalco's "Goodnight My Love", which makes one think of Ella Fitzgerald's early version from the '30s.

Gheber displays maturity (particularly on the ballads), youthful enthusiasm, an appealing voice and pure joy. *Dearly Beloved* is a strong start to a career with plenty of potential.

For more information, visit cellarlive.com. This project was scheduled to be at Birdland Theater.



Little Stories
Peter Slavov (Slavov Music)
 by Jim Motavalli

This is a New York story, with many antecedents. Bassist Peter Slavov, son of a famous Bulgarian jazz drummer, wants to channel the source, so he comes to the U.S. (via Berklee) in 1998 and is in New York as soon as possible. The dream is realized because that's him behind Joe Lovano, Quincy Jones, George Garzone, Danilo Perez, Kevin Mahogany and many more.

Slavov wrote all the music for *Little Stories*, his leader debut, and it is tinged with Eastern European sadness. Many of the tracks, recorded at the Samurai Hotel in Astoria over a two-year period, are based on memories of the bassist's homeland and, specifically, his musician father (drummer Peter Slavov). They must have been close. Despite shifting personnel, the music is of a piece, highly melodic, slightly melancholy modern jazz, with strong writing.

"In Defense of the Minotaur" is a standout, featuring an elegant melody, John Ellis' bass clarinet (played more lyrically than is usual for this instrument—shades of Ken Peplowski!) and sparkling piano from Nitzan Gavrieli in a Bill Evans groove. Mark Small also plays bass clarinet on "Small Little Things", with a light, questing tone. Ellis is back with the instrument on "Bye", this time exploring the lower register. On the latter, a bass solo section gradually adds Diego Ramirez' very spare drums, then the full band with Gavrieli.

"Photos", written to commemorate the priceless artifacts that helped Slavov remember his family while he was first in America, starts out elegiac but then brightens, as Slavov hits a walking pace and Ellis channels mid-period Dexter Gordon. There's a lovely

bass solo, with sympathetic piano. "Ghost" and "History of Beauty" both feature Mi Kim's wordless vocals. The second is the better of the two, mixing Brazil and Eastern Europe effectively; "Ghost" is pretty ghostly, though. Another starred track is "A.M.", with Matt Marantz on tenor. This is pure late-night-in-the-club music, written to evoke a walk through the streets of Sofia at midnight.

"Gone" is something else again: a piano trio (Slavov, Ramirez, Gavrieli) with a very effective string section arranged by the bassist while "Glide", the album's prologue, is a brief feature for strings, Dan Kaufman's piano and Mark McLean's drums. Throughout *Little Stories*, Slavov's playing—like his writing—is focused and forceful, in service to the music without grandstanding.

For more information, visit peterslavov.com. This project was scheduled to be at Smalls.



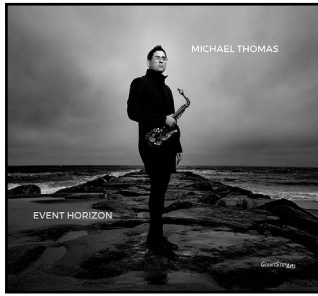
Embrace
Chris Dingman (Inner Arts)
 by Marco Cangiano

There is luminescence and overarching tranquility in Chris Dingman's newest CD we can all benefit from in the current circumstances. This recording marks a departure from Dingman's more complex and highly praised *The Subliminal and the Sublime*. The trio format puts the onus on Dingman's composing and capacity to carry each tune, even if both are wonderfully supported by the supple rhythmic duo of bassist Linda May Han Oh and drummer Tim Keiper. The compositions are complex from a harmonic point of view and yet maintain a very melodic approach. Although inspirations and sources vary across the nine originals, there is a cohesive, suspenseful and hypnotic quality conveying a thoughtful approach to improvisation. Echoes of Gary Burton come across frequently but Dingman is his own artist and commands the full range of the instrument.

Opener "Inner Child" unfolds on a sort of a music-box device, providing the base for a dance-like dialogue between Dingman and Oh. "Find Away" showcases the trio as a tight unit, with the musicians supporting each other until Oh's dramatic solo, her deep sound taking over the proceedings. Dingman's knack for hypnotic melodies, along with a touch of circular minimalism, is featured in "Ali". "Goddess" takes that mood up and leads to "Mudita", which is more affirmative, if not celebratory in tone. "Forgive/Embrace" has a more rhythmic and assertive approach based on an insistent bassline and multi-layered drumming. Burton's inspiration is more evident in the folksy lullaby "Hijinks and Wizardry", which is underscored by Keiper's subdued yet tasteful brushes. "Folly of Progress" concludes by dancing around Oh's steady pattern, Keiper's coloration adding complexity to what remains at heart a singing vehicle.

This album conveys very absorbing music, thus offering an oasis of calm and sheer pleasure. Part of it comes from Dingman's personal experience in assisting his late father through hospitalization and hospice. It therefore also has a therapeutic quality, if one wishes to listen carefully, which should be shared as widely as possible to help exorcise today's fears.

For more information, visit inner-arts.org. This project was scheduled to be at Jamaica Center for Arts and Learning.



Event Horizon
Michael Thomas (Giant Step Arts)
 by Thomas Conrad

Event Horizon is the fifth release from Giant Step Arts (GSA), a visionary, groundbreaking nonprofit program founded by photographer/recording engineer Jimmy Katz. The first four excellent releases were led by Jason Palmer (two), Johnathan Blake and Eric Alexander. With *Event Horizon* Katz, for the first time, has chosen to work with a player under the radar.

Michael Thomas is a badass. Anyone who doubts it should go to “Sax Intro”, a four-minute cadenza with maniacal runs in towering arcs and torrents of scales upon scales. It sounds perhaps like an alto saxophone virtuoso practicing, except that Thomas shapes it all into a spontaneous symphony. Then, after this wild celebration of chops, he segues seamlessly into “Chant” and into what this album is truly about: daring, in-depth collaborative ventures based on Thomas’ intelligent compositions, conducted by a formidable chordless quartet of trumpeter Palmer, bassist Hans Glawischnig and drummer Blake.

Like all GSA releases to date, this two-CD set is a live recording. In The Jazz Gallery in New York, four committed improvisers lay it on the line, again and again, responding to Thomas’ challenging forms, to one another, to the dug-in crowd, to the night. Tunes may need 16 minutes, but remarkably few notes are wasted. Thomas’ solos are valiant attempts to keep up with the flood of his arriving ideas. Palmer is more analytical. His statements are voluminous, arcane expositions filled with twists and subplots.

Blake oversees the excitement. On “Dr. Teeth”, he freely breaks up time yet arrays irregular fragments into insidious grooves. His drama is powerfully rendered in the recording. Katz has translated his renowned artistry as a photographer into the realm of sound: he gets both a telephoto-close focus on the band and a wide-angle perspective on the ambient room.

Thomas has said that *Event Horizon*, recorded in August 2019, was conceived as a reflection on “the role technology plays in modern life” and how our dependence on “computers and smart phones...creates more distance between people.” But that was then. This is now. Something appalling and lethal has transformed “modern life” and has made “distance between people” imperative. In our current coronavirus lockdown, computers and smart phones are often our only means of human connection.

For more information, visit giantsteparts.org. This project was scheduled to be at Café Bohemia.



Fodder On My Wings
Nina Simone (Carrere-Verve)
 by Annie Murnighan

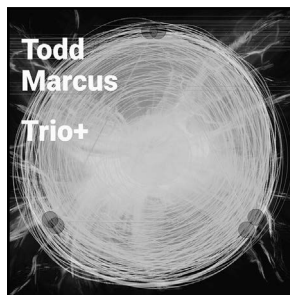
Despite Nina Simone pushing against industry forces attempting to pigeonhole her both stylistically and

personally, she was most often viewed strictly as a jazz singer, a title she found both reductive and racially coded. After building up a remarkably vast catalogue and using her voice to rally support for the Civil Rights movement, she found her success beginning to dwindle. After recording 1978’s *Baltimore*, a frustrating experience for Simone, who argued that she had no creative control whatsoever, she left the U.S. for Paris. She soon gathered together a group of African musicians and got back in the studio, this time with full artistic authority. These sessions became *Fodder On My Wings*. Less an album than a collection of rarities, the record (now reissued by Verve) finds Simone exploring sounds from a wide variety of influences with a freedom she was often denied in her early career.

Though once considered non-essential, the album and its significance as a deeply introspective and effusive work is now clear. Though it can feel all over the place, it’s not hard to understand why it was one of her favorites. Each track is written and arranged by Simone, and despite the immense distress she was facing at the time, her creative hunger shines through. Though her voice had settled into its lower register, it remained rich and brassy, demonstrating an unwavering ability to convey sadness, strength and soul.

The standout title track is a jarring encapsulation of her frustration with close-minded American audiences (“They had fodder in their brains”) and the mental health struggles it exacerbated. Though she clearly enjoys herself on the foot-stomping “Vous Etes Seul, Mais Je Désire Avec Vous” and hilarious and autobiographical “Liberian Calypso”, overwhelming loneliness permeates the record, regaling with travels and hardships through different languages and sonic palettes. “Alone Again Naturally” begins with a fluttering pentatonic riff and an initially blasé retelling of Simone learning that her father was terminally ill; once he has passed her voice becomes paper thin as she reveals how close the two were despite his failings and the grief-stricken loneliness that washed over her in his absence. While it may not be the best place to start for those unfamiliar with Simone’s prolific catalogue, *Fodder On My Wings* will give diehard fans plenty in which to sink their teeth.

For more information, visit vervelabelgroup.com. Simone tributes were scheduled to be at Club Bonafide.



Trio+
Todd Marcus (Stricker Street)
 by Ken Dryden

The bass clarinet is typically a secondary instrument for reed players, including Harry Carney, Eric Dolphy, David Murray and others. Yet Todd Marcus made it his primary vehicle and isn’t overly influenced by the approaches of his predecessors. For his fifth CD as a leader, Marcus recorded two sessions, alternating between trio and quartet, utilizing a mix of musicians: Ralph Peterson or Eric Kennedy on drums, Ameen Saleem or Jeff Reed on bass, plus trumpeter Sean Jones.

Marcus is unafraid of playing in a small group without a chordal foundation, choosing top-flight musicians to explore his intriguing originals, starting with the four-part “Something Suite” with Saleem and Peterson. This well-paced work has fairly brief movements, each that could stand on their own but together pack a greater wallop. The next track, “Cantata”, not only changes the rhythm section to Reed

and Kennedy, but also finds the leader in a one-time switch to clarinet. Droning arco bass and deft percussion provide a potent backdrop for Marcus’ Baroque-like line. “Amy Pookie” will immediately invite comparison to ‘60s Ornette Coleman, Peterson, Saleem and Jones navigating the piece’s demanding shifts.

Victor Young-Ned Washington’s “My Foolish Heart”, long a favorite of jazz musicians, is essayed in a novel arrangement, adding a contrasting trumpet harmony to bass clarinet lead in an extended chart, Reed and Peterson masterfully filling in the background. Bennie Maupin’s “Neophilia” hasn’t gotten much attention since he recorded it with Lee Morgan in 1970; this driving interpretation features both bassists and Peterson, Marcus bringing the sensation of a tribal chant growing in intensity with each chorus. Reed’s arco line in unison with bass clarinet is a unique way to introduce Irving Berlin’s “How Deep Is The Ocean” and Jones returns for a punchy, playful setting of the Bronisław Kaper-Paul Francis Webster standard “Invitation”. This rewarding CD merits inclusion in critics’ top ten lists for this year.

For more information, visit toddmarcusjazz.com. Marcus was scheduled to be at Rockwood Music Hall.



Signs
Gerald Cleaver (577 Records)
 by Franz Matzner

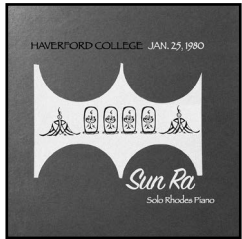
Drummer Gerald Cleaver is an omnivorous musician, equally comfortable in free jazz and postbop contexts. With *Signs*, his catholic taste now extends to electronica. Electronics are not alien to the jazz world, but Cleaver’s approach goes far beyond casual addition. It represents an inclusive embrace of electronica’s many sub-genres and traditions, a fully articulated exploration of rhythmic, sonic and textural possibilities drawn from the genre’s golden age in the late ‘90s.

Unlike traditional electronica, which tends to stay within the confines of one tonal mode or rhythmic trajectory, Cleaver presents a wide range of forms, at times integrating them within a single piece, as on the opening “Jackie’s Smiles”. Present across 11 tracks are the pounding beats of drum ‘n’ bass; patient arcs of artists like Aphex Twin; big beats evocative of bands like the Chemical Brothers; meditative trance and more while shying away from some sub-genres such as traditional techno and dark ambient; one can speculate that Cleaver doesn’t find electronica genres reliant on repetitive (or no) beats sufficient to provide a platform for his erudite jazz drumming techniques.

Cleaver’s layering of complex rhythms is one adaptation of his jazz skills. Another is found on the elegiac “Tomasz”, which displays a melodicism less common in the electronica world, in this case delivered via a sonorous, almost harp-like line. Cleaver is also unpredictable. His organization of beats, sonic effects and soundscapes shift and plunge, as on “Signs II”. This manifests even on some of the most straightforward tunes, like “Signs III”, which relies on a deep, resonant pulse reminiscent of classic drum ‘n’ bass.

Signs could just as easily be filed under electronica as jazz and probably would be a clearer fit there. Regardless of label, Cleaver applies his substantial skills to offer an enjoyable, unexpected experience.

For more information, visit 577records.com. Cleaver was scheduled to be at 244 Rehearsal Studios.



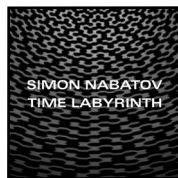
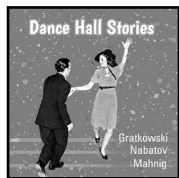
Haverford College 1980 (Solo Rhodes Piano)
Sun Ra (Sun Ra LLC)
Songs From The Sun Ra Cosmos
Burrence Whitfield Soul Savage Arkestra
(Modern Harmonic)
 by Ivana Ng

Sun Ra's range and influence is expansive and enduring. *Haverford College 1980 (Solo Rhodes Piano)* and Burrence Whitfield Soul Savage Arkestra's *Songs From The Sun Ra Cosmos* travel the arc of Ra's cosmic journey from jazz standards to atonal improvisation to soul and funk. They represent a kaleidoscopic cross-section of Ra's wide-ranging body of work.

Though known more so for the aggressive improvisation and Afrofuturist explorations of his Arkestra, Ra was often restrained in solo performances. Irwin Chusid, radio DJ, historian and administrator of Ra's catalogue, diligently restored Ra's solo set at Haverford College, unveiling an intimate and meditative side of Ra. The only known solo recording of Ra on the Fender Rhodes, the release also includes a 25-minute solo set by vibraphonist Walt Dickerson. The latter's extended improvisation is bright and whimsical, a complement to Ra's cerebral set. As is typical with many of his solo performances, Ra plays a mix of crowd favorites, interwoven with spells of philosophical improvisation and familiar standards. His iconic "Love in Outer Space" becomes a cozy lullaby on the mentholated keys and his academic range is on full display in a medley of "Space Is The Place" with Harold Arlen's "Somewhere Over the Rainbow", which is playful yet masterful in how it swings from space jazz to romantic lyricism.

Ra's influence takes on new dimensions in *Songs From The Sun Ra Cosmos*. Co-produced by Chusid and Brother Cleve, this collection of Ra interpretations was recorded over the span of 25 years by the renowned garage and soul 'screamer' who, like the Sun Ra Arkestra, is known for his high-octane live shows. This record is more akin to the vigorous atonal motifs usually associated with Ra, but it also stands on its own with Whitfield's velvety vocals and his band's garage/punk stamina. Their rendition of "Love in Outer Space" is a tropical noir melody and "Black Man" is a raucous rock anthem worthy of a mosh pit. Whitfield and his band infuse their own brand of explosive energy and old-school funk while paying homage to Ra's vision.

For more information, visit sunramusic.bandcamp.com and modernharmonic.com. The Sun Ra Arkestra was scheduled to be at Brooklyn Bowl.



Last Minute Theory
Simon Nabatov Quintet (Clean Feed)
Dance Hall Stories
Frank Gratkowski/Simon Nabatov/Dominik Mahnig
(Leo)
Time Labyrinth
Simon Nabatov (Leo)
 by Stuart Broomer

Pianist Simon Nabatov has a restless creativity, combining keyboard virtuosity and an insistent curiosity. From his long-time base in Cologne, he has

created musical settings for radical Russian literature and recorded solo interpretations of the works of Herbie Nichols and Thelonious Monk; a frequent visitor to New York, he works regularly with a shifting assembly of front-rank collaborators. His recorded output is as varied as it is large, as typified by these three recent releases, one recorded in New York and two from Cologne: the first consists of compositions for an insistently current New York band; the second is free improvisations; the third, largely composed work for a septet. True to Nabatov's identity, though, they have much in common.

On *Last Minute Theory*, the remarkable quintet is completed by saxophonist Tony Malaby, guitarist Brandon Seabrook, bassist Michael Formanek and drummer Gerald Cleaver, a group ideally suited for the kind of inside-outside compositions Nabatov has crafted for them, at once deeply rooted in jazz traditions and also wildly playful.

It's apparent immediately in "Old Fashioned", a loping groove with an off-kilter beat thrown in, while "Rickety" further demonstrates the band's rhythmic aplomb, somehow managing to combine lock-step with the sonic equivalent of Monty Python funny walks. Nabatov likes playing slower as well as faster than most: "Slow Move", which sounds like secretive birds waking up, is sufficiently slow for the musicians to get out and walk around the notes while "Translated" is a spotlight for Malaby's warm balladry. "Good Pedigree" layers different densities, seemingly moving at different tempos. The final "Afterwards" is wonderfully weird, beginning as seeming homage to the original Giuseppe Logan Quartet and ending in a zone so refined as to suggest smooth jazz. Seabrook consistently finds voices that are suspended between his alien electronic tones and his partners' acoustic lines, creating strange ambiguities in the process. There may not be anything left to say about Formanek and Cleaver at this point except that their support and interplay are ideal.

The wit and originality are just as apparent on *Dance Hall Stories*, a session with Frank Gratkowski, likely Nabatov's most frequent associate, playing a host of reeds, and drummer Dominik Mahnig, who joins in on half of the eight tracks.

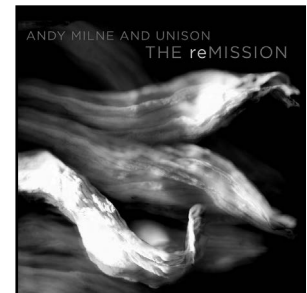
With titles tracing a comic dance hall experience, the music has the rare distinction of being both freely improvised and programmatic. Gratkowski and Nabatov share the special empathy of improvisers who have collaborated closely for decades. It shows in the opening "Hopeful Glance", with Gratkowski on alto saxophone. Its quiet opening suggests a clarinet, but by its midpoint the cascading runs are unquestionably those of an alto. In pointed contrast to the rambunctious energy of "Wrong Move Reflected", a bass clarinet/piano duo, the elusive "Sitting One Out" combines thin reed sounds with empathetic E-bowing of the piano strings. Mahnig adds a very different element to the trio pieces, the close conversation of the duets giving way to an increasing intensity. The erratic drum patterns trigger the ultimate mayhem of "Gradual Enticement", which, by its conclusion, has Gratkowski achieving a kind of virtuosic sputtering, as if multiple alto saxophonists have been sped up.

Nabatov turns to a compositional emphasis on *Time Labyrinth*, though there's still a crucial improvisatory element in featured solos. The "Time" of the title is as much conceptual as rhythmic. Nabatov's fascination with time has previously led to "Sunset Redux" (on *Round-Up*), a piece inspired by the idea that pilots can experience a double sunset.

Here the concept of time is sufficiently elastic and mysterious not to require a percussionist. Rather a "digital conductor" on a monitor conducts a densely-voiced septet with Gratkowski on his multiple woodwinds, tenor saxophonist Matthias Schubert, trombonist Shannon Barnett, tuba player Melvyn Poore, bassist Dieter Manderscheid and Hans W. Koch

playing synthesizer. The opening "Waves" builds from isolated incidents to a fluid, literally wave-like, movement. Part of its fascination lies in the wavering glissandi of tuba and trombone, the low brass suggesting pitch itself as an unstable temporal element, literally measured in cycles per second. "Metamorph" creates a thick weave in which voices move in contrary directions, highlighted by a Schubert solo with his pitch quavering with Albert Ayler-like intensity. Those moments are balanced by pieces of great subtlety: "Reader" wafts on Gratkowski's serene flute while the concluding "Choral" suggests an ancient dance orchestra appearing in isolated fragments amid barely enhanced silence and airy piano figures.

For more information, visit cleanfeed-records.com and leorecords.com. Nabatov was scheduled to be at Ibeam Brooklyn and 244 Rehearsal Studios.



The reMission
Andy Milne (Sunnyside)
 by Dan Bilawsky

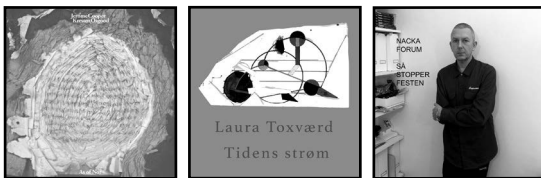
With sickness comes clarity; with the return of good health, renewal. When pianist Andy Milne received a cancer diagnosis in 2017, he began to evaluate his life—and music—from every possible angle. Now in remission, he's seizing new opportunities and recalibrating his artistic compass. On this aptly-titled outing, Milne leaves his favored formats, like the quintet and duo, behind, choosing instead to focus on the art of the trio. And 'art' is most certainly the operative word. With bassist John Hébert and drummer Clarence Penn by his side, Milne explores this most venerated of vehicles on his own imaginative terms.

Bookending the program with nods to two masters, Milne begins and ends by reckoning with the past and its place in the present. Opening with recently departed pianist McCoy Tyner's "Passion Dance", the leader adds supplementary colors to the ever-recognizable harmonic scheme while still retaining its essence. The rhythm section works its weight into the music but, as compared to the original, there's less of a streamlined shift-and-flow here and more of a countervailing ideology at play in the trio's bump and groove. On the opposite end of the program sits an opposite emotional release—one built on the sorrows of goodbye and appreciation for time spent together. Essaying saxophonist Benny Golson's "Sad to Say", Milne finds true peace—and purpose—in parting.

While this outfit ably follows the light of those two lodestars, their work is ultimately a place to visit, not a space in which to dwell. Eight Milne originals sit between the aforementioned poles and all prove virtuous in their embrace of the moment. "Resolution", for example, rises out of the abyss, covering a spectrum moving from uncertainty to clarity. "Winter Palace" contains a core built on a wonderfully off-kilter feel in five. "Vertical on Opening Night" highlights Hébert's mystical draw and mastery of time and tone. And "Drive by - The Fall" finds Penn putting out strong vibes up front before the ensemble delivers its variegated vision.

With great presence, deep dimensions, appreciation for breathing room and lust for life, Andy Milne and Unison makes music that truly matters.

For more information, visit sunnysiderecords.com. This project was scheduled to be at Dizzy's Club.



As Of Not
Jerome Cooper/Kresten Osgood (ILK Music)
Tidens Strøm
Laura Toxværd (ILK Music)
Så Stopper Festen
Nacka Forum (Moserobie)
 by Robert Iannapallo

Since the turn of the century, Danish drummer Kresten Osgood has been involved in nearly 90 recordings as leader and sideman. He's a drummer for all seasons, comfortable crossing stylistic boundaries, and also a very adept piano player. His range of international collaborators is amazingly wide: Dr. Lonnie Smith, Paul Bley, Sam Rivers, John Tchicai, Michael Blake and others. He always adds a unique energy. Below are three recent recordings that are a great demonstration of this.

Vinyl-only *As Of Not* is credited to Osgood and late drummer/multi-instrumentalist Jerome Cooper, the latter one-third of The Revolutionary Ensemble, one of the finest trios of the '70s (reuniting in the new millennium). Cooper subsequently played drums in various bands but his own music took on an unusual cast as he incorporated chirimira (a Latin American reed sounding like a Middle Eastern shawm), piano and electronics. Cooper also took to composition as a means of expression as much as improvisation. He and Osgood struck a friendship in the mid-2000s and Cooper was invited to Denmark to conduct workshops, during which time they realized Cooper's title piece. It features Cooper on the above-mentioned instruments and Osgood on drums and piano. It's a seven-part suite spread out over four sides of an LP. The piece begins with a passage of sustained stasis over an electronic drone and carefully placed piano. Midway through Osgood starts playing a motif matched by Cooper on balafon for a minimalist interlude. "Part 2" extensively features chirimira over wandering piano lines and an electronic rhythm. The one drawback is that some of these electronic rhythms are rather clunky but as the piece develops, it's what's placed over the top that lifts it out of clunkiness; "Part 4" is an excellent example of that. Cooper clearly was going for something universal and succeeds for the most part. And Osgood is there along with him. The two were a good team to realize this music.

Osgood appears on alto saxophonist Laura Toxværd's *Tidens Strøm*. Although his presence isn't forward in the quintet, it's crucial to the music. Toxværd scored this with an unusual instrumentation of tuba, accordion, saxophone and drums plus singer Marta Laurette Friis, who delivers the six songs with a folk-ish quality and matches the instrumentation well. Toxværd's gritty solos give the music a primal energy and Osgood is subtle but very effective. Drums are well recorded and their resonance fills out the group sound nicely. *Tidens Strøm* is a successful recording, which, while short (27 minutes), stands alone.

Nacka Forum has been together for six albums, the quartet stable except for a change at its fourth album with Osgood in the drummer's chair. Taking in composition, varying styles, freewheeling improvisation and humor, it seems a perfect fit. For their sixth release, *Så Stopper Festen*, the group delivers an Ornette Coleman-ish ballad "Reboleira" by bassist Johan Berthling and frenetic freebop of reedplayer Jonas Kullhammar's "OhSoGood". Osgood has two compositions, "Haltefanden" and "Big L"; the latter starts out sounding like Tony Williams' Lifetime with Osgood delivering a fractured organ solo and when the horns enter, Lifetime with horns seems to be a good idea (too bad it never materialized). The compositions are succinct, mostly in the six-minute range, diverse

and packed with the energetic solos characteristic of this band. *Så Stopper Festen* is as good as anything Nacka Forum has come up with thus far.

For more information, visit ilkmusic.com and moserobie.com. Osgood was scheduled to be at Downtown Music Gallery, Soup & Sound and The Stone at The New School.



Time is Thicker
Mike McGinnis (Open Stream Music)
 by Mark Keresman

It's relatively rare that a reedplayer focuses solely on the clarinet—Benny Goodman and John Carter come to mind. While Mike McGinnis is also a saxophonist, he relies on the straight-reed instrument entirely on *Time is Thicker*, a trio set with bassist Elias Bailey and drummer Vinnie Sperrazza. This type of format can be a naked listen, yet the full-bodied production and caliber of the performance make it a compelling date.

On the briskly invigorating opener "Get In the Car", McGinnis sticks mostly to his instrument's middle range, getting all kinds of mileage out of a warmly woody tone and fluid execution while Bailey and Sperrazza create a persuasive yet not overbearing forward motion. The Chano Pozo-Gil Fuller bebop anthem "Tin Tin Deo" has a swell, sly bluesy statement of the theme, otherwise darting in a deceptively carefree way, Bailey taking a piquant solo. "Bow Legged Releve" begins with what could be a collective free improvisation but then settles into a groove in which McGinnis dances about amid growing winds stirred by Bailey and especially Sperrazza. Closer "Just One of Those Things" is given a surging fare-thee-well treatment—McGinnis swirling and dashing, making with a bit of Dixieland-styled phrasing in his solo. Sperrazza is volatile here, lavishing rolling crashes and cymbal splashes over his crackling bursts while Bailey anchors with a lively, sinewy throb. This concludes the platter with a hearty restatement of the theme and the laughter of the players.

Time is Thicker is an album of lively contrasts. There are moments of cerebral intellectual mien and good-humored swagger. This combo is making jazz that can appeal both to old-school hepcats and art-snobs alike.

For more information, visit openstreammusic.com. This project was scheduled to be at Café Bohemia.



Alles Hat Seine Zeit
Jürgen Kupke/Hannes Zerbe (JazzHausMusik)
 by Anna Steegmann

Clarinetist Jürgen Kupke (who turns 60 this month) and pianist Hannes Zerbe both grew up in East Germany and studied at the Hanns Eisler College of Music in East Berlin. They made a name for themselves, toured with Willem Breuker, Elliott Sharp, Phil Minton, Leo Wright, to name a few, and released several

recordings. *Alles Hat Seine Zeit* (Everything has its time) is their first album as a duo. This is change for Zerbe, known for his Hannes Zerbe Jazz Orchester. Kupke is a clarinet virtuoso and his instrument takes center stage most of the time; Zerbe, a hugely talented pianist, seems happy in the background.

Alles Hat Seine Zeit is mostly jazz with dashes of New Music. Zerbe composed 9 of the 16 tracks, Kupke 1, 2 are co-written and the pair breathe new life into tunes by Carla Bley, Francois Jeanneau and Hanns Eisler. Opener "Vorspiel Winterschlachtsuite" (Winter Battle Suite: Prelude), a slow and sorrowful piece, will pull at the heartstrings of the most cynical of minds and hook the listener. Eisler's "Der Kirschdieb" (The Cherry Thief) is stark and haunting, his "Vom Sprengen des Gartens" (Sprinkling the Garden) delicate and lively. Zerbe and Kupke reveal a special affinity for Eisler through the lens of chemistry developed in 35 years of collaboration. The majority of tunes are languid and lyrical; others like "Zeit 1", "Up and Down" and "#13" are wild flights where piano moves into the foreground and clarinet is played at whirlwind speed. Bley's "Ictus" has unexpected twists and turns.

Whether you prefer the faster, more experimental tunes or the slower melodious ones, you will be enchanted by *Alles Hat Seine Zeit*.

For more information, visit jazzhausmusik.de



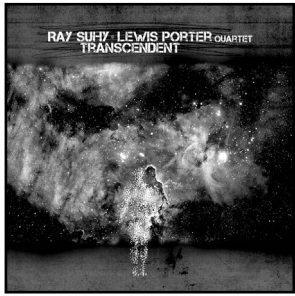
Down The Hill
Alexandra Grimal/Giovanni di Domenico (s/r)
 by Kurt Gottschalk

Alexandra Grimal's text for the title track of her new duo CD with pianist Giovanni di Domenico gives a good indication of the shifting moods of the music the two create. "And I went down the hill / and I ran down the stone / and I climb the trees / where you were" she sings in part. It's a strange evocation of an unclear mood. The scene seems to be a passing moment, running to catch up with an unnamed other. Was it anxious? Playful? Is she expressing joy? Malaise? Moods intermingle without clear division in the verse as in the music, the way they do on some (not all) days and are met without resistance. There's a strong uncertainty about it.

Grimal, who turns 40 this month, sings the words as if no one is listening, like internal narration. It's one of a handful of songs on which she sings (two are hers, the third by poet Goffredo Muratgia). For the most part, she's heard on soprano saxophone. As an instrumentalist, Grimal has received some acclaim (including in these pages) but less attention, at least on these shores. A wonderful duo with bassist Joëlle Léandre released last year should have helped to set that straight, as should this beautifully fragile and occasionally plaintive record. Di Domenico is an equal part of the ambiguous afternoon being conjured (it certainly doesn't come off as evening music). The pianist has an uncanny knack for projecting simplicity even when not playing it, easily shifting between pensive and sprightly. His credits include two previous duos with Grimal.

Down The Hill is an unhurried effort, even when sprinting. 12 tracks in close to an hour succeed in being expressive yet unspecific. It's available as a CD as well as download. There's far worse ways to spend an hour and, of late, seeming far more hours to be spent.

For more information, visit alexandragrimal.bandcamp.com



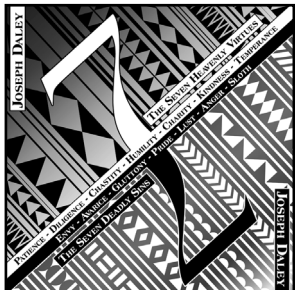
Transcendent
Ray Suhy/Lewis Porter Quartet (Sunnyside)
by Phil Freeman

Jazz guitar is all too frequently the realm of musicians who play as if they're afraid someone might hear them. Not Ray Suhy. His melodies shimmer and gleam and his solos have genuine bite. This willingness to step forward and seize the spotlight is doubtless related to his parallel career; he's a member of extreme metal bands like Cannabis Corpse and Six Feet Under, where high-volume, maximum-force riffing is the name of the game.

This album isn't some kind of Mahavishnu-Orchestra-meets-Metallica assault, though. The combination of guitar, fed through a variety of effects, and Lewis Porter's nimble switching between acoustic piano and Fender Rhodes, depending on the track, works extremely well in service of the compositions, all of which are originals, five by the guitarist and three by the pianist. Stylistically, they're a blend of high-energy hardbop of the late '70s Milestone All-Stars/VSOP school—what pianist/blogger Ethan Iverson refers to as “stadium jazz”—and fusion of the baroque rather than overpowering school. A lot of the pieces have the feel of something Chick Corea could have written; the melodies spiral upward like model rockets, exploding into florid solos that bloom in the sky, showering multicolored sparks in all directions but dissipating quickly.

What's most interesting about the album, particularly on the uptempo tracks, is not the work of the two co-leaders, but how powerful the rhythm section is allowed to get. They're stomping as much as they're swinging and Rudy Royston in particular is going absolutely wild throughout. He seems to have added four or five drums to his kit, the better to let his inner Billy Cobham out to play. Bassist Brad Jones has worked with both Elvin Jones and Marc Ribot, so he's perfectly suited to support anything anyone else in this band throws at him and James Dellatacoma, who mixed and mastered the album at Bill Laswell's Orange Music Sound Studio, gives everyone plenty of space and power; this music comes out of the speakers like a boxing glove on a spring. It's not subtle, but at its best it's quite beautiful.

For more information, visit sunnysiderecords.com. This project was scheduled to be at Nublu 151.



The Seven Heavenly Virtues and The Seven Deadly Sins
Joseph Daley (JoDa Music)
by George Kanzler

In 2010 and 2013, tuba and bottom brass player Joseph Daley released CDs that each had the preponderance of their minutes devoted to large ensemble suites he had composed. *The Seven Deadly Sins*, featuring a two-dozen-strong horn, woodwind and rhythm contingent, was on the first. *The Seven Heavenly Virtues*, featuring 18 strings plus rhythm, came second. Now the other

tracks from those CDs have been omitted and the two pieces appear, in reverse chronological order, on this CD. In these suites, Daley has created a multifaceted hybrid of jazz, avant garde and contemporary classical music that is a direct descendant of the Third Stream movement of the mid-20th Century and an extension of the music he has helped make over the decades in ensembles from Gil Evans and Maria Schneider to Carla Bley and Muhal Richard Abrams. He has also found innovative ways, especially with *The Seven Deadly Sins* suite's ensemble, to combine, feature and blend unique orchestral tones. He also finds some equivalency for that sonic variety in the way he mixes and combines string players from different disciplines, from jazz and classical to fiddling.

Daley is good at finding sonic equivalents, especially for *The Seven Deadly Sins*. Scott Robinson's lugubrious bass saxophone crawls over slow, low chords throughout “Desidia (Sloth)” while low woodwinds and brass burp and regurgitate to introduce “Gula (Gluttony)” before repeating riffs led by trombone take over. “Lechery (Lust)” is a convocation of assembling solos and sections—from wah-wah trumpet to tandem saxophones—building with groaning, growling fury. “Superbia (Pride)” mixes a soprano saxophone-led exotic (Middle-East?) melody over mallet instruments, trumpets and tinkling piano, a proud French horn in the mix. Heavy drumming and percussive bells interact with a jagged melody and tandem saxophone soli to suggest “Ira (Anger)”. While contrasting violin/viola styles dominate the soloing on *The Seven Heavenly Virtues* suite, two highlights feature pianist Lafayette Harris. He is given the lovely melody of “Humility”, played mostly as a piano trio with strings entering at the climax. And his piano introduces the theme of “Temperance” and shares solo honors with violin and viola.

For more information, visit jodamusic.com. Daley was scheduled to be at 244 Rehearsal Studios.



Legacy Holder
Jonathan Barber & Vision Ahead (Vision Ahead Music)
by Russ Musto

The sophomore release from drummer Jonathan Barber finds the Hartford, Connecticut native advancing his tradition-rooted/forward-looking concept with the same quintet of alto saxophonist Godwin Louis, guitarist Andrew Renfroe, pianist Taber Gable and bassist Matt Dwonszyk from his debut. *Legacy Holder* opens gently with “The Call”, on which Barcelona-born vocalist Mar Vilaseca sings her uplifting lyric over Barber's atmospheric melody, which segues with suite-like seamlessness into his “Find My Way”, a folkishly lyrical piece reminiscent of Brian Blade's similarly configured Fellowship Band.

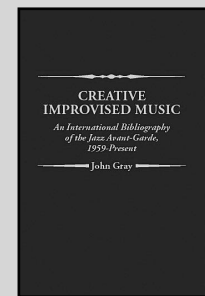
The title track is a contemplative outing, a melancholic excursion with absorbing solos by Renfroe, Gable and Louis. Dwonszyk's “Haikus” rhythmically moves things forward, driven by propulsive drumming dancing around the pocket, underpinning Renfroe and Taber's solos, before coming to the fore over the ensemble's dash to the finish vamp. The band charges straightahead on Barber's “Major”, with gritty alto and McCoy Tyner-ish piano soaring over walking bass, before an explosive drum solo over a bluesy piano ostinato.

Three more Barber originals close out the disc.

“Seconds & Seasons” is an appealing melody supporting inspired solo work by Dwonszyk, Louis, Taber and finally Renfroe, buoyed by briskly escalating drumming. “Son Of Hartford” is a rocking tribute to the legacy of the city's Artists Collective and Jackie McLean Institute of Jazz, where he, Renfroe, Gable and Dwonszyk all trained. The date concludes with the metrically charged “29”, an exciting feature for Barber's dynamically expansive rhythmatism, which has earned him the drum chair in the bands of JD Allen, Jeremy Pelt and Pat Metheny, among others.

For more information, visit jonathanbarbermusic.com. This project was scheduled to be at Jazz Standard.

IN PRINT



Creative Improvised Music: An International Bibliography of the Jazz Avant-Garde, 1959-Present
John Gray (African Diaspora Press)
by Andrey Henkin

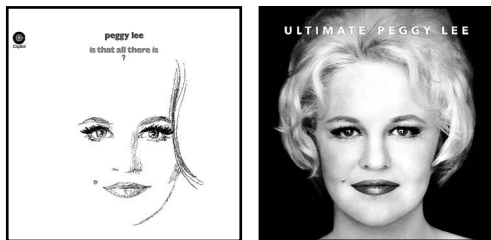
[Full disclosure: this gazette, in both its original iteration as AllAboutJazz-New York and current form as The New York City Jazz Record, is referenced within this book.]

One hopes that, given the current world situation, a corollary benefit down the road will be a renewed respect for rigorous scholarship, of expertise and the long, committed path it takes to get there. When fools on world stages make ignorant, potentially lethal claims and the internet has become a black lagoon of mis- and disinformation, those analyzing genetic codes, parsing population trendlines and just generally being thorough and responsible are to be counted among the heroes of the age.

While bibliographers aren't saving lives, they are saving researchers time. Eminent scholar John Gray has released a follow-up to his 1991 tome *Fire Music: A Bibliography of the New Jazz, 1959-1990*, this new volume updating his work through 2019. Its simple cover is a demonstration of its author's seriousness. Across over 500 pages and 5,513 references, plus another 74 pages of indices, Gray presents a comprehensive accounting of critical and informational writing, broken up into three categories: General Works, Regional Studies and, taking up the preponderance, Biographical and Critical Studies.

While the density and \$150 price tag skews Gray's intended audience towards professional researchers flush with grant money, university music departments and public library systems, those with time on their hands (read: everyone these days) and who have more than a passing interest in critical jazz analysis should consider this as a necessary part of their library. Jazz listeners are arguably more aware of/interested in history and searching out new sounds or rare vinyl requires its own patience and investigative skills so having this kind of book nearby makes sense. Even a cursory flip through the index pages by this reviewer, who humbly considers himself deeply steeped in the teapot of jazz history, shows that learning is all about knowing what you don't know.

For more information, visit african-diaspora-press.com



Is That All There Is?
Peggy Lee (Capitol-Universal Music)
Ultimate Peggy Lee
Peggy Lee (Universal)
 by Marilyn Lester

When it comes to “legendary”, singer-songwriter Peggy Lee is a frontrunner. Her stature was such that she eventually became known by the honorific “Miss Peggy Lee”. To celebrate the 2020 centenary of this prolific icon’s birth (May 26th, 1920), her estate has released two albums in tribute: the 13-track digital-only re-release of 1969’s *Is That All There Is?* and the new 22-track *Ultimate Peggy Lee*. Choosing the material couldn’t have been easy. Lee, over a six-decade Grammy-winning career, wrote over 200 songs, recorded over 1,100 masters and had 100 chart hits. She recorded myriad albums — many with specific themes — over many genres, within the popular arranging styles of the day. Yet these two albums succeed in offering logical and intelligent selections: charting hits; Lee’s own work; and a buffet of tunes in varying styles.

Two tracks only are found on both releases: “I’m A Woman”, her powerful R&B-tinged hit from her album of the songs of Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller, and the eponymous charting “Is That All There Is?” (Lieber-Stoller), also offered as an alternate take and as a remixed version by Peter Stoller. (“Is That All There Is?” was recorded in 37 takes, with the last one used as the master, spliced with bits from other takes.) Lee’s big break came in 1941 when she became Benny Goodman’s girl singer. A reinterpreted song from that era, “Don’t Smoke In Bed” (Willard Robison), is included with other songbook standards as well as a mix of work from contemporary songwriters of the day, including Neil Diamond, George Harrison and Randy Newman, all given the Lee treatment of insouciant, yet incisive delivery. A particular treat is two versions of “Me And My Shadow” (Dave Dreyer-Billy Rose) with the alternate taken from Lee’s own personal stockpile of recordings. In it she parses out her phrases with deliberate cool, giving new meaning to the term laid-back.

Ultimate Peggy Lee features the work that made her name and became her signature song, 1958’s “Fever” (Eddie Cooley-Otis Blackwell as John Davenport), a huge hit for Little Willie John in 1956 on the R&B and Billboard Hot 100 charts. Many mainstream artists were quick to cover it, including Lee, who rewrote the lyrics (without credit); the rest is history. “Sweet Happy Life” (Luiz Bonfá-Antônio Maria-Norman Gimbel) is a pleasant tune with a samba beat in the ‘something different’ category. Akin to it is a number from Lee’s well-received 1960 album *Latin ala Lee!*, recorded when cha-cha and mambo were all the rage. From it, the diva sings “Heart” (Richard Adler-Jerry Ross), an amusing trifle that has to rank as one of the most original interpretations of a popular tune from a Broadway musical (*Damn Yankees*).

Two birds with one stone are delivered in “I Love Being Here With You” (Bill Schluger-Peggy Lee). Not only is the tune one of her own compositions, but also it undeniably proves the often ultra-cool Lee could swing—an ability also applied to “I’ve Got The World On A String” (Harold Arlen-Ted Koehler). Lee’s well-known “It’s A Good Day” (Dave Barbour) is presented in a happy, uptempo, foot-tapping instrument-forward arrangement. She also wrote the songs for the 1955 animated Walt Disney feature *Lady and the Tramp* (with composer Sonny Burke). “He’s A Tramp” is representative of that venture. And should anyone

doubt that this product of the northern plains could sing the blues, Lee proves her torchy worth with a down-low rendition of “Black Coffee” (Sonny Burke-Paul Francis Webster) and an angsty lament in “I Wanna Be Around” (Johnny Mercer-Sadie Vimmerstedt).

The last track on *Ultimate Peggy Lee* is completely captivating—the previously unreleased “Try A Little Tenderness” (Jimmy Campbell-Reg Connelly-Harry M. Woods) recorded 57 years ago. In this story-song arrangement, Lee’s voicing is purposeful, her smoky purr alluring as she thoroughly inhabits the lyric. Her capacity to communicate with such authenticity defines much of her appeal and illustrates what made her an enduring star of the music world. This last lovely track is the perfect capper to an album that succeeds in painting a solid portrait of Miss Peggy Lee.

For more information, visit universalmusic.com. A Lee tribute was scheduled to be at 54Below.



When Will The Blues Leave
Paul Bley/Gary Peacock/Paul Motian (ECM)
One Night in Karlsruhe
Michel Petrucciani Trio (Jazz Haus)
 by George Grella

Two piano trios, two live recordings, one single anchor in bassist Gary Peacock, who turns 85 this month. These are also two vastly different records, reflecting a fascinating juxtaposition between the styles of the two pianists.

These are also two new archival recordings, though first releases—*When Will The Blues Leave* is a date from Switzerland in 1999 while the night in question in Karlsruhe was Jul. 7th, 1988. Michel Petrucciani’s set seems more conventional; though both mix standards and originals, the French pianist plays “There Will Never Be Another You”, “In a Sentimental Mood”, “Embraceable You” and “My Funny Valentine” while Paul Bley ends the set with the Ornette Coleman title tune then returns for a lush, swooning “I Loves You Porgy”.

Bley was a romantic (and a modernist and a bluesman all in one) and there is some kinship here with Petrucciani. Both are striving for expression above structural and technical exploration and on each of these recordings both are near hyper-communicative. That the Karlsruhe concert is much more satisfying than the Swiss performance (which is quite fine itself) seems to have more to do with the accompanists than the pianists.

Peacock, drummer Paul Motian and Bley had an excellent connection with one another, though their playing doesn’t always stay on the right side of the fine line between a private conversation meant to be overheard and enjoyed by an audience and a kind of solipsistic secret language. And the musicians don’t always sound at their sharpest. Bley’s funky riffs that start “Told You So” stumble a little and the three are not always headed in the same direction, or organized around the same pulse, on “Mazatlan” and “Flame”.

There’s also flashes of inspired playing within each track, stretches where the three have found common purpose. It’s the nature of the playing—just as much free as it is based around tunes—and live there is no opportunity to leave lesser takes on the cutting room floor. The high points come at the end, with the title track and the encore.

The Petrucciani date, with Roy Haynes at the drums, is great through and through. The pianist left us over 20 years ago and this release is a welcome

reminder of what a superb musician he was. His technique is scintillating and the rhythmic feel of his phrases connecting with Peacock’s downbeats and Haynes’ sizzling cymbals is a perfect distillation of the sound of modern jazz.

Working within an entirely conventional formal and harmonic framework, the musicians are full of invention and free of clichés. No matter the tempo, the music tools along at an ideal pace. Peacock’s solos are often in the context of walking lines and the way he turns accompaniment into lead is full of subtle complexity. Petrucciani just sparkles, his lines outlining artful rises and falls of musical motion. Haynes’ fleet touch could not be more ideal in this situation and while all the musicians seem full of joy, he may be having the best time of all. This is a real gem.

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

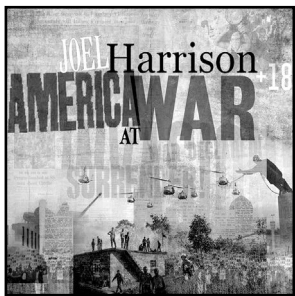


Re-Collect
Jeb Bishop Flex Quartet (Not Two)
 by Steven Loewy

What is so remarkable about Jeb Bishop is that the talented trombonist, a former philosophy major, began his career as a rock guitarist, switching to electric bass in the early ‘90s when he was part of The Flying Luttenbachers and only later took up the trombone, becoming a member of The Vandermark 5, one of the most important small groups emerging from the Chicago jazz scene of the early 2000s. Since then, Bishop has performed in a variety of settings as a leader and a sideman. On *Re-Collect*, he leads his impressive pianoless Flex Quartet through six original compositions in what is a compelling, at times even thrilling, performance. The lengthy pieces take full advantage of a highly compatible quartet in which trumpeter Russ Johnson acts as a perfect foil to Bishop’s gruff, broad swatches of sound while bassist Jason Roebeke and drummer Frank Rosaly diligently undergird the horns with intense, time-less structures.

Bishop masterfully paces each of the pieces so that while the opening two charts take up more than 40 minutes and more than half the total time of the album, they keep the listener guessing and fully engaged. Although Bishop is identified with the more radical elements of jazz, his heart clearly sprouts from postbop, his melodies and even his solos embracing a strong jazz aesthetic while injecting sweeping strategies, which include regularly changing tempos, collective improvisation, building and releasing tension and intense interaction. These come to the fore on “Razorlip”, in which an off-balance syncopated head leads to a strong bass solo and fast and exciting dialogue between trumpet and trombone, some of which is played without backing. On “Lungfish”, gravelly trombone takes a brilliant ride through an attractively snake-like bop melody, then transforms into something modern and offbeat. Bishop’s chops are in high style throughout, focusing mostly on the midrange of the horn with meaty, powerful double-tonguing on the postboppish “Backfire”. The playing is strong throughout, without a weak link, Bishop in the lead but, unquestionably, Johnson’s strong blowing and the tight rhythm section contributing to the album’s success.

For more information, visit nottwo.com. Bishop was scheduled to be at The Stone at The New School.



America at War
Joel Harrison + 18 (Sunnyside)
 by Robert Bush

Guitarist Joel Harrison has always heard things differently, from 3+3+7 (Nine Winds, 1996) and *Range of Motion* (Koch Jazz, 1997) to last year's stunning *Still Point: Turning World* (Whirlwind). Harrison has consistently marched to the beat of different drummers. His latest is a scathing indictment of our nation's history of violent intercourse and his first big band record.

He's gathered some of the finest players across the stylistic spectrum, including Jon Irabagon and Ned Rothenberg (reeds) alongside Ingrid Jensen (trumpet) plus the trombones of Curtis Hasselbring and Alan Ferber. In all, it's a 20-piece ensemble playing extremely creative charts reflecting the tradition from Oliver Nelson to Henry Threadgill.

The album explodes with fat funk bottom end anchored by the tuba of Ben Stapp and wah-wah guitar on the opening "March On Washington", which unfolds like a page-turning novel. The ensemble writing avoids big band clichés like the plague and the soloists (Harrison and trumpeter Dave Smith) consistently up the ante on the excitement quotient. "Yellow Cake" continues with Harrison recounting the George Bush/Colin Powell narrative as the tune evolves, yielding volcanic solos from Irabagon (tenor saxophone) and Hasselbring while the background landscapes keep shifting, like observing from the window of a high-speed train. Things quiet down considerably on the introduction to "My Father In Nagasaki" (Harrison's dad was one of the first soldiers to enter the area after the bomb dropped.) Orchestral percussion and somber brass set the appropriately pensive backdrop for evocative essays from Rothenberg (shakuhachi) and Ken Thomson (bass clarinet.)

Particularly moving is the highly autobiographical "Gratitude", written while Harrison was recovering at an artist colony from a traumatic brain injury. He lays down a soulful introduction of gospel-inspired double-stops that bring the work of Curtis Mayfield to mind and the tune climbs to an exhilarating plateau to feature the wonderful work of Jensen, who is also exemplary on "Requiem For An Unknown Soldier".

Harrison also turns in a moving vocal interpretation of the Tom Waits tune "Day After Tomorrow", which tells the story from the perspective of a soldier writing a letter home. He's quite an effective singer and this is a highlight moment in an album full of them.

For more information, visit sunnysiderecords.com. This project was scheduled to be at Drom.



I Should Care
Yoon Sun Choi/Jacob Sacks (Yeah Yeah)
 by Elliott Simon

I Should Care is a program of nine jazz standards, in which the conventional vocal ballad meets the avant

garde, the results surprisingly amicable. Vocalist Yoon Sun Choi's striking phrasing and tempo changes explore nooks and crannies of these tunes hidden from other more traditional vocalists. With pianist Jacob Sacks, she creates exciting and touching new music while retaining the compositions' original lyrical objectives.

Most of these songs, with a couple exceptions, date to the '30s-50s and have been recorded by many singers using standard vocal arrangements. The title opener is a case in point; Frank Sinatra, Mel Tormé, Peggy Lee and many others highlight the song's self-reflective attitude in beautiful but parallel ways. However Choi's style is perpendicular and shares more in common with Thelonious Monk's creative instrumental take on the tune than with prior vocal renditions. Similarly, Sacks is given the difficult task of following Choi when she sings off-page on "But Not For Me"; after she sets up the tune with an initial soliloquy, he ably anticipates and even directs her movements.

Sacks also knows when to color delicately as opposed to lead or parry: Choi's heartfelt performance of "For All We Know" is gorgeously emphasized by his thoughtful chordal choices; an elegant vocal interpretation of "Blackberry Winter" benefits from his lovely emphasis; and he provides solid structural support to the more mainstream "Love For Sale". When taking the lead, he prods Choi for a boppy offbeat version of "Just Friends" and guides an interesting reading of closer "The More I See You".

The improvisational give and take between Choi and Sacks on *I Should Care* is very different from the usual jazz vocal/piano duo. Together, they create new music out of old and that is the real star of this release.

For more information, visit yeahyeahrecords.bandcamp.com. This project was scheduled to be at Carnegie Hall's Weill Recital Hall.



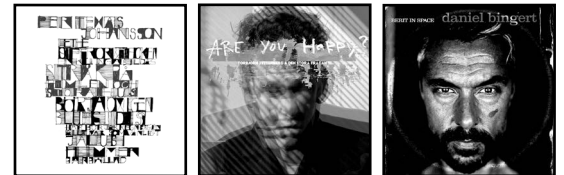
The Coandă Effect
Tim Berne/Nasheet Waits (Relative Pitch)
 by Tyran Grillo

In this 2019 live set from The Sultan Room in Brooklyn, alto saxophonist Tim Berne and drummer Nasheet Waits connect a 49-minute Möbius strip of improvisational wonder. Composed of two free outpourings, "Tensile" and "5see", the performance is a barrage of ideas, which, despite their thickness of description, leave plenty of room for our imagination as listeners to run wild in tandem. With an immense freedom of spirit and catharsis of expression, the duo breaks down one wall after another until all expectations end up in a free box at the side of our mental road. Without a map, we are left to roam the subtler implications of their interactive cause. The ending of each statement becomes the beginning of another, leaving us with a string of words barred access to orthography. The ebb and flow between clarity and obscurity is as cohesive as the connection between bodily organs.

Berne plays with intense lucidity of communication. He tells stories not for the sake of a reaction but in the interest of filling in blanks the rest of us may be afraid to touch in the Mad Libs of life. His incisiveness fires arrows of indisputable meaning into the air. Waits likewise pulls out the rug from under us not out of a desire to break our equilibrium but to reveal an even more stable surface beneath it. Like Peter Pan, he cuts away his shadow in search of a land without rules, only to realize that connections of a higher order can

never be broken. Such is the depth of their rapport as each defers to the other until the geyser of creativity grows too hot to contain. And so while we might end up with more questions than answers, we are all the better for having asked them.

For more information, visit relativepitchrecords.com. This project was scheduled to be at The Sultan Room.



Stråk på himlen och stora hus
Per Texas Johansson (Moserobie)
Are You Happy?
Torbjörn Zetterberg & Den Stora Frågan (Moserobie)
Berit in Space
Daniel Bingert (Moserobie)
 by Andrey Henkin

20 years ago this month, Swedish saxophonist Jonas Kullhammar led a quartet at Stockholm's Glenn Miller Café. Excerpts of the gigs (recorded "directly on twotrack, no funny shit involved") would be released later in 2000 as *Salut*, Moserobie Music Production CD001. The choice of that three-digit catalogue number was prescient; to date, Moserobie has released over 100 albums, many by Kullhammar but also a healthy amount from *Salut*'s bassist, Torbjörn Zetterberg, and a wide array of Sweden's free thinkers, echoing such artist-run labels/community forums as Strata-East and FMP. Two of the most recent releases include both Kullhammar and Zetterberg while a third is by another label stalwart, reedplayer Per "Texas" Johansson.

Johansson's *Stråk på himlen och stora hus* is essayed by a quintet, the leader (clarinet, bass and contrabass clarinets, oboe, flute and tenor saxophone) joined by Konrad Agnas (drums, timpani), Mattias Ståhl (vibraphone and marimba), Josefin Runsteen (violin) and Margareta Bengtsson (harp), plus singer Rebecka Törnqvist on closer "Barballad" and four-person choir on opener "Lethe". Please excuse this music critic cliché: this album is screaming out for a film for which its 11 pithy tunes can be a soundtrack. Johansson is the lead voice but his narrative melodies are buoyed by the fascinating textures of his band. The feeling is often gauzy and languorous yet there are moments of woodsy industrialism, jazz-noir or Esquivel-style exotica.

Zetterberg's *Are You Happy* is the third release under the banner of his Den Stora Frågan band, with steady membership since 2014: reedplayers Kullhammar and Alberto Pinton, trumpeter Susana Santos Silva, trombonist Mats Ålekint and drummer Jon Fält (replaced on two tracks by Lark Skoglund), plus regular guest Alexander Zethson (organ, Fender Rhodes); Zetterberg also plays organ and zither. The leader is in the tradition of bassist-composers like Charles Mingus, Charlie Haden and Adam Lane, especially in the breadth of his tunes and his ability to make a largish ensemble feel weightless. The eight pieces are all quite different, though falling into bouncing and groaning camps, without suffering from multiple composer disorder.

While Daniel Bingert has played bass on the three Jari Haapalainen Trio albums on Moserobie, for *Berit in Space* he appears only as composer/mastermind, his ten tunes played by Johansson, Kullhammar, Zetterberg, trumpeter Karl Olandersson, pianist Charlie Malmberg and drummer Moussa Fadera. The Blue Note-inspired typography on the back is no accident. This is classic late '50s jazz, recalling the Swedish golden era of Lars Gullin, Bengt Hallberg and Arné Domnerus in a lineup echoing Art Blakey and The Jazz Messengers, a testament both to Bingert as a composer and musicians who clearly have deep foundations in jazz history.

For more information, visit moserobie.com



Mutima
Cecil McBee (Strata-East - Pure Pleasure)
 by Scott Yanow

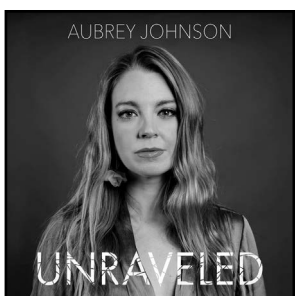
Cecil McBee, who celebrates his 85th birthday on May 19th, has been a major bassist for over 55 years. His huge tone, solid sense of time and flexibility has made him greatly in demand for hardbop, modal music and avant garde sessions. Among the many artists whose music he uplifted were Jackie McLean, Wayne Shorter, Charles Lloyd, Freddie Hubbard, Sonny Rollins, Pharoah Sanders, Chico Freeman, Woody Shaw, McCoy Tyner, Charles Tolliver, Lonnie Liston Smith, Sam Rivers and even Miles Davis. More recently he has been a member of The Cookers.

McBee only led a handful of albums in his career. *Mutima* from 1974 was his first. Recently reissued on vinyl, this set finds McBee heading a group that at times includes four horns (including tenor saxophonist George Adams and Art Webb on flute) and an expanded rhythm section with the recently departed Onaje Allan Gumbs on keyboards and several drummers/percussionists including Billy Hart.

The album consists of six McBee originals. "From Within" is a lengthy exploration showcasing the leader (via overdubbing) on two bowed basses, one in the lower register, the second using upper register overtones to create otherworldly sounds. "Voice Of The 7th Angel" is a short piece that puts the focus on the wordless vocalizing of a young Dee Dee Bridgewater. "Life Waves" finishes Side One with McBee playing speedy lines behind the passionate solos of trumpeter Tex Allen, Adams, alto saxophonist Alan Braufman and Gumbs before taking a virtuosic improvisation of his own. The title cut is a modal piece with several intense solos from the horns and spirited ensemble work. After the relatively brief and fairly free "A Feeling", the program concludes with the episodic "Tulsa Black", which has McBee's son Cecil McBee, Jr. on electric bass and a relatively brief but strong statement from Adams.

This rare Strata-East session deserved to be reissued and it shows just how powerful a bassist Cecil McBee was many decades ago.

For more information, visit purepleasurerecords.com. A tribute to McBee was scheduled to be at Club Bonafide.



Unraveled
Aubrey Johnson (Outside In Music)
 by Jim Motavalli

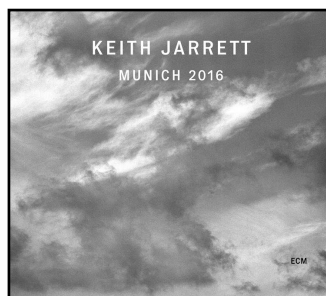
Singer Aubrey Johnson (her uncle, the Pat Metheny collaborator Lyle Mays who died in February, was a mentor) has produced quite a varied album, jazz, pop and world music mixing happily. In general, the jazz fares best. It's hard to erase the memory of Annie Lenox' electro-pop "No More 'I Love You's", which she took to the top of the charts in 1995. Johnson's version is pleasant enough and nicely sung and arranged. Her

take shades into pop and cabaret, but Chris Ziemba's piano solo moves the agenda back to jazz. Johnson is clearly gifted. She recorded the vocal acrobatics on Egberto Gismonti's "Karate" after just one rehearsal with Ziemba and Vitor Gonçalves' accordion—Argentina meets Brazil.

Let's look at how she handles the classics. "The Peacocks", first recorded by Stan Getz and composer/pianist Jimmy Rowles in 1977, is just fine and uses Michael Sachs' bass clarinet and alto effectively. Johnson could be slightly more prominent in the mix, but she fully inhabits the material. You better have some chops if you're going to tackle Antônio Carlos Jobim's "Dindi" (listen to Maria Booker sing it on Wayne Shorter's *Super Nova*—she gets so emotional she breaks down in tears. And Johnson is up against Astrud Gilberto, Blossom Dearie and Frank Sinatra, for crying out loud.) But this is an assured take, too, with a wordless section that soars into the stratosphere before heading back into the lyric. Nice bass playing from Matt Aronoff.

Tomoko Omura wrote "Voice is Magic" though it too sounds Brazilian. A tricky piece, with stops and starts and the composer's dancing violin onboard (as it is on six other tracks), it's a keeper, showcasing more of Johnson's vocalese (and that bass clarinet). Sachs composed "Happy to Stay" expressly for this project, but it doesn't light up. The remaining tracks were written by Johnson, one with her brother, poet Gentry Johnson. The songs aren't bad, but there's not a lot of swing. "Love Again" is the best of them.

For more information, visit outsideinmusic.com. Johnson was scheduled to be at Saint Peter's Church.



Munich 2016
Keith Jarrett (ECM)
 by Annie Murnighan

Pianist Keith Jarrett, who turns 75 this month, has been releasing solo recitals since the '70s and is renowned for his physicality and the diversity of ideas he uses it to convey. On *Munich 2016* Jarrett's ideas flow organically, pulling from Western classical music, jazz, blues, ragtime and Americana while traversing enigmatic and uncanny landscapes.

Jarrett once told an interviewer: "If a person plays dissonance long enough, it will sound like consonance. It's a language that was alien and then it's less and less alien as it continues to live." *Munich 2016*'s first and longest piece, "Part I", is a demonstration of this ethos in action. It finds Jarrett lingering in post-tonal territory, exploring dark modal ideas with palpable enthusiasm. Some of the most compelling moments arise when Jarrett settles on a harmonic structure and focuses his attention on rhythm and dynamics, playing with time and circling angular melodies around a rumbling ostinato. Longtime fans will be pleased to hear Jarrett moaning and stomping his feet—a signature element of his process—lost in the music.

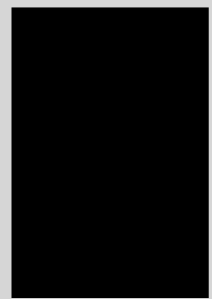
The magic of Jarrett's work lives at the point where traditional tonality and post-tonality meet. He traces a venn diagram of the two worlds in real time. In the companion pieces "Part V" and "Part VI", he demonstrates his prowess as an impromptu composer, sketching fully realized and gorgeously melancholic melodies that veer in and out of familiar tonality. "Part X", too, possesses this quality and, as the second longest of the 12 pieces, suggests his lingering fascination with stylistic grey areas. Jarrett also spends

much of *Munich 2016* expressing his interest in more recognizable genres and disciplines. "Part III" reflects inspiration he has found in the renowned composers of 18th Century Europe, before transitioning confidently to folksy pastoral sketches tinged with the blues.

Jarrett has referred to himself as his harshest critic when he's on stage. When one listens to his improvisations he comes off more as a kind of real-time editor. Possessing an almost supernatural sense of time, Jarrett has the ability to paint compositional arcs, knowing when a phrase warrants repetition or when a fluid transition is needed.

For more information, visit ecmrecords.com

ON SCREEN



Live at the Jazz Showcase (Re-Rip Productions, Vol. 1)
Art Ensemble of Chicago (AECO)
 by Kurt Gottschalk

Much has been made of the Art Ensemble of Chicago's early days and rightly so. It was a period of remarkable creativity that set a new course for the Great Black Music tradition of which the band was (and is) so avowedly a part. But if the '70s represented the Art Ensemble of Chicago at the height of discovery, the '80s saw them at the peak of that power. It's easy, in hindsight, to take a band that good for granted, especially on record. There's the drum thing, there's the theme thing, there's the African, the urban, the global, the universal, but what you get on video is the actual: there's just five guys doing this. There are realms in that quintet and it's a wonder to watch it unfold.

Live at the Jazz Showcase is a fine reminder, capturing the band on their home turf, beautifully edited from multiple-camera footage. It's been available on VHS and DVD (on a somewhat limited basis) in the past, but this no-frills DVD-R issue is apparently the first release authorized by the band.

There's a stage full of horns and percussion at the Chicago venue and both an upright and an electric bass. There's also Joseph Jarman overblowing a soprano until it sounds almost like an oboe, Roscoe Mitchell playing piccolo bird songs and trumpeter Lester Bowie trancing out before rising to hit a quick swing. There's Malachi Favors Maghostut, ever mysterious, with a heavy black mask covering most of his face, playing a bass that seems to exist outside of time. And there's Famoudou Don Moye, striking and focused in face paint, always in a sense leading, whether it's a drum jam or a free jazz explosion.

The band moves quickly through the material, playing (at least) eight pieces in under an hour and playing them like the pros they'd come to be—which, it merits saying, is a kind of pro few have been. After more than a decade together, they'd become a fantastically tight improvising ensemble. Much of this 'second period' for the band was collected in a worthy boxed set issued by ECM in 2018. Much more—especially their releases on the Japanese DIW label—deserves to be heard again. This concert is a valuable addition to that prized pile.

For more information, contact famoudoudonmoye@yahoo.com. This band was scheduled to be at Brooklyn Academy of Music.



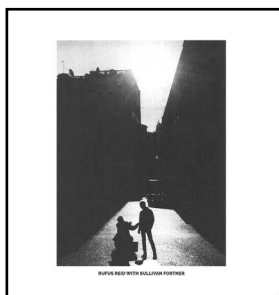
In The Face of Chaos | Blended Lineage
David Bixler (Red Piano)
by Marco Cangiano

David Bixler's recent CDs—his last one was more than five years ago—convey a subtle joy and the sheer pleasure of making music. Having looked after his youngest son following a traumatic brain injury during the last decade, the alto saxophonist has reemerged with a different approach and maturity to music, as if in pursuit of a personal catharsis. There is a soothing quality and a sense of serendipity in this music, superbly executed by extremely well integrated bands. Gone is a sort of eclecticism, ranging from Latin American influences to a certain postbop mainstream, which has characterized Bixler's earlier recordings. There is no rush, no insistence on patterns, just the careful choice of the right note and an unusual openness to what the other musicians have to say.

In The Face of Chaos presents a set of Bixler's originals, mostly midtempo, the bouncy "nofomomofo" being the exception. The quartet could not be more empathetic. Jon Cowherd's musical piano is quite congenial to Bixler's writing while bassist Ike Sturm provides solidity and taste on top of Rogério Boccato's supple and creative percussion. Bixler is the leading voice and soars at his own pace during the solos. The opening title track aptly introduces the main theme of the CD: a relaxed atmosphere with ample space. Among the most heartfelt tunes are "Return" and "Hope", the former closer to a ballad while the latter discloses more accentuated dynamics. These are clearly very personal stories we can all associate with, particularly in this day and age. Both tunes have a slow and circular development, with each solo filling the space one note at a time as pauses and silences play a major role. "Deep Trust" develops in an almost suite-like fashion while "Leap" is the most traditional postbop tune. Bixler's arrangement of traditional melody "Give Me Jesus" wraps up the program as it started, Cowherd and Sturm with an opportunity to stretch out unhurriedly after an inspired alto solo.

The more recent *Blended Lineage* is a bit more structured, mainly due to a string quartet (Judith Ingolfsson and Heather Martin Bixler, violins; Josh Kail, viola; Rubin Khodeli, cello) complementing Bixler's quintet (another recording with the same ensemble is already underway). It is a suite in four movements based on the concept of modern tribes. Cowherd is showcased throughout, but particularly in "Origins", which develops from a dramatic intro led by the strings to the quintet repeating the main theme and leading to Cowherd's thoughtful and deliberate solo. Mike Rodriguez' trumpet blends very well with the leader while bassist Luke Sellick and percussionist Fabio Rojas sustain the slow evolution with taste and restraint. Without the strings, "Motherland" reproduces the atmospheres found in the earlier album. "Trenches" is the most complex piece, the interaction between quintet and strings more accomplished than elsewhere. Based on an ostinato pattern, Rodriguez' solo leads to a sudden change of pace featuring a dialogue between the quintet and the strings followed by Bixler and Rojas' solos. Finally, "My Soul" concludes with alto winding down James Joyce's words from the last paragraph of his short story "The Dead". In the face of chaos, different tribes can still find unity and plenty of beauty.

For more information, visit redpianorecords.com. Bixler's *Blended Lineage* was scheduled to be at Soapbox Gallery.



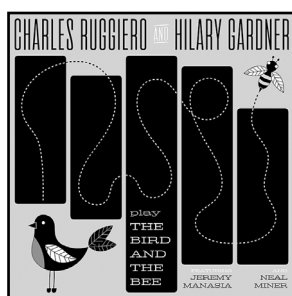
Always in The Moment
Rufus Reid/Sullivan Fortner (Newvelle)
by Ken Dryden

Veteran bassist Rufus Reid honed his sound through intense learning on his own and through classical studies at Northwestern. He has graced hundreds of recordings and his output as a leader has earned consistently strong praise. Not to be overlooked are his tremendous gifts as a composer and arranger, both of which are displayed in depth in this duo session with Sullivan Fortner, a pianist whose star is very much on the rise. In spite of the several-decade difference in age, they mesh beautifully. Reid's originals provide plenty of inspiration for the duo, with his flawless tone always prominent while Fortner's playing is lyrical, imaginative and never excessive, the latter a skill it takes many instrumentalists years to learn.

Subtlety is a key factor. There is an intimacy to the performances, with plenty of give and take between the principals, whether on one of the bassist's compositions, an overlooked gem like Charles Mingus' "Duke Ellington's Sound Of Love" or a time-tested jazz standard like Jimmy Rowles' "The Peacocks". The closing song is a gorgeous solo bass rendition of Ellington's "Sophisticated Lady", leaving the listener sad to see the needle move to the end of the LP.

Newvelle Records' novel approach seems to be making good money for their artists and there is a lot to like about their products. The warm sound is among the very best available today and rivals the heyday of premium direct-to-disc LPs. But they are only available to those purchasing an entire season subscription of six LPs by different artists at \$60 apiece plus shipping. One also must download the liner notes, though they could have been printed and inserted into the record jacket, along with the enclosed poem.

For more information, visit newvelle-records.com. Fortner was scheduled to be at The Jazz Gallery.

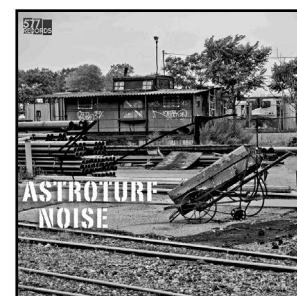


Play The Bird and The Bee
Charles Ruggiero and Hilary Gardner (smallsLIVE)
by George Kanzler

The Bird and The Bee is an electronica pop duo, a lineal descendant of the post-WWII pop duo Les Paul and Mary Ford. Like them, The Bird and The Bee create their songs by layering multi-tracks of voices (by Inara George as Ford did) and music (electronic and synthesizer sounds and beats by Greg Lurstin as Paul did with his guitar). The duo have been recording songs, both coyly acerbic and wryly romantic, for over a decade. They offer a singular cache of pop, much as Tin Pan Alley did in the mid-20th Century, for jazz musicians to draw on and reinterpret. Drummer Charles Ruggiero and singer Hilary Gardner do just that, reframing eight of their songs as acoustic renditions for vocalist with a piano-bass-drums trio—jazzing them up, if you will.

Ruggiero brings a variety of rhythms and tempos to his arrangements, mirroring or taking cues from the duo's recordings (comparisons are easy as The Bird and The Bee tracks are available on multiple internet platforms). Latin beats kick in after a vocal-piano verse on "You're A Cad", wherein the lyrics both excoriate said cad but also confess "I'm a fish on your hook / Still I wait by the phone / I should get better but I'm worse", Gardner delivering the contradictory messages with convincing irony. Ruggiero double times on brushes on "The Races", with enigmatic lyrics conflating gambling and desire. "4th of July" is bright and sparkling, sung with swinging brio. The duo's most infamous song, "F*cking Boyfriend", has one of the most intricate arrangements, beginning with vocal over bass and finger-snaps, as the lyrics admonish a boyfriend for being sexually withholding and non-committal. Pianist Jeremy Manasia's solo in the middle, heavily in the Red Garland/Wynton Kelly style, is a highlight, as are his contributions throughout this surprisingly enjoyable jazz take on a pop duo's repertoire.

For more information, visit smallslive.com. Gardner was scheduled to be at Café Bohemia.



Eponymous
Astroturf Noise (577 Records)
by George Grella

In 1979, Steve Martin put out *Comedy is Not Pretty!*. On one of the tracks, "Cruel Shoes", he reads a short story while accompanying himself on the banjo. There's no joke in the story, but this is Martin, so it's hilarious—so much of what he does is about delivery, tone and timing.

Comedy isn't pretty, it's hard. It's particularly hard in music, but a listener often gets the impression that musicians think it's pretty easy, especially among the more avant garde players. But the reason Martin made it look easy and Peter Schickele and Lester Bowie were masters of comedic music is that they knew it was hard and worked at it until it came off as second nature.

This debut album from the trio Astroturf Noise—mandolinist Sam Day Harmet, violinist Sana Nagano and bassist Zach Swanson—shows musicians who think that playing a comical, slightly free bluegrass/country/Americana mix is simple. That makes for an album that is insulting because in its fundamental laziness it condescends both to musicians and listeners who care about those styles of music and who have a sense of humor that is generous, not exclusionary.

The material is simplistic, some kind of down-home theme or rocking rhythm made 'funny' and 'avant garde' with dissonant counter melodies and harmonies and some seasoning with things like a stutter effect. The combination of the ordinary musical thinking and the cutesy and manipulative attitude starts off irritating and then, through the first two tracks, "Orange Blossom Bullet Train" and "Black Berry", grows nauseating. The press materials name-drop the likes of Bill Monroe, James Chance and The Lounge Lizards, leaving one with the idea the musicians never actually listened to those artists.

There is a light at the end of the tunnel: closer "Cluck" abandons the snark for a committed improvisation that is atmospheric, *sui generis* and satisfying. A shame it has to go with the rest of the album.

For more information, visit 577records.com. This project was scheduled to be at Pete's Candy Store.

BOXED SET



**The Complete Woody Herman
Decca, Mars and MGM Sessions (1943-1954)
Woody Herman (Mosaic)
by John Pietaro**

Among the leading figures of the Swing Era, clarinetist Woody Herman, who was born 107 years ago this month, stands out as iconic. He fronted bands well beyond the '40s; premiered a work by Igor Stravinsky written for him; and enjoyed a wildly popular multimedia career, thereby carving out a vital space in the history of big band music. Rethinking the concept governing his ensemble, Herman was quick to move from "The Band That Plays the Blues" to a series of Thundering Herds in 1943, with stars including Ben Webster, Stan Getz, Flip Phillips as well as progressives Chubby Jackson, Billy Bauer, Urbie Green, Kai Winding, Red Mitchell and, particularly, Jimmy Giuffre. And of course, an array of soloists who remain legendary (see: Red Norvo, Ray Nance, Pete Candoli, Juan Tizol, Shorty Rogers, as well as the aforementioned). While Herman's music has been widespread, there was a raft of recordings lost to time

and long sought-after by fans. *The Complete Woody Herman* satisfies this need, offering listeners the airchecks, live dates, rehearsals, alternate takes and records cut for singular radio broadcasts along with other sessions. Furthermore, this seven-CD boxed set includes a detailed booklet of historical facts including personnel, recording dates and sites. However, the absence of important pieces like 1945's "Apple Honey", "Laura" and the celebrated "Four Brothers" (1947) reveals that the Complete in the title falls glaringly short.

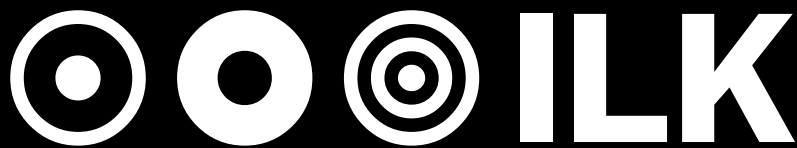
That said, there are gems here and for Herman completists and jazz historians pairing this set with earlier collections may finalize your search. Highlights include Norvo's extended vibraphone choruses on "The Man I Love" and "Red Top"; blistering trumpet from Candoli; Herman's own clarinet solo flights; drummers Cliff Leeman, Dave Tough, Sonny Igoe, Don Lamond, Louie Bellson, Panama Francis and Chuck Flores; the young Neal Hefti's trumpet and arrangements; and guests like percussionist Candido. Yet, for all of the talent, the vast majority of this collection is comprised of ballads, the first half of which are dominated by Herman alternating vocal duties with Frances Wayne. Neither were celebrated for their vocal chops and Herman's tendency toward an affected African-American style ranges from merely irritating to outright offensive. Herman was conscious enough of racial struggles to hire respected black artists in featured spots, so why the 'jive' vernacular? One can imagine the private discussions of these band members, the disapproving, disappointed glares and stifled protest.

"One-Two-Three-Four Jump", composed by

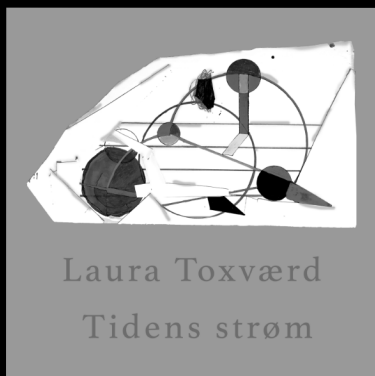
Phillips, is another Norvo feature for vibraphone, an instrument he had transitioned to from xylophone in 1943. Phillips is strong here, too, though the tune borrows much from both "Undecided" and "Apple Honey". The oft-maligned recording of "Ebony Concerto" happens to be a standout, if only for its historic content, but it is fascinating to hear the band work through a modern classical piece like this. And the four selections credited to "Billy Eckstine and Woody Herman and his Orchestra" are impressive with Eckstine, as always, exquisite. On "Here Come the Blues" he's in top form with the ensemble including Wilbur Schwartz on alto saxophone and Giuffre and Babe Russin among the tenors. Most interesting is the presence of French horn (John Graas) and tuba (Gene England). Arrangers Pete Rugolo and Rogers were heavily influenced by the advances of bebop and the expansive post-War sounds. These sides were cut in January 1951; two years earlier, Rugolo produced the first sessions of Miles Davis' *Birth of the Cool*, which boasted expansive arrangements by Gil Evans and Gerry Mulligan, graduates of the Claude Thornhill Orchestra. And of course, Eckstine's own band had earlier included Charlie Parker and welcomed in the new direction. Much was happening in this period of transition, but unfortunately the next Herman session went back to the basic lineup—and a Herman vocal. Though his '50s Herds included strong section players and soloists, as well as the promise of advanced orchestration by Giuffre and Ralph Burns, the remaining selections too often leave one wondering what could have been.

For more information, visit mosaicrecords.com

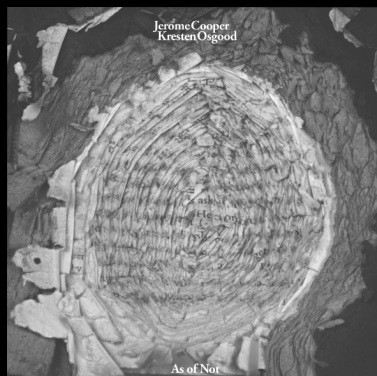
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— DownBeat, Feb. 2019



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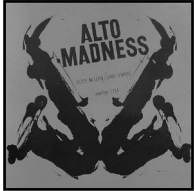
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ON THIS DAY

by Andrey Henkin



Alto Madness
Jackie McLean/John Jenkins (Prestige)
May 3rd, 1957

They both played alto, were born in big cities (Jackie McLean in New York, John Jenkins in Chicago) five months apart in 1931 and had a Prestige to Blue Note progression early in their careers. But while McLean would keep working steadily into the new millennium, Jenkins was out of music by the end of the decade. For this session the pair are joined by a semi-tragic rhythm section: pianist Wade Legge died in 1963 and bassist Doug Watkins in 1962. Drummer Art Taylor did live a long life. Leader originals and standards make up the set.



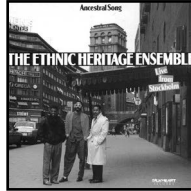
Jazz à Gaveau
Martial Solal (Columbia)
May 3rd, 1962

Gaveau (1847-1960) was one of the three major French piano-makers. In its factory was a performance hall, stately with a massive pipe organ on stage. While the company has since merged with its rivals, the hall continues to host concerts. One such event was the Francophone trio of pianist Martial Solal (Algeria), bassist Guy Pedersen (France) and drummer Daniel Humair (Switzerland). Apart from the opener, Duke Jordan's "Jordu", the music is Solal originals, including one presumably written for the set, "Gavotte A Gaveau".



Live At The Jazz Galerie
El Babaku (MPS)
May 3rd, 1971

This is the group's only LP, a live date from Berlin. The most known member is drummer/bamboo flutist Billy Brooks, who had moved to Europe in 1964, working with Tete Montoliu. The percussion-heavy quintet is filled out by other ex-pats: Burt Thompson (bass and vocals), Donald Coleman and Charles Campbell (congas and vocals) from the U.S. and Carlos Santa Cruz (congas and vocals) from Cuba. Apart from Brooks' band theme song and a tribute to Malcolm X, the set is his arrangements of music from Nigeria and Cuba.



Ancestral Song
Ethnic Heritage Ensemble (Silkheart)
May 3rd, 1987

While this group was made up of Chicagoans, born or living – drummer Kahil El'Zabar, saxophonist Ed Wilkerson and reedplayer Henry 'Light' Huff, coming out of the latter's Infinite Spirit Music band from 1979 – its first four albums were recorded in Germany, Italy, Finland and Sweden. Huff had been replaced by Maurice McIntyre the album before and here himself is replaced by trombonist Joseph Bowie for a live set at the Fasching Club in Stockholm. El'Zabar composed the four lengthy tunes, including the title track.



Polar Bear Stomp
Jim Pepper (EmArcy)
May 3rd, 1991

Jim Pepper (tenor saxophone and vocals) is notable in jazz history both as its most famous Native American musician and for writing "Witchi-Tai-To" (supposedly a peyote song from his grandfather), covered by Jan Garbarek, Oregon and others. That song appears on this posthumously released live date from Miles Smiles Jazz Café in Vienna, Pepper (who died nine months later at 50) with bassist Wayne Darling and drummer Bill Elgart. Other tunes are by Pepper, his father (also a saxophonist) and the traditional melody "Greensleeves".

BIRTHDAYS

May 1
†Ira Sullivan b.1931
†Shirley Horn 1934-2005
Carlos Ward b.1940
James Newton b.1953
Kevin Hays b.1968
Ambrose Akinmusire b.1982

May 2
†Pat Smyth 1923-83
†Richard "Groove" Holmes 1931-91
†Eddy Louiss 1941-2015
Mickey Bass b.1943
Keith Ganz b.1972

May 3
†John Lewis 1920-2001
†Jimmy Cleveland 1926-2008
†Jymie Merritt 1926-2020
Johnny Fischer b.1930
John Alexander b.1948
Larry Ochs b.1949
Guillermo E. Brown b.1974
Matt Bauder b.1976
Alexander Hawkins b.1981

May 4
†Sonny Payne 1926-79
†Maynard Ferguson 1928-2006
†Don Friedman 1935-2016
Ron Carter b.1937
Chuck Folds b.1938
Rudresh Mahanthappa b.1971
Jeremiah Cymerman b.1980

May 5
Kidd Jordan b.1935
Stanley Cowell b.1941
Jack Walrath b.1946
Pablo Aslan b.1962

May 6
†Freddy Randall 1921-99
†Denny Wright 1924-92
Isla Eckinger b.1939
Paul Dunmall b.1953
Rob Silverman b.1954

May 7
†Pete Jacobs 1899-1952
†Leon Abbey 1900-75
†Edward Inge 1906-88
†Herbie Steward 1926-2003
†Arthur Blythe 1940-2017
David Haney b.1955
Michael Formanek b.1958

May 8
†Red Nichols 1905-65
†Mary Lou Williams 1910-81
†Jerry Rusch 1943-2003
Keith Jarrett b.1945
Jon-Erik Kellso b.1964
Meinrad Kneer b.1970

May 9
†George Simon 1912-2001
†Dick Morrissey 1940-2000
Dennis Chambers b.1959
Ricardo Gallo b.1978

May 10
†Pee Wee Hunt 1907-79
†Al Hendrickson 1920-2007
†Mel Lewis 1929-90
†Julius Wechter 1935-99
†Mike Melvoin 1937-2012
†Jimmy Ponder 1946-2013
Ahmed Abdullah b.1947
†Hans Reichel 1949-2011
Alex Foster b.1953
Philip Harper b.1965
Jasper Hoiby b.1977

May 11
†King Oliver 1885-1938
†JC Higginbotham 1906-73
†Oscar Valdambrini 1924-97
†John Coppola 1929-2015
Dick Garcia b.1931
†Freddie Roach 1931-80
Carla Bley b.1938
Ralph Humphrey b.1944
Mikkel Ploug b.1978

May 12
†Marshall Royal 1912-95
†Don DeMichael 1928-82
Gary Peacock b.1935
Klaus Doldinger b.1936
Trevor Tompkins b.1941

May 13
†Maxine Sullivan 1911-87
†Gil Evans 1912-88
†Red Garland 1923-84
Creed Taylor b.1929
†Erick Moseholm 1930-2012
John Engels b.1935

May 14
†Sidney Bechet 1897-1959
†Zutty Singleton 1898-1975
†Skip Martin 1916-76
†Al Porcino 1925-2013
Warren Smith b.1932
†Jack Bruce 1943-2014
Virginia Mayhew b.1959
Frank Basile b.1978

May 15
†Ellis Larkins 1923-2002
Karin Krog b.1937
Oscar Castro-Neves b.1940
Omer Klein b.1982
Grace Kelly b.1992

May 16
†Woody Herman 1913-87
†Eddie Bert 1922-2012
†Betty Carter 1930-98
Billy Cobham b.1944

May 17
†Paul Quinichette 1916-83
†Dewey Redman 1931-2006
†David Izenzon 1932-79
†Jackie McLean 1932-2006
Roy Nathanson b.1951
Michiel Braam b.1964

May 18
†Joe Turner 1911-85
†Kai Winding 1922-83
Jim McNeely b.1949
Weasel Walter b.1972

May 19
Cecil McBee b.1935
†Sonny Fortune 1939-2018
†Henry Butler 1949-2018
Michael Blake b.1964

May 20
†Tommy Gumina 1931-2013
†Louis Smith 1931-2016
†Bob Florence 1932-2008
†Charles Davis 1933-2016
†Rufus Harley 1936-2006
Victor Lewis b.1950
Ralph Peterson b.1962
Sheryl Bailey b.1966
Benjamin Duboc b.1969

May 21
†Fats Waller 1904-43
†Tommy Bryant 1930-82
Marc Ribot b.1954
Lewis "Flip" Barnes b.1955

May 22
†Sun Ra 1914-93
†Elek Bacsik 1926-1993
†Giuseppi Logan 1935-2020
†Dick Berk 1939-2014

May 23
†Artie Shaw 1910-2004
†Rosemary Clooney 1928-2002
†Les Spann 1932-89
Daniel Humair b.1938
Marvin Stamm b.1939
Don Moye b.1946
Richie Beirach b.1947
Ken Peplowski b.1959
Darcy James Argue b.1975

May 24
†Frank Signorelli 1901-75
†Herbie Fields 1919-58
†Max Bennett 1928-2018
†Gianni Basso 1931-2009
†Michael White 1933-2016
Archie Shepp b.1937
†Charles Earland 1941-99
Ben Monder b.1962

May 25
Marshall Allen b.1924
†Miles Davis 1926-91
†Piet Noordijk 1932-2011
Gary Foster b.1936
Christof Lauer b.1953
†Wallace Roney 1960-2020

May 26
†Shorty Baker 1914-66
†Ziggy Elman 1914-68
†Calvin Jackson 1919-85
Frank Grant b.1931
†Neil Ardley 1937-2004
David Torn b.1953

May 27
†Albert Nicholas 1900-73
†Earl "Jock" Carruthers 1910-71
†Bud Shank 1926-2009
Ramsey Lewis b.1935
†Rufus Jones 1936-90
†Niels-Henning Ørsted Pedersen 1946-2005
Gonzalo Rubalcaba b.1963

May 28
†Andy Kirk 1898-1992
†Al Tinney 1921-2002
†Russ Freeman 1926-2002
Alfred Patterson b.1937
†Claudio Roditi 1946-2020

May 29
Freddie Redd b.1927
†Hilton Ruiz 1952-2006
Jim Snidero b.1958
Lafayette Harris, Jr. b.1963
Wycliffe Gordon b.1967
Sean Jones b.1978

May 30
†Sidney DeParis 1905-67
†Benny Goodman 1909-86
†Pee Wee Erwin 1913-81
†Shake Keane 1927-97
†Harry Beckett 1935-2010
Ann Hampton Callaway b.1959
Juan Pablo Carletti b.1973
Frank Rosaly b.1974

May 31
†Red Holloway 1927-2012
Albert "Tootie" Heath b.1935
Louis Hayes b.1937
Marty Ehrlich b.1955
Eric Revis b.1967
Christian McBride b.1972



ISLA ECKINGER
May 6th, 1939

When ECM reissued, in grand double-LP fashion, its inaugural release, Mal Waldron's *Free At Last* from 1969, last December, it also called attention to one of the most accomplished jazz musicians hailing from Switzerland: bassist Isla Eckinger. He would go on to make two more albums with Waldron but had already been recording for over a decade, both with countrymen like Bruno Spoerri (on trombone) and visiting Americans like Buck Clayton. He has been on well over 100 albums, many for MPS, Enja and EGO – labels based in his then-adopted home of Germany – for the cream of European (and U.S.) jazzers. In the new millennium, he moved to Los Angeles, where he is still active. -AH

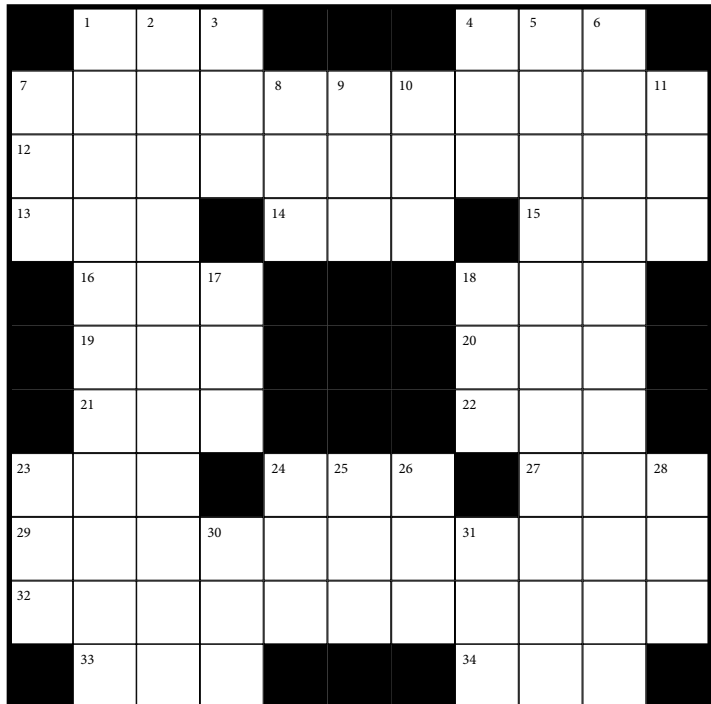
CROSSWORD

ACROSS

- Jazz Pharmaceuticals got approval from this org. in 2019
- '50's His Master's Voice French 7" EP catalogue prefix
- Jazz singers often have to be these as well
- Rahsaan Roland Kirk's "____ Slavery"
- Denny Zeitlin and Eddie Henderson are part of this org.
- 1991 Teddy Edwards featuring Tom Waits Verve album *Mississippi* ____
- '50 jazz label ____-Jay
- Airport code for visiting Twins Jazz Club
- They help with booking (abbr.)
- Manufacturer of guitar effect pedals
- Pianist Yamamoto
- This has two uses on the bandstand
- Late British trumpeter Colbeck
- 2012 Mike Dillon Royal Potato Family album useful for interment
- Romanian pianist Baciu, Jr.
- Five Saxes LP catalogue prefix
- Steinway competitor
- This Monkee had a 1967 big band album arranged by Shorty Rogers
- Trio ____, Scottish improv group of Cameron Thomson-Duncan, Tom Stephenson and Greg Irons
- Jazz Masters - 100* ____ *De Jazz* compilation series

DOWN

- Like the Jones Brothers
- Late jazz poet Steve
- Australian univ. with noted jazz program
- Vocal suffix
- Trumpeter Jack Sheldon was sidekick on his TV show
- Comps
- Fredrik Ljungkvist/Mattias Ståhl/Patric Thorman band ____ *För Tommy*
- Steve Turre and James Genus are longtime band members of this show (abbr.)
- Tom T. Hall country sound "Harper Valley ____" covered by The Three Sounds, Seiji Hiraoka and others
- This tome describes jazz as "broadly characterized by regular forceful rhythms, syncopated phrasing...and improvisatory soloing." (abbr.)
- '50's Decca Scandinavian 7" EP catalogue prefix
- A musician's instrument?
- 2004 Nik Bärtsch's Mobile Tonus-Music album
- German label releasing late '80s-early '90s Manfred Schoof albums
- Tokyo jazz club The Pit ____
- 1972 Barry Guy Incus double album
- NFL team playing in birthplace of jazz
- Duke Ellington composed a suite for her (abbr.)
- Fusion suffix
- NYC venue that hosted Harlem in the Himalayas series



By Andrey Henkin

visit nycjazzrecord.com for answers