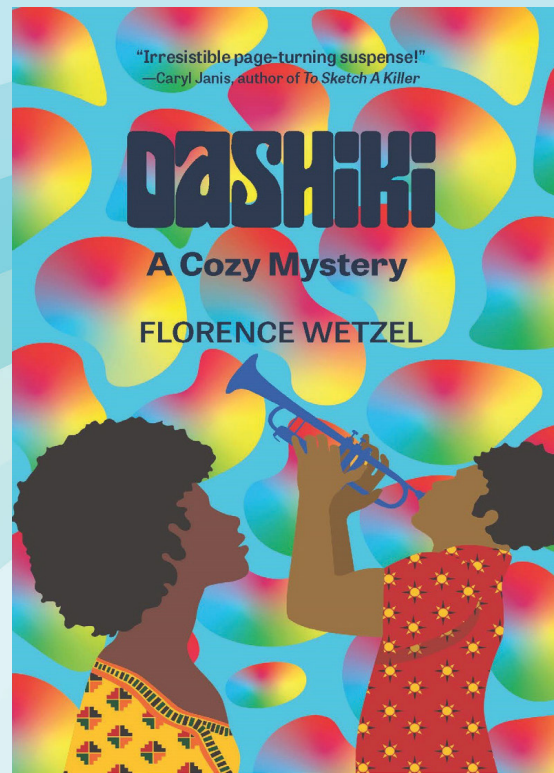


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Flo Wetzel was contributor to *The New York City Jazz Record*, *AllAboutJazz.com* and *The Squid's Ear* and is co-author of the jazz biography *Perry Robinson: The Traveler* ("One of the most informal, engrossingly personal jazz memories in years" - Gary Giddins, *Village Voice*)

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**History of the Vibraphone
Warren Wolf (Cellar Music)
by Scott Yanow**

The vibraphone has had a long history in jazz with Lionel Hampton and Adrian Rollini establishing the instrument during the Swing Era, though there have only been a few dozen major players through the decades since. One can pretty much sum up the history of the instrument prior to 1970 by citing Hampton, Red Norvo, Milt Jackson, Terry Gibbs, Cal Tjader, Bobby Hutcherson and Gary Burton, with only a small number of significant players missing from the list.

In more recent times, Warren Wolf has been one of the vibraphone's leaders ever since he emerged in the early part of the 21st century. And on *History of the Vibraphone*, he pays tribute to some of the earlier greats by dedicating each of the first nine songs to a different artist. For this worthy project, he enlists the talents of Alex Brown (piano, keyboards), Vicente Archer (bass) and Carroll "CV" Dashiell III (drums) plus, for six of the numbers, Tim Green (alto, soprano). Performing songs mostly written by other vibraphonists (other than selections by pianists John Lewis and Chick Corea), Wolf pays tribute to Gibbs, Hampton ("Midnight Sun"), Jackson ("Django"), Hutcherson, Tjader, Burton (Corea's "Captain Señor Mouse"), Roy Ayers, Dave Samuels and Joe Locke (while Norvo is missing, perhaps he will be included in a second volume?).

Wolf, who also performs his own "I See You Baby, Looking at Me" and a second version of "Midnight Sun", sounds quite at home exploring the variety of styles. He gets to be boppish on Gibbs' "Bopstake Course" and "Django", creates a fresh interpretation of "Captain Señor Mouse" (which was originally a duet by Corea and Burton), and sounds quite comfortable on the more groove-oriented performances. While he hints here and there at the subjects of his tributes, he always sounds like himself.

Warren Wolf, who has grown to be an inspiration for younger vibraphonists who have followed him, sounds as if he was clearly having a fun time on his well-conceived *History of the Vibraphone*.

For more info visit cellarlive.com. Wolf is at *Birdland* with SFJAZZ Collective Mar. 12-15. See Calendar.



**Americana
Rale Micic and Abe Rábade (Karonte)
by Elliott Simon**

Jazz guitarist Rale Micic and pianist Abe Rábade share a long history of collaboration. The two met in 1996 at Boston's Berklee College of Music and have performed together across Europe and the U.S., including at Carnegie Hall's Weill Recital Hall and the Blue Note. Despite their long-standing partnership, this recording marks their first album together.

Released last year, *Americana* was recorded at Samurai Hotel Studio in Queens during sessions in 2016 and 2022. Offering clean, balanced contemporary jazz shaped by Micic's Serbian and Rábade's Galician backgrounds, featured are nine original compositions that highlight the pair's deep musical connection and seemingly effortless balance. The album also includes two traditional pieces: Micic's arrangement of the Serbian tune "Mito Bekrijo" and the Galician folk piece "Xota do Marreco". Both tracks infuse the music with vibrant energy while offering a glimpse into the musicians' respective cultural roots.

The album opener, "Only Love Will Stay", sets the stage with Micic establishing a tango-esque rhythm, creating movement and intrigue. Rábade explores striking dynamic contrast, alternating between thicker, harmonically-rich chords and more sparse, delicate moments. The track draws listeners in with its contrasting depth and breathing room. On "Sunrise", the guitarist establishes a compelling groove before stepping into the lyrical melody, the duo then seamlessly shifting between lead and supporting roles. The melody here is as memorable as it is enjoyable. "A Folla do Castiñeiro" carries a distinct Spanish influence, driven by urgency and forward momentum. Its heavier chords and dynamic contrasts add intensity, offering a striking counterpoint to the album's more lyrical moments. The fusion of traditional Galician elements with contemporary jazz is especially effective. The title track unfolds with a quiet, clean chord progression, repeated in meditative fashion. While there are many ways to represent the American melting pot, this piece offers a soft, contemplative and deeply human perspective.

The chemistry between Micic and Rábade, honed over years of collaboration, is undeniable. *Americana* showcases the duo's compositional depth and ability to blend diverse musical influences into a cohesive and captivating work.

For more info visit aberabade.com. Micic is at *The Django* Mar. 12. See Calendar.



**Gratitude: One Head Four People
Roscoe Mitchell (Wide Hive)
by Fred Bouchard**

Elder statesman and co-founder of the Art Ensemble of Chicago (AEC), reed Svengali and inveterate iconoclast, Roscoe Mitchell (now at age 84) peers coolly steadfast in rainbow round shades and fly herringbone 'n' cravat on *Gratitude: One Head Four People's* jacket portrait and group photo. He likewise thrives as jacket artist: his snap-to design imagines the band as a pointillist quincunx, a Zen-like concept shared by four equal executors: he on bass saxophone (in his kit from the get-go), with Sandy Ewen (guitar), Damon Smith (bass) and Weasel Walter (drums, percussion), a dervish of sticks, skins and bells. The plan is direct: a roaring half-hour of Mitchell's huge horn and "rhythm section," followed by a pianissimo quadrilogue as the four subtly strike metal, strings and wood with sticks, bows, fingers, electronic buttons, in what the classic AEC affectionately called "little instruments."

On "Ruckus", reedy sax unleashes inch-thick burps over scratchy arco bass, busy woodblocks, and buzzy beeps and twerks. The horn may approach

sonorities of amplified contra-bassoon. Centerpiece "Ripples" pairs slurry string glissandi with buzzy horn overtones (now like a sarrusophone) and reaches a sustained climax to rattle windows and jar your fillings. Walter's mouse-hole scampers upend memories of AEC co-founder Famoudou Don Moye's amped rampages: chamber work has replaced tribal spectacle. "Ruff, Ruff, Ruff, and Squeaky" (comic title of the year?) unleashes a barrage of rumbled graffiti that fades off-stage with quivery "jews-harp" and an ambiguous Ewen-Smith guitar-bass meld. Solo high saxophone on "Shiver" meanders into a swoon as the band checks out on a drum-bass flurry. Pure chime and temple bells calmly anchor the prevailing hush of mini-suite "Sustain and Ring"...with infinite decayyy... Midnight in their clock shop invites meditation amid eventual surrurations and tintinnabulations (thanks, liners writer, reedman Joshua Marshall). Inching toward an anti-climax, bandmates softly ply gongs, lyre, bowed cymbal, echoey timbales, rubber ducky and ref whistle. "The Final Bell" rolls with stormy interplay over a creaky hull. At the single toll of this space-ship's bell, the cycle rewinds anew.

For more info visit widehive.com. Mitchell is at *Roulette* Mar. 6 (presented by Interpretations). See Calendar.



**Dark Journey (The Music of Andrew Rathbun)
Western Jazz Collective (Origin)
by George Kanzler**

If jazz is "the sound of surprise," then the septet (sometimes octet with guest percussion on some tracks) Western Jazz Collective definitely delivers. *Dark Journey* (The Music of Andrew Rathbun) features multi-reed player Rathbun's kaleidoscopic compositions, works far from the conventional 32-bar or 12-bar tunes that dominate the jazz canon. His pieces unspool like skeins of multi-colored and textured threads that weave complex forms. Many of the nine tracks here employ shifting time signatures, often including odd meters as well as changing tempi, from swift down to rubato, sometimes all on the same tune.

"Making No Sense", the opening and longest track is representative of most of those attributes. The rhythm section, with Matt Landon (guitar), opens in a rollicking 3/4-6/8 time, then gives way to a Scott Cowan (trumpet) solo at a crawling tempo, gradually joined and backed by comments from Landon and Matthew Fries (electric piano), as the tempo dissolves into semi-rubato ensemble choruses, horns and guitar joined by the sonorities of Greg Jasperse's wordless (mostly vowel-based) vocals. Then a 6/8 jangly rhythm introduces solo trades by the composer's soprano saxophone and Landon's guitar; the track then concludes in a slow reverie of electric piano, guitar and voice.

Rathbun's arrangements conjure a surprising variety of timbral and tonal colors from just a septet/octet. "Longer Wait" evokes a *Twilight Zone* vibe with soft keyboard chords and his slithery WX7 electronic saxophone, paired with Cowan's classically pure-toned open trumpet. "Different Directions" unfurls true to its title, as shifting times (6, 4, 5) are more than matched by disparate lines from voice, horns and guitar and piano. A highlight is the second-longest track, "February First", with John Hébert's pizzicato bass solo opening over a trotting tempo, and other

musicians dropping contrasting lines until pianist Fries asserts a theme ushering in guitar and tenor saxophone solos (Rathbun in Sonny Rollins mode), all culminating in an electronically altered, Eddie Harris-like saxophone mouthpiece on trumpet solo coda.

The sum total results in a constantly surprising and stimulating program exploring the outer range of jazz' compositional strategies.

For more info visit originarts.com. Andrew Rathbun is at *Ibeam Brooklyn* Mar. 15 (presented by Connection Works). See Calendar.



**Francesca
David Murray Quartet (Intakt)
by Ken Waxman**

Apparently there comes a time when avant garde tenor saxophonists turn into Coleman Hawkins. They don't become slavish imitators, but although exploratory impulses remain, swing, melody and a deeper sound become paramount. That transformation first affected Archie Shepp, who transitioned to blues and ballads by the late 20th century. Now the same metamorphosis has affected David Murray. Unlike Shepp, who arguably changed to mask a failing lip, Murray's skill is still on full display and *Francesca* is a high-quality mainstream release. One reason for that is the New York-based saxophonist-bass clarinetist (who returned to NYC in 2016) surrounds himself with younger, accomplished musicians, as heard in the last few years on tour and on the quartet's new album: Marta Sanchez (piano), Luke Stewart (bass) and Russell Carter (drums).

Murray also continues to play bass clarinet, and on "Richard's Tune" he takes out that horn and balances chalumeau burps and clarion squeaks. Interestingly enough, the Don Pullen composition, which also features Sanchez' leaping piano chording and Stewart's slithering double bass thumps, mixes wallowing reed scoops and vibrations plus what seems to be a contrafact of "Jitterbug Waltz". On tenor, the passion and power Murray has always displayed is still upfront, alongside slurs, splashes and smears—sometimes expressed unaccompanied—as on the title track. More often than not he plays in tandem with Sanchez' keyboard bounces and swirls, measured drum smacks that take on bop and Latin articulations and occasionally the bassist's string slides. Among the allusions, Murray's expositions encompass interludes where he stutters, swallows and stings tones into expanded doits that meet piano stops and trade fours with the drummer as on "Am Gone Get Some". Torque linear altissimo motions into clenched snorts speed up as they squeal into a nearly endless exposition on "Come And Go". Murray also ups the excitement as constant overblowing and triple tonguing introduce Carter's ruffs and cracks on "Cycles and Seasons". Throughout the album foot-tapping rhythms mostly recap the heads.

Francesca can be heard as one of the most outside mainstream albums or, conversely, the most inside avant garde session. And it can and should be appreciated by those who favor one or both of these genres.

For more info visit intaktrec.ch. Murray is at *Blue Note* Mar. 3, 17 and 31. See Calendar.

DROP THE NEEDLE



**Hip Ensemble
Roy Haynes (Mainstream-Wewantsounds)
by Pierre Giroux**

Roy Haynes, who passed away last November at the age of 99 and whose centennial is this month (Mar. 13), was regarded as one of jazz' most compelling drummers, possessing an unerring instinct for innovation and ranking among the most recorded drummers in the genre. His *Hip Ensemble* now has been (finally) reissued and available on vinyl for the first time since its initial release in 1971.

Featuring the original gatefold artwork with first-generation photos, remastered audio and a two-page insert (including new liner notes from Kevin Le Gendre), the music is a striking synthesis of jazz-funk, spiritual jazz and raw percussive power. The album moves effortlessly between deep grooves and fiery improvisations, capturing the restless energy of the era. Surrounding Haynes is a band that amplified his vision: George Adams (tenor), Marvin Peterson (trumpet), Teruo Nakamura (bass), Mervin Bronson (electric bass), Elwood Johnson and Lawrence Killian (percussion) and Carl Schroeder (piano, Fender Rhodes).

Side one opens with the Stanley Cowell theme "Equipoise", guided by Haynes' unshakable command of time and texture. Adams takes control of the theme with his sharp edges and smoke, while Schroeder's keyboard musings are both rhythmic and exploratory. "Tangiers" (an original by the drummer) is a poly-rhythmic deep-end dive, with Adams' desperate wails in full flight, as Haynes' drumming fills a whole mad, beautiful rhythmic world. "Nothing Ever Changes My Love for You" (Marvin Fisher, Jack Segal) was first made popular by Nat "King" Cole and was eventually covered by numerous popular and jazz artists. The band takes the number at a bristling pace, driven by the leader with support from percussionists Johnson and Killian interjecting vitality into the number. Schroeder's keyboard work punctuates the ensemble with sharp voicing, and Adams and Peterson each offer splendid solos.

Side two continues with sweating, grooving, soaring tracks such as "Satan's Mysterious Feeling" (by Adams), which comes in like a fever dream. Haynes' funky drumming creates a hypnotic pulse, with the tenor saxophonist wailing like a siren from some lost, haunted place. "You Name It/Lift Every Voice and Sing", the first section of a two-part, nine-minute number, struts and saunters with electric bass thick as summer city heat. The second section, composed in 1900 and often referred to as "The Black National Anthem", begins with an explosive drum solo. The closer, "Roy's Tune", was not included in the original album; it is a testament to Haynes' enduring brilliance, and it is like a sermon you didn't even know existed.

For more info visit wewantsounds.com. A Roy Haynes Memorial is at *Saint Peter's Church* Mar. 13. See Calendar.