

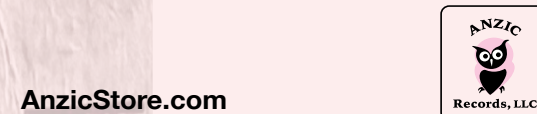


“Chemistry. Alchemy. Telepathy... otherworldly quality of improvisation by a band with longstanding individual credentials.” —DownBeat

All-star family band **The 3 Cohens (Anat, Avishai, and Yuval)** returns with *Interaction*—an electrifying new live album. This dynamic recording—featuring the esteemed **WDR Big Band**, conducted and arranged by **Oded Lev-Ari**—captures the siblings’ signature chemistry in full force. With exhilarating originals and joyous takes on classics like *Tiger Rag* and *Festive Minor*, the recording delivers pure energy, spontaneous interplay, and deep musical connection.



The **GTO Trio**—pianist Gadi Lehavi, bassist Tal Mashiach, and drummer Ofri Nehemya—presents *Within*, an intimate and exploratory release seamlessly weaving intricate interplay, global influences, and spontaneous artistry.



She’s exciting on records, more so in videos, but for the full **Jazzmeia Horn** effect you need to share her space, witness her process. The Loft at City Winery provided just such a space (Feb. 8), when Horn, Anthony Wonsey (piano), Eric Wheeler (bass) and Carroll “CV” Dashiell III (drums) performed a set that converted the audience’s initial *Huh?* to a resounding *Uh-Huh!* Festooned in plush maroon with gold trimming and her trademark high-rise headdress, the singer opened with the tricky stop-and-go timing of “Tip”, scatting imaginatively, flipping in and out of high falsetto, lingering on flatted fifths and other outré pitches, hopping/skipping/jumping about the stage with childlike abandon. That was just a warm-up. Like a method actor, she stayed in character, riding the trio’s mojo waves on a hyped-up “Willow Weep for Me” while Wonsey trilled and feinted across the upright piano keys like a broken-field runner. The leader introduced “Happy Livin’” with her grandfather’s stories, “Destiny” and “When I Say” with experiences of her own motherhood, all three sets of lyrics espousing themes of self-awareness and determination. On the transfigured ballad “You’re Getting to Be a Habit with Me” she stretched out over two dazzling scat improvisations in sweetly shrieking altissimo tones, rapid serpentine runs and dramatic warbles, all framed by her mercurial facial expressions and distinctive body English. The set concluded with a churchy “Happy Birthday” sung to her sister (in the house) and the clever “Voicemail Blues”. *Uh-Huh!* listeners murmured, leaving the space she’d shared with us. — **Tom Greenland**



Jazzmeia Horn @The Loft at City Winery

The long-established, top-notch **New York Pops**, led by charismatic music director-conductor Steven Reineke, leans heavily into Broadway in its concert season, but now and again, dips its collective toes in the wellspring of jazz. At Carnegie Hall’s Stern Auditorium/Perelman Stage (Feb. 7), Reineke handed the keys to the kingdom to jazz singer-pianist Tony DeSare, who curated *Let’s Misbehave: The Songs of Cole Porter*, with the kind of jazz edge that went beyond the Swing Era to the beboppers. Appearing on the bill were Bria Skonberg (trumpet, vocals) and John Manzari (tap dance, vocals). This string-oriented symphonic unit of about 80 pieces was jazzified by bringing horns forward and by jazz musician-arrangers, including DeSare and pianist Tedd Firth. Embedded in the orchestra were DeSare’s sidemen: David Rourke (guitar), Dylan Shamat (bass) and Michael Klopp (drums). Among the fiesta of well-known Porter tunes, two DeSare originals captured the mood and feel in *nouveau* Porter: “Paris Always Will Have You” and “Chemistry”. The vocal capabilities of the pianist are well-established, but in this outing it became startlingly apparent that Skonberg could easily have had a career solely as a singer. Her vocal range and interpretive approach were revelatory on her feature, “Have a Little Heart” and beyond. The athletic Manzari proved an extraordinary improvisational embodiment of jazz as dance. In an overall program of swing and with a perfect combination of solos, duets and dance, the riches of the evening were nonstop. *Playout* was a full-out barn burner of “Let’s Misbehave”. — **Marilyn Lester**

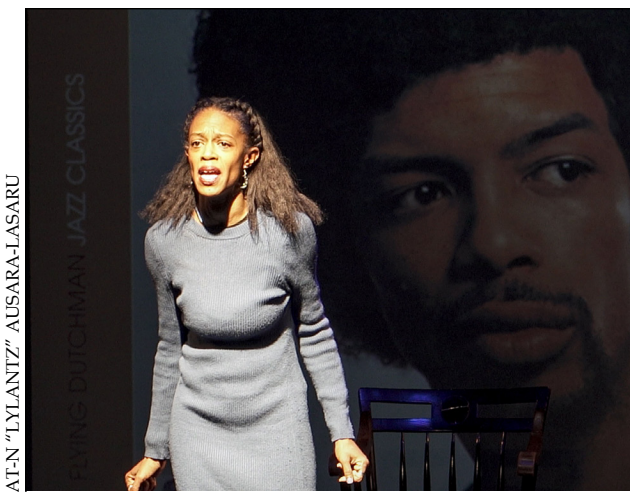


John Manzari, Bria Skonberg, et al. @Carnegie Hall

As the Village Vanguard approaches its 90th anniversary, its Monday night house band, the **Vanguard Jazz Orchestra** (né Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Jazz Orchestra), celebrated its 39th anniversary with a week-long residency. Midway through last month’s eight-night run (Feb. 6), most of the usual suspects were on hand: Ralph Lalama, Simón Crosby-Arreaza (Dick Oatts sub), Billy Drewes, Rich Perry, Gary Smulyan (saxophones); Max Seigel, Robert Edwards, Dion Tucker, Jason Jackson (trombones); Brandon Lee (Terell Stafford sub), John Chudoba, Brian Pareschi, Scott Wendholt (trumpets); Adam Birnbaum (piano), David Wong (bass) and John Riley (drums). The band played charts by favorite composer-arrangers: Thad Jones’ “Love Walked In”, “Say It Softly”, “Us”, “Rejoice”, “All of Me”, “Fingers”; Bob Brookmeyer’s “Willow Weep for Me”, “First Love Song”; Jim McNeely’s “Off the Cuff”, “Reflection”; plus Bob Mintzer’s “Mr. Fonebone” and Ed Neumeister’s arrangement of Wayne Shorter’s “E.S.P.”. Each arrangement unfolded like an epic adventure, with a rhythm section warm-up, well-wrought thematic statements, solis and chorales by separate sections, extended solos cushioned by tasteful orchestral accompaniment, climaxing with rousing tuttis and shout choruses, all laid out on the bedrock of the rhythm section’s rock-solid timekeeping. Individually, musicians bring consummate craftsmanship and idiosyncratic improvisational artistry to the group sound. Together, they make this difficult but delightful music stand up and sing. (TG)

Under the aegis of Jazz Power Initiative (founded by pianist Eli Yamin), at the National Jazz Museum in Harlem (Feb. 15), trumpeter **James Zollar**’s Zollar Systems quintet played a swinging, varied set honoring several jazz greats. Among these was Duke Ellington (Zollar played with the Ellington Orchestra under Mercer Ellington and beyond). His arrangement of “Concerto for Cootie” (aka “Do Nothing till You Hear From Me”) was delivered in an evocative, slow, bluesy tempo with the leader in full growly Cootie (Williams) mode. The tune also provided a strong feature for another Ellingtonian, bassist Jennifer Vincent. Two melodically energetic Zollar originals included “Slick” (an ode to Jaco Pastorius), with powerful statements delivered by the leader and alto trombonist Mike Rory, the two horns in empathic sync here as well as throughout the set. Vocalist (and Zollar spouse) Nabuko Kiryu scatted on several tunes, sang her own samba composition in Japanese and delivered “Time After Time” in her direct, emotive style. Pianist Rob Schneiderman was full of creative ideas whether comping or in the spotlight, as on the counterpoint blues “Double Clutching” (with a hat tip to the late trumpeter-composer Kenny Dorham), his flexible fingers playing so quickly the notes seemed to fly off the keys. This tune also gave drummer Bruce Cox an opportunity to really stretch out on his kit. These players were in such a comfortable, tight groove it was sheer joy to experience the music they made together so effortlessly. (ML)

In time for another generation’s revolutionary voice, the late Gil Scott-Heron (1949-2011) was conjured and fêted at the SoHo Playhouse (Feb. 3) in a multi-disciplinary production, *Gil Scott-Heron Bluesology*. The cast, largely comprised of the L.A. performers and writers who’d built the show, featured the honoree’s daughter **Gia Scott-Heron**, also a producer. Ms. Scott-Heron has been presenting her father’s works for years and said that this theatrical experience has long been a dream. Based on the response, the event spoke volumes to the sold-out house. With the direct hit of a broadside, Victor Orlando’s conga solo opened the proceedings. He sat stage left throughout the show, musically commenting on the poetry and song at center. He was joined at points by Yawo Jandwa Watts on djembe, also a cast member, as was guitarist-vocalist Art.Us Mansoor. Other music heard included excerpts of original recordings accompanying projections of Scott-Heron’s lyrics, crossed with the corresponding evening news. One could imagine the strength of this production with a live band, particularly because the vocalists and actors so artfully reimaged the works. To that end, especially memorable were Gia Scott-Heron’s “Home Is Where the Hatred Is” and “The Revolution Will Not Be Televised”, an enlivened “Whitey on the Moon” by the Oracle (aka Denise Lyles-Cook), the deeply moving “Your Daddy Loves You” by Lorenzo Frank and Conney Williams’ stirring “Winter in America”. Unmistakably, the people’s theatre is alive and well and living in *Bluesology*. Catch it before it can be silenced by today’s Big Brother. — **John Pietaro**



Gia Scott-Heron @SoHo Playhouse

Raw irony was vital to downtown arts as the meld grew a couple of generations back from Gotham’s shadows. When irony became satire, however, the new music further splintered and ensembles like **Big Lazy** helped forge a genre of equal parts artistry, technique, homage and deadpan humor. The trio, fronted by Stephen Ulrich—slinging a black and gold Gretsch Duo-Jet guitar—occupied Barbès (Feb. 7) for one of its scorching monthly sets. To the delight of the packed room and bar area, the noir canopy over Park Slope bit with twang, spy, surf and ska well beyond nostalgia: Duane Eddy infused by Les Paul, Mary Halvorson, Chet Atkins and Bob Marley? This sparkling topography built with the roving New Orleansian basslines of Andrew Hall and Yuval Lion’s terse, pulsating drumming, is the magic in Big Lazy. That, plus tightly arranged works interspersed with improv, spilling dreamily through tube amps. The music ranged from a Henry Mancini reconstruction to an assortment of originals easily imagined as film score fodder such as the heavily Raymond Scott-inspired “Princess Nicotine” from the trio’s eponymous release, and featuring the second blurring slap-bass solo of the evening (classic upright stuff, this). “Avenue X” envisaged a gnarly foray beneath the el line, and closing number “Sizzle and Pops” climaxed with a drum solo built on Stax grooves, slowly, deliberately intensifying into cross-sticking patterns. Guest musicians, Neil Ochoa (percussion) and Filipe Wurst (guitar), who each joined for two numbers, only added to the overall hypnotic shimmer. (JP)

Headlining Carnegie Hall’s **Nuestro Sonidos** (Our Sounds) festival, a resplendent **Claudia Acuña**, in folkloric dress, stepped into the spotlight at Zankel Hall, joining her band of Manu Koch (piano), Carlos Henderson (electric bass) and Yayo Serka (drums), to deliver an impassioned rendition of the beautiful bolero “Esta Tarde Ti Volver” and an uplifting rendition of “Cuando Vuelva a Tu Lado” (“What a Difference a Day Makes”). Greeting the audience, she then recited a translation of the lyric to “La Mentira (The Lie)”, which she followed with a swinging original arrangement of the classic “Besame Mucho”, proudly proclaiming it was composed by a woman: Consuelo Velázquez. Spelling the trio, Acuña invited her hometown Chilean colleague, pianist Pablo Vergara, to join in a duet of “Verdad Amarga”, noting she had recorded the song on her recent *Duo* album with her late friend, guitarist Russell Malone. Rejoined by the trio, with Serka pounding out a martial beat and Henderson playing charango, the mood turned political for Victor Jara’s revolutionary anthem “El Derecho Que Vivir en Paz” (“The Right to Live In Peace”), then moved to the optimistic “Contigo a la Distancia” and well-known “Quizás, Quizás, Quizás”, as well as the unabashedly joyous “Gracias a la Vida”. Revealing her talent as a composer, Acuña sang her own “That’s What They Say” with palpable determination, powerfully proclaiming “I’m a dreamer,” knowingly expressing the word’s current consequence. She closed persuasively with Djavan’s “Lilás”. — **Russ Musto**



Claudia Acuña @Zankel Hall

WHAT’S NEWS

San Antonio native, Chicago-based musician and visual artist **Lisa Alvarado**’s first NYC solo exhibition, *Shape of Artifact Time*, featuring her vibrant and colorful Mexican-American heritage-inspired work is at The Kitchen (Feb. 27 – Apr. 12). The collection is comprised of a series of translucent textile works, with sewn paintings and printed fabric, drawing from American muralism, music and woven technologies—an interdisciplinary approach rooted in cultural tradition as well as social history. Alvarado will also perform with Joshua Abrams’ Natural Information Society (in which she is a longtime member and for which her work has graced many of the group’s album covers) at The Kitchen (Feb. 28 - Mar. 1), performing music from NIS’s *Mandatory Reality* (Eremite, 2019) for the exhibition opening. For more info visit thekitchen.org.

The 23rd annual **Lady Got Chops Festival** (LGCF) takes place throughout and beyond NYC over Women’s History Month, featuring performances by LGCF president and vice president, bassist Kim Clarke and pianist Bertha Hope, respectively, as well as saxophonists Carol Sudhalter and Erena Terakubo, vocalists Antoinette Montague and Vanessa Rubin, flutist Cheryl Pyle, pianist Miki Hayama and many others. For more info visit ladygotchops.com.

The World Entertainment Awards (held on Jan. 31 in Los Angeles, two days prior to the GRAMMYS) acknowledged vocalist **Andromeda Turre** with three awards: “Best Jazz Album”, “Best Jazz Artist” and “Best Social Awareness Song”. Her *From the Earth*—which fosters environmental advocacy and climate action and initiatives—partners with environmental organizations and features Harold E. Smith (didgeridoo), Chien Chien Lu (vibraphone), ELEW (piano), Richie Goods (bass), Gene Lake (drums), Riza Printup (harp), Steve Turre (trombone) and Chelsea Baratz (tenor). For more info visit wea.earth and andromedaturre.com.

Congratulations also go out to all of this year’s GRAMMY nominees, as well as GRAMMY winners: Jon Batiste (“Best Song Written for Visual Media”, “Best Music Film”); Samara Joy and Sullivan Fortner (“Best Jazz Performance”, “Best Jazz Vocal Album”); Béla Fleck and the late Chick Corea (“Best Jazz Instrumental Album”); Dan Pugach Big Band (“Best Large Ensemble”); Zaccai Curtis (“Best Latin Jazz Album”); Meshell Ndegeocello (“Best Alternative Jazz Album”); Taylor Eigsti (“Best Contemporary Instrumental Album”); Pascal Le Boeuf (“Best Instrumental Composition”); sàje and Regina Carter (“Best Arrangement, Instrument and Vocals”); Donald Nally, who featured the works of George Lewis, et al. (“Best Choral Performance”); Ricky Riccardi (“Best Album Notes”); Archeophone Records (“Best Historical Album”) and others. The In Memoriam segment of the awards ceremony each year customarily includes one, perhaps two, jazz or jazz-adjacent artists who passed away in the last year: this GRAMMYS had images of alto saxophonist David Sanborn and drummer Roy Haynes. An opportunity missed: Benny Golson (1929-2024), whose composition “Killer Joe” was included in the GRAMMYS’s Quincy Jones tribute (which featured Herbie Hancock) and announced on-stage by actor Will Smith who neglected to mention the jazz standard’s composer, who additionally was left off the In Memoriam reel (though he composed primarily for TV, Golson’s music does appear in movies such as *The Terminal* starring Tom Hanks, *Pawn Sacrifice* with Tobey Maguire and Liv Schreiber and *DreamWorks’ The Bad Guys* with Sam Rockwell, etc.) For more info visit grammy.com.

The Berklee Institute of Jazz and Gender Justice, Bard College and Pyroclastic Arts present the **International Music Creators + Collaborators Workshop** (IMCCW), a groundbreaking new week-long intensive (Jun. 15-21) for emerging and early career artists (18 years of age and older) at Bard College (located 100 miles north of NYC). IMCCW’s faculty and guest artists will include pianists Kris Davis, Angelica Sanchez and Marilyn Crispell; drummer Terri Lyne Carrington; cornetist Taylor Ho Bynum; drummer Johnathan Blake; bassist Larry Grenadier and dancer Christiana Hunte. For more info and to register visit imccw.org.

Rhythm Is My Business: Women Who Shaped Jazz is an exhibition at Lincoln Center’s Library for the Performing Arts (through Jun. 13), which sheds light on the achievements of female jazz musicians (particularly instrumentalists, bandleaders, composers and arrangers: e.g. trombonist Melba Liston, pianist Hazel Scott, organist Gloria Coleman, drummer Viola Smith) who have often gone unrecognized and at the very least under-recognized. Included are photographs, posters, video, audio and archival items in the collection of the New York Public Library’s Music and Recorded Sound Division. For more info visit nypl.org.