



**Nineteen Sixty-Six**  
**The Jazzmen (with Joe McPhee)**  
 (Corbett vs. Dempsey)  
**Monster**  
**Monster (Klanggalerie)**  
**Morning Bells Whistle Bright**  
**Eunhye Jeong/Michael Bisio Duo (ESP-Disk')**  
 by Robert Iannapolo

It's hard to believe multi-instrumentalist Joe McPhee is approaching a 60-year recording career. During that time he has maintained his individualism by recording in a variety of contexts and collaborating with unusual players and groups, from all around the world, best suiting a free jazz musician. He's always possessed a unique approach be it on trumpet or saxophones, and these three recent releases all demonstrate what a consistent player he has been over the years.

*Nineteen Sixty-Six* documents the earliest known recording (1966) of McPhee, when he was as a member of Poughkeepsie-based bassist Tyrone Crabb's Jazzmen. While a recording of variable (but not unlistenable) audio quality, McPhee plays trumpet only. The lead track, "One Mint Julep" had been a top 10 hit by Ray Charles earlier in the decade. It's a straight-ahead version, with spirited delivery and a fine solo by McPhee. The 35-minute "Killed in Vietnam" starts as free improv, surprising in its intensity. It's clear what these players had been hearing and were responding to in their own way, and it's surprising that at the 18-minute mark, the band switches to a high energy version of "Milestones". This is a worthwhile release and gives real insight into McPhee's early development.

McPhee became popular in Europe early in his career. Switzerland's HatHut Records was founded in 1975 initially to release his music. One place he was quite popular was Austria, where he appeared at the Music Unlimited Festival in Wels many times, and *Monster* is a recording from the 2023 edition. He appeared with a quartet that included longtime British collaborator, John Edwards (bass), Austrian Susanna Gartmayer (bass clarinet) and Brazilian Mariá Portugal (drums). They play a fine set of four free improvisations with attention to detail, and with an attuned sense of space while still maintaining a level of musical ferocity. McPhee sounds comfortable with these cohorts and they sound like a cohesive group of complementary free players who've been making music together for years.

The Eunhye Jeong/Michael Bisio Duo recording *Morning Bells Whistle Bright* has McPhee and percussionist Jay Rosen (two thirds of the late, lamented Trio X) for 60

percent of the disc's running time. Recorded in 2023, the album starts as a remarkable duet set of South Korean pianist Jeong and bassist Bisio for the first four tracks. There's deep duet interplay and they're clearly attuned to each other. By the fifth track, McPhee and Rosen enter. One might fear they could destroy the duo's communication, but they're both sensitive, intelligent and listening players, so what emerges is a quartet recording where each player's style blends perfectly into the group dynamic: although they split off into duos and trios, they all seem musically empathic no matter the combination. The album is also beautifully-recorded with the sounds of decaying phrases captured perfectly. McPhee and Rosen are perfect "group" players throughout and this recording shows how far McPhee has traveled, now in his seventh decade of performing.

For more info visit [corbettvsdempsey.com/records](http://corbettvsdempsey.com/records), [klanggalerie.com](http://klanggalerie.com) and [espdisk.com](http://espdisk.com). Joe McPhee is at Grimm Artisanal Ales Jun. 3 (with Tcheser Holmes) and—as part of Vision Festival—at Roulette Jun. 4 (with Ava Mendoza) and Jun. 5 (with Michael Wimberly's Spirit World). McPhee is also at The Stone at The New School Jun. 14 (with Louie Belogenis). See Calendar.



**Words Fall Short**  
**Joshua Redman (Blue Note)**  
 by Pierre Giroux

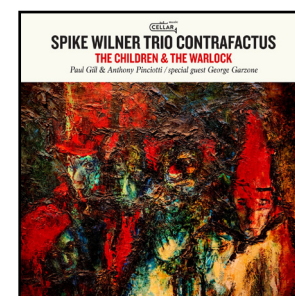
With *Words Fall Short*, saxophonist Joshua Redman presents a compelling reminder of his continued relevance not only as a performer but also as an evolving composer. This new release features a quartet of fresh voices, including Paul Cornish (piano and third place finisher in the 2023 Herbie Hancock Institute of Jazz International Piano Competition), Philip Norris (bass) and Nazir Ebo (drums)—an audacious and genuine statement that exudes maturity while maintaining the thrill of exploration. The eight originals brought together for this release—long-gestating ideas that Redman claims "had not yet found a home"—have finally found a setting that allows them to breathe fully. The result is a session that feels organic, cohesive and full of quiet daring. Each composition unveils a distinct emotional and rhythmic landscape as the album builds a world of musical conversations that require no words to be fully understood.

In the opening track, "A Message to Unsend", the interpretation feels like a quiet confession—tentative yet deliberate—with Redman's tenor introducing the theme with subdued breathiness, as though weighing the emotional consequence of what is to be said or unsaid. The rhythm section plays its part by filling in the spaces but never settling into a declarative statement. On "So It Goes", the quartet is joined by tenor saxophonist Melissa Aldana. The track has a tempo that moves with a fragmented, almost sardonic lilt. The two tenors play with lean, clipped articulation and irregular phrasing, suggesting restraint amidst emotional undercurrents. The band seems on edge, evoking the ambiguity of acceptance.

The title track features Redman on soprano. Following a big-toned bass opening from Norris, Redman begins his lyrical journey playing the melody like it's being remembered as it is delivered—tentative, bruised and beautiful. The most flamboyant track on the release is "Icarus", with trumpeter Skylar Tang joining the band. Driven by Ebo's propulsive drumming, Redman

and Tang launch in with exchanges as the composition spirals upward with rhythmic insistence. The closing track, "Era's End", with guest vocalist Gabrielle Cavassa, provides a certain gravitas as she explores the themes of transition and loss. Redman's tone is darker here as he stretches phrases into meditative spaces. The rhythm section offers slow-moving tectonics underneath, suggesting finality, but also transformation. The compositions featured here reveal a facet of Redman's musical identity deeply rooted in emotional clarity, made all the more vivid through the interplay with his young collaborators.

For more info visit [bluenote.com](http://bluenote.com). The album release concert is at Blue Note Jun. 20-22 (part of Blue Note Jazz Festival). See Calendar.



**The Children & The Warlock**  
**Spike Wilner Trio Contrafactus (Cellar Music)**  
 by Ken Dryden

Spike Wilner leads two lives: he's the owner of two intimate NYC jazz clubs, Smalls and Mezzrow, and is also a gifted jazz pianist, composer and bandleader. With this recording, *The Children & The Warlock*, he pays tribute to his mentor, the late pianist Harry Whitaker (1942-2010), one of many talented New York-based musicians who eluded the spotlight during his lifetime, though he inspired many others. This fall 2024 session features Wilner leading his band Trio Contrafactus with Paul Gill (bass) and Anthony Pinciotti (drums), plus special guest, veteran tenor saxophonist George Garzone (who the leader refers to as "the warlock" and the trio as "the children"). The set list is a mix of originals and creative interpretations of classic jazz works, along with several pieces improvised in the studio. Garzone contributed "Hey, Open Up!", a quirky up-tempo blues that has a Thelonious Monk-like air with its dissonant theme full of twists.

The musicians devour Whitaker's mystical title track (unfortunately mislabeled "The Child and the Warlock"), which is introduced by Wilner, then builds upon its chant-like theme with Garzone's turbulent tenor leading the way. The pianist's intricate solo further brings the tension into a higher gear. The group's brisk romp through John Coltrane's infrequently performed "Miles' Mode" finds the trio pushing Garzone's soulful tenor playing. The pianist and saxophonist explore guitarist Fred Lacey's (miscredited as F. Lacy) lush standard, "Theme for Ernie", as a duo in the introduction, bringing out a Monk-ish flavor, though the entrance of Gill and Pinciotti gives it a breezy air as Wilner takes the spotlight with his engaging solo. The brooding, hypnotic "Benediction" is the first of three improvisations Wilner and Garzone created in the studio, a brief duet that seems through composed. Their second, "Moment to Moment (For Harry Whitaker)" is a bit freer, with the rhythm section interacting individually with passionate playing by the tenor saxophonist. The final joint improvisation, "Re-Solution", also a piano-tenor duet, has a wistful air, conveying a sense of both loss and hope.

The session merited a follow up meeting, but the sense of loss became tangible when Pinciotti suddenly passed away from a heart attack just three months after this date was completed.

For more info visit [cellarmusicgroup.com](http://cellarmusicgroup.com). Wilner is at Mezzrow Jun. 13-14. See Calendar.

**New Releases Joris Teepe**

- 1 "The American Dream Today" (Planet Arts Records)
- 2 "Messages From The Bassist" Solo Bass album (G2 Records)
- 3 "Joris Teepe Real Book" 96 Teepe compositions (Jazztribes.com)

**Upcoming concerts in NY:**

- June 13 **Clement's Place** -Steve Johns 5 tet
- June 14 **The Django** -Ron Jackson
- June 15 **Hastings on Jazz** -David Janeway
- June 17 **Smalls NYC** -Steve Johns 5 tet

[www.joristeepe.com](http://www.joristeepe.com)