

complacency antagonist Dan Blake—broke fresh sonic territory with keyboard electronica and fearless writing. Keen adaptability and deep respect showed early and often (2007-24) collaborating with musical sister Berklee-ite esperanza spalding's head-spinning ensembles, the latest with sainted Brazilian divo Milton Nascimento. Since 2020, Genovese has nudged inspirations into the Pan-American pop of The Mars Volta beyond its mewling origins with canny jazz splashes. And dig: he earned a "best improvised piano solo" GRAMMY with sax god Wayne Shorter, from *Live at the Detroit Jazz Festival* (2017). Forging Forward, Genovese again scours the galaxy in experimental outreach; he's like a musical Mafalda (mythical Argentine comic-strip heroine), relentlessly quizzing the status quo and finding imaginative outcomes.

Sidling in as sideman is another matter with alto saxophonist Greg Ward's nominally-led *Full Cream*, which has Matthew Stevens (guitar, bass) and Ziv Ravitz (drums). Into this smooth jazz set Genovese taps lightly, his sure-fingered caution a triple-threat on Hammond B-3 organ, piano and synths. Churchy-cool on the title track, firm of foot on "Good Morning, Zebras!", spookily synthy on "Late", he adds the right lick of butterfat. And if voting for GRAMMY graphic cover art, I'd rate highly Diana Quiñones Rivera's graceful linear arabesques.

For more info visit sugahhoof.com and 577records.com. Genovese is at Zinc Bar Aug. 26 (with Ryan Devlin), Bar Bayeux Aug. 12, 27 (as leader) and Bar Lunático Aug. 28 (with Igor Lumpert). See Calendar.



Open Up Your Senses
Tyreek McDole (Artwork)
by George Kanzler

You could assess vocalist Tyreek McDole's jazz talent by listening to his tour de force delivery of the Count Basie-associated "Everyday I Have the Blues", the last vocal on his just-released debut album, *Open Up Your Senses*. His version is extraordinary, never more so than in the way he appropriates Joe Williams' classic blues phrasing and macho attitude during Williams' Basie band tenure. But McDole isn't just mimicking, he's using that version as a launching pad for his own take, a version that includes an interlude of bluesy scat choruses, and ends with melismatic repeats of the title line building in intensity like a cheerleader urging a touchdown. McDole is no one-trick pony, nor merely an adaptor of the Williams' style. The track is the only blues on the album, an album remarkable for its stylistic diversity, which includes McDole's empathetic interaction with a variety of musicians and musical settings, from hard bop combos to duets with piano and hand drums. To it all McDole brings a commanding, resonant baritone that can be dominant, warm or tender, depending on the song.

Another jazz voice McDole pays homage to is Leon Thomas, channeling his preacherly command in Thomas and Pharoah Sanders' anthemic "The Creator Has a Master Plan", on which Sanders' son Tomoki Sanders references his father's fiery tenor saxophone solo on the intro. The vocalist's versatility is also capable of suggesting jazz crooners such as Nat "King" Cole and Johnny Hartman—ever more so on his delicate, silky delivery of Carmen McRae's lyric to Thelonious Monk's "Ugly Beauty", sung as a subtle

vocal-piano duet with Kenny Barron. He gets even closer to Swing era crooners in his smooth exposition of "Under a Blanket of Blue" with his core quartet: Dylan Band (tenor), Caelan Cardello (piano), Rodney Whitaker (bass) and Justin Faulkner (drums). The vocalist also tosses in a couple of ringers from left field. He references his Haitian roots on "Wangolo Wale", a traditional Haitian folk song, chanting it with just the hand drums of Weedie Braimah. And he includes a comically breezy take of the children's song, "The Umbrella Man", elaborating the "toodle-o-da" lyric with his own scat extensions.

Judging from this debut, Tyreek McDole, with his commanding yet flexible and supple, rich baritone, promises to be a notable jazz singer for many decades to come.

For more info visit store.pias.com. The album release concerts are at Joe's Pub Aug. 6 and Close Up Aug. 16. McDole is also at Greenwich Jazz Festival Aug. 17 (presented by Back Country Jazz) and The Jazz Club at Aman New York Aug. 19. See Calendar and 100 Miles Out.



The Jewel in the Lotus
Bennie Maupin (ECM)
by Jim Motavalli

Originally recorded and issued in 1974, *The Jewel in the Lotus* by multi-instrumentalist Bennie Maupin (who celebrates his 85th birthday this month) emerged during the leader's stint in Herbie Hancock's groundbreaking groups of the early '70s (including the Head Hunters and Mwandishi), and features many of those band members, including Hancock (piano), Buster Williams (bass), Billy Hart (drums), Freddie Waits (drums, marimba) and Bill Summers (percussion), as well as Charles Sullivan (trumpet on 2 of the album's 8 tracks). The release was slow to get much-needed recognition as an innovative classic but has since been reissued numerous times, most recently on vinyl as part of ECM's Luminescence audiophile series.

The recording's mood is group tone-poem music, reflecting the leader's Buddhist faith, eschewing soloing in search of an organic music with meditative intent. *Jewel in the Lotus* originally came out the year after Hancock's mega-successful and decidedly funky *Head Hunters* (Columbia), but it's light years away—aiming for the head and not the dancers' feet. The selfless approach grew out of Maupin's work a few years earlier in 1970, with his close friend, saxophonist Marion Brown on *Afternoon of a Georgia Faun* (ECM's fourth-ever record release).

The delicate "Ensenada" opens with Waits' shimmering marimba over Williams' two-note bass figure, slowly folding in Hancock's piano seasoning and the leader (on flute)—used here mostly as color. This slow-moving piece is the album's most distinctive, reminiscent of Lonnie Liston Smith's "Astral Traveling" (which was first heard on Pharoah Sanders' *Thembi* three years earlier). It's lovely. The atmospheric title song finds Hancock using some of the electronic effects so familiar from his own band, as well as his brilliant travel-the-spaceways electric piano. Williams gets his bow out and digs deep for low notes. Maupin's tenor provides forward movement, if not actual soloing. "Song for Tracie Dixon Summers" features the bassist and feels elegiac, with beautifully spare lines from the composer's horn. Maupin employs his alto flute sparingly for the

ascending "Mappo" (named after the leader's dog), with strong contributions from Hancock, Williams and Hart. This track alone explains why all three were busy back then and continue to have ringing phones now.

On this overall quiet album, "Excursion" is the album's sole cooker, emerging from Buddhist chanting that could have been recorded in a monastery (rather than a New York studio). It builds slowly, incorporating the leader's tenor shrieks, rumbling bass and the twin drummers. But it's over too soon, as is the whole album. What a shame there were no alternate takes to include.

For more info visit ecmrecords.com

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