

## GLOBE UNITY



### *Fearless Five*

Enrico Rava (Parco Della Musica)

### *No Time For Time*

Pål Thowsen, Jon Christensen, Terje Rypdal, Arild Andersen (Zarepta-Norske Albumklassikere)

### *Fearless*

Rolf Kühn (MPS)

by Daniel A. Brown

The stars seemingly have been aligned in the month of August. The eighth month of the Gregorian calendar year denotes two births and a death anniversary of three legendary and influential European jazz musicians. Explored this month are three releases, highlighting the music of Italian trumpeter Enrico Rava (b. Aug. 20, 1939), Norwegian guitarist Terje Rypdal (b. Aug. 23, 1947) and the late German clarinetist Rolf Kühn (b. Sep. 29, 1929 - d. Aug. 18, 2022).

*Fearless Five* features Rava fronting a quartet of younger players: Matteo Paggi (trombone), Francesco Diodati (electric and acoustic guitars),

Francesco Ponticelli (bass) and Evita Polidoro (drums, vocals) through a set of ten innovative, enthralling pieces, half of which hover just beyond the two-minute range. The 11-minute album opener “Lavori casalinghi” arrives with a whirlpool of guitar feedback from Diodati, detonating into Sonny Sharrock-style shrapnel, Rava, Paggi and Ponticelli creating swirling motifs on the bed of sound. “The Trial”, at nearly eight-minutes, is a group workout via pointillistic funk, while ambient balladry is explored on the condensed “Bell Flower”. At age 86 this month, Rava is an object lesson in graceful aging, courageous creative decisions and a certain musical life-force.

Originally released in 1977, the recently reissued *No Time For Time* features a bonafide European all-star unit with drummers Pål Thowsen (left channel) and Jon Christensen (right channel), plus Terje Rypdal (guitar) and Arild Andersen (bass) all in youthful, peak form, serving up a nine-song set of prog-leaning jazz rock. The title track is a breakneck performance of berserker fusion: a syncopated intro by the drummers calls forth Rypdal and Andersen, who meet the challenge in volleying ideas and riffs back and forth; the proto-metal-jazz of “P.T.” packs a certain wallop, while the solo drum pieces (“More Cymbals”, “Pox”,

“Only Two” and the Don Cherry-tinged “The Tamborim”) assure the listeners that drummers called the tunes on this gem of an album.

In what turned out to be his final recording, Rolf Kühn’s *Fearless* is a fitting epitaph of a singular jazz artist. Opener “Alpha 47” is a logical development of the lumbering avant swing ushered in by Charles Mingus and Eric Dolphy, an ostinato motif broken up by jabbing, unison accents by the ensemble. The intuition and trust between the leader and his band: Frank Chastenier (piano), Lisa Wulff (bass) and Túpac Mantilla (drums, percussion) are audibly evident. “Fun for Kids” boasts a start-stop feel of the whole-tone scale combined with Middle Eastern flourishes, all played with a certain confidence and trust by the assembled musicians. In what could have played like saccharine schmaltz, the band’s version of Eric Clapton’s “Tears in Heaven” is rendered as a sultry torch song. Perhaps the best example of Kühn’s lifetime of musical versatility is the album’s inclusion of a version of Leonard Bernstein’s show tune “Somewhere” (from *West Side Story*), along with the “Free Exit” closer, a five-minute blast of turbulent group improvisation.

For more info visit [norskealbumklassikere.no](http://norskealbumklassikere.no), [mps-music.com](http://mps-music.com) and [auditorium.com/en/parco-della-musica-records](http://auditorium.com/en/parco-della-musica-records)



### *Gratitude*

Sharel Cassity (Sunnyside)

by Jeff Cebulski

In 1995, renowned bassist Christian McBride’s debut album *Gettin’ to It* (Verve) was released, and a college musician from Oklahoma quickly latched on to it; that recording became an inspiration that would eventually take her to NYC, then to Chicago. That person is the now-recognized saxophonist-educator Sharel Cassity, a noted alto player whose fifth album as a leader, *Gratitude*, reconnects her with the basic ensemble that recorded with McBride, including Cyrus Chestnut (piano) and Lewis Nash (drums). In place of the late trumpet hero Roy Hargrove is Terrell Stafford; and in for trombonist Steve Turre is longtime Cassity friend Michael Dease.

On her new release, Cassity sticks predominantly to her glorious alto, with one selection double-tracking a clarinet. The album begins with three bop tunes that demonstrate her ability and facility to swing. “Magnetism” rides Chestnut’s driving chords and Nash’s pounding beat to the saxophonist’s fluent entry, pushed along by McBride’s woody bass, with Stafford and Dease along for the chase. One more rendition of Charlie Chaplin and David Raksin’s “Smile” doesn’t disappoint; Cassity swings in tandem with McBride, as she inserts lines of notes along the way. The bassist’s walking presence provides a nifty foil for the saxophonist, with a tasty Chestnut solo added on. “Stick Up!” puts the ensemble into hard bop land—Cassity’s soulful effervescence sure sounds like Sonny Stitt here—embellished by a short but sweet scat from Nash. The title song is a waltz, which the quartet performs with evident delight; the leader

practically sings her “Gratitude”. Richard D. Johnson’s “Suspect” promenades forward, riding McBride’s ebullient bass. Stafford delivers a vibrant solo before Cassity steps in, leading to a Dease addition on trombone. On “Kenny’s Quest” she leads the way over Chestnut’s McCoy Tyner-like chords—her dexterity is on full display during her longest excursion, while Nash punctuates the tune with a short but eloquent solo. “The Promise” is an homage to Cassity’s relationship with her son, a layered statement of alto over clarinet, deftly supported by the bassist and pianist’s impressive near-baroque expression. The album closer, “In The Spirit”, provides some gospel ambiance, a celebratory moment that brings out the best in Chestnut. The leader’s garrulous delivery and McBride’s solo exclamation typify the session’s overall positive attitude.

Sharel Cassity, who has managed to navigate family matters, teaching and career development, has certainly proven her talent and mettle over the course of two decades. With *Gratitude*, given the pedigree of her accomplices, she successfully certifies her worthy position as one of our brightest rising stars.

For more info visit [sunnysiderecords.com](http://sunnysiderecords.com). Cassity is at Blue Note Aug. 19-24 (with Dizzy Gillespie Allstar Big Band). See Calendar.



### *We Insist 2025!*

Terri Lyne Carrington & Christie Dashiell (Candid)

by Terrell K. Holmes

Sixty-five years after its release, *We Insist! Max Roach’s Freedom Now Suite* is as influential and topical as it’s ever been. The album, written by drummer

Max Roach and lyricist Oscar Brown, Jr. and featuring Abbey Lincoln’s memorable vocals, was released in 1960 in the cauldron of the Civil Rights Movement. *We Insist!* has become a musical landmark, one of the first jazz albums to protest racial injustice in America and Africa. Drummer, composer and arranger Terri Lyne Carrington reimagines this classic with *We Insist 2025!* She and her ensemble interpret the album from a contemporary perspective, expanding the sonic palette, exploring unifying themes and blending musical styles.

The leader’s arrangement of “Driva’man” has the distinctive tambourine snap and rattle of the original, but this ensemble adds Take 5-caliber vocals, Simon Moullier (vibraphone), Weedie Braimah (percussion), Milena Casado (trumpet) and Matthew Stevens (guitar), with Morgan Guerin (bass, keyboards). Lincoln’s singing reflected a world-weariness, fiery and sharp-edged. Christie Dashiell’s smoldering vocals recall more of Cassandra Wilson. “Freedom Day (Part I)” is not only about jubilation; Dashiell’s earthy tone makes it a love song to those who have been freed. Part 2 is a straight up R&B groove that reprises the lyrics and adds a statement of empowerment and support among women everywhere. The triptych “Prayer/Protest/Peace” on *We Insist!* featured the most memorable and controversial moment on the album: “Protest”, where Lincoln screams her outrage and anger. The middle of Carrington’s triptych, “Resolve/Resist/Reimagine”, is a clear statement on resistance that probably articulates what Lincoln was screaming about. The presence here of Julian Priester, the trombonist who played on the original *We Insist!* gives “Tears for Johannesburg” an even deeper poignancy.

Carrington contributes four originals. “Boom Chick” is a tribute to the creators of *We Insist!* The onomatopoeic title is Roach’s heartbeat, the drum riff that drives classics such as “The Drum Also Waltzes”. Tamia Elliott offers a lovely spoken word tribute to Lincoln on “Dear Abbey”. The uplifting and encouraging “Freedom Is....” examines the notion that true freedom is the option to decide what defines one’s own freedom. By having a young man and woman speak the words, this track looks to the next