

HARLEM JAZZ BOXX



**LIVE CREATIVE
MUSIC
IN HARLEM**

**Mount Morris Ascension
Presbyterian Church
15 Mount Morris Park West
@ 122nd St.
Harlem ~ New York, NY**

EVERY THURSDAY @ 7PM

RHYTHMS OF RESISTANCE



CRAIG HARRIS AND HARLEM NIGHTSONGS BIG BAND

*"A sonic shaman expanding the music far
beyond the restrictive confines of jazz."*

Ron Scott, amsterdamnews.com

EVERY FRIDAY @ 7PM

HARLEM JAZZ SERIES

AUG. 1ST COREY WALLACE

*Vibrant trombonist-composer electrifies
with a soulful, contemporary sound.*

AUG. 8TH JOE DALEY

*Renowned euphonium and tuba master
breathes boundary-pushing life into music.*

AUG. 15TH MILTON SUGGS

*Rich baritone powerhouse delivers
vocals rooted in soul and swing.*

AUG. 22ND CARLA COOK

*Commanding vocalist captivates with soulful
swing, rich tone and fearless song choices.*

AUG. 29TH WARREN SMITH

*Legendary percussionist ignites audiences with
dynamic rhythm and expressive artistry.*

**harlemjazzboxx.com
212.662.7779**

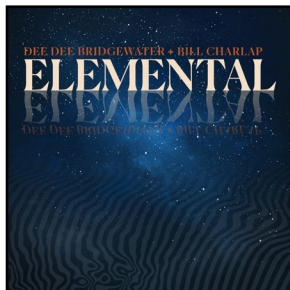


The Jazzcup Café Blues
Alvin Queen (Cellar Music)
by Rachel Smith

Drummer Alvin Queen's *The Jazzcup Café Blues* captures the café aesthetic perfectly: the music will put the listener in the right frame of mind to sit back, be comfortable and take in the sounds. And that is precisely what Queen (who celebrates his 75th birthday this month) loves doing at his favorite hang in Copenhagen, Jazzcup, the city's beloved jazz venue located directly across the street from the southwest corner of the popular park Kongens Have (The King's Garden). Additionally, the energy level of the band here reflects the café concept wherein the music is neither relegated to the background nor the sole purpose of the space. The seven tracks herein are accessible for both disengagement and reengagement, as the band leaves the door open for the listener to drift in and out of the music as they please.

Embodying this spirit of exit and entry, the players themselves come and go in the spotlight of any given tune, throughout the whole, which, like the stanzas of an epic poem, are bound together but leave space for separation before coming together again. The importance of the solos, as well as the inclusion of Queen's announcements to the crowd, underscore the reality and vitality of the live recording. Yet, even though mixed in the studio, there's still one drawback of the live setting: the bass can be sometimes hard to hear, so much so that the playing of Dezron Douglas (who characteristically has a strong presence, mic or no mic) risks getting lost, especially for the casual listener. An exception is his robust solo during "Blues for Sluggo" in which he absolutely shines. There are several slices of the performances that command deep listening. The leader's solo at the end of "Au Privave" proves that he can deliver one of the trickiest feats in jazz: a drum solo with a momentum that keeps even pitch-focused listeners on the edge of their seats. The beginning of "Herd's Word" also stands out, with alto saxophonist Jesse Davis leading a tune that stretches further than most of the rest of the album, while pianist Danny Grissett's playing is particularly and consistently strong, here and elsewhere. The addition of Cesar Granados (hand drum percussion) on "Evening Stroll Through Nyhavn" adds another dimension and a nearly danceable element to the group sound.

For more info visit cellarlive.com



Elemental
Dee Dee Bridgewater + Bill Charlap
(DDB/Mack Avenue)
by Marilyn Lester

Simply put, the collaboration of these two giants of jazz in *Elemental*, vocalist Dee Dee Bridgewater

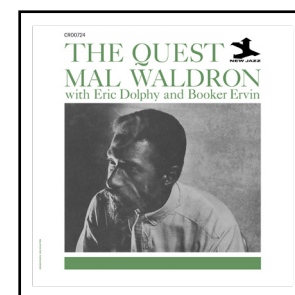
and pianist Bill Charlap, is pure *elemental* magic—innovative, different, the kind of disc you'd want with you on a desert island with time to kill. There's depth to it and layers of creativity to parse. Collaborating only since 2019, this pair of GRAMMY winners have developed a musical chemistry, a meeting of jazz minds. And there's a mutual respect between the two that strikes a perfect balance—both voices are heard equally well. Music arrangements were created by Charlap with vocal arrangements by Bridgewater. There are but eight tracks, but each has plenty to offer the listener. The tunes are familiar: great songs written by the superstars of their *oeuvre*, but here twisted and turned in all directions into new, unique versions.

Elemental is certainly not your grandparents collection of standards. Throughout, Bridgewater's vocal range and flexibility, creative phrasing and uber-dramatic melodic and lyric interpretation prevail. Charlap is not only a superior pianist in his own right, but a gifted accompanist: he knows precisely how to listen to a singer and provide ultimate support. On solos he's direct in the tradition of Bill Evans, with a stream of creative ideas that issue from a deep well.

A whispery, vocal come-hither lead to "Beginning to See the Light" [sic] (Duke Ellington, Johnny Hodges, Harry James, Don George) expands to a wildly exuberant, scat-rich statement. "Mood Indigo" (Duke Ellington, Barney Bigard, Mitchell Parish) begins with a contemplative piano intro, as Bridgewater transforms the usually haunting melody into a torchy blues story song. Charlap builds on the approach with a thinking man's exploration of the tune's harmonic and melodic opportunities. "Love for Sale" (Cole Porter) is percussive as Bridgewater pulls out vocal stops and tricks to communicate the anguish of a lady of the night. Ellington trombonist, Juan Tizol's "Caravan" closes the album, with an urgency captured in the pianist's again percussive angular phrasing and the vocalist's non-verbal scat and sound-play, rising in freneticism that shoots off into outer space.

Elemental may not be for everyone: each track is rich in mood and approach and yields to Bridgewater's determination to take the vocal legacy of Eartha Kitt to way-out realms. But its unique creativity is very worthy of exploration.

For more info visit ddbprods.com and mackavenue.com. The album release concert is at Tompkins Square Park Aug. 24 (part of Charlie Parker Jazz Festival). See Calendar.



The Quest
Mal Waldron (Prestige New Jazz-Craft Recordings)
by Stuart Broomer

Pianist-composer Mal Waldron, whose centennial is this month (Aug. 16), distinguished himself at numerous points in his career and often in very different settings. A near-fatal 1963 drug overdose left him re-learning the piano, effectively dividing his career into two halves: the first in New York and rooted in bop and post-bop, the second in Europe and Asia, moving largely toward free jazz. *The Quest*, from 1961 (and recently reissued on 180g vinyl with all-analogue mastering from the original tapes), is a musical pinnacle of his New York career.

In the mid to late '50s, Waldron worked