

**Complete Communion**  
**Don Cherry (Blue Note Tone Poet)**  
**Music for Turkish Theater**  
**Don Cherry/Okay Temiz (Caz Plak)**  
 by Andrew Schinder

Though October represents avant garde trumpeter Don Cherry's 30-year deathaversary, two recent album releases celebrate (in advance) his 2026 centennial: an exquisite reissue of the pivotal *Complete Communion* (one of free jazz' most seminal records) and *Music for Turkish Theater*, which is closer to what one may assume as prototypically "avant garde."

*Complete Communion*, originally released in 1966, has been expertly remastered for Blue Note's Tone Poet Series on 180gr vinyl in a deluxe gatefold tip-on jacket; liner notes by the late, eminent jazz journalist, Nat Hentoff, provide historical context to a work that rewards multiple (if challenging) listens. The recording followed Cherry's departure as a regular member of free jazz pioneer Ornette Coleman's band. Thereafter he spent time taking on leader and sideman gigs in Europe; while in Italy he met tenor saxophonist Gato Barbieri, and ultimately recruited him for this session. Cherry's years playing with Coleman and touring Europe served him well on this album, a quartet which is rounded out by bassist Henry Grimes and drummer Ed Blackwell (Cherry's Coleman Quartet bandmate). Proving himself to be a fully-formed artist,

this is Cherry's American label debut (his *Togetherness* album for the Italian Durium label, which also includes Barbieri, was recorded months earlier, and is thus technically his very first recording as leader). Somewhat betraying the "free jazz" label (and posing the question as to what "free jazz" actually is or could be), *Complete Communion*, despite any challenges, is still highly accessible and is certainly one of the most broadly appealing works in the trumpeter-cornetist's catalog (as well as the free jazz idiom generally). The album is divided into two suites: the title track and "Elephantasy", each based on a trumpet motif as the players break off into free-flowing improvisation before returning to the respective main themes. Cherry and Barbieri prove to have tremendous chemistry. A neophyte in the studio during the recording of the album, for Barbieri it was a coming out party, and in the ensuing years he would become a star.

In comparison, *Music for Turkish Theater* is somewhat of a curiosity, although certainly a fascinating item in Cherry's discography. In 1969, writer-activist James Baldwin helped stage a Turkish version of the John Herbert play *Fortune and Men's Eyes* (*Düſenin Dostu*), a work the Turkish government tried unsuccessfully to ban, since its theme was the exploration of homosexuality in Turkish prisons. Baldwin recruited his friend Cherry to provide a musical accompaniment for the work, with Turkish percussionist and frequent Cherry collaborator, Okay Temiz joining. The play became a huge hit in Istanbul. Fast forward and Turkish record label Caz Plak recently recovered and reissued the recording. There are no structural motifs, however, to assist the listener. Cherry had asked Temiz to play in several rhythmic times simultaneously, which can be audibly unsettling. While there are bursts of joyful funk, the recording's overall mood is appropriately somber. To the Western

ear, the music also can feel incomplete, especially since it was originally written as underscoring for the play, serving as an enhancement to the drama. Nevertheless, the recording certainly is a valuable entry in Cherry's oeuvre and is a captivating example of his forays both in avant garde and global music.

For more info visit [bluenote.com](http://bluenote.com) and [cazplak.bandcamp.com](http://cazplak.bandcamp.com)



**Syzygy, Vol. 1**  
**Brandon Lopez/DoYeon Kim (577 Records)**  
 by Kurt Gottschalk

It's no easy game to guess the instrument Brandon Lopez and DoYeon Kim play. The baryton, perhaps, an augmented bass viol with six or seven strings and a dozen or more resonating strings running underneath. But it might be a detuned theorbo, or an oversize hurdy-gurdy, or a giraffe piano played inside the case. An astute observer, however, will soon surmise, in fact, that they play but two instruments: string bass and gayageum (Korean plucked zither)—but the deep sonorities of their thick, thumping strings and the close attention they pay to their shared improvisation suggest a single instrument, even a single player with somewhere between three and six hands.

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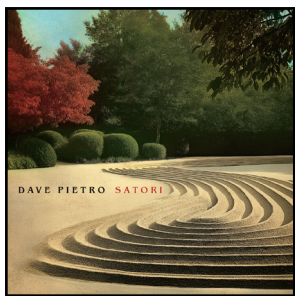




This instrumental pairing makes a lot of sense, but hasn't often been investigated; Peter Kowald's duet with Tadao Sawai (on the gayageum's better known cousin, the koto) comes to mind. Listening to *Syzygy, Vol. 1*, it's hard to imagine just why. The title suggests a conjunction of opposites but the music (at least to these ears) doesn't make good on that promise. They're just too kindred for that. Lopez has become an active and essential character among NYC's free-spirited improvisers, mostly through his own bands and solo concerts but also thanks to an exciting, ongoing partnership with poet Fred Moten. DoYeon Kim is a more recent presence in town, bringing an adventurous spirit and her Korean tradition into a variety of encounters, notably a 2018 album with guitarist Joe Morris.

It's a quick 40 minutes (LP length but at least at present only available as CD or download), five tracks dissolving into a vibrating dream of shifting grounds. In truth, when the consciousness isn't set adrift, it's really not so hard to tell the two instruments apart most of the time, but that "most of the time" is key. They both bow, they both (it seems) prepare their strings, they both let their big wooden boxes rattle and buzz. And key to the proceedings, neither overplays their hand. It's a surprise when it ends seemingly so quickly but no surprise how easy it is just to hit "play" again. The sad surprise, though, is Kim's powerful singing voice is nowhere to be heard. Maybe that's the gameplan for volume two.

For more info visit [577records.com](http://577records.com). Kim is at First Street Green Oct. 13 (part of Arts for Art's InGardens Festival). See Calendar.



**Satori**  
**Dave Pietro (East 15th)**  
by Ken Dryden

Alto saxophonist Dave Pietro has been part of the NYC jazz scene for almost four decades, contributing to a number of prominent bands, including the Toshiko Akiyoshi Jazz Orchestra, Maria Schneider Orchestra, Maynard Ferguson's big band and Darcy James Argue's Secret Society, among many others. But the veteran jazz educator also has proven his skills as a composer and arranger on his own albums over the past 30+ years.

*Satori* is a showcase for Pietro's diverse original works, interpreted by some of the top musicians in New York, many of whom are old friends and collaborators. The quintet includes Michael Rodriguez (trumpet, flugelhorn), Gary Versace (piano, keyboard), Johannes Weidenmueller (bass) and Johnathan Blake (drums), with Rogerio Boccato (percussion) added on several numbers. While Pietro arranged each of his original compositions, he allows the music to breathe by giving the musicians freedom to explore them.

Throughout the album, the lively exchange of ideas between the leader and Rodriguez flows effortlessly, as if this was a working band playing time-tested repertoire from its band book. The title track is a Japanese Zen Buddhist term, variously interpreted as "awakening, enlightenment or to understand." The two musicians shine in this breezy samba, buoyed by the undercurrent from Versace's light-hearted Fender Rhodes playing, Weidenmueller's pulsing electric bass and Blake's intuitive, driving percussion. Pietro's emotional alto and Versace's bluesy Hammond B3 leave a lasting impression in his melancholy ballad of longing, "Numbers to Leave Numbers", while

his powerful "Suchness" suggests a quiet moment alone, focused on self-reflection and healing. On the latter selection, each of the musicians make effective use of space as they solo within the ensemble's rich harmony, which provides for a moving climax. The album ends in a somber, contemplative mood with "The Two Silences", which interweaves the lush blend of Pietro's alto and Rodriguez' trumpet, Versace's subdued yet provocative performance on piano and Weidenmueller's nimble bass technique, fueled by Blake's delicate brushes and mallet work.

Dave Pietro has added another tantalizing release to his discography as a leader, a recording that will surely stand the test of time.

For more info visit [davepietro.com](http://davepietro.com). Pietro is at Smalls Oct. 16 (as leader) and Dizzy's Club Oct. 9-12 (with Gaia Wilmer Large Ensemble). See Calendar.



**The Katalyst Conversation (Live in Brussels)**  
**Vincent Davis, Ari Brown, Edward Wilkerson Jr.,**  
**Preyas Roy (Katalyst Entertainment)**  
by David Cristol

Ari Brown has associations with Lester Bowie, Kahil El'Zabar and the AACM after starting out in the first half of the '70s on cult label Black Jazz. In recent years he has issued a string of albums on Delmark and toured with Joshua Abrams' Natural Information Society. His bountiful tenor stands out whether it's on records or in live situations, his style informed by bop, soul, blues and other genres included in the "Great Black Music—Ancient to the Future" continuum, according to the expression coined by the Art Ensemble of Chicago.

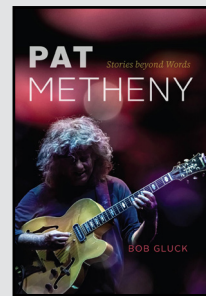
Brown began as a pianist, and plays piano on five of seven live tracks that comprise *The Katalyst Conversation (Live in Brussels)*. The gathering of artists stems from two distinct regular gigs at Chicago's The Katalyst coffee shop and record store, where nominal leader Vincent Davis (drums, percussion) and Brown were performing weekly duets, while Preyas Roy (vibraphone, percussion) organized jam sessions of his own at the venue. Preyas is by far the youngest of the quartet, and this recording feels like a passing of the torch between the seasoned players, including Windy City stalwart Edward Wilkerson, Jr. (saxophones, clarinet, didjeridu), and the relative newcomer.

The music is open and one surmises largely improvised. On the modal "Sizzler Settling In", Davis and Brown sustain a moody vamp for Wilkerson and Roy to extemporize upon. "Opening Up The Road To Discovery" has a shuffling motif on piano along with free drumming. Roy is highlighted on "Anointed Arrival", his touch calling to mind that of vibraphonist Walt Dickerson. The didjeridu and percussion-led "Crossing the Sands" harks back to the devotional jazz of Pharoah Sanders, vocal and saxophone growls included.

The entire set feels like it could have been recorded a half-century ago. Though the sound quality is slightly muffled and not pristine, it convincingly resembles what it must have felt like to be in attendance, whether at a mid '70s Chicago showcase—or in Brussels just last year, when *The Katalyst Conversation* was recorded.

For more info visit [katalystentertainment.com](http://katalystentertainment.com). The album release concert is at Solar Myth (Philadelphia, PA) Oct. 15 and Nublu Oct. 16. See Calendar and 100 Miles Out.

## IN PRINT



**Pat Metheny: Stories beyond Words**  
**Bob Gluck**  
**(University of Chicago Press)**  
by Jeff Cebulski

Guitarist Pat Metheny's appeal to millions worldwide is undeniable, even if he, as a generous contributor, remains slightly enigmatic (his album *Secret Story* is arguably one of his most personal narratives). Besides many interviews with him in print and other media outlets, Metheny has had his craft explored in only two books by authors who focused on his ECM years and his early musical experiences in Kansas City. Bob Gluck's new paperback volume, *Pat Metheny: Stories beyond Words* (198 pp.) is the first to focus on the breadth of his art and technique. Fans of the prolific guitarist will benefit from Gluck's concentration on music as metaphor, while interested musicians will receive insight into Metheny's characteristic approaches to playing and composition, including the use of tunings and electronics. The passages about his iconic guitar synth are particularly welcome.

Given that Gluck is a professor emeritus at the University of Albany, the book does have a pedantic bent as the author, a pianist who has written about Miles Davis and Herbie Hancock, explains what he has learned from years of research, aided by Metheny's willingness to share his thoughts on music. He has also interviewed several of the guitarist's bandmates (tracing the evolution of the Pat Metheny Group), and their insight adds crucial depth to understanding this modern genius, whose creative intensity and drive are self-evident. Some jazz history is provided for contextual purposes, sometimes interlaced with references to noted rock performers (for example, an explanation of "stepwise bass lines" involves a quick study of Paul McCartney). The story of Metheny's well-known admiration for Wes Montgomery is as biographical as Gluck gets, down to the very first Gibson Metheny owned that spawned hours of practice and the formulation of his singular style.

Representative of the whole volume, Chapter 2, "Stories We Listen To" and Chapter 5, "Developing That Sound: Guitars and Sonic Space" are places where readers can begin to appreciate what makes Metheny unique in the world of straight ahead and contemporary jazz. For the music student, Chapter 4, "Motif and Improvisation," reads like a jazz approach primer. (Given Gluck's deep analyses of theme and composition, this book could be used in both a liberal arts and school of music classroom.)

*Pat Metheny: Stories beyond Words* is a worthy addition to the literature about an important musical artist.

For more info visit [press.uchicago.edu](http://press.uchicago.edu). Metheny is at The Kate (Old Saybrook, CT) Oct. 1-2, District Music Hall (Norwalk, CT) Oct. 8 and Carnegie Hall Oct. 9. See Calendar and 100 Miles Out.