



Clone Row
Ches Smith (Otherly Love)
by John Pietaro

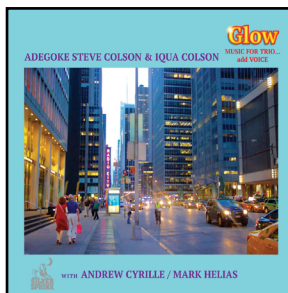
For those raised on rock 'n roll, the word "band" conjures the two guitars-bass-drums configuration notably established by The Beatles and taken to new heights by prog-rock group, King Crimson and its co-founder Robert Fripp. Ches Smith has not identified *Clone Row*, his most compelling recording to date, as an homage to that seminal ensemble, but its qualities certainly make this album a fitting companion.

Album opener, "Ready Beat", speaks volumes in this regard, from throbbing acoustic/electronic drums to the ominous Fripp-like guitar and bass lines, doubled at points by Smith's vibraphone. Even the casual listener should seek to absorb the intricacies, with Mary Halvorson's guitar in the right channel and Liberty Ellman's the left—separate but also forming a wondrous mélange. The tone row concept (a concept explored heavily by Fripp) is heard plainly and then seemingly in retrograde, running over polyrhythms, and colored at all points by splashes, scratches, scrawls and snarls of a whole other kind. By midpoint, Smith's drumming, equal parts melodic and contrapuntal, spins the rage with the muscle and flow of a latter-day Rashied Ali.

The extended intro of "Abrade with Me" offers cool, open-extended chords played in a heterophonic manner, the very close repetitions only hinting at the piece's main body of biting, unpredictable rhythmic turns. Bassist Nick Dunston artfully fills every space of the broken meter with both his instrument and a boiling, sizzling field of electronics. This is a duty shared with the leader throughout the album. The title work exemplifies the use of electronics—at points triggered by Smith's vibraphone—most melodically, while the guitars and bass synthesizer reinvent the tone row concept with each touch. "Town Down", largely unaffected by electronics, sports a bright 10/8 with intertwining modal lines and brilliant fusionist drumming, and "Heart Breakthrough" somehow blends the acoustic and electronic in a highly-listenable manner. When the rhythm section drops out, leaving the space to the guitars, Ellman's garage-rock tone is spaciouly paired with Halvorson's clean, clipped delivery as they trade inventive, inspired statements. The closing piece, "Play Bell (for Nick)" comprises arco bass, vibraphone (both through effects and pure), and wholly percussive sounding guitars flooding into and through electronics.

Is *Clone Row* the future of new, expansive jazz? Quite possibly, but it shouldn't be missed, especially since THIS is the band that King Crimson might have become.

For more info visit otherlylove.net. The album release concert is at Firehouse 12 (New Haven, CT) Oct. 3 and Public Records Oct. 5. See Calendar and 100 Miles Out.



Glow: Music for Trio...Add Voice
Adegoke Steve Colson & Iqua Colson
(Silver Sphinx)
by John Sharpe

Pianist Adegoke Steve Colson's *Glow* gathers a lifetime of music into a crisp, modern piano trio setting. Colson calls on two A-list partners—drummer Andrew Cyrille, his longtime collaborator, and bassist Mark Helias, a linchpin of countless adventurous ensembles. His wife and artistic counterpart, vocalist Iqua Colson, adds her burnished, soulful presence to four of the album's seven tracks. A half-century-plus member of Chicago's esteemed AACM (Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians), Colson is best known for exploratory projects alongside luminaries such as David Murray, Amiri Baraka and Baikida Carroll. However, listeners expecting abstraction in the spirit of his last recording—*Tones For* (2015), an expansive double set of unaccompanied piano—may be surprised by the tuneful, rhythm-forward program here. Melodic clarity dominates, though flashes of Colson's avant garde instincts emerge, most vividly on "Atrocities", where his piano solo edges toward atonality before resolving with the structural elegance that distinguishes his work throughout.

Helias and Cyrille maintain a buoyant, conversational partnership from the opening "Gelling Comfortable", with its insistent Latin groove. Helias, steadfast yet lyrical, threads supple counterpoint throughout the album, while Cyrille, ever resourceful, shapes textures without calling attention to himself. His shifts in color—switching to cymbals to frame a Helias solo, or building a feature out of rimshots and stick-on-stick dialogue—reveal a master percussionist

in constant motion. "Midnight Samba" finds him subtly pivoting into galloping hi-hat patterns under Helias' improvisation, a detail easily missed yet crucial to the piece's momentum. "For Freddie", written shortly after the passing of trumpeter Freddie Hubbard, brims with suitably bright boppish energy. When she appears, Iqua Colson adapts her dramatic phrasing to the contours of the tunes. Even on "Atrocities" she delivers unsettling lyrics with disarming warmth, her voice enriched by Helias' responsive bass figures. The title track closes the set with striking restraint: Helias' cello-like bowing introduces the aching theme, later carried by Iqua Colson's wordless line, an arrangement suggesting what we might be missing in the larger-scale entries in Colson's catalog that remain under-documented.

Glow stands as both a summation and a revelation: Colson channels his AACM-honed imagination into music that swings, sings and resonates across the full spectrum of jazz history.

For more info visit colsonsmusic.com. The album release concert is at Mount Morris Ascension Presbyterian Church Oct. 10. Adegoke Steve Colson also plays DiMenna Center Oct. 25 (part of AACM-New York's "Piano Series"). See Calendar.




Wild Women Don't Have the Blues (Candid)
Second Thoughts (Benfan)
Nancy Harrow
by Anna Steegmann


Vocalist Nancy Harrow (who turns 95 on Oct. 3) has released 18 albums as a leader, reflecting on an illustrious career as a singer, songwriter and composer, as well as work in musical theater.

Harrow's recently reissued debut album, *Wild Women Don't Have the Blues*, recorded exactly 65 years ago this month and still a standout in her discography, catapulted her to success. Prominent jazz critic Nat Hentoff spotted her at the Five Spot, signed her to the Candid label and produced the album for its 1961 release. The "backing" band of trumpeter Buck Clayton's Jazz Stars was comprised of some of the top jazz artists of the era: Buddy Tate (tenor), Danny Bank (baritone), Tom Gwaltney (clarinet, alto), Dickie Wells (trombone), Kenny Burrell (guitar), Dick Wellstood (piano), Milt Hinton (bass) and Oliver Jackson (drums). This all-star nonet provided a free-swinging, sophisticated sound that complemented her expressive vocal style, distinctive phrasing and emotional subtlety. Her voice, praised for its authenticity and nuance, can be fully appreciated in interpretations of compositions by Duke Ellington ("All Too Soon"), Count Basie ("Take Me Back Baby") and Harold Arlen ("I've Got the World on a String"). The album also includes delightful renditions of "On the Sunny Side of the Street" (Dorothy Fields, Jimmy McHugh) and Kay Swift's "Can't We Be Friends". The title track, the Ida Cox classic from 1924, turns out to be a surprising feminist anthem that has stood the test of time, as has this album, which remains a must-have for fans of vocal jazz.


If Harrow's debut was bold, *Second Thoughts*, in contrast, is more gentle, inward-looking and deeply personal. Her voice and artistry have matured over time. We no longer find a dynamic interaction with an ensemble playing jazz and blues, but rather a more intimate, literary approach that retains its jazz roots. Most of the 11 tracks are originals and duets with pianist Ted Rosenthal (bassist Rufus Reid and drummer Dennis Mackrel appear on two tracks). Rosenthal's




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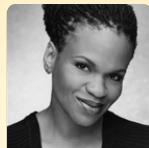
Sunday, October 26th 4:40pm
The Makanda Project
All Saint's Church Park Slope, NY





Sunday, November 9th 4:40pm
Robert Rutledge Quintet
Soapbox Gallery Brooklyn

Robert Rutledge Quintet ignites modern jazz with rich & fearless original grooves



Sunday, December 14th 4:40pm
Gha'il Rhodes Benjamin
Soapbox Gallery Brooklyn

"She Got Burned" award-winning spoken-word artist, poet & educator

playing, marked by intensity, sophistication and fluidity, enhances Harrow's voice while never outshining it. Listeners will discover a range of moods and themes in intimate arrangements that allow the singer's voice to shine. "Self-Esteem" is playful and witty and "Dear Max" (inspired by F. Scott Fitzgerald's letters to his editor, Max Perkins) will make you laugh out loud. Standards including "I Thought About You" (Jimmy Van Heusen, Johnny Mercer) and "My Ship" (Kurt Weill, Ira Gershwin) sparkle with gentle, introspective clarity. The standout title track expresses a reflective maturity. The tone of the album is timeless yet contemporary, deeply personal yet inviting. Harrow's vocal style remains honest and genuine, with a focus on storytelling rather than display. Every note feels spontaneous and authentic and this album strikes a balance between a thoughtful examination of life's complexities and flashes of wit, optimism and even joy.

For more info visit candidrecords.bandcamp.com and nancyharrow.com



My Ideal
Sam Dillon (Cellar Music)
by Scott Yanow

It is obvious from the start of the opening selection on *My Ideal*, the original "No Promises", that John Coltrane is tenor saxophonist Sam Dillon's primary inspiration. Dillon's technique is dazzling and he can play double-time lines with the speed and assurance of Johnny Griffin. Many of his ideas purposely look towards Coltrane, and while Dillon's sound is not quite identical, he certainly sounds like a close musical relative. However, when one plays with such a steady stream of inventive ideas and enthusiasm, the references and resemblance in styles are not necessarily a bad thing. Certainly his ferocious playing on "Path of Totality", one of four originals on this set (which alternate with four standards), is very much in his own voice.

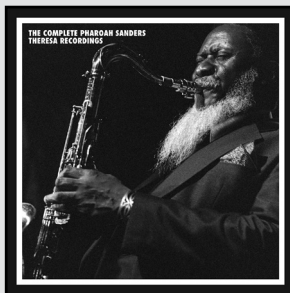
"No Promises" (a tribute to Coltrane's "The Promise") is filled with passionate sheets of sound tenor. "Softly, as in a Morning Sunrise" features Dillon hanging onto the chord structure while pushing against it and occasionally hitting upper register, altissimo notes that recall Ernie Watts. "Past Time" is a modal original while "Have You Met Miss Jones" has the leader's high-energy solo followed by a relatively relaxed and boppish statement from David Hazeltine (piano), a short spot for Alexander Claffy (bass) and a tradeoff with Rodney Green (drums).

One album highlight is the tenor saxophonist's opening cadenza on the title track. Another standout is the quartet's rendition of Cole Porter's "I Love You". Coltrane recorded a pianoless trio version in 1957, and Dillon recreates the setting and the introduction of that version before launching off on his own. The aforementioned "Path of Totality" and the blues-with-a-bridge original "SD Card" (inspired by "Traneing In") conclude this impressive set.

While one hopes that Sam Dillon becomes more individual in the future, *My Ideal* will certainly be enjoyed, particularly by Coltrane fans.

For more info visit cellarmusicgroup.com. The album release concert is at Chris' Jazz Cafe (Philadelphia, PA) Oct. 3 and *The Django* Oct. 15. Dillon is also at Zinc Bar Oct. 8. See *Calendar* and *100 Miles Out*.

BOXED SET



The Complete Pharoah Sanders Theresa Recordings
Pharoah Sanders (Mosaic)
by Marc Medwin

The more history is confronted, the messier it becomes. Lines blur and categories collapse while cause and effect fade in the simultaneously multivalent lights of discovery and rediscovery. Pharoah Sanders (1940-2022) was a musician well-versed in historical complexity and the means to overcome it. Just in time to celebrate what would have been his 85th birthday this month (Oct. 13), the inimitable Mosaic Records has boxed up a point of career definition. In the '80s, on San Francisco's independent Theresa label, the tenor saxophonist released a series of albums that document his immersion in all aspects of the music that fostered his talent, continued to spark his imagination and shaped the unique syntax he used to express it.

A word must first be said about the booklet. While Mosaic sets are known for their exemplary liner notes, Mark Stryker raises the stakes with a 10,000-word Sanders primer. Yes, we get all of the requisite biography and sociohistorical context, but, helpfully, Stryker first elucidates the sonic vocabularies forging the Sanders sound his fans relish, such as the multiphonics on the bridge of "I Want to Talk About You", recorded by drummer Idris Muhammad's pianoless group in 1980, a year after he played on Sanders' first Theresa session as a leader. Stryker also cites the freedom-screams informing the three versions herein of the aptly titled "You've Got to Have Freedom", suggesting that Sanders plays the political statements that interviews do not completely capture.

This introductory section can serve either as a listening guide in miniature for the individual sessions Stryker then chronicles or a launchpad for the many felicitous discoveries these albums afford. Each disc of this limited edition, seven-CD set is a kind of amalgam, ideas contrasted and connected as lush landscapes throughout, from which the fruits of collaboration are harvested. Sanders' *Journey To The One* (1980) brought then-recent Theresa to national attention, and with it Sanders modes of inquiry as reflected on this multifarious microcosm. Juxtapose the fiery groove of "Doktor Pitt" with the introspective musings of "Kazuko (Peace Child)" to mine the diverse territory a Sanders album might travel, and then revel in the trilling at 3:28 of "Kazuko" to hear how completely he inhabits that terrain, specifically a shimmering soundscape of koto, harmonium and bells. Suddenly, we're treated to the unexpected but delicious duet version of John Coltrane's "After the Rain", courtesy of Sanders and Joe Bonner, which anticipates the languid quartet take on "It's Easy to Remember", featuring Muhammad, pianist John Hicks and bassist Ray Drummond, two of the many souvenirs of Sanders' relationship with Coltrane peppering the set. If the keyboard- and vocal-heavy arrangement on "Think About the One" seems a bit dated, the tambura-driven "Solidate" places the music outside of temporal concern, Sanders' tenor

floating freely over the more frenetic rhythms of James Pomerantz' sitar.

The time and genre-bending gauntlet was thrown down, and the rest of the set explores aspects of these complex but rewarding historical symbioses. Whether you're in the mood for old, new, borrowed and all kinds of blue, it's all there. It's easy to gravitate toward the two live albums, *Live* and *Heart Is a Melody*, the latter including a blistering version of Coltrane's "Ole", especially to Muhammad's solo beginning at 13:19 or pianist William Henderson III's deep and glistening intro. Sanders' final of three solos finds him literally in voice, trading vocal motives with his customarily welcome saxophone squalls. If the synthesized chorus on "Body and Soul" from *Shukuru* (1985) isn't to taste, Sanders' gorgeous and adventurous solo (dig the moment at 2:26 when he leaves the key far behind!) soothes and invigorates by turn. It is wonderful to hear Leon Thomas with Sanders again, and his rich baritone vocal acrobatics are a treat as the rhythm section of Drummond and Muhammad provide affable support. The session exudes the mellow joy in musical communication in which getting lost is simple. Sanders tears it all up on the brief but poignantly and politically charged swing of "Jitu", which is perfectly balanced by "For Big George" (this live bonus track is actually "Goin' Home"). Anticipating Sanders' final statement, the achingly beautiful and justly-lauded *Promises* (2021), Thomas and Sanders emote over a multileveled drone as deep and timeless as each note they sing and play.

The last two discs in the set juxtapose Sanders' final recordings for Theresa with his first, then uncredited, because he was still under contract to Arista. *A Prayer Before Dawn* is the more interesting of the two, not least because it includes what might be considered the only "late" Coltrane tune Sanders offers, the wisdom-drenched "LivingSpace". Sanders drags more blues out of it than seems possible, digging the melody from deep underground. Henderson is all over this album (with the exception of guest pianist Hicks on "After The Rain") and provides exquisite and soulful harmonic support on this most spiritual of Coltrane's 1965 pieces; when the pianist's melody ascends in rippling arpeggio, Sanders sinks lower, and vice versa, exemplifying the layers of perfection embodying the relationships the saxophonist could have with his collaborators.

It is more than a privilege to encounter and revisit the music emanating from this period of transition as Sanders re-evaluated his historical perspective. Like Sun Ra, he brings special flavor to the standards he updates, and there are new sounds a-plenty to tickle the ear. Through it all, Sanders' saxophone lexicon is an open book of unpredictably imaginative reference, embracing the past while delineating a present of his making. The occasional rearing of commerciality's head does nothing to diminish the importance of a committed body of work in need of exactly the anthologizing Mosaic has given it. History is here, in all of its transcultural glory, accepting facile containment no more than does any one pitch, phrase or emotional line, peaceful or confrontational, that Sanders unleashes upon it. Established voices, like those of Bobby Hutcherson and Elvin Jones, cross paths with then-new talent, including the young Bobby McFerrin, to carry the concentric lineages forward. All that's left to do is to celebrate the man, these musicians and their legacy by listening again.

For more info visit mosaicrecords.com