

# Rico Jones

6-Time  
Downbeat  
Award  
Winner

new LP  
from Giant  
Step Arts  
and  
Producer  
Jimmy Katz



Review pg 24 in  
this issue

## BloodLines

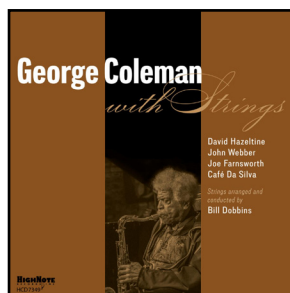


RicoJonesMusician.com

LIVE at  
Smalls  
NYC

Oct 7

Tickets: SmallsLive.com



*With Strings*  
George Coleman (HighNote)  
by Scott Yanow

Hard as it is to believe, George Coleman's tenure as a member of the Miles Davis Quintet ended over 61 years ago. The distinctive tenor saxophonist has been busy ever since, mostly as a bandleader since the '70s. Today, at the age of 90, he still has a strong presence in New York area clubs. In his long career, though, Coleman had never been featured on an album with a string section. In 2022 when he was 87, he finally had the opportunity, recording this recently-released set, *With Strings*, joined by David Hazeltine (piano), John Webber (bass), Joe Farnsworth (drums), Café DaSilva (percussion on two songs) and a 13-member string section arranged by Bill Dobbins.

The program begins with a concise and straightforward reading of the melody to "Dedicated to You" with the tenor saxophonist soaring above the strings. DaSilva's percussion is prominent on Henry Mancini's "Moment to Moment", which has Coleman noticeably stretching himself. His tenor performance comes up with some interesting variations on "Stella By Starlight", which also has a fine solo from Hazeltine. A light Brazilian feel is given to "A Time for Love" and Thelonious Monk's "Ugly Beauty" receives a moody waltz treatment; there are alternate versions of both as well, which are in essence the same performances except for the string section introductions (totaling 82 and 75 seconds respectively) that add a bit of drama to each rendition. Including two recordings of those songs seems a bit frivolous. What is the point of the only-slightly truncated versions? Except for the fact that when one considers the brevity of this album, without the second versions, this disc would contain a mere 26 minutes.

Even with all of the music, though, it is just 36 minutes and seems unfortunate that a couple more songs were not (or could not be) performed, even if without strings. In any case, what is included on *With Strings*, by one of jazz' living legends, is well worth hearing, as Coleman continues to be in excellent playing form and can now check this one off his bucket list.

For more info visit [jazzdepot.com](http://jazzdepot.com). Coleman is at Smalls Oct. 12-13. See Calendar.



*End of Something*  
Matt Mitchell/Sara Serpa (Obliquity)  
by Kurt Gottschalk

There's a wonderful, musical intimacy between pianist Matt Mitchell and singer Sara Serpa that goes back at least to 2018 and Serpa's remarkable *Intimate Strangers* project (heard on record in 2021 with modular synthesizer, Mitchell's piano and four voices including

poet Emmanuel Iduma), and up through a set of duets on Ingrid Laubrock's *Purposing the Air*, released earlier this year. Their mutual trust not only allows each of the musicians to give the other space, but also includes a shared understanding of sometimes leaving space unfilled.

Their first duo record, *End of Something* (released as CD and download on Obliquity, the label Mitchell runs with drummer Kate Gentile), is both challenging and gentle, moving in unexpected directions in intuitive ways. Nowhere is this more apparent in the hourlong set, than when they step into Olivier Messiaen's "Les Bergers" (from his 1935 organ suite *La Nativité du Seigneur*). It begins with Mitchell delicately stating the wandering theme of the shepherds before they repeat it together. Serpa is on point, assured and understated. Mitchell drops out and the vocalist continues in wordless articulation and vibrato-free scat. When the piano returns, the focus seems more finely-tuned in extended unison. It's an unusual choice for piano and voice, but the rendering is nothing less than pristine.

The other 14 tracks are their own compositions, often uncompleted or unrealized compositions, not initially intended for this collaboration. The duo makes them whole, much like they did with Messiaen, in trust and no hurry. Serpa's singing does sometimes approach scat by definition, in short strings of syllables, but less so in mood. She is at times something like a blasé Blossom Dearie, at other times merging momentarily into Meredith Monk territory; her shaping of words (borrowed at times from Sofia de Mello Breyner, Luce Irigaray, Sonia Sanchez and Virginia Woolf) and nonwords can be quite stirring. Mitchell's occasional ornamentation at times seems like all the weight the fragile songs can support.

As a duo, Mitchell and Serpa sit in service of the songs, enjoying the perhaps unexpected freedom that brings. Even given their shared history, *End of Something* feels like a new beginning.

For more info visit [obliquityrecords.bandcamp.com](http://obliquityrecords.bandcamp.com). Serpa is at The Stone at The New School Oct. 9 (with Erik Friedlander) and Bar Bayeux Oct. 17 (as leader). Mitchell is at The Jazz Gallery Oct. 18 (with Yuhuan Su). See Calendar.



*Sound Remains*  
Rez Abbasi Acoustic Quintet (Whirlwind)  
by Terrell K. Holmes

Listening to Rez Abbasi is like sharing the warmth of a pleasant conversation with close friends over a glass of wine. The acclaimed guitarist's new album, *Sound Remains*, brings harmonic sophistication and a wealth of sonic textures to an impressive roster of songs. Joining Abbasi is his Acoustic Quintet of Bill Ware (vibraphone), Stephan Crump (bass) and Eric McPherson (drums), with Hasan Bakr (percussion) augmenting the musical palette.

This is the group's third album and their cohesion is audibly and immediately evident. Abbasi's spare melody on album opener "Presence" leads to a burst of color and rhythm that sets the tone for the rest of the recording. Ware's agile, spiraling solo sets up the guitarist, who whips off crisp single notes on his steel string acoustic, which coalesce into frenetic, urgent chords. The brooding introduction to "You Are" evolves seamlessly from a measured waltz to some of



Abbasi's most nimble and intense playing, matched by McPherson and Bakr thrashing alongside him. Ware's thoughtful and economical phrasing during his solo, and throughout the album, shows why he's been in the vanguard of vibraphonists for the last 40 years through to today. The band steps lively on Keith Jarrett's "Questar", with the leader displaying more of his enviable rhythmic dexterity and cleverness as Crump, McPherson and Bakr provide a strong foundation behind him. "Folk's Song", a guitar-vibraphone duet, is a lovely tribute to Abbasi's parents. The band adroitly navigates the challenging tempo shifts of the mercurial "Spin Dream". The raga-tinged sound the guitarist coaxes from his instrument when he states the melody of the band's mesmerizing take on John Coltrane's "Lonnie's Lament" gives the song a striking tonality. After the reflective opening, it rises above the clouds and settles into a vigorous swing mode. "Meet the Moment" pulsates with an engaging moodiness and struggles to find a resolution at the end that's just out of reach, as though this particular moment will never be met. The issue is unresolved, but the tune is satisfying. The album's closer, "Purity" is a generous helping of front porch gospel with a splendid, plucked solo by Crump.

*Sound Remains* will confirm and cement Abbasi's place as both an excellent guitarist and composer.

For more info visit [whirlwindrecordings.com](http://whirlwindrecordings.com). Abbasi is at Roulette Oct. 24 (with Kiran Ahluwalia) and Bar Lunático Oct. 29 (as leader). See Calendar.



**Monk's Music**  
**Thelonious Monk (Riverside-Craft)**  
by Stuart Broomer

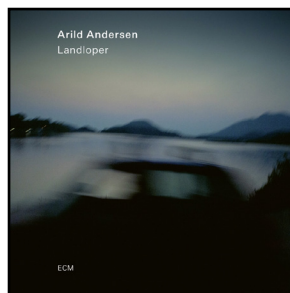
While Blue Note introduced Thelonious Monk's music to the world (1947-52), Prestige kept his exotic originality alive (1952-54) and Columbia spread the word to the jazz mainstream and beyond (1962-70), while Riverside did the most to document assiduously the "genius of modern music" at his creative peak (1955-59) in the era of the 12" LP, contributing massively to one of the essential bodies of work in jazz history. First fixing Monk (born 108 years ago this month) in the mainstream with recordings of familiar material (*Plays Duke Ellington* in 1955 and *The Unique* in 1956), the label was soon ready to present the pianist's music in all its challenging glory. First came the genuinely radical *Brilliant Corners*, followed shortly thereafter by the recordings under discussion here, a solo set, *Thelonious Himself*, and the band album *Monk's Music*, both recently reissued with their original contents in 180gr vinyl editions by Craft Recordings.

The septet of *Monk's Music* was one of the largest ensembles that Monk had led (one obvious exception being 1959's Riverside album, *The Thelonious Monk Orchestra at Town Hall*) in a program of his own music, and what a band it was, with recognized tenor giants, Coleman Hawkins and John Coltrane, Gigi Gryce (alto), Ray Copeland (trumpet) and Art Blakey (drums). The album begins with a strikingly reverent gesture as unlikely as the appearance of Coltrane and Ware on "Monk's Mood": the four winds performing a brief and luminous version of the hymn "Abide with Me", an inspiration that might only come from Monk. An extended treatment of "Well, You Needn't" follows, with a special creative edge to the solo order of Monk, Coltrane, Copeland, Ware, Blakey, Hawkins and Gryce. Every track is a highlight, with a balance of

forceful inventions and warm balladry. "Epistrophe" is another charged performance, the rampaging energy of its theme enhanced by the four horns. Hawkins brings a special elegance to a quartet rendition of "Ruby, My Dear", while the ensemble of "Crepuscle with Nellie" is infused with a distinctive warmth.

*Thelonious Himself* (Monk's fourth album on Riverside) is a brilliant solo set, matching standards including Irving Berlin's "All Alone" and Vernon Duke's "April in Paris" with originals such as the nine-minute slow blues of "Functional" and a perfect "'Round Midnight" distilled from multiple takes. Most tempos are slow, a treatment that is both analytical and sculptural, romantic and surgical, further enriched with certain characteristic, personal gestures—from a series of dissonances and an occasional sharp punctuation in the treble to creating a kind of existential ballad—all with a degree of immediate and inspired illumination, whether a casual brushing of a note on the way to its neighbor, or a near-patented abrasion. Monk the iconoclast is represented by a perfectly Monk-ish *envoi*: the closing "Monk's Mood" has a mid-stream shift with the sudden addition of John Coltrane (tenor) and Wilbur Ware (bass) for their only appearance on the recording, one more of those sudden inspirations that make Monk's recordings so special and so memorable.

For more info visit [craftrecordings.com](http://craftrecordings.com). Monk birthday tributes are at World Café Live (Philadelphia, PA) Oct. 8, Smoke Oct. 8-12, 15-19 and Birdland Oct. 10-12. See Calendar and 100 Miles Out.



**Landloper**  
**Arild Andersen (ECM)**  
by Thomas Conrad

Arild Andersen (who turns 80 this month) is one of the most important jazz musicians to come out of Norway and one of the most lyrical bass players anywhere. He has been at the center of many world-class ensembles, several led by himself, including his trio, which made three epic albums for ECM, with Scottish tenor saxophonist Tommy Smith and the late drummer Paolo Vinaccia. On Andersen's new release, *Landloper*, he is, for the first time, solo. In recent years, solo bass albums have become a small trend. But this album differs in that it uses electronics and was recorded live: every song but one (opener "Peace Universal", recorded in his home) was captured in Victoria National Jazzscene in Oslo.

"Peace Universal" is a lovely, simple, fragile tune composed by drummer Bob Moses. Andersen applies electronics subtly, to imply a string orchestra whispering in the distance. In the foreground, his bass sings the yearning melody. "Peace Universal" sets an inward, contemplative mood for the album. Well-traveled Andersen compositions, including "Dreamhorse" and "Mira"—stripped down to the bare instrumentation of acoustic bass with selective, provocative electronic enhancements—become newly haunting.

A song that embodies the mysterious fascination of this album is Manning Sherwin's 1940 standard, "A Nightingale Sang in Berkeley Square". It is a rush when the familiar, affirmational melody coalesces from Andersen's slow, searching basslines. The song's exhilarating romanticism has never sounded so true and conclusive. The medley of Ornette Coleman's

"Lonely Woman" and Charlie Haden's "Song for Che" is strangely affecting. When Andersen plays the fervent melody of "Lonely Woman", you hear in your mind's ear, as stark contrast, the piercing cry of Coleman's alto saxophone. Haden first introduced "Song for Che" in a wild, turbulent version by his Liberation Music Orchestra. To hear Andersen render these pieces on bass alone is to encounter their essence. When concentrated into the dark utterance of his bass—a deep, thick voice striving to become articulate and ultimately achieving eloquence—the emotion of these songs is laid bare.

For more info visit [ecmrecords.com](http://ecmrecords.com)

**Elijah Shiffer**  
**City Of Birds**  
Volume 3: Fly By Night Blues

**Releases**  
**October 11th**  
**on Star Jelly**  
**Records**

"keenly observed and briskly portrayed sketches of familiar and unusual species..."  
"an accomplished student of birdlore..."  
"a veritable jazz-oriented guide to Northeast American birds."  
-Fred Bouchard  
(The New York City Jazz Record)

Elijah Shiffer's City Of Birds quartet will be playing at  
**Cutelab on October 17, 8:30pm**  
with Jack Doe at 8:00 and *Dumetella* (debut performance) at 9:30  
email [hello@cutelab.nyc](mailto:hello@cutelab.nyc) for address

[elijahshiffer.com](http://elijahshiffer.com)  
[elijahshiffer.bandcamp.com](http://elijahshiffer.bandcamp.com)

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## JAZZ VESPERS 5PM

October 5  
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**JAZZ MEMORIALS**  
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October 12  
**Hendrik Meurkens**

October 14  
**Ronny Whyte**

October 19  
**Harvie S**

October 28  
**Dave Gibson**

October 26  
**Kevin Burke**

November 18  
**Sheila Jordan**



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