

# Rico Jones

6-Time  
Downbeat  
Award  
Winner

new LP  
from Giant  
Step Arts  
and  
Producer  
Jimmy Katz



Review pg 24 in  
this issue

## BloodLines

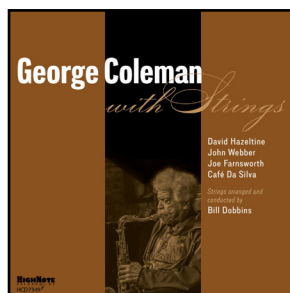


RicoJonesMusician.com

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