

THURSDAY NIGHT JAZZ

PRESENTS WAYNE TUCKER

DECEMBER 11, 8PM

Jamaica Performing Arts Center
153-10 Jamaica Avenue

Tickets \$10 at JCAL.org



The Songbook Sessions, Vol. 1: 1920
Glenn Crytzer and His Quartet (Blue Rhythm)
by Scott Yanow

Glenn Crytzer is a veteran NYC-based swing guitarist, bandleader, singer, composer-arranger, who has led a variety of groups playing pre-bop music. When COVID-19 hit in 2020, rather than become musically inactive, Crytzer gathered together a quartet for an ambitious project. With Ricky Alexander (clarinet), Mike Davis (trumpet) and Ian Hutchison (bass), he launched *The Songbook Sessions*. The group recorded ten songs a week for 25 weeks, each session covering a year chronologically, from 1920-1944. Rather than recreate early recordings or play in the style of that particular year, the musicians were more inspired by (but not derivative of) the Bechet-Spanier Big Four of 1940, which featured Sidney Bechet (soprano, clarinet), Muggsy Spanier (cornet), Carmen Mastren (guitar) and Wellman Braud (bass).

The first volume, featuring ten songs published in 1920, is now available digitally. While there are a few relative obscurities performed, most of the 105-year-old songs have since become jazz standards. The songs generally include hot trumpet, clarinet and guitar solos, beginning and ending with melodic ensembles and often including the song’s verse: Crytzer is a stickler at playing the melodies properly. The repertoire includes “Whispering” (Paul Whiteman’s big hit), the exotic “Lena from Palasteena” (which as simply “Palasteena”, was recorded by the Original Dixieland Jazz Band) and Swing era favorites “Margie” (including a group vocal) and “Avalon”. To the musicians’ credit, “Singin’ the Blues” avoids any reference to the famous Bix Beiderbecke recording and Crytzer’s chordal solo is worthy of Carl Kress. The performances are reasonably concise but not confined to the three-minute limitations of the era of 78s.

Crytzer (whose single-note lines conveniently fit into the early ’40s style), Davis and Alexander blend well while taking solos in their own complementary voices, while bassist Hutchison sticks to keeping the music swinging in more of a supportive role. The plan is to gradually release all 250 recordings in this series individually and on ten sets. If the quality remains as high as in the first volume, there is a lot of fine music to look forward to in the future from Glenn Crytzer!

For more info visit glenncrytzer.bandcamp.com. Crytzer is at Green Fairy and Red Room at KGB Bar Dec. 4, Parker & Quinn Dec. 5, Winnie’s Jazz Bar Dec. 26 + Festival Café Thursdays and Peck Slip Social Saturdays. See Calendar.



Enleio/Na Parede/ Arcada Pendular
Carlos Zingaro, João Madeira, et al. (4DaRECORD)
by Fred Bouchard

At the venerable Estoril Jazz Festival in Portugal in 2001, I was impressed with audience appreciation for quality mainstream, but quite floored by Lisbon’s rabid enthusiasm for avant garde in venues such as Hot Clube. The country’s fascination with free jazz

and wild improvisation likely flourished as voices rebelling under oppressive politics. Carlos “Zingaro” (gypsy) Alves, who celebrates his 77th birthday this month (Dec. 15), studied classical music at Lisbon Music Conservatory (1953-65), and later musicology, pipe organ and electroacoustic music. This veteran of international festivals has over 50 albums as leader or collaborator (often, as here, decorated with his prized artwork). These untethered, yet companionable acoustic sessions involve Zingaro playing violin (seldom wielded with curved bow) in various contexts with bassist João Madeira, who triples as engineer and producer. *Arcada Pendular* is a dynamic duo; the other two releases include self-styled “anti-cellist” Fred Lonberg-Holm, with bass clarinetist Bruno Parrinha (*Enleio*) or guitarist Flo Stoffner (*Na Parede*). Neither scores nor range parameters were imposed: pure improvisation!

Enleio (Entanglement) emerges highly interactive, organically weaving in series of furious or contemplative exchanges. Its “Trama” unveils tart, textured dissonances in blurred, brusque, buzzing ensembles. Suite-length “Nervos” features the strings alternating in soaring legato lines. “Liames” spreads laterally like tree-roots or rhizome networks. Cellist Lonberg-Holm titled *Na Parede*, which means “on or in the wall” and is also the name of the town where the music was recorded. Then, according to the cellist: “I like the vagueness...we went for aspects of walls—pedra (stone), barro (clay), agua (water), cal (whitewash).” Movements do more or less hold aurally analogous to their elements: stolid and brooding; dense, twangy, and elastic; trinkly, sprinkly, glissy, trembly, and fluid; astrigent, with dramatic pizzicato, then bowed, bass/cello duo aflame under Zingaro’s frazzly fiddle. The cello typically works as sympathetic catalyst and sonic buffer between violin and bass, and their wrangling discussions hold plausibly engaging. Yet the two quartet sets sound either tentative or hyperactively competitive. Even as Parrinha (on *Eleio*) and Stoffner (on *Na Parede*), respectively, hew to deferential roles, horn and bass may cancel out in the overlapping cycle range, while lean, lightly-amped no-effects guitar picked alongside pizzicato strings achieves a strident pincushion effect. Moreover, neither instrument emerges with great clarity and separation as recorded.

The hanging arch duo of *Arcada Pendular*, however, avoids such pitfalls—and competitive clamor—as seasoned colleagues go at it enthusiastically in eleven well-focused watercolors. They intuit melodic connectivity at a conversational pace, yet pull off plenty of plosive surprises, high on scurrying tremolo, galloping *col legno*, body thumps, snap or nail pizz. Intuitive understanding naturally entails a sprinkle of breathless silences.

For more info visit 4darecord.bandcamp.com



A New Conception
Sam Rivers (Blue Note Tone Poet)
by Jason Gross

Before he became a pioneer of ’70s NYC loft jazz and formed big bands in subsequent decades, the late saxophonist Sam Rivers (whose 14-year deathaversary is this month) started out early on as a bandleader in the ’60s on Blue Note, where he daringly melded

bop and free jazz. After a brief stint with Miles Davis, Rivers debuted with 1965’s *Fuchsia Swing Song*, with Ron Carter and Tony Williams (both with Miles at that time), and 1966’s more lyrical *Contours* with Herbie Hancock (yet another Miles band member) before the saxophonist-flutist took an unexpected turn. Now reissued as part of Blue Note’s deluxe Tone Poet audiophile 180g vinyl reissue series (mastered from the original analog tapes), 1966’s *A New Conception* consists of all covers, concentrating on interpretations of romantic ballads tied to great vocalists. Here, Rivers also featured a new quartet: Hal Galper (piano), Herbie Lewis (bass) and Steve Ellington (drums), no relation to Duke.

The seven selections start off with the breezy “When I Fall In Love” (popularized by Nat “King” Cole). Rivers enters charmingly with soaring flights on tenor, stretching out the melody, then setting up Galper (who passed away this July at age 87) for a lyrical turn in the middle before he flies back in for more melodic extensions and emotional, minimal passages towards the end. Ellington’s masterful brushwork can be appreciated in the intro and outro sections. Via Tommy Dorsey and Frank Sinatra, “I’ll Never Smile Again” has the leader swinging, again on tenor, before pulling out his soprano mid-way for a wild romp. “Detour Ahead” (sung memorably by Billie Holiday, then a decade later by Ella Fitzgerald) starts with Rivers’ lithe flute performance before switching to soprano, then later to tenor for a blazing passage, sandwiching an elegant Galper piano solo. “That’s All” (a Bobby Darin hit) features Rivers’ graceful soprano playing throughout, over swinging piano trio accompaniment, with a brief, but effective, melodic piano solo from Galper midway through. The standard “What a Difference a Day Makes” starts with a wild, mostly unaccompanied tenor run before settling into and bouncing around the melody, then leaping into free territory with honks and screams, before Rivers switches gears to a gliding spotlight on soprano. The seven and a half minute “Temptation” (a Bing Crosby hit) features heavy improvisational stylings from Galper, creative, offbeat Lewis bass lines and Ellington’s cymbal-heavy Paul Motian-like off-killer rhythms, as Rivers charges wildly on soprano, then flute, eventually tenor, occasionally glancing off then re-referencing the original melody on each occasion. On “Secret Love”, Rivers’ flute playing coasts around some of the pianist’s more elegant contributions to the session, going into free territory by the tail end.

A New Conception is an extraordinary display that makes you wish Rivers reimaged even more ballads before his ’70s re-emergence.

For more info visit store.bluenote.com

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Joni's Jazz
Joni Mitchell (Rhino)
by Franz Matzner

Joni's Jazz is a monumental collection (available as a 4-CD or 8-LP boxed set), befitting the stunning achievements over five decades of the Canada-born guitarist, pianist, vocalist and lyricist Joni Mitchell (who turned 82 last month). Curated with Mitchell’s extensive input, the set explores the profound influence of jazz on her music. The 61 tracks include studio recordings, live performances, rare alternate takes and two previously unreleased 1980 demos (“Moon at the Window” and “Be Cool”). Though she is most often placed in the early ’60s folk music revival milieu, this set not only brings to light her massive achievements *in toto*, but specifically highlights her prolonged engagement with jazz and blues, as well as mergers with Americana, rock and more. Featured are such jazz collaborators and luminaries as Chuck Berghofer, Brian Blade, Michael Brecker, Peter Erskine, Wilton Felder, Victor Feldman, Mark Isham, Plas Johnson, Pat Metheny, Charles Mingus, Gerry Mulligan, Jaco Pastorius, Joe Sample and Tom Scott, as well as, significantly, Herbie Hancock and Wayne Shorter (the latter with whom she had an ongoing musical relationship since 1977). The set’s large cover image is actually a photo of her with Hancock and Shorter in 2022, when she received an honorary doctorate from Berklee College of Music.

For those already exposed to Mitchell’s vocal acuity and stature as an inspired lyricist, the set provides a welcome historical timeline of her creativity. For those unfamiliar with the length of her career, or deep connection with jazz and blues, the set is well worth the modest investment, considering its scope and production. Most tracks have been remastered, lending enhanced clarity to the subtlety of Mitchell’s art as she sculpts her unique blend of composition, instrumental capacity and difficult-to-rival lyrical insight. The compilation includes renditions of many jazz standards—“Comes Love”, “You’re My Thrill”, “Summertime”, “At Last”, “Stormy Weather”—and showcases her evolution as a standards vocalist. Mitchell’s investigation of many styles of music at times explores them in their traditional format and at other times melds them into something entirely and uniquely her own. Yet, what emerges most clearly is that in any context, one of her most remarkable and consistent abilities is as a lyricist. Dominating her writing is an immediately identifiable approach that paints with unusual imagery and syntax, while at times sewing together more established idioms.

Mitchell evokes a wide spectrum of human experience, from reflective to sadness; from playful to the dramatic; and with a particular gift, the deeper significance found in the most mundane of circumstances. In some ways, it is the latter ability that truly distinguishes participating in almost all her releases. The blend of this emblematic color palette with Mitchell’s evocative voice, delivering her potent lyrics, is a truly unique sound that promises to guide listeners through peaks, valleys and fluid streams of sonic and psychological subtlety. Drawing from nearly every core album in Mitchell’s discography—*Song to a Seagull*, *The Hissing of Summer Lawns*, *Hejira*, *Mingus*, *Turbulent Indigo* and *Both Sides Now*—it also includes guest appearances on projects such as Hancock’s GRAMMY Award-winning album, *River: The Joni Letters*. Of other notable selections on the set: the title track from her 1971 *Blue*, “Marcie” (from her 1968 debut *Song to a Seagull*) and “Cold Blue Steel and Sweet Fire” (from *For the Roses*). The most recent track included is a live performance of “Summertime” from the 2022 Newport Folk Festival, which was her first full-length concert in over two decades.

Joni’s Jazz is housed in a book-style format and includes liner notes with rare, unseen photos and original artwork by Mitchell, who is also, among her many talents, a painter (her original artwork graces the covers of many of her albums, including *Song to a Seagull*, *Ladies of the Canyon*, *The Hissing of Summer Lawns* and the self-portrait found on *Clouds*).

This prodigious work is the perfect introduction for those who aren’t familiar with Mitchell or her body of work, or hadn’t realized how much jazz has influenced her and, conversely, how much she has influenced jazz music and musicians in return. And for established fans, it serves as a treasure chest of music that will no doubt call for many repeat listens.

For more info visit rhino.com

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Following her internationally acclaimed debut solo album on Trem Azul Records, Luisa Gonçalves returns with a new solo venture, expanding on the impenetrable musical connections outlined on her triumphant predecessor (2020's *Unno*). Across style, ideas, and expression, the artist has an innate piano sound. Luisa Gonçalves is known for her ability to merge different musical influences and create unique and unclassifiable music.

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