

THE JAZZ ROOM

WILLIAM PATERSON UNIVERSITY

SPRING 2026 SEASON

Orrin Evans

THE HEART OF JAZZ

Steve Wilson

John Pizzarelli

Branford Marsalis Quartet

Paquito D'Rivera

Sunday, February 15 | 3:00 p.m.

Orrin Evans

Sponsored by Heart of Jazz Foundation

Thursday, February 26 | 7:30 p.m.

Branford Marsalis Quartet *

Sunday, March 8 | 3:00 p.m.

Steve Wilson with the William Paterson University Jazz Orchestra

Sunday, March 29 | 3:00 p.m.

John Pizzarelli

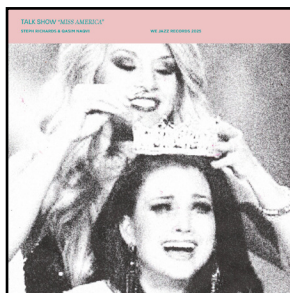
Sponsored by the Woody Shapiro Endowment

Sunday, May 3 | 3:00 p.m.

Paquito D'Rivera with the William Paterson Latin Jazz Ensemble

Sittin' In Meet-the-Artist one hour before performance | *Post-show Q&A

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"Miss America"

Talk Show (Steph Richards/Qasim Naqvi) (We Jazz)
by Bill Meyer

Talk Show is the duo of trumpeter Steph Richards and drummer-electronic musician Qasim Naqvi. The pairing might be called a reduction, since the two musicians have worked together in more expansive settings for years, ever since they first met at CalArts in 2008. Their earlier collaborative experiences with theater, dance and animation inform Talk Show's multimedia performances, which ponder how the mundane debasement of 1990s daytime TV prophesied our current national nightmare. "Miss America" further narrows Talk Show's focus to just the music. The five-track vinyl LP (also available as a download) was recorded live in the studio, and joint crediting of the compositions suggests that they were spontaneously created. It certainly sounds that way given the music's frequent appearance of parallel development.

On "Royalties", Richards relies heavily on unconventional techniques, gargling and huffing breath-sized chunks of sound while Naqvi's sticks skitter lightly over drums. Their parts fit together, but also sound like each could stand on its own. The material changes but the dynamic is the same on "Mom's Night Out", as Naqvi's spare full-kit perambulations coexist with Richards' plump parps and abraded strips of sound. A spatial quality emerges on the title piece, with long trumpet tones seeming to call loudly from a distance to quiet, close-mic'd bells, which persists on "Soft As a Rock", where the insectoid twitter of Naqvi's synthesizer seems to converse with the trumpeter's decaying lines, like pond dwellers exchanging observations with wildlife on the shore. Their playing becomes more interdependent on the closer, "Death Bed", as long horn tones layer with sustained drum skin groans, and synthetic resonations melt into trumpet cries like a simmering stew.

This record serves effectively to document the duo's musical language. But their videos, which are easily found on YouTube, make a stronger case that Naqvi and Richards' work has its greatest effect when they incorporate other media.

For more info visit wejazzrecords.bandcamp.com. The album release concert is at Roulette Feb. 26. See Calendar.



The Shadow of Your Smile
Chad LB (Bandstand Presents)
by Scott Yanow

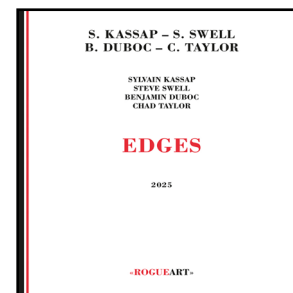
Chad Lefkowitz-Brown, who goes by the name of Chad LB, is a tenor saxophonist with a big sound of his own. Technically skilled, he puts plenty of passion into each note, which keeps him in demand for both jazz and pop assignments. In addition to his own

albums, he has recorded with Arturo O'Farrill's Afro-Latin Jazz Orchestra, Chris Botti and Benny Benack III, among others. His forceful and assertive style, which is both soulful and adventurous, is directly in the spotlight throughout his latest, *The Shadow of Your Smile*. He is joined by an excellent trio comprised of Liya Grigoryan (piano), Ben Tiberio (bass) and Mike Piolet (drums), and though there are occasional brief solos from the impressive pianist, this is very much the leader's show.

The album's seven selections are drawn from a wide variety of sources. The opener, "It Could Happen to You", is the album's most straight-ahead jazz performance with the tenor saxophonist effortlessly playing heated double-time runs. Next is a mostly unrecognizable version of Eric Clapton's "Layla", which is given a funky groove that one could imagine Eddie Harris playing over. Chad LB caresses the title track's melody for two choruses and then, after a quietly creative piano solo, makes a particularly passionate statement while keeping the melody in mind. "Change the World" (another Clapton song) has a simple theme that the quartet gives a musically funky rendition. The addition of a string quartet: Francesca Dardani and Tiffany Weiss (violins), Tia Allen (viola) and Sasha Ono (cello), doubles the size of the group on Bach's "Ave Maria", giving the music a mellow foundation behind the saxophonist's intense playing. On the Grover Washington Jr. hit "Just the Two of Us", the leader plays some explosive ideas, filled with sheets of sound that almost sound soulful. The album closes with The Platters' "Only You" taken at a patient pace, with the tenor saxophonist preaching the melody, building to an exciting, bluesy climax.

All in all, *The Shadow of Your Smile* makes for a stimulating showcase for Chad LB.

For more info visit bandstandfoundation.com. Chad LB is at Birdland Feb. 17-21. See Calendar.



Edges
Sylvain Kassap, Steve Swell, Benjamin Duboc,
Chad Taylor (RogueArt)
by David Cristol

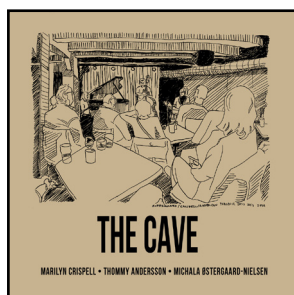
The association of Frenchmen Sylvain Kassap (clarinet) and Benjamin Duboc (bass) with Americans Steve Swell (trombone) and Chad Taylor (drums) stemmed from Kassap's wish to work with the trombonist—and the feeling was mutual. All members of this group have several albums on the French RogueArt label, Swell the most with 11 titles. Kassap, a steady presence on Europe's improvised music, jazz and contemporary classical scenes for decades, has worked with an endless list of collaborators, including Sam Rivers, Nicole Mitchell, Michel Portal, Anthony Ortega, Hamid Drake and Luc Ferrari. As a composer of film soundtracks and researcher of traditional Turkish music, the clarinetist can also be heard on two recently-reissued albums from the early '80s by L'Intercommunal Free Dance Music Orchestra.

Edges was recorded in 2023, augmented by live dates in Marseille and Paris. The selections are jazz-informed, improvised music with left-leaning inclinations and techniques. This does not necessarily mean chaos: there is a constant attention to form, but the quartet audibly steers clear of conventions and expectations. Still, the overall result is that everything

seems to flow naturally and logically. Swell's previously written "Texture #3" and "#7", with included fits and starts, are reworked for the occasion. The trombonist also includes "Periscope", a tribute to the late clarinetist Perry Robinson (1938-2018), on which Taylor features a gently-vibrating mbira (the metal-keyed, traditional African thumb piano). Two collective improvisations, "919" and "991" (named after prime numbers) are interspersed between the compositions, one of which features Duboc's muttering, unintelligible imprecations. Kassap's signature tune, "Crinière" (previously heard on 2022's *Octobres*) and the wickedly driving rhythm section on "2 L8 4 U", weave a flying carpet for reeds and brass to fly and display no end of impish phrasing.

Enhanced by excellent recording quality, the life-affirming mood of *Edges* is sure to lift listeners' spirits.

For more info visit roguart.com. Steve Swell is at Downtown Music Gallery Feb. 3 and Nublu Feb. 12, 19, 26. See Calendar.



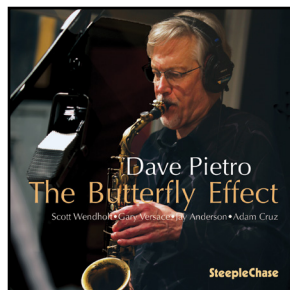
The Cave
Marilyn Crispell, Thommy Andersson,
Michala Østergaard-Nielsen (ILK Music)
by John Sharpe

Danish drummer Michala Østergaard-Nielsen has introduced her leadership debut, *The Cave*, through a pianist's touch: indeed Marilyn Crispell's exquisitely-shaped opening to the title cut quickly establishes the governing tone. Swedish bassist Thommy Andersson completes the threesome, which came together in 2022. Together they take the forward-focused egalitarian template pioneered by Bill Evans and Paul Bley, but dial up the melodicism a notch further. Recorded near the end of the trio's inaugural tour, the album captures a group thoroughly attuned to both each other and the drummer's concept of spacious extemporization within understated but gorgeous frames. An animating force, Crispell imbues her artistry with an emotionally-drenched luminosity that elevates even the simplest ideas. Although she first gained wider renown as a member of Anthony Braxton's '80s quartet, she later supplemented the exploratory flights with a fierce balladic intensity, which proves ideally matched to Østergaard-Nielsen's writing. Paul Motian looms as a likely touchstone in the drummer's personal pantheon, and like him she exhibits a super sensitive feel and a propensity to reduce her presence, but maximize her impact. Andersson complements both collaborators, possessed of an assertive woody tone and an innate folk-inflected lyricism, which places him firmly in the lineage of fellow Swedish bass masters Anders Jormin and Palle Danielsson.

Across six charts and two improvisations, Østergaard-Nielsen allows great exposure. The longest track, and in some ways the quintessence of the program, "My Spirit Heart", showcases first Andersson's stealthy creeping resonance, before yielding to Crispell's rippling, cascading shimmer, all set within a languidly melancholic design. Nothing here strains for effect. On "Into The Light", an unchanging pizzicato throb serves as backdrop to the pianist's staccato droplets, which are seamlessly replaced midway through by the music box sonorities of Østergaard-Nielsen's vibraphone. The drummer

returns to mallets again for a reverb-cloaked lead-in to the final "A Smile of a Butterfly", another lovely line where the bassist figures prominently. The drummer's lone solo is the tinkling percussive haze of "Improv #2", but her imprint nonetheless pervades every corner of this finely-crafted program.

For more info visit ilkmusic.com. Marilyn Crispell is at Village Vanguard Feb. 11-16 (with Trio Tapestry). See Calendar.



The Butterfly Effect
Dave Pietro (SteepleChase)
by Ken Dryden

Alto saxophonist Dave Pietro's magical sound is matched by his skill as an inventive composer and arranger. The veteran jazz educator is an alumnus of North Texas State University and NYU, the latter where he is now Director of Jazz Studies, while his impressive resume includes long stints with the Maria Schneider Orchestra, Toshiko Akiyoshi Orchestra, Gil Evans Project and Darcy James Argue's Secret Society. It isn't surprising that many of his recordings as a leader have been released by European labels, given his popularity from touring there regularly.

The Butterfly Effect, Pietro's second album for Denmark's SteepleChase, features Scott Wendholt (trumpet), Gary Versace (piano), Jay Anderson (bass) and Adam Cruz (drums). Given that he is such a prolific composer, new and original works make up most of this release, including the title track on which the saxophonist's intricate, melancholy melody reveals new facets with each chorus, seemingly explaining with music how a promising situation unfolded into disappointment. "Mr. Breitenfeld" (sans Wendholt) is an obvious tribute to the late great Dave Brubeck alto saxophonist Paul Desmond (Breitenfeld was Desmond's surname at birth); the light-hearted, upbeat song suggests the mood of Brubeck's "In Your Own Sweet Way" without being a contrafact of it, as Pietro captures the essence of Desmond in his witty solo. The full quintet is featured in "Idle Tears", a bittersweet ballad spotlighting Anderson's introspective, spacious bass playing. None of the three pop tunes arranged by the leader are typically played in a jazz setting today, though each of the composers has regularly had music adapted into jazz settings. Burt Bacharach's essentially jazz-based "Promises, Promises" was written for the 1968 Broadway musical adaptation of the film *The Apartment*. Pietro's scoring is fairly straight ahead, showcasing himself and Wendholt at a bright tempo that crackles with energy. With the trumpeter out, the saxophonist interprets Joni Mitchell's "Free Man in Paris" in a jaunty, strutting manner that is interactive with the rhythm section, including Versace's sublime piano performance. Stevie Wonder's "Taboo to Love" is another quartet performance, highlighted by Pietro's emotional alto saxophone yearning for a love that was lost.

The Butterfly Effect will likely provoke listeners to investigate the rest of Dave Pietro's discography with great interest.

For more info visit steeplechase.dk. Pietro is at Birdland Feb. 3-7 (with Maria Schneider Orchestra) and Dizzy's Club Feb. 10 (with NYU Wayne Shorter Ensemble). See Calendar.



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