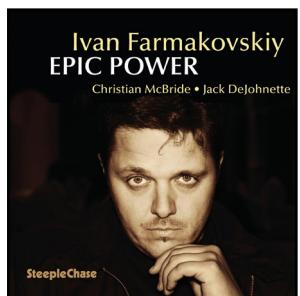


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Epic Power
Ivan Farmakovskiy, Christian McBride,
Jack DeJohnette (SteepleChase)
by Jeff Cebulski

The Russia-born, bred and raised-on-American-jazz, pianist Ivan Farmakovskiy was a big deal in the late '90s and early 2000s. Mixing deft keyboard clarity with impressive inventiveness, Farmakovskiy won the 1997 Europe Jazz Contest in Belgium, played in a number of ensembles and orchestras (including a quartet with the late Benny Golson and expatriate trumpeter Valery Ponomarev), and then traveled to NYC in 2008 to record *Next To The Shadow*. That debut album included hard and post bop selections performed by a quintet that included countryman, saxophonist Igor Butman, trumpeter Ryan

Kisor, bassist Ugonna Okegwo and drummer Gene Jackson. His sophomore effort soon followed in 2010 with *The Way Home* (Butman Music), a Russian quartet effort with American drummer Donald Edwards.

Epic Power, a trio session recorded that same year as his second album, has only just recently emerged on SteepleChase. Somehow it had remained in the vaults. The question is why, given that Farmakovskiy's top-tier rhythm team consisted of renowned bassist Christian McBride and the recently-deceased Master of drums, **Jack DeJohnette (1942-2025)**, whose history itself spanned generations, with work ranging from Charles Lloyd, Bill Evans, Miles Davis, Joe Henderson, Wayne Shorter and Keith Jarrett to John Abercrombie, Joanne Brackeen, Pat Metheny, Gonzalo Rubalcaba, et al. Based on the sterling results, as if there was any doubt, this formidable duo came through, providing the classic bop-disciple with spirited, professional support through the album's nine selections, including originals, derivations of Russian folk tunes, plus a song from The Beatles. That synergy becomes evident right away on "Soul Inside Out", a hard bop excursion that features the great DeJohnette in fills and a robust drum solo during Farmakovskiy's Bud Powell-like expressions. The ballad, "The Day Before", is typical of the pianist-leader's arrangements, starting quietly

and building up along the way, with McBride having a typically-melodic solo turn. "Conciliation" follows, a waltz that has nifty runs tossed around. The pianist's stylistic breadth is revealed on "Orange", a calypso-ish tune that includes another masterful DeJohnette break. "And I Love Her" (Paul McCartney), covered by many, gets an even-slower treatment than Shirley Horn's lyric-twisted version, but smolders as much. "Professor" is a New Orleans-style treat, with Professor Longhair the obvious object of respect.

Farmakovskiy has since moved to Italy, and has only recorded once since his 2010 sessions, which was in 2014 as a member of Russian saxophonist Serge Golovnya's quintet (*Touching the Sky*, Butman Music). One can find some contemporary live ensemble performances on YouTube, but in the absence of more, *Epic Power* thus becomes the most accessible recorded testimony to his prowess, blessed by two of America's great jazz artists. We can thank Nils Winther and SteepleChase not only for reintroducing Farmakovskiy, but also for reminding us just how powerful Jack DeJohnette was before his passing on Oct. 26 last year at age 83: the G.O.A.T. to many critics and fans, he never phoned it in.

For more info visit steeplechase.dk



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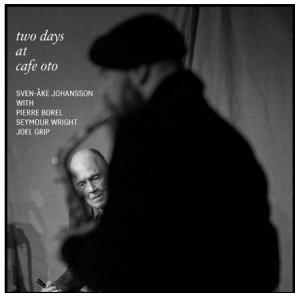


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Two Days at Café OTO
Sven-Åke Johansson (Otoroku)
by John Sharpe

Even though recorded at age 82, a little over a year before his Jun. 15 death last year, *Two Days at Café OTO* captures the Swedish, Berlin-based drummer **Sven-Åke Johansson (1943-2025)** in undiminished exploratory form. A pivotal presence in European free improvisation since the '60s, Johansson is known not only for his work with Peter Brötzmann—most notably on *For Adolphe Sax* and *Machine Gun*—but also for his wide-ranging conceptual projects, from “Concert for 12 Tractors” to “MM schäumend: Overture for 15 Handheld Fire Extinguishers”. But none of these works disguise the fact of Johansson’s highly-attuned sensibilities for improvised music, heard throughout this double-album documenting a short residency at the titular venue. Two of the most adventurous contemporary alto saxophonists, Pierre Borel (Die Hochstapler, Umlaut Big Band) and Seymour Wright (لچم [Ahmed]), join him, along with Ahmed stalwart and co-founder of Umlaut Records, bassist Joel Grip. Across four lengthy excursions and one shorter outing, in both trio and quartet permutations, the principals develop an elastic conversational dynamic, favoring motion and inquiry over climax or closure.

Johansson’s drumming relies on pared-down rudiments—a kick-drum thump, a hi-hat zap, a brush of snare—deployed with purposeful spacing that subtly steers the ensemble. Wright specializes in pithy, textural alto exclamations, willfully abrasive and raw, while Borel traces springy lines, often trading in fragments that evoke bebop, Monk and Eric Dolphy, among others. The music’s most bracing stretches occur when both saxophonists engage in prolonged, back-and-forth invention, reshaping snippets of jazz vocabulary into wiry, kinetic exchanges, particularly on the third and fifth pieces (the pieces are simply numbered with the names of the participants appended). Grip binds the ensemble with a firm, yet flexible pulse, responding to Johansson’s minimalism with grounded, economical figures. Johansson also turns to accordion during parts of the performance, prompting some of the set’s more atmospheric moments, as on the fourth track where his cascading patterns, bowed bass and Borel’s breathy saxophone converge in a spare reverie before the music fractures again into stop-start motion. Ultimately, what emerges is less a late-career summation than a reminder that Johansson’s imagination never stopped seeking new terms for engagement.

For more info visit otoroku.bandcamp.com



Portrait of Sheila (Blue Note Tone Poet)
Sheila Jordan
by Ken Dryden

Sheila Jordan (1928-2025) passed away last year on

Aug. 11, a few months shy of turning 97 years young. She was singing from her early youth and although she was a jazz fan, her unusual approach to singing scared off many record labels and tested club owners’ patience. Jordan was not only driven and willing to go where the music inspired her, but in that dynamic was never one to fall into predictable routines.

Her landmark debut album, *Portrait of Sheila*, has certainly stood the test of time since its 1963 release, in no small part due to Jordan’s fresh approaches, adventurous spirit, emotional delivery and courage to stick to her guns as to how she wanted to interpret the music. This recent 180g vinyl reissue—part of Blue Note’s limited, deluxe edition, Tone Poet series—restores the warmth of the original sessions in a superb Kevin Gray mastering. The session’s set list, which blends standards, then-recent compositions and jazz tunes, would eventually become classics for jazz vocalists globally. Her band—veteran Barry Galbraith (guitar), the young Steve Swallow (bass) and Denzil Best (drums)—prove sensitive to Jordan’s free-spirited singing. Her playful take of “Dat Dere” (Bobby Timmons), adding Oscar Brown Jr.’s timeless lyric, was influenced by raising her young daughter, Tracey, and features Swallow as her sole accompanist, a setting she continued to explore throughout her career. Jordan’s emotional rendition of “Willow Weep for Me” brings out the loneliness of this oft-performed chestnut.

By the end of her career, as she continued to regularly perform into 2025, Jordan was widely acknowledged as a major jazz artist, having been honored with numerous awards, plus a gargantuan following of admiring fellow vocalists and fans. Her intimate 2022 studio session, *Portrait Now*, with frequent collaborators, Roni Ben-Hur (guitar) and Harvie S (bass), is likely her recording swan song. Yet, the ravages of age seem to have had little effect. Buoyed by the bassist’s creative accompaniment, she scats up a storm in a breezy rendition of “The Touch of Your Lips”, brings out the hopefulness in “You Must Believe in Spring” and reprises the wistfulness of “Willow Weep for Me” six decades after her recording debut. Jordan doesn’t merely rely on well-known repertoire either, as she also can be heard exploring Kenny Dorham’s lesser known “Fair Weather” (featuring his lyrics). Of course, Jordan had to include one of her vocalese numbers, performing a mini-autobiography and inspired scat in “Relaxing at the Camarillo” [sic]. This relaxed date serves as the perfect finale to Sheila Jordan’s storied career.

For more info visit dottimerecords.com



Reflections - Facing South
(featuring Eddie Palmieri, Luques Curtis)
Conrad Herwig (Savant)
by George Kanzler

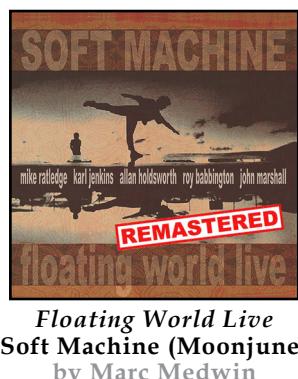
Of *Reflections - Facing South*, Conrad Herwig writes of this unique, sans percussion-instrument album: “This is basically a reflection of a lifetime of work. And there are a lot of reflections here—of jazz, of salsa, of Afro-Cuban, Afro-Caribbean, and South America.” He goes on to say that it was his idea but “Eddie [Palmieri] never does anything without playing a huge role in shaping it into something beautiful.” **Eddie Palmieri (1936-2025)**, the composer-pianist-

bandleader who passed away Aug. 6 at age 88, before this album was released, was nothing less than a titan of salsa, Afro-Caribbean music and jazz. *Reflections* (recorded in 2020) is unique in both his and Herwig's discographies, eccentrically but brilliantly creating a program of Afro-Latin jazz without any percussion instruments or trumpets. The band: just Herwig's trombone, Palmieri's piano and Luques Curtis' bass.

The unique set-up allows Palmieri to remind us that the piano, too, is a percussion instrument. He uses it to create the Afro-Caribbean rhythms usually expounded by various drums, bells and cymbals. He also riffs on the piano, as horn sections would in a salsa band, and on "C'mon (Mi Guajira)" he incorporates tombao and montuño figures usually supplied by percussion and horn sections. Throughout the album, Palmieri's comping combines jazz-style accompaniment with Afro-Latin rhythms, while the solid bottom of the beat is firmly established by Curtis' rock-solid bass playing. As a soloist, the pianist contrasts markedly with Herwig. The trombonist favors a fluid, bold, open tone and his jazz solos flow melodically. Palmieri, conversely, brings the avant-leaning jazz modernism exemplified by pianists such as Thelonious Monk, McCoy Tyner (he's cited both as influences) as well as touches of Cecil Taylor, into his solos. The Monk debt is unmistakable on the opening of "Augmented Blues", but then he retreats into Afro-Latin clavé behind Herwig's lead and solo, before he begins his solo with dissonant notes from his right hand and rolling chords from the left, all becoming disjointed before resolving back into clavé. Yet Palmieri can also match the trombonist's lyricism with his own, bringing subtlety and grace to solos on the ballads "Cuando se Habla Amor" and "Monica".

Reflections - Facing South was a one-off, an eccentric but triumphant reimagining of the essence of Latin jazz in a chamber jazz setting and perhaps Palmieri's final recording.

For more info visit jazzdepot.com. "The Eddie Palmieri Experience" is at Jazz at Lincoln Center Jan. 9 (part of Unity Jazz Festival). See Calendar.



Floating World Live
Soft Machine (Moonjune)
by Marc Medwin

Founding member of Soft Machine, English keyboardist and flute player **Mike Ratledge (1942-2025)** passed away last year on Feb. 5, at the age of 81. In 1976, he was the longest-tenured Soft and was also the final original member to have left the group. As annotator Sid Smith observes, *Floating World Live* captures Soft Machine in transformation, one moment of so many for a band always intent on metamorphosis. Yet, recorded one year prior to Ratledge's departure, this 1975 concert broadcast (now lovingly remastered by Mark Wingfield) also demonstrates an astonishing unity of purpose.

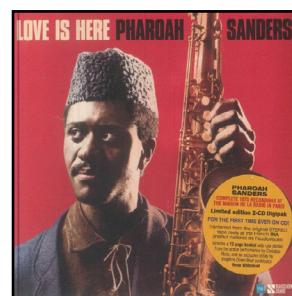
In typical Softs fashion for the period, the Bremen performance comprises a connected suite. The album opens with one of the group's most synergistic concert-captures as they "float" a breathtaking version of the titular piece. Ratledge and Karl Jenkins share keyboard duties as the music rises, spectral, capped by Alan Holdsworth's guitar sustains, John Marshall's gong invocation and sizzling cymbals,

all of which leads directly into a scorching version of "Bundles". If Holdsworth is afforded much of the solo space, including an exquisite violin contribution to "The Man Who Waved at Trains", the others are given spots that demonstrate the group's increasing sonic diversity. Roy Babbington's effected bass narrates its way through "Eaeling Comedy" and "J.S.M." at ten minutes and change gives John Marshall room to stretch out, his timbrally melodic drum kit in full effect. Ratledge crafts an astonishing synthesizer solo, building it from a few motives as he would later construct portions of his soundtrack to *Riddles of the Sphinx*.

Unlike that "minimalist" score, "North Point" uses repetition and expansion to push against tonal boundaries until all that remains are squalls of varying speed and register, though a logical progression governs the whole. Marshall joins when Ratledge's solo fades out, and the group slams into the modally-charged, felicitous riffage of "Hazard Profile". Even to posit that the album is a winning mixture of classic Softs fusion and then-current experimentalism would be to render it glib beyond reason. A testament to those now gone, especially to the late Ratledge, the concert also demonstrates just how flexible the band could be. They blurred the boundaries they originally erected, and, as always, Moonjune presents an exemplary package in glorious sonics.

This is Soft Machine at its finest and sounds like no one else.

For more info visit moonjune.com



Love Is Here
Pharoah Sanders (Transversales-Elemental Music)
by Pierre Crépon

Drummer **Greg Bandy (1949-2025)**, perhaps best-known for his association with saxophonists Pharoah Sanders and Gary Bartz, passed away last year on May 23, a few months after turning 76. Here he appears on one of what are many albums with his former employer, Sanders. And though this release represents new old-Pharoah Sanders, it is not necessarily *brand-new*.

Love Is Here (The Complete Paris ORTF Recordings) is an expanded, complete edition of a 1975 French radio concert released on LP by the Transversales label in 2020 as *Live in Paris* (1975). This current, limited edition, 180g double album edition (also available as a 2-CD set), however, adds one full extra hour of music. The re-release of this material in such short order calls for attention to details. Packaging-wise, there's not too much to remark: veteran writer Kevin Whitehead's liner notes provide contextualization and quotes from the concert's pianist, Harlem native Danny Mixon, and although the cover inexplicably uses a mid '60s image of the bandleader, the booklet does include a few nice photos from the actual concert. The main thing here is therefore the music.

As Whitehead points out, the concert comes from an under-documented period in Sanders' career. The tenor saxophonist made his most impactful leader dates during his work with the Impulse! label (1966-73). It was often written, back then, that the quality of his output had starkly declined during those years. He only recorded again in 1976, taping *Pharoah* (Bandy's second-ever recording), an India

Navigation LP that achieved cult status many years later and reissued in 2023 as a boxed set by Luaka Bop. This 1975 Paris concert predates *Pharoah* as Bandy's first-ever recording with Sanders, but seems to confirm that the saxophonist had indeed hit a creative block. The original material ranges from his certified classic, the crowd-pleaser "The Creator Has a Master Plan" to "Love Is Everywhere", from his downward Impulse! period, to the title track, which he would later record with singer Phyllis Hyman for *Love Will Find A Way* (Arista), a largely decried crossover album. Several John Coltrane-related tunes are included, as is a somewhat generic vocalized blues. Length is a dominant aspect. Bassist Calvin Hill joins Mixon and Bandy and all solo extensively, while allowing the laid-back grooves and minimal vamps to stretch.

The fact that editing often was an issue for Sanders is on plain display here. Unfortunately, the overlong selections highlight the safety-net devices and gimmicks Sanders used while waiting for the right inspiration. Something is not working, and the single-disc *Transversales Disques* LP arguably makes a smoother listen. But there is a catch: the one standout from this 1975 Paris tape is the use of the radio studio's pipe organ on "The Creator Has a Master Plan". The instrument was large enough to eventually be moved to a cathedral, and it adds unexpectedly great texture to a well-known classic, including Bandy's crescendoing, rhythmic undercurrent and interplay. Attentive listening to this new edition reveals that several minutes of this highlight's ending had been deftly edited out of the *Transversales* disc. Take your pick.

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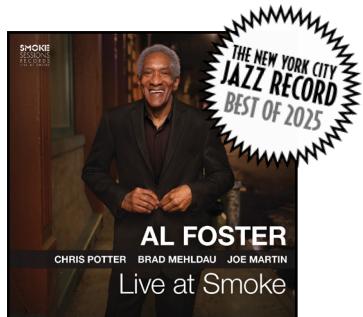
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Live at Smoke
Al Foster (Smoke Sessions)
by Thomas Conrad

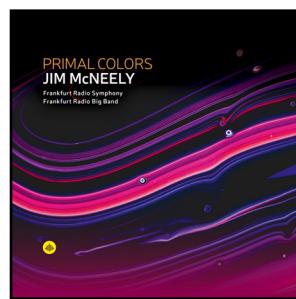
Drummer Al Foster (1943-2025) was money. Miles Davis knew it, as did Sonny Rollins, both with whom Foster played. Add to this pedigree, the likes of Herbie Hancock, Joe Henderson, McCoy Tyner, Cedar Walton and Kenny Barron. All hired Foster to play drums in their bands because, as Davis put it, "Al had such a groove and he would just lay it right in there." Foster made very few records under his own name. But toward the end of his long life, his last albums were three fine recordings, all released on the Smoke Sessions label, two of which feature saxophonist Chris Potter. The most recent of these is the double-album *Live at Smoke*. It turns out to be the most valuable of the three because it is the only one recorded live in the New York club (that gives the label its name), because Brad Mehldau is on it, and because it is Foster's swan song. The occasion was a birthday celebration for the drummer, with bassist Joe Martin rounding out the quartet. But a scant four months after it was recorded in January 2025, Foster passed away at age 82 on May 28, before the music could be released.

This album bursts with life in its nine tracks. Some

of the tunes have been familiar for decades, but the band here sounds excited to rediscover them. Wayne Shorter's "E.S.P." is a famously ambiguous form, with shifting harmonies, hovering melodies and few clear resolutions. Potter attacks it, transforming its mysteries into bold declarations. Rollins' "Pent-Up House", on the other hand, is devoid of ambiguity. It is built on ass-kicking syncopations. Potter smokes it. There are two stunning songbook ballads. Potter renders the melody of "Old Folks" in trills and passionate *a capella* cadenzas, and Mehldau reimagines that melody in sudden single-note stabs. The pianist is also riveting on "Everything Happens to Me". It would be hard to overstate how much it elevates a band to put Potter and Mehldau in the tenor saxophone and piano chairs.

As for Foster, he is the soul of the swinging energy that lifts this music. He gives himself many solos, which are always clever, purposeful and concise. He even solos on "Old Folks", slowing down and choosing his notes as carefully as any player of a melodic instrument. In *Live at Smoke*, Al Foster has left behind a parting gift. It will make us miss him all the more.

For more info visit smokesessionsrecords.com



Primal Colors
Jim McNeely (Challenge)
by Ken Dryden

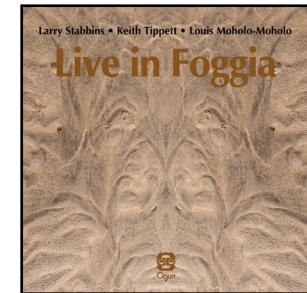
A master of many skills, Jim McNeely (1949-2025) was known equally as a brilliant pianist, soloist, bandleader, sideman, composer and arranger. Like valve trombonist-pianist, arranger and composer Bob Brookmeyer, some of McNeely's best work is heard in music that he wrote for large European ensembles, several of which he conducted over decades. Aside from the Vanguard Jazz Orchestra, opportunities for McNeely to record his larger scale works in the US were limited, whereas several European orchestras had the funding and ability to record them. The suite *Primal Colors*—commissioned by German broadcaster Hessischer Rundfunk (hr)—is finally receiving its premiere release, long after it was debuted in 2007 (recorded for broadcast in 2009), with the composer conducting the Frankfurt Radio Symphony and Frankfurt Radio Big Band, as heard on this album.

This is McNeely's long-hidden masterpiece, with nine sections and five movements connected by four interludes (all named for the colors that inspired the composer). The overall impression of the music feels as if it was created as a soundtrack for a film in the composer's mind. "Black" especially sounds like a theme for a movie thriller, serving as an ominous introduction with its eerie strings, leading into a tense surge of brass with the punch of the rhythm section, highlighted by soprano saxophonist Hans-Dieter Sauerborn's darting, intriguing solo. The multi-faceted "Yellow" waltz showcases McNeely's creative integration of big band and orchestra, blending lush sections with a touch of drama, spotlighting pianist Peter Reiter and flugelhornist Axel Schlosser. "Red" has an upbeat, layered structure, but with its share of musical detours, featuring an edgy solo by guitarist Martin Scales. Conveying the image of the hopes for a new day at sunrise, "Blue" spotlights tenor saxophonist Julian Argüelles. The composer's explosive finale, "White", is introduced by Jean Paul Höchstädt's extended drum solo; he remains prominent throughout

the movement, leading into a whirlwind of swirling themes backing tenor saxophonist Tony Lakatos' searing solo.

While this album is not Jim McNeely's final recording, it adds an important chapter to the distinctive musical legacy he has left us since his Sep. 26 passing last year at the age of 76.

For more info visit challengerecords.com



Live In Foggia
Larry Stabbins, Keith Tippett, Louis Moholo-Moholo
(Ogun)
by John Sharpe

This trio of Larry Stabbins, Keith Tippett and Louis Moholo-Moholo (1940-2025) approaches free jazz as *freedom to* call on whatever takes its fancy, rather than *freedom from* accepted norms, be they harmony, meter or song. That was as true on the unit's only other album, *Tern* (FMP, 1983), as it is now on *Live In Foggia*, an archival recording from a short Italian tour in 1985. As a consequence, legendary South African drummer Moholo-Moholo, and the British pair of pianist Tippett and reedman Stabbins, draw on the entirety of their long cross-curricular histories in a transcendent set.

"The Greatest Service" begins with Tippett and Stabbins outlining an aching, majestic theme, familiar from the pianist's 1978 large ensemble magnum opus *Ark: Frames (Music for an Imaginary Film)*, before stretching into a lop where consonance and squall rub shoulders as equals. Also immediately apparent, the underpinning shimmering cymbal work affirms Moholo-Moholo's remarkable sensitivity, something well known to collaborators as diverse as pianist Marilyn Crispell, trumpeter Wadada Leo Smith and saxophonist Evan Parker. Belying a reputation built on the indisputable power and volcanic drive that fuelled the legendary Blue Notes and the Brotherhood of Breath (both with Chris McGregor), he proves as adept at muted undercurrents and timbral provocation as surging tattoos.

Across two expansive improvisations, the trio's responsiveness becomes its defining signature. In the ensuing volatile exchanges, Tippett seems almost willfully mercurial, as if trying out a panoply of different gambits in rapid succession for what best fits the moment. As funky riffs, folky airs, joyous South African kwela rhythms, classical flourishes and prepared piano clanking speed by, Moholo-Moholo and Stabbins variously accentuate or contrast, with the reedman's ear for a catchy extemporized melody especially prominent. Structural echoes thread through the performance. That opening theme recurs, once instrumentally as might be expected, but also once, strikingly, as a vocal refrain hummed by Tippett, with Moholo-Moholo not harmonizing but offering discordant counterpoint, before Stabbins' flute playing continues into a mysterious section of whispers and taps.

Alternately dizzying and mesmerizing, the album stands as a revealing portrait of an under-documented band operating with spontaneity, daring and purpose. It also serves as a reminder of the greatness of two improvising masters who have passed away: Keith Tippett (d. 2020) and Moholo-Moholo, who died last year on Jun. 13 at age 85.

For more info visit ogunrecording.co.uk

SHEILA JORDAN (Nov. 18, 1928 – Aug. 11, 2025)



On Feb. 14th, jazz legend Sheila Jordan released *Portrait Now* on the preeminent jazz label Dot Time Records. The title was inspired by *Portrait of Sheila*, Jordan's debut album for Blue Note Records (1962).

The album features Jordan on vocals, Roni Ben-Hur on guitar and Harvie S on bass. Their chemistry on this recording is undeniable.

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STEVE CROPPER (Oct. 21, 1941 – Dec. 3, 2025) Nicknamed “The Colonel,” the Dora, MO-born session guitarist, record producer and composer died at age 84. Cropper acquired his first guitar at 14, and was influenced by guitarists Chuck Berry and Chet Atkins. He was best known for early work with the Stax Records house band, including with Booker T. & the M.G.’s (his 1962 recording debut was the group’s *Green Onions*), and later the Blues Brothers band. He began his career with the Royal Spades, and for Stax played and co-wrote hits such as “(Sittin’ On) the Dock of the Bay”, “Knock on Wood” and “In the Midnight Hour”. His songs were covered by the likes of Ella Fitzgerald, Count Basie, Al Hirt, Chico O’Farrill, Mark Murphy, George Benson and many others. His session work included Etta James, Ramsey Lewis and The Manhattan Transfer. A two-time GRAMMY winner with multiple nominations, he was also inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1992 (as a member of Booker T. & the M.G.’s), the Songwriters Hall of Fame in 2005 and ranked as 36 on *Rolling Stone*’s 100 greatest guitarists.

RAÚL DA GAMA (Apr. 24, 1955 – Dec. 14, 2025) The writer, poet, editor and critic died at age 70. Born into a musical family, his father being a Brazilian violão player and his mother a pianist and vocalist, Da Gama began musical studies at age five at Trinity College of Music in London. In 1974 he began exploring the work of Charles Mingus, which culminated 15 years later with his book, *The Unfinished Score – The Complete Works of Charles Mingus*. He authored the column “Highly Opinionated” for *allaboutjazz.com*, contributed reviews to *Coda* and *DownBeat* and wrote liner notes for releases on hatHUT, Cuneiform, HighNote, Fundacja Słuchaj! and other labels.

J. RICHARD DUNSCOMB (unknown – Nov. 12, 2025) The jazz pedagog, educator and prominent historian, passed away in his 80s. He was a Professor Emeritus of Music at Columbia College Chicago (where he chaired the Music Department), was elected to the International Association of Jazz Educators (IAJE) Hall of Fame and received the Medal of Honor from The Midwest Clinic (he was an active clinician and adjudicator). He also advocated April’s Jazz Appreciation Month as a means to introduce traditional music students to new sounds and approaches to music.

ANDRÉ GERAISATI (Sep. 7, 1951 – Nov. 19, 2025) The Brazilian guitarist-composer, whose work blended jazz with Brazilian folk elements, passed away at age 74. He gained recognition in the ’70s as a founder of the guitar trio Grupo D’Alma. From 1982-85, Geraissati collaborated extensively with Egberto Gismonti, and later explored Americana roots music and Brazilian sambista rhythms with open-tuned Eastern music. His GRAMMY-nominated 1991 album *Brazilian Images* featured Paul Horn. Other collaborations included Bobby McFerrin and Wynton Marsalis.

GORDON GOODWIN (Dec. 30, 1954 – Dec. 8, 2025) The Wichita, KS-born multi-instrumentalist, bandleader, composer, arranger and conductor, best known as the leader of Gordon Goodwin’s Big Phat Band, died in LA from pancreatic cancer at age 70. Goodwin composed his first big band chart in 7th grade and would later work as a musician at Disneyland, which led to opportunities to compose and arrange for Disney and Warner Brothers TV and film. He won four GRAMMYS among his 25 nominations, and hosted the nationally syndicated jazz radio program *Phat Tracks with Gordon Goodwin*. Among many collaborations were Ray Charles, Christina Aguilera, Johnny Mathis, John Williams, Natalie Cole, David Foster, Sarah Vaughan, Mel Tormé and Quincy Jones. Goodwin was also a sideman with Bill Perkins, Gil Scott-Heron, Louie Bellson, Jack Sheldon, Count Basie Orchestra, Dave Koz and David Benoit.

MANFRED HERING (Jun. 3 1939 – Nov. 29, 2025)

The German saxophonist, who was prominent in the free improvisation scene of the former East Germany, died at age 86. He studied mathematics before teaching himself to play saxophone and then formally studied alto saxophone and clarinet at the Musikhochschule Friedrichshain. He was a member of the Gerhard-Stein-Combo, played in various groups led by Manfred Schulze (including Schulze Bläserquintett until his passing), worked with guitarist Joe Sachse in the mid ’70s and toured with the Leipzig band Osiris. He also performed in West Germany with the Ulrich Gumpert Workshop Band. Hering formed his trio in the ’80s and led the Jazzorchester der DDR (Jazz Orchestra of the GDR). Collaborators included Irène Schweizer, Peter Kowald, John Tchicai, Rüdiger Carl, Paul Rutherford, Gunter “Baby” Sommer, Hannes Zerbe and others.

PAUL KENDALL (Feb. 3, 1961 – Dec. 4, 2025) The multi-woodwind musician, composer and producer died at age 64. Kendall studied clarinet in the 4th grade, baritone in 9th, adding flute, tenor and alto in college. Early in his career, he was a member of big bands led by (Makanda) Ken McIntyre and Charli Persip, and while living in New York, led groups at notable venues such as Birdland, The Angry Squire and Cleopatra’s Needle. Kendall also taught woodwinds at various levels from elementary school to college, including seven years in New York State public schools. Prior to his passing, Kendall was a member of the Skip Wilkins Quintet, the Tony Gairo/Gary Rissmiller Big Band and Mark Hamza’s Great Swamp Blues Band. He had albums on Cats Paws, Sea Breeze Jazz, Brownstone and ZOHO.

JAN KLING (Sep. 17, 1940 – Nov. 24, 2025) The Swedish multi-instrumentalist passed away at age 85. He worked in pop and rock and was well-known as a musician with Swedish pop band ABBA. He was also a prolific session musician, working with the Swedish group Tages on their album *Studio* and later with the power trio November. Further collaborations included Lars Samuelson, Dynamite Brass, Jan Johansson, Jukka Tolonen, Monica Zetterlund, Lars Sjösten, Lennart Åberg, Elisabeth Lundberg, Nannie Porres, Rune Gustafsson and Anders Berglund.

LOIS MARTIN (Oct. 29, 1952 – Nov. 19, 2025) The versatile jazz and contemporary music violinist, who was principal viola chair of the Stamford (CT) Symphony, died at age 73. Co-founder of the Atlantic Quartet, she also performed with numerous new-music ensembles in New York. Martin’s collaborations included Ornette Coleman, Steve Reich, Esperanza Spalding, Shirley Bassey, Elton John, Paul Simon, Fred Hersch, Joe Lovano, Pat Metheny, John Zorn, Bucky Pizzarelli, Ryan Truesdell, Brian Landrus and Brad Mehldau.

MARILYN MAZUR (Jan. 8, 1955 – Dec. 12, 2025) The largely self-taught, NYC-born percussionist-vocalist, who relocated to Denmark at age six with her Polish father and African-American mother, died at age 70. Early on she studied classical piano and dance and later classical percussion at the Royal Danish Academy of Music, then transitioned into jazz, working with various groups, including Six Winds with Alex Riel, Pierre Dørge’s New Jungle Orchestra and Palle Mikkelborg (which led to Miles Davis’ album *Aura* and subsequent touring with Davis). She later became a member of Jan Garbarek’s group for 14 years. Her approach to percussion included an array of instruments from various cultures, including African lamellophones, Udu clay pot drums, congas, kalimba, tuned gongs, Norwegian goat horn and the waterphone. Formed in 2015, her all-Scandinavian band Shamania consisted of avant garde female musicians. She also co-led the 13-piece Maluba Orchestra (founded in 2017), worked with Gil Evans and Wayne Shorter, and had her own

or collaborative albums since the ’80s on labels such as CBS, Rosen, Olufsen, Dacapo, Stunt, ECM, Storyville, RareNoise, Loveland and Clap Your Hands. Mazur’s credits include Ketil Bjørnstad, Benjamin Koppel, Peter Kowald, Niels-Henning Ørsted Pedersen, Lotte Anker, Jean-Michel Pilc, Charlie Mariano, Martin Lutz, Aarhus Jazz Orchestra, Cæcilie Norby, Lis Wessberg, Laura Toxvaerd, Jakob Bro and many others.

ERNEST MCCARTY, JR. (Mar. 26, 1941 – Dec. 11, 2025) Born in South Chicago, the bassist, who began on piano, then switched to bass in DuSable High School, died at age 84. McCarty was especially known for his seven-year tenure with pianist Erroll Garner (from 1970 until Garner’s death in 1977). He served as music director for Gloria Gaynor and Odetta, performed with Oscar Brown Jr., Ike and Tina Turner and Sonny Stitt, and was also a member of the Jazzmen band. Additionally, he was a prolific playwright, having written or co-written over 25 plays and musicals, including *Dinah! Queen of the Blues*, about Dinah Washington. After moving to Pittsburgh in 1993 he served as the artistic director for New Horizon Theater (1994-2008). McCarty had a pair of 2010s albums on Blujazz alongside work with Ella Fitzgerald, Sarah Vaughan and others.

BILLY MITCHELL (1940 – Dec. 2, 2025) The guitarist, who passed away at age 85, was known for his work with Galt MacDermot (the composer associated with the rock musical *Hair*), as well as Bernard “Pretty” Purdie, Roy Ayers and Tyrone Washington.

POPS MOHAMED (Dec. 10, 1949 – Dec. 4, 2025) Born Ismail Mohamed-Jan in South Africa, the multi-instrumentalist died a few days short of his 76th birthday. He mastered the African mouth bow, bird whistle, berimbau, didgeridoo, guitar, keyboard, kora and thumb piano (mbira). Early exposure to countrymen Abdullah Ibrahim and Kippie Moeketsi shaped his music as did his mixed heritage – his father of Portuguese and Indian descent and his mother of Xhosa and Khoisan ancestry. He started his first band, The Valiants, at age 14. His band Black Disco, formed with Basil “Manenberg” Coetzee and Sipho Gumede, released compositions that blended soul, funk and jazz. As an activist for social justice, Mohamed later formed Movement in the City, a project he described as “code for fighting the system.” Mohamed worked with Khoisan musicians and communities, frequently visiting them in the Kalahari Desert to play music. In his diverse recording career, he produced over 20 albums on Kalamazoo, B&W Music, M.E.L.T. 2000, The Sun and Sheer Sound.

DEMIAN RICHARDSON (Nov. 15, 1970 – Dec. 10, 2025) The trumpeter, known for his work in free jazz and avant garde music, died at age 55. His collaborations included Dominic Duval, Jimmy Bennington, Jay Rosen and Daniel Carter. He had his own or collaborative albums on 577 Records and CIMP and was a member of Big Group and Wake Up! (with Carter).

PHIL UPCHURCH (Jul. 19, 1941 – Nov. 23, 2025) The self-taught guitarist and bass guitarist, who emerged from Chicago’s electric blues and R&B scene, died at age 84. Upchurch’s jazz guitarist father introduced him to music by giving him a ukulele at age 13. As a session musician, he appeared on more than 1,000 recordings and released over 20 albums as a solo artist or bandleader. The guitarist’s “You Can’t Sit Down”, from his 1960 recording debut, sold over a million copies. Credits include Cannonball Adderley, Dorothy Ashby, George Benson, Bob Dylan, Dizzy Gillespie, Donny Hathaway, John Lee Hooker, Michael Jackson, Chaka Khan, Hubert Laws, Curtis Mayfield, Jack McDuff, Jimmy Smith and Cat Stevens. Upchurch had albums on labels such as Boyd, United Artists, Milestone, Cadet, Blue Thumb, Kudu, Paddle Wheel, Jam, BGM Jazz, Wondervision and others.