

## UNEARTHED GEM

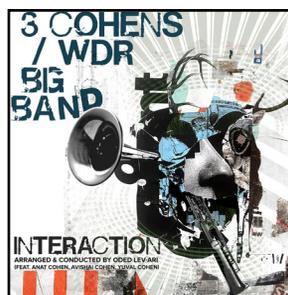


*Live in Helsinki 1963-1965*  
**Ella Fitzgerald (The Lost Recordings)**  
by Ken Dryden

By the time Ella Fitzgerald reached her mid-40s, the masterful jazz vocalist was a superstar. Fitzgerald took no time to captivate her audiences as she explored the Great American Songbook, jazz favorites and even current chart-topping pop songs. This three-LP collection, *Live in Helsinki 1963-1965*, of previously unissued concerts in the Finnish capital, sourced from the Finnish Broadcasting Company, documents two evenings from her European tours. The mono sound on these 180gr vinyl pressings is crystal clear, with Fitzgerald in top form, backed by two sympathetic bands. The earlier tour, heard on the first two discs, features Tommy Flanagan (piano), Les Spann (guitar), Jim Hughart (bass) and Gus Johnson (drums). The setlist for this concert is fairly typical, including standards from the '30s and '40s, earlier hits for the singer including the inevitable "Mack the Knife" (with her hilarious Louis Armstrong impression) and also a scat-filled rendition of "How High the Moon" that detours into numerous other oldies along the way. Fitzgerald also delivers a rousing, upbeat interpretation of Ray Charles' "Hallelujah, I Love Her So" and a swaying treatment of Antônio Carlos Jobim's "Desafinado" that benefits from the accents of Spann's guitar playing.

The 1965 group is similar, though omitting guitar and replacing bassist Hughart with Keter Betts. It seems like Fitzgerald had a fairly-fixed set in mind, as her Hamburg concert, recorded just a few days later, is almost identical to this release. The chemistry is still at a high level, though the surprising opener is "Walk Right In", a '30s song that also has been covered in folk and rock. The singer gives it her own twist with a boisterous interpretation fueled by Flanagan's strong support. Fitzgerald's hip setting of "That Old Black Magic" had been a fan favorite since her first recording of the tune and this passionate version meets her high standards. This was followed by heartfelt settings of ballads "Body and Soul" and "Here's That Rainy Day". Ella Fitzgerald was always attuned to what was happening on rock radio and she wasn't afraid to tackle some of the hits. While some were occasionally misfires and none of them remained in the repertoire for the long run, her swinging setting of The Beatles' "A Hard Day's Night" pleases her audience and stands the test of time. It was "Mack the Knife", though, that sent the crowd home on a high note.

For more info visit [thelostrecordings.store](http://thelostrecordings.store). Ella Fitzgerald tributes this month include "Savoy Ballroom Centennial Tribute #1: Ella Fitzgerald" (featuring Charenée Wade) at Interchurch Center Mar. 11 (presented by Jazzmobile) and "Ella & The Duke" (featuring Sandra St. Victor) at The Appel Room Mar. 18. See Calendar.

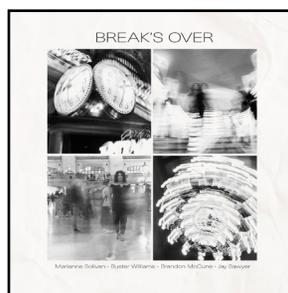


*Interaction*  
**3 Cohens/WDR Big Band (Anzic)**  
by Scott Yanow

Clarinetist Anat Cohen (also a superior tenor-saxophonist) and her two brothers, Yuval (soprano) and Avishai (trumpet), have all had significant careers as leaders. However, it is particularly special when they join together as the 3 Cohens. Needless to say, though there is no connection between them and the original Four Cohens, which 130 years ago launched the career of George M. Cohan, it is a pity that the current group has never added the "other" Avishai (no relation), a notable bassist, to form the new Four Cohens!

Joking aside, *Interaction* is the eighth recording by the 3 Cohens since 2003 and this is their second with a large orchestra—in this case the Cologne, Germany-based 16-piece WDR Big Band. The siblings are featured performing the arrangements of Oded Lev-Ari (also co-founder and director of the Anzic label) at a wide-ranging 2022 concert that is filled with variety, contrasting complex ballads ("Trills & Thrills", "Naked Truth Pt. 2") with exuberant jams. One of the album's highlights is their rendition of the Dixieland standard "Tiger Rag", which the 3 Cohens had recorded before with a small group, and utilizing Middle Eastern scales with hot jazz. While this new version takes a bit of time to get going, it has its charm and does finally swing hard. Other album and performance highlights include the infectious "Footsteps & Smiles" with its clarinet-soprano tradeoff, "Shufra de Shula" and Yuval Cohen's tricky melody line on "Catch of The Day". The WDR Big Band plays with enthusiasm and typical brilliance throughout, though some of their soloists go uncredited. Most noteworthy is a performance *sans* orchestra or even rhythm section: on Gerry Mulligan's "Festive Minor", which the 3 Cohens had recorded previously (*Tightrope*, 2013). The three again perform this as a horn trio, weaving lines around each other in joyful fashion. Someday they should record a full album this way, just for the fun of it. Their *Interaction* is a worthy addition to the 3 Cohens legacy.

For more info visit [anzicrecords.com](http://anzicrecords.com). Anat Cohen is at *Birdland* Mar. 10-14. She is also at *Jazz Forum* (Tarrytown, NY) Mar. 6-7. See Calendar and 100 Miles Out.



*Break's Over*  
**Marianne Solivan (Imani)**  
by Marilyn Lester

With the release of her sixth album, vocalist Marianne Solivan presents a novel approach to her hard swing style, choosing phrasing that's vocalese-adjacent and centering on her own creative abilities as a composer and lyricist. Backed by a simpatico trio—Brandon McCune (piano), Buster Williams (bass) and Jay

Sawyer (drums)—who firmly have her back, she, in turn, allows the players plenty of space. Probably the most interesting example of Solivan's phrasing choices is a tune that's been in her repertoire and to which she's applied varying attitudes: Richard Rodgers' "Look No Further", written for a 1962 Broadway outing, *No Strings*, the first musical he composed after the death of his long-time collaborator, Oscar Hammerstein II. It's a message number, and with its *a capella* start, and lovely piano feature midway in, she soundly delivers the heartfelt goods in her strong alto to midrange soprano.

Always a thoughtful singer, *Break's Over* reveals Solivan as a poet of ability. Her lyrics, set to several tunes on the album, reflect particular insights. The balladic "Drifting Through this Maze (Zingaro)", written by Antônio Carlos Jobim in 1965, has had a strange history of versions, in titling and lyrics both Portuguese and English. The tune is one Solivan has been singing over most of her career and her lyrics, which focus on the meaning of the title, unspool with depth, assuring her a place as a strong storyteller. For "We Must Love" (based on Randy Weston's "Little Niles"), a pensive and free piano intro gives way to the singer's slow vocal, picking up with the trio gathering steam, Sawyer creating a drum sequence of rolling thunder until Solivan turns down the boil and the piece resolves and bookends where it began. Flipping the scenario, she wrote the evocative music of "First Desire" to a poem ruminating on the nature of love by Spanish great, Federico García Lorca. The album's eight tracks are bookended by tunes in which Solivan had no creative writing hand: "Open the Door" by a deep Solivan inspiration, Betty Carter, and "The Other Half Of Me" (Jack Lawrence, Stan Freeman).

*Break's Over* follows pandemic time and the vocalist's 2024 album *Re-Entry*, reflecting Solivan's fierce intent to fully get back to music and her career. Like Dolly Levi, of *Hello!* fame, it's so good to have her back where she belongs.

For more info visit [imanirecords.bandcamp.com/artists](http://imanirecords.bandcamp.com/artists). Solivan is at *Tavern on George* (New Brunswick, NJ) Mar. 12. See 100 Miles Out.



*head shot shy*  
**Teresa Riemann (Fort Evil Fruit)**  
*Ratsnake*  
**Chloe Kim (Kou)**  
by Kurt Gottschalk

The percussion family tree is a big one, including any manner of struck and smacked metallophones and membranophones, chordophones and idiophones—many quite melodic. But there's something uniquely fascinating about a player who finds musicality in the old kit drums. The Berlin-based Teresa Riemann and Australian Chloe Kim both compose for the traps, albeit in very different styles.

Riemann writes songs for drums and voice (and for piano and voice under the moniker "A tender kiss into the void") that fire on multiple cylinders. *head shot shy* is a powerful, nine-song set landing between angst and despair. Her voice is effective, convincing to the character of her songs, sung in English, French and German; her playing is intriguing, confident, thoughtful and complex. The songs seem to be single, in-studio takes, exhibiting focus and control. (The mix is the biggest clue here. The vocals are slightly off-mic, presumably keeping the drums from pushing into the red.) They almost seem as if they could go