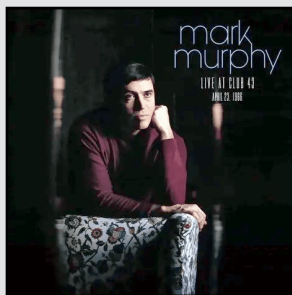


## UNEARTHED GEM



**Live at Club 43**  
**Mark Murphy (Jazz Rewind-Hindsight)**  
by Ori Dagan

Considered by some to be one of the very best male jazz singers of his generation, Mark Murphy (1932-2015) could also be described as an admirably dedicated, endlessly innovative, underrated genius. Far deeper than the surface of his oceanic baritone, this restless spirit was constantly exploring a song's possibilities. On over 50 recordings, Murphy's output provides a roller coaster of highs and lows. At his best, he was a sensitive yet fearless improviser who left listeners breathless. At his worst, he struck out despite a mighty swing, particularly early on when he was still finding his voice.

The Syracuse-born singer, who was himself a proficient piano player, relocated to London in 1963 after working steadily in New York and Los Angeles. On April 23, 1966, he performed at Manchester's Club 43 with Brits Joe Palin (piano), Alan Cooper (bass) and Tony Oxley (drums), the results which can now be heard in this

first-time, archival release: *Live at Club 43* (April 23, 1966). Arrangements are few in the loose set; the somewhat underwhelming instrumental solos might lead listeners to believe they may have been sight-read. Scat singing enthusiasts will enjoy the wordless escapades which separate Murphy from his crooner counterparts. He takes his choruses confidently, with highlights including the modal magic of "Milestones" and a fast flight through "A Foggy Day", which the audience eats up like Yorkshire pudding. Surprisingly the most straight-ahead tune that night in Manchester was the vocalese classic "Twisted" (by Wardell Gray with Annie Ross lyrics). Eschewing scat on this take, the singer's tasteful phrasing is richly satisfying, ending on the crunchiest bebop note. Sentimental classics "Tenderly" and "Gone with the Wind" are imaginatively phrased, but in both cases Murphy ultimately falls into the trap of going over the top, thereby losing the lyric. This is a startling contrast to his later studio work, where he gave sensitive, restrained ballad performances, as early as 1968's *Midnight Mood* (a great place to start for those unfamiliar with this artist). For all we know, Murphy might have been tipsy that night, which would explain the lyric flubbing on tunes he had previously recorded. He recovered well, showman that he was, but one can't help but wonder how he would have felt about this performance.

While *Live at Club 43* does not rank with Murphy's finest work, it is still highly recommended to fans of this eternally hip artist whose creativity knew no bounds.

For more info visit [hindsightrecords.com](http://hindsightrecords.com)



**Mama Killa**  
*Alive Alone, Alive Together*  
**Ava Mendoza (Burning Ambulance)**  
by Daniel A. Brown

Guitarist-vocalist Ava Mendoza offers two releases emphasizing her rightful place and continuing ascent as an innovative, adaptive and skillful contemporary musician. Classically trained, she also studied under the influential, experimental guitarist Fred Frith. Her playing crosses genres, blending elements of free jazz, blues, noise and experimental rock, among others. Still in her early forties, Mendoza's work with like-minded creatives, including (among others) Nels Cline, Ikue Mori, Bill Orcutt, William Parker and Jamaaladeen Tacuma, in addition to groups Unnatural Ways and Mendoza Hoff Revels, reveals the varied hues and divergent musical situations she is drawn into.

The avant-ferocity of *Mama Killa*, released last year, features Mendoza grinding out eight tracks with gabby fluke-mogul (violin) and Carolina Pérez (drums). The album's title and thematic content draws from Andean mythology, referencing icons such as Mama Killa (the Incan moon goddess), Mama Huaco (an Incan warrior princess) and Mama Coca (goddess of health and the coca leaf). The music respectfully explores these traditions, using improvisation to reflect the complexity of pre-Colombian Andean

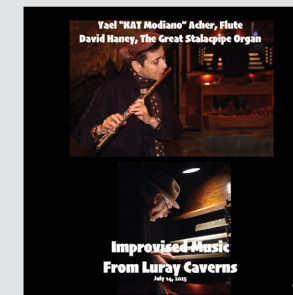
society. Album opener "Puma Punku" is a quick-moving molten slab of Mendoza's droning, over-driven guitar, Pérez' walloping drums and fluke-mogul's heavily-effected strings, generating and collapsing tornadoes of riffs and beats. "We Will Be Millions" is an update and reboot of the past forty years of aggro-guitar experimentation, Mendoza and fluke-mogul trading vibrato trills, Pérez dropping impressionistic beats. "Amazing Graces" holds the blues with one finger, dissipating in a tumult of staccato bowed-and-plucked strings.

Released this month, *Alive Alone, Alive Together* is a collection of eight live tracks recorded at four performances last year (the Summer Bummer Festival in Antwerp, plus solo performances from the US and Italy). Four tracks feature Mendoza solo, while the remaining are in collaboration with drummer Hamid Drake. The material includes new compositions along with reconceived and transformed versions of compositions previously found on her prior studio albums *The Circular Train* and *New Spells*. The expansive web of "Cypress Crossing" spreads tendrils of psych-leaning roots music, fractalized through echo and Mendoza pushing bluesy forms into soft splinters. Mendoza and Drake glide "Dust from the Mines" from hazy glimmers into deeper waters. Album closer "New Ghosts" is an 11-minute jam with Drake that slowly builds into the guitarist's accelerating esoteric arpeggios, the drummer matching her travels into welcomed, strange sonic terrain.

Both albums are impressive releases, both on-point for Mendoza's refreshing agenda on modern guitar moves.

For more info visit [burningambulancemusic.bandcamp.com](http://burningambulancemusic.bandcamp.com)

## ON SCREEN



**Journey to Luray**  
**David Haney/Yael Acher "KAT" Modiano**  
(Cadence Media)  
by Paul Gaita

A popular tourist spot in West Virginia's Blue Ridge Mountains, Luray Caverns is also home to the Great Stalacpipe Organ, a confluence of geology, acoustics and electrical engineering, a sprawling instrument that essentially uses the cave's natural geological formations to create low tones that resemble that of marimbas. Much of the Great Stalacpipe Organ's unique sound is thus formed by natural acoustics over 3.5 acres of the cave itself; the result is, as one might expect, haunting and ethereal. Recordings heretofore have been limited largely to those by its creator Leland W. Sprinkle, a mathematician and electronics scientist who conceived the idea in the early '50s, and later, organist Monte Maxwell. But pianist and *Cadence* magazine publisher David Haney and flutist Yael Acher "KAT" Modiano were inspired to venture into the Caverns' depths to

perform an improvised duet on what is acknowledged as the largest instrument in the world.

The 40-minute *Journey to Luray* is a two-part documentary, with the first a composite of video footage, still images by photographer Patrick Haney, and audio from Haney and Modiano's appearance on Dave Sewelson's "Music For a Free World" radio program on 91.1 WEMU-FM (broadcast out of Jersey City, NJ). Narration (rather flat), by Ava Martin, provides some context into the Caverns' and Organ's history and the performance itself, but the second half is the duet in its entirety. Haney's photographs again provide the images, which are aesthetically pleasing but also somewhat static (actual footage may have been difficult, given the location, but it's missed). Modiano's flute playing dominates the recording; her playing is pensive and evocative of Eastern modalities before moving into more freeform territory as the piece reaches its conclusion.

The Great Stalacpipe Organ is harder to hear in the documentary, but what is notable are the gentle sonic tides produced by Haney's playing and the soft, rumbling clatter of the mallets that strike the stalactites to produce the Organ's tones. The overall effect is similar to one of Moondog's longer creations, or the work of avant gardist Harry Partch: meditative, somewhat earthy and unearthly at the same time—and wholly unique.

For more info visit [cadencejazzworld.com](http://cadencejazzworld.com). Acher is at Intercession Church Jun. 7, Barzakh Cafe Jun. 20 and Dutch Baby Jun. 24. See Calendar.

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30

# VISION 30

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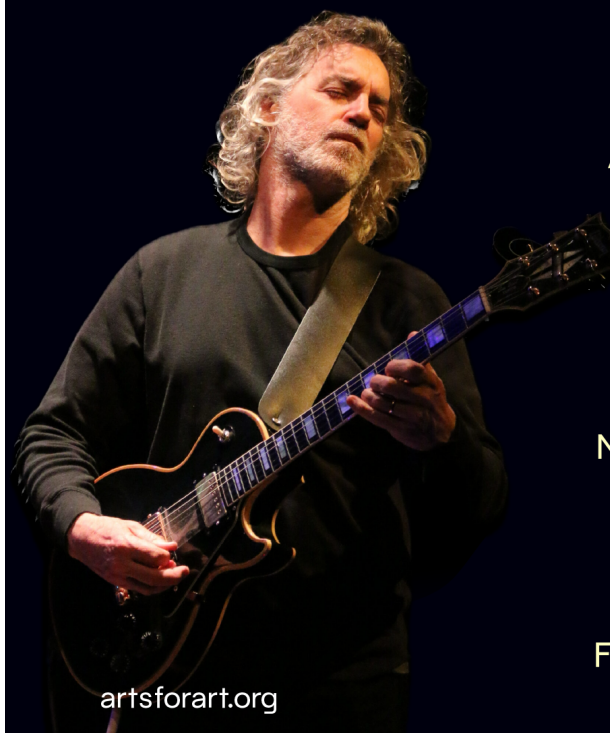
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**April Varner**



July 16  
**Tyler Bassett**



July 23  
**Benny Benack III**



July 30  
**Camille Thurman**



August 6  
**Eitan Kenner**



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**June Cavlan**



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