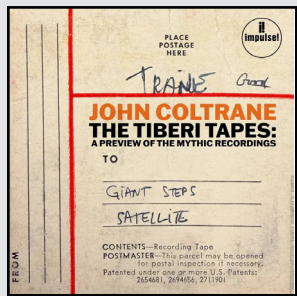


## DROP THE NEEDLE



### The Tiberi Tapes: A Preview of the Mythic Recordings John Coltrane Quartet (Impulse!) by Marc Medwin

Freedom comes in what Rahsaan Roland Kirk called “bright moments,” and in this Record Store Day special of the legendary Frank Tiberi tapes of John Coltrane, soon to be released in more complete form, we have two of those extended moments. This LP offers only an “early 1960s” recording date, but if the “probable” presences of bassist Steve Davis and drummer Pete La Roca, as stated on the album cover, are correct, we can place the quartet recordings with some certainty in the summer of 1960. I’m skeptical, but currently accepting. Falling far short of high fidelity, for Coltrane aficionados this release is pure gold. Coltrane enthusiasts likely know that professor Tiberi (a reeds master, and still teaching at Berklee College of Music at age 97) recorded him, mostly in New York and Philadelphia, between 1960-65, but until now, only a lucky few have heard the tapes.

But we can watch master Coltrane in evolution. A 13-minute version of his “Giant Steps” is presented complete and in the best sound possible. Immediately following the ascending four-note sequences in his solo (beginning at the four-minute mark), he pushes at the tenor’s upper limits, a boundary-breaker repeated throughout an increasingly blistering and atomistic feature. Freedom unfolds in these energetic fragments. Pianist McCoy Tyner’s playing is no less inspired or diverse than Coltrane’s, and his solo on “Satellite”, the LP’s second side, may be even better. The rhythm section, whomever it comprises, is burning. Check out their sizzling syncopations and astonishing interplay beginning at 8:17; they raise and lower the temperature by degrees right up until the crash at 10:34, Coltrane entering hot on its heels. Here, the drummer’s fills, timbre and timing sound more like Elvin Jones than La Roca, though the fidelity is an impediment. As the temperature rises, Coltrane is all over the horn, making the leap to the Village Vanguard performances of late 1961 seem much smaller.

Energy and environment imbue these fly-on-the-wall documents, rendering them invaluable. For anyone in search of those luminous instants of nascent freedom, not to mention those who have been waiting decades to hear them, these revelations—in sync with 2026’s Coltrane centennial celebrations—can’t come a moment too soon.

For more info visit [recordstoreday.com](http://recordstoreday.com). Coltrane tributes this month include “John Coltrane Centennial: Celebrating Jimmy Garrison” at Shapeshifter Lab Jun. 20, and Park Slope Jun. 21 (part of 7th Heaven Street Festival). Isaiah Collier “Plays Coltrane” is at Blue Note Jun. 16-17 (part of Blue Note Jazz Festival). “Celebrating Miles Davis and John Coltrane” is at Metropolitan Museum of Art Jun. 18 (with Logan Richardson). “Celebrating John Coltrane’s Centennial” is at Chris’ Jazz Café (Philadelphia, PA) Jun. 27 (with Tim Brey). See Calendar and 100 Miles Out.



### Directions & Expressions Blue Moods (Posi-Tone) 100 Miles for Miles Davis Jason Miles (Lightyear) by Jeff Cebulski

Being that 2026 is Miles Davis’ centennial (the trumpeter would have turned 100 on May 26), one can continue to expect a wide range of artists expressing their connection to and appreciation of the iconic jazz hero. Recent albums by the Posi-Tone label’s Blue Moods ensemble and the veteran keyboardist-producer Jason Miles each represent different celebratory approaches over such a wide spectrum of tributes.

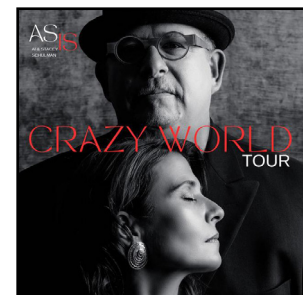
In 2022 Posi-Tone gathered several in-house musicians to begin a series of albums focusing on compositions of well-known jazz artists, including Charles Mingus (*Myth & Wisdom*, 2022), Duke Pearson (*Swing & Soul*, 2024) and Freddie Hubbard (*Force & Grace*, 2025). This year’s *Directions & Expressions* consists of the group’s core membership: Diego Rivera (tenor, soprano), Art Hirahara (piano), Boris Kozlov (bass) and Vinnie Sperrazza (drums). A broad selection of Miles compositions are explored, from his “cool” days to his later fusion efforts. The arrangements, enhanced by the addition of Eli Howell (trombone) and Behn Gillece (vibraphone), fall squarely in the post-bop vein while proving that the central structures of Miles’ music can be fulcrums for worthy interpretations. Among the ten cuts, “Boplicity” receives a quasi-Latin swing treatment à la Cal Tjader, with Gillece’s vibraphone dancing atop the horns, while the always-solid Kozlov walks and bops through the choruses, including a fine solo from Rivera. “Somethin’ Else” is finessed into a blues that would fit with John Coltrane’s *Blue Train*. The more modal “Circle”, with its loosely-losing theme, is roped back into a bluesier ballad mode, while “Stuff” retains the original’s funk as the whole ensemble steps into the flow, augmented by Hirahara’s harmonic comping that borrows more from Herbie Hancock’s earlier pre-Miles recordings. “Agitation” receives an aggressive tact that evinces the group’s broad competence, especially in the pairing of the vibraphonist and drummer, with Rivera adding an adroit, Wayne Shorter-ish solo. The ensemble also excels on “La Suite De Kilimanjaro”, involving pieced-together themes from Miles’ *Filles de Kilimanjaro* (Columbia, 1968).

Keyboardist Jason Miles is among the still-performing artists who once played with Davis. On his newly-released *100 Miles for Miles Davis*, instead of revisiting old tunes, the leader here arranged new compositions (recorded in Portugal, where he has resided the last four years) aimed at remembering his former colleague and employer. Given that Jason Miles accompanied Davis on four of his latter albums, the music here—performed by varying ensembles—reflects more of the fusion side of Davis’ career, with a contemporary bent that will certainly get the attention of “smooth” jazz aficionados. The important element here is the trumpet playing: Randy Brecker, Russell Gunn, Barry Danielian and Patches Stewart are each able to evoke memories of Davis without merely copying him. The title cut rocks forward, involving Brecker’s appropriately echoed horn bursts and the leader’s electric keyboards, with soulful input from alto saxophonist Ada Rovatti, as well as orchestrated effects. “The Girl With the Purple Hair” dances, Prince-like, in an arrangement not unlike something Quincy Jones might have constructed. Jason Miles’ shimmering keyboard work is juxtaposed with Vinnie Colaiuta’s deep, sumptuous drumming on “Malibu

Midnight Blue”. The tune most evocative of Davis, however, is a side-tribute to one of the trumpeter’s great loves, “Jeanne Moreau” (the legendary French actress, with whom Davis collaborated on the 1958 Louis Malle-directed film, *Ascenseur pour l’échafaud*). Stewart plays an excellent muted theme that, in the leader’s soulful arrangement, pairs the Davis of Paris with his later electric glory.

Miles Davis’ influence on at least four generations of musicians is well-documented, even before this year’s wide centennial celebrations, and these albums from Blue Moods and Jason Miles represent and manifest that influence in their *vive la différence* approaches.

For more info visit [lightyearentertainment.com](http://lightyearentertainment.com) and [posi-tone.com](http://posi-tone.com). Miles tributes this month include Gil Evans Orchestra (with Miles Evans) at Shapeshifter Lab Jun. 21. See Calendar.



### Crazy World As Is (Al & Stacey Schulman) (Nite Nite the Elephant Productions) by Marilyn Lester

Take the title at face value. Socially conscious husband and wife team—As Is—want you to know we are stronger and better together, and the message is delivered in their *Crazy World* via an eclectic mix of jazz vocalese, pop, Brazilian repertoire, soul and original material. Al Schulman (guitars) and Stacey Schulman (vocals) have aimed the 11 tracks of their new release as both a warning and a reassurance in striving for connection, shared experience and the power generated when artists and listeners meet honestly. The album isn’t a reflection of the times, but rather a response to them, they say. With James McKinney (keyboards), Corcoran Holt (bass) and Jeff “Tain” Watts (drums), additional collaborators include Kokayi, Dante Pope, Gil Goldstein, plus a Philadelphia-based string ensemble drawn from the city’s classical and chamber music community. Opener, “From This Very Moment On” has Cole Porter lyrics augmented by those of Stacey Schulman and Kokayi, who provide vocals, along with Dante Pope’s vocalese. A beatbox (Christylez Bacon) helps deliver pointed social commentary, riffing on the Porter melody with hip hop, soul, funk and rap-vocalese elements—performed with guitar forward.

As Is appeared at Chelsea Table + Stage (May 1), with the Schulmans working in a more simplified ensemble, rhythm format, beginning with a pared down “From This Very Moment On”. Performed in the dark, the following number represented the album’s two AI-worked tracks, which presented disruptive statements in “Children’s Games” (Antônio Carlos Jobim) and “PrAilude” (Stacey Schulman): works “born from both curiosity and unease” with Stacey’s narrative explaining that the AI was used as a tool, not a crutch. Jobim’s “Double Rainbow” was tapped on record and in concert as a folksy statement of something organic—the opposite of AI. Also drawn from the familiar and on the album, the concert version of “A House Is Not a Home” (Bacharach, David) was bluesy, filtered through Northern and Philadelphia Soul traditions, and Stacey scatting quotes from Sting’s “Fragile”. Concert closer was a reprise of “From This Very Moment On” with the appearance of Dante Pope’s rap contributions, making for a super energetic power statement of the song’s intention. The album