



**THELONIOUS MONK
BREMEN 1965**

THELONIOUS MONK piano
CHARLIE ROUSE tenor saxophone
LARRY GALES bass
BEN RILEY drums

SSC 1635 LP / AVAILABLE NOW
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The release of *Bremen 1965* finds the legend on his second tour to feature stops in Germany with his seasoned quartet featuring his longtime saxophone foil, Charlie Rouse, along with bassist Larry Gales and drummer Ben Riley. Bremen, Germany was the second stop on the quartet's world tour, which would include much of Europe, Australia, and Japan. The original master tape of the concert at the Sendesaal / Studio F was transferred to high resolution (24/96) files by Radio Bremen technical staff.



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Cellist **Tomeka Reid** illuminated the variegated hues of her creative palette during an early-April four-night residency at The Stone. The Hemphill Stringtet (Apr. 1)—a project Reid co-leads with Sam Bardfield (violin), plus Curtis Stewart (violin) and Stephanie Griffin (viola)—performs repertoire by World Saxophone Quartet co-founder Julius Hemphill. It turns out his WSQ compositions/arrangements for two altos, tenor and baritone work perfectly for this string quartet of two violins, viola and cello. The performances of “Ji-Ji Tune”, “R & B”, “Steppin’” and Billy Strayhorn’s “Lush Life” added new wrinkles to WSQ versions. Mid-set, Hemphill’s life partner Ursula Oppens (piano) joined on “One Atmosphere”, a tune he’d written for her. Stopped over the piano, her fingers, like long spider legs, danced daintily across the keys. Reid’s second night (Apr. 2) was of a completely different color: no tunes, arrangements, or plans—just a first-time free-improv session with James Brandon Lewis (tenor) and Pheeroan akLaff (drums). Not to imply all havoc was wreaked. Au contraire, Lewis and Reid’s comely mindssets insured there was always methodology behind the madness: motives were stated then developed, di- and tri- dialogues maintained, solo space apportioned, temporary time signatures established and later abandoned, B sections improvised to juxtapose A sections and calm stretches introduced between stormy ones. During one memorable episode, Reid created ethereal, multiphonic vibrations, using the butt of her bow like a dentist’s drill to bore into the cello fingerboard. — **Tom Greenland**



Tomeka Reid @The Stone at The New School

Knowing that too many chefs can spoil a dinner, in staging his *Miles Davis at 100*, pianist-arranger **John Beasley** deftly delegated musical tasks to a talented “cook staff.” The early set of the group’s penultimate night (Apr. 4) of a five-day run at Birdland, was a well-balanced nine-course meal, sampling Davis’ diverse career. Served fresh from the fingers of Beasley, Sean Jones (trumpet), Marcus Strickland (tenor), Kurt Rosenwinkel (guitar), Ben Williams (bass) and Terreon Gully (drums), for an hors d’œuvre, the sextet opened with a rapid romp over “Seven Steps to Heaven”, organized around the original recording’s catchy three-note riff, fired by incendiary trumpet, saxophone and guitar solos. “Teo” was the soup course, warmed by Strickland’s soulful tenor playing, flavored by Jones’ flamboyant high range, segueing finally into “Someday My Prince Will Come”. The appetizer, “Nefertiti”, was taken at a fast, swinging clip with short, round-robin solos, capped by “The Theme”. A cool-toned, adroitly orchestrated “Moon Dreams” (Chummy MacGregor, Johnny Mercer) was served for salad, followed by the main course, a medley of “Sanctuary” and “Fat Time”, showcasing Rosenwinkel’s shred-full lyricism over a wonky, J Dilla-esque beat. Strickland’s tasteful approach on “Iris” cleansed audience palates for a second main course, “Splatch”, another funk-fest enhanced by Jones’ zesty, muted trumpet. And for dessert, “Pinocchio” was arranged so that each soloist (tenor, trumpet, piano) improvised alone, then repeatedly cued the band in at varying tempos, Jones again displaying sterling chops. (TG)

The Atlanta-bred **Queen Esther**, a polymath rooted in the storytelling tradition of the Lowcountry, presented an ambitious song cycle, *All Cats Are Beautiful*, at Dizzy’s Club (Apr. 7), with music directed by project collaborator, trumpeter Wayne Tucker and his The Bad Moths band: Willerm Delisfort (piano), Raphael McGregor (pedal steel guitar), Dan Pappalardo (bass) and Anwar Marshall (drums). Rhythm tapper, AC Lincoln, added percussive commentary on several of the pieces, artfully interpreting the intent of the lyric in his movements. The program’s title is a riff on the anti-police slogan “All Cops Are Bastards” (ACAB), itself an acronym for various protest movements going back to the ‘20s. This iteration of ACAB focused on racial injustice and trauma, civil rights, police violence, fear and grief. Song styles were varied, from country, soul, jazz and blues, with Tucker providing musical commentary throughout, while the solid core of musicians delivered consistent support, occasionally in solo spotlights. The set opener, “Officer Friendly”, offered a positive statement that not all cops are bad, before moving into bad cop territory, with the work ending on the persistent fear of violence aimed at Blacks. Most of the songs were untitled, underscoring the disjointed through-line of the entire piece. In its current iteration, *All Cats Are Beautiful* reads like a work in progress, rather than an effective, cohesive social commentary with strong, inspiring statements. It needed more songs and less talk, and a “Mississippi Goddam” for sure. — **Marilyn Lester**



Queen Esther @Dizzy’s Club

In its uniformly, excellent programing, Jazz at Lincoln Center’s educational concert series, *Journey Through Jazz*, continued to be inspiring in its *Overtures to Africa*. Led by drummer Domo Branch, the **Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra**, in the intimate Appel Room (Apr. 10), carried on the weaning process of JALC without soon-to-retire Wynton Marsalis. On the table: how the rhythms and experiences of the African diaspora influenced jazz musician-composers. And as is the band’s style, there were features for all members. Representing Max Roach, “Freedom Day” (*We Insist! Freedom Now Suite*) featured vocalist Ekep Nkwelle. Charles Mingus’ scorching “Fables of Faubus”, a 1959 protest about Arkansas’ racist governor, featured enthusiastic vocals by trombonists Chris Crenshaw and Vincent Gardner. Dizzy Gillespie’s “Tin Tin Deo” spotlighted his strong attraction to Afro-Cuban and Afro-Caribbean influences, such as Mario Bauza and Chano Pozo. Although written by Cal Massey, “The Damned Don’t Cry” was chosen to represent John Coltrane, recorded on *Africa/Brass* during Coltrane’s experimental work with a large ensemble—and a big surprise: Gardner produced a tuba, blowing long, low tones (as Bill Barber did on the original session). And then there was Duke Ellington, who Branch noted was channeling Mother Africa from the start. Concert closer was “Afrique”, from *The Afro-Eurasian Eclipse*, written four years before Duke’s death. How appropriate that Duke’s music made the final, most important statement of the evening. (ML)

On an oddly chilly night just as everything was getting warmer, and while the pious were preparing for Easter or recovering from hefty Passover seders, dozens of young people hanging for drinks and the scene crowded Nublu 151 (Apr. 4) with hard bop visions flickering on every wall. Tenor saxophonist **James Brandon Lewis** took to the stage (as part of the three-week long “The Music of Now!” festival), warming up his trio over the hording noise, as if it wasn’t warm enough. Without warning, the group kicked into throbbing, accented long tones, very *A Love Supreme*, more flurrying exposition than prelude. “Alicia” electrified the space: from the downbeat the leader’s sheets of sound hovered over a medium funk beat. His jagged, bluesy phrases and wonderfully harsh repetitions were arguably more rock than we’ve heard from him before: apparently, his ongoing collaboration with The Messthetics has left an imprint. Still, Lewis never tires out. Neither does piston-like drummer Warren Trae Crudup III, perhaps the most muscular in today’s jazz, armed with heavy metal cymbals, explosive tom-toms and undeniable swing. By the time the trio got to “Apple Cores 1”, electric bassist Josh Werner’s reggae-powered line equally pushed and pulled the heartbeat, causing the saxophonist to conjure Coltrane and Pharoah Sanders in his solo, absolutely burning over the already enflamed rhythm section. There were few moments of pensive balladry this night, though “Five Spots of Mind and Feeling” may just qualify as one unique, downtown power ballad. — **John Pietaro**



James Brandon Lewis @Nublu 151

Jazz journalists often revel in citing the latest young lion, who, by press time, may have already reached rising star status. So is the case of alto saxophonist **Sarah Hanahan**. Her set at Zinc Bar (Apr. 10) baptized a new quartet, which embodied near perfection. The leader’s prolific solos extended tirelessly over numerous choruses and blue excursions, leaving listeners breathless. Hanahan, who also enjoys sharing the spotlight, welcomed solos by her bandmates, particularly guitarist Tony Davis, whose attack (more vertical than horizontal) dropped piano-like contrapuntal fills, chordal leads and rapid-fire picking as specters ranging from Chuck Wayne to Al DiMeola hovered just over stage right. Featured on Tadd Dameron’s “On a Misty Night”, he displayed lush chordal atmospherics and lead lines, with a solo segment of a hefty six or so choruses morphing strains of R&B into hard bop and classic jazz balladry. Bassist Charlie Lincoln’s solo on the same number burst out unexpectedly, then poured over the footlights, tossing rhythmically-accented long tones through melodic variations and pulse-shattering accents, reminiscent of a youthful Charlie Haden. And making his debut with Hanahan was Jared Spears (another young lion to be watched), whose crisp, rim-shot laden fills and galloping rhythms sparkled. All that, plus guest drummer Frederik Villmow of Cologne, who held the driver’s seat during Hanahan’s recent European tour, sat in on a bristling “I’ll Remember April” samba that pulsated for hours in our heads. (JP)

On a Saturday night (Apr. 11) on W. 46th Street, aka Restaurant Row, a brand-new room, Jazzcultural—the latest from Spike Wilner (Smalls, Mezzrow)—was already feeling like a neighborhood institution. Located in the former Swing 46 space, the 100-seat capacity, wood-paneled back room was sold out for both sets. A large portrait of pianist-educator Barry Harris (1929-2021), whose Jazz Cultural Theater inspired the venue’s name, presides over the bandstand. The occasion was **Gregory Hutchinson’s** release concert for his Miles Davis tribute album *Kind of Now* (Warner Music). The Brooklyn-born, now Italy-based drummer assembled first-call NYC replacements for his recording band and led loosely, calling audibles as he went. The program traced Davis’ career: Nicole Glover’s nimble tenor playing on “Ah-Leu-Cha” reached back to 1955, the first Miles Davis Quintet recording session; the effects-drenched guitar of Emmanuel Michael (who is on the album) in “Fall” summoned Pete Cosey’s alchemical electricity; “Fran-Dance” featured evocative piano playing from Christian Sands; Josh Evans (standing in for trumpeter Ambrose Akinmusire) walked Wayne Shorter’s “Orbits” out imaginatively before the band crashed in with Sands firing electronic chirps from his keyboard as the music pushed toward Davis’ modal, electric terrain. Anchored by bassist Larry Grenadier, Hutchinson’s drumming and program shed light on Miles’ full arc. The set closed with an eye to the cosmos: an audience singalong of the iconic bass figure from “Bitches Brew”, followed by a fleeting “Water Babies”, ending as if poised for liftoff. — **Ariella Stok**



Gregory Hutchinson @Jazzcultural

An announcement that NASA’s Artemis II had just returned safely from its moon voyage served as an unlikely prelude to The Jazz Gallery’s one-night benefit (Apr. 10): a first-time trio of **Ron Carter** (bass), **Bill Frisell** (guitar) and **Vijay Iyer** (piano). The sold-out room buzzed with the gravity of the intergenerational summit. But if the star power suggested a blast-off into space, instead the music floated weightless and dreamlike, as if already in space. Carter guided the set with subdued authority, his collaborators watching with reverence. His “United Blues”, a gently-probing statement of shared language, was expressive, rigorous and patient. Frisell and Iyer shaded the margins while the bassist, eyes closed, shaped a melodically supple solo that returned to the theme as if waking from a trance. A haunted diptych followed: “I’m So Lonesome I Could Cry”, drifting into Gershwin’s “My Man’s Gone Now”, rendered as a hushed lullaby. Then came a sequence of solos. Frisell’s tender take on Ellington-Strayhorn’s “Isfahan” held the room in suspension. Iyer revealed the architecture of Monk’s “Work” through rhythmic sleight of hand. Carter’s extended meditation on “Willow Weep for Me” was a masterclass—harmonics, percussive textures and left-hand pizzicato unfolding with orchestral breadth. Reuniting for “Alone Together”, the trio seemed to bend time itself, tapering to near silence as the bassist’s fingers traced phantom notes in the air. They closed with Lee Konitz’ “Subconscious-Lee”, their coiled lines tightening and dissolving in mutual admiration. (AS)

WHAT’S NEWS

As a “must” event for jazz students, educators, professionals, fans and enthusiasts—and anyone interested in exploring the unique pedagogical ideas of pianist Barry Harris (1929-2021)—the Spring/Summer 2026 **Barry Harris Workshop** is gearing up, starting this month, at The New School (and Lincoln Center), with the option of attending any one of the handful of scheduled workshops (May 3, 17, 31; June 14, 28), or all five. In addition to workshop programming, practice and rehearsal rooms will be available to all participants from 8 am to 6 pm each day. Additionally, early bird registration is available for the Barry Harris Institute of Jazz’ weeklong Summer Intensive (Jun. 22-26), which includes harmony masterclasses, improvisation workshops and singer sessions, culminating with a concert at Ernst C. Stiefel Hall. For more info visit barryharrisinstituteofjazz.org.

The Jazz Foundation of America’s (JFA) annual “**Great Night Gala**” (usually at The Apollo in Harlem, now under renovation) this year moves to midtown’s Jazz at Lincoln Center (May 21). Help support JFA, which consistently and reliably supports musicians and their families in times of crises: all proceeds from the Gala support JFA’s social service and employment programs to benefit hundreds of jazz, blues and roots musicians in need, as a result of age, illness or circumstances. And as a bonus to lending your support to the music, enjoy the marathon night of all-star performances, which will include Gary Bartz, Norah Jones (Dr. Billy Taylor Humanitarian Award Honoree), Patrice Rushen, Buster Williams, Lenny White, Stefon Harris, Steve Wilson, Monte Croft, Steve Jordan (Artistic Director), tributes to Ernest Ranglin and Cal Tjader and much more. Our hats are off to the JFA for another stellar year, supplying the invaluable service they provide—to the musicians and for the music. For more info visit jazzfoundation.org/greatnight26.

The Morrison Hotel Gallery (formerly located on The Bowery at the now shuttered CBGB Gallery space, and now at 116 Prince St. in SoHo) this month presents “**Birth of the Cool: 100 Years of Miles Davis**,” in celebration of the trumpeter’s centennial. Opening May 14 in both MHG’s NYC and West Hollywood locations, the photographic retrospective will honor the life, artistry and enduring influence of one of jazz’ most ground-breaking innovators. The career-spanning collection of featured photos will include both iconic and newly surfaced images, by photographers including Herman Leonard, Joe Alper, Glen Craig, David Gahr, Lynn Goldsmith, Patrick Harbron, Don Hunstein, Paul Natkin, Jack Robinson, Amalie R. Rothschild, Leigh Wiener, Barrie Wentzell and Charlyn Zlotnik. For more info visit morrisonhotelgallery.com/collections/birth-of-the-cool-100-years-of-miles-davis.

The Board of Trustees of the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation recently announced the appointment of the 101st class of **Guggenheim Fellows**. Included are bassist-composer Linda May Han Oh and saxophonist-composers Jon Irabagon, James Brandon Lewis and Ingrid Laubrock. Originally established in 1925 by founder Senator Simon Guggenheim, the Fellowship is based on both prior career achievement and exceptional promise. Each Fellow receives a monetary stipend to pursue independent work at the highest level under “the freest possible conditions.” Congratulations to all the Fellows and keep creating! Your visionary work offers us hope and solace, through thick and thin. For more info visit gf.org.

In what is becoming a welcome, annual Hudson Valley Jazz Appreciation Month tradition, last month **Senator Pete Harchkham** honored several musician residents of the 40th Senate District (NYC metropolitan area of Westchester, Putnam, Rockland and Dutchess Counties). On Apr. 12 at the Katonah Village Library, he presented plaques to Katonah residents, cellist Akua Dixon and guitarist John Scofield and Peekskill resident, drummer-vocalist Tony Jefferson. (Last year’s honored recipients were trumpeter Ingrid Jensen, Dave Douglas and Ted Daniel.) To view the ceremony go to facebook.com/SenatorPeteHarchkham/videos/1333554561921457.

The **Jazz Journalists Association** annual Jazz Award recipients will be announced this month. As a preview, the 2026 class of Jazz Hero awardees have already been revealed. Among the 30 total recipients are NYC’s own Dr. Eli Yamin and Bob Meyers, in addition to Maggie Brown (Chicago, IL), Paul Arslanian (Northampton, MA), Ellen Rowe (Ann Arbor, MI), Chuck Obuchowski (West Hartford, CT), Javier Nero (Baltimore, MD) and Henry Franklin (Los Angeles, CA). NYCJR is once again up for “Print Periodical/Website of the Year.” Always a bridesmaid, maybe the 20th occasion of being nominated will be a charm as we close in on our silver anniversary next year! Really though, all of the team at NYCJR are deeply honored to once again be nominated. For more info visit jjazzawards.org/2026.

To submit news email ldgreene@nycjazzrecord.com