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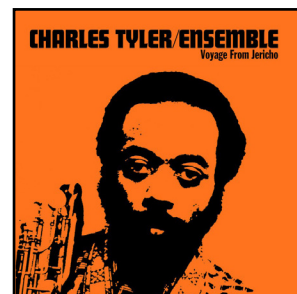
Hejira
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TRIBUTE
Tuesday, July 14th at 8:30pm

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Voyage From Jericho
Charles Tyler Ensemble
(AK-BA - Frederiksberg)
by Mike Shanley

In the entry for Charles Tyler in *Music Hound Jazz—The Essential Album Guide*, a 1,300-plus page listening resource, a passing reference was made to two albums on the saxophonist's own AK-BA imprint, concluding, "Good luck finding them!" True. Original copies of *Voyage From Jericho* (first released in 1975) command upwards of \$500. But fans of Tyler—who died 34 years ago on June 27, 1992, at the age of 50 (he would have been 85 this month)—now have a chance to discover this long-missing chapter of his career.

Tyler first appeared on Albert Ayler's ESP-Disk' albums *Spirits Rejoice* and *Bells* before releasing his two albums for the label and heading to Indiana University to study with David Baker (who played cello on one of those releases). *Voyage From Jericho* came after he returned to New York and got involved in the city's loft jazz scene. Probably best known as an alto saxophonist, here he is also on baritone. Earl Cross (trumpet) plays throughout, with Ronnie Boykins (bass) and Steve Reid (drums) holding down the rhythm section; two tracks additionally feature Arthur Blythe (alto) joining as a fiery third horn.

The five originals (one penned by Cross, the rest by Tyler) draw on a hybrid of Ayler-esque marching themes, vamps and, like Ornette Coleman's early work, harmonic adventures played over a steady tempo. The latter style features prominently in the title track, which launches the album. In it, Blythe solos first, setting a high standard with a sharp mix of technique and passion, but Tyler's raspy baritone work complements his frontline bandmate. The leader gets a chance to stretch out on alto saxophone in "Return From the East", which begins with an extended rubato melody before shifting into a heavy groove. Later, Reid takes a brief, liberating drum solo in "Just For Two". Tyler's "Children's Music March" gives the young ones a detailed theme, fueled by his baritone playing, while "Surf Ravin"—Blythe's second appearance—indicates that the New Thing's sense of exploration continued to burn bright well into the '70s.

Frederiksberg's reissue cleans up the sound of the original raw recording a bit and a 28-page booklet of notes by Cisco Bradley, with reproductions of flyers from the era, make for a great package.

For more info visit frederiksbergrecords.bandcamp.com



Live at the Village Vanguard Volumes 1-3
Immanuel Wilkins Quartet (Blue Note)
by Andrew Schinder

Alto saxophonist Immanuel Wilkins stands as one of the rising stars of contemporary jazz. At the mere age of 28, he offers an exciting opportunity for

young jazz fans to engage with a peer who can offer a gateway into the music, and this new release offers exciting, multi-faceted musical statements that foretell of the genre's bright future. His debut live recording, *Live at the Village Vanguard* (chronicling a May 2025 residency) consists of three volumes, released in succession this year, and the quartet's skill level and the quality of the music produced rightfully justify the largesse of the set.

Wilkins has spent the last several years as a member of piano legend Kenny Barron's group, playing delightfully classic straight-ahead jazz, as well as dabbling with modern non-jazz musical forms (including a recent single with popular Canadian electro-pop group Chromeo). *Live at the Village Vanguard*, however, is none of that—it is deeply spiritual, free, forward-thinking jazz, befitting a dark, intimate venue like the Vanguard that obviously owns a hallowed spot in jazz history but is no relic. Micah Thomas (piano), Ryoma Takenaga (bass) and Kweku Sumbry (drums) joined Wilkins, and together they were in lockstep for the entirety of these sessions. One volume does not differ much from the other, and indeed, Wilkins treats them as a single, cohesive work. The set showcases the four musicians' improvisational exploration of meditative, almost spectral, but highly rhythmic sounds. All selections are Wilkins originals, with the exception of a stirring cover of Alice Coltrane's "Charanam" that is just as devotional as the source material but swaps out Sanskrit vocals for gospel melodies.

Despite the intellectual, chamber mood of the entire set, the free-flowing nature of the music leads to the Wilkins Quartet exploring diverse themes within the structure created by its fearless leader. The first volume opens with "Warriors", where the saxophonist is at his most assertive, exploring a scale-based improvisation while his bandmates provide a moderately cadenced canvas. Thomas' dulcet piano melodies carry *Volume 2*'s beautiful ballad "Grace and Mercy" before Wilkins' saxophone comes in for the second side of a duet. From *Volume 3*, "Dolla\$" is straight blues and, by the standards achieved by the rest of the set, quite catchy.

For more info visit bluenote.com. The album release concert is at The Pocket Jul. 1-2. See Calendar.



For the Space You Left
Marta Sánchez (Out Of Your Head)
by JR Simon

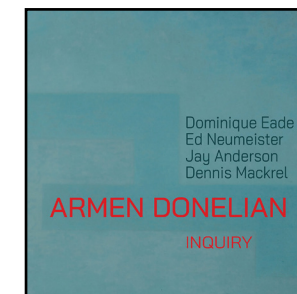
Pianist Marta Sánchez' first solo album, *For the Space You Left*, takes the listener through nine tracks of prepared piano built around the idea of solitude. The title and liner notes point toward isolation, but the project explores the complex nature of loneliness. Throughout the album Sánchez demonstrates an impressive range as a solo performer. Commanding and percussive one moment, weightless and ethereal the next, her confidence and technical control are on full display. There's a strong sense of space and resonance, and the recording captures reverberation and decay in striking detail. The pianist's approach to preparation is careful and controlled. Rather than transforming the entire instrument, she leaves the lower register largely intact while focusing many

of the altered tones in the mid-to-upper range. The result (especially clear on "Echolor" and "One for Blake") juxtaposes solid bass notes with sounds that buzz, shimmer and fracture into unusual colors. Even the most heavily altered notes feel purposeful; Sánchez never lets the effect take over the music.

Repetition is one of the album's main structural tools, and Sánchez finds remarkably different uses for it. The opener, "Frost Bloom", pairs strong bass notes with altered tones that blur and soften the instrument's usual attack. Small changes to repeated figures continually highlight the differences between prepared and unprepared sounds. On "Inward Loop", repetition becomes a source of tension and drama. The layering of heavy bass, circling upper-register motifs and piercing unaltered tones, creates an almost hypnotic effect. By contrast, "Snowing In The Woods" unfolds patiently, its slower pacing and delicate textures creating a sense of stillness and reflection.

For the Space You Left succeeds not because of its concept, but because of Sánchez' ability to find new expressive possibilities within a deliberately limited palette. Using essentially the same setup across all nine of the album's tracks, she creates a remarkable variety of colors, textures and emotional registers. The result is a *tour de force* of solo piano that reveals solitude not as a quiet or simple state of being, but as an experience filled with tension, beauty, persistence and contradiction.

For more info visit outofyourheadrecords.com. Sánchez is at Ornithology Jazz Club Jul. 13 (as leader), Dizzy's Club Jul. 16 (with Yuhuan Su) and St. Luke's Episcopal Church (East Hampton, NY) Jul. 19 (part of Hamptons Jazz Festival). See Calendar and 100 Miles Out.



Inquiry
Armen Donelian (Sunnyside)
by Fred Bouchard

In Armen Donelian's thirteenth album in over three decades for Sunnyside (the label founded in 1982 by François Zalacain), the Brooklyn-born pianist presents an unusual, highly personal project. What began as an introspective solo piano study, gradually morphed into a somber studio inquiry, enlisting four bandmates, often in layered overdubs, intense in its fathomless darkness and somber in its grief.

Donelian values his piano sound as "a refuge, a safety zone, a spacious place where soul-searching is welcomed and supported." His music expresses gratitude towards his mentors, notably late piano innovator Richie Beirach (1947-2026), deep thanks to soulful colleagues, and righteous disdain towards immoral politicians. Piano solos lead us in: from "Beyond", a simple, deep melody, possibly a rear-view coda to his 60-year career, laced with gravity and sadness, to "Somewhere" (Bernstein's *West Side Story* anthem), which summons a flutter of birdsong from Messaien's *Catalogue des Oiseaux*.

From that point, most tracks feature Donelian's trio—with Jay Anderson (bass) and Dennis Mackrel

(drums)—formed in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic. Just as Donelian's calm demeanor and principled interpretations once applied soothing balm for saxophonist Billy Harper and percussionist Mongo Santamaria, today his chosen collaborators reflect styles arching towards congenial introspection and mutual empathy. Miles Davis/Bill Evans' iconic "Blue in Green" welcomes Dominique Eade, a vocalist of rare expressive depth, who, after a warm bass solo, reinterprets Cassandra Wilson's lyrics exquisitely. "Aqua Reminiscence", untethering Anderson and Eade, floats free as its spacy stepchild, "Dark Moon", which is a bizarre, minor-key transformation of Beethoven's "Moonlight Sonata" into a wasted battlefield, trod by longtime colleague Ed Neumeister as a haunted survivor, wielding his trombone with plunger or hat mute. "What Is" is a blithely skipping 6/8 tribute to meditation practice, pentimentos all around. "Petite Triste", a wistful waltz à la Nino Rota, unites Mackrel's brushed cymbals, Donelian's glissandi and an echoey Eade. "Weeping Willow" pairs two piano parts with bass in mixing session magic as haunting as *Twin Peaks*. "Too Soon Gone" is an austere solo salute to Yvonne Ervin, the late, ebullient, tireless jazz advocate and presenter, who passed away in 2018 at the age of 59. For his deep-dive centerpiece "Inverted Reality", Donelian summons all to a swirling musical maelstrom, quietly commending political outrage at rampant greed and flagrant humanitarian indignities.

For more info visit sunnysiderecords.com. Donelian plays solo at Bryant Park's Piano Jazz Series Jul. 13-16 and Isaan Thai Star (Hudson, NY) Sundays. See Calendar and 100 Miles Out.

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