



JAY HOGGARD

UNDEREXPOSED VIBES

BY JEFF CEBULSKI

Even though he's been a presence on the jazz scene since the mid '70s, vibraphonist and Wesleyan University music professor Jay Hoggard has no illusions about his position within the public consciousness: "I am not one who has suffered from overexposure," he declares. About his forthcoming Jazzmobile Summerfest concert this month, for which he will be presenting his sextet at Marcus Garvey Park, he considers the performance as yet another introduction to his oeuvre. "I'm at the stage now that I have enough material that I can draw on from different projects," he says, "trying to bridge the gap between the art of the music and what is in the marketplace, and presenting it as one, organic whole." In fact, a blueprint for this approach is Hoggard's most recent album, *Retro Focus* (JHVM, 2023), a re-recording of tunes that cover the diverse aspects of his career.

What the soon-to-be 72-year-old Hoggard has attained is remarkable, given his educational and professional pedigree. Raised in Mount Vernon, NY—the son of an African Methodist Episcopal Zion bishop who helped arrange Duke Ellington's *Second Sacred Concert* in Harlem (at AME Zion Church, two months prior to the formal premier at Cathedral of St. John the Divine for which J. Clinton Hoggard, Jay Hoggard's father, was also one of its principal coordinators), and a mother and educator who introduced him to piano—at 15 Hoggard had a dream that he could play the vibraphone and then boldly embraced the instrument. "I had been on the New York scene as a kid," he says. "I used to stand outside the door at the Vanguard and go to all of the lofts in Lower Manhattan, in Brooklyn, the East Village. I took all that in...(and) felt that I was going to be playing with them eventually." He attended and graduated from Wesleyan University, where many influential musicians taught: "Sam Rivers, Ed Blackwell, Jimmy Garrison, Ken McIntyre, Bill Barron, Daoud Haroon and a trumpet player named Clifford Thornton were teaching here. So, I got to know people who were part of the guiding spirit, so to speak, of the '70s and '80s." Hoggard's auspicious early '70s recording debut was on the B-side of trumpeter, cornetist and multi-

instrumentalist Thornton's *Communications Network* (Third World), recorded at Wesleyan's 1972 Festival of African American Music, along with poet Jayne Cortez, saxophonist Nathan Davis, bassist Andy Gonzalez and percussionist Jerry Gonzalez, among others.

The vibraphonist soon found himself among the young lions to emerge in the mid '70s, when educated, fledgling jazz artists had to negotiate, both artistically and economically, the twists and turns of NYC's new music jazz period. It helped that fellow younger musicians and musical colleagues such as pianist Anthony Davis and drummer Pheeroan akLaff were along for the experience. Davis and Hoggard would become key members of an ensemble led by woodwinds virtuoso Chico Freeman (son of revered Chicago saxophonist Von Freeman and nephew to legendary Chicagoan guitarist George Freeman and drummer Buzz/Bruz Freeman), including on Chico's noted album *Kings of Mali* (India Navigation, 1977). The pianist and vibraphonist continued their musical partnership over the years, performing and recording prolifically together, particularly in the late '70s and early '80s—from flute player James Newton's eponymously titled album (Gramavision, 1982), to Hoggard's *Mystic Winds, Tropic Breezes* (India Navigation, 1982), Davis' *Song for the Old World* (India Navigation, 1978) and *Epistémè* (Gramavision, 1981), and as an efficient and explorative duo on *Under the Double Moon* (MPS, 1980). Says Freeman, "Jay's a very warm person, a really likable guy. We had some wonderful learning experiences on my first tour in Europe. What he brought was a level of accomplishment and musicianship...he played anything. Open arms and open mind, and open heart. I never argued about what direction we were going...if we had conflict, we just let the music decide!"

Versatility has unquestionably been a major characteristic of Hoggard's career. He explains that "when I did my first record in '78 (*Solo Vibraphone*, India Navigation), I kind of continued being in two (sub-genres) that appeared to be different because of marketing strategies but were in a cultural packaging of African-American musics [sic]. That said, during the day, when I was rehearsing for a record with (pianist) Dave Grusin for GRP (*Days Like These*), in the afternoon I was also rehearsing with Cecil Taylor. I never thought anything of it." akLaff, who has been a musical partner for as long as Hoggard has been performing, remembers, "We were 20 years old, playing together in New Haven, CT, in a band named Déjà Vu, which included reggae as part of the repertoire. We both came out of a tradition of music as a spiritual force; working with the 'hallelujah

force' to raise consciousness was part of what we were trained to do before entering commercial music." While akLaff and Hoggard performed gigs in the '70s, the drummer's recorded presence became more prominent in the '80s, when Hoggard's music began to more directly reflect his gospel roots and affinity for world music. "He's more versed of knowing African music and instruments, like the balafon from West Africa, that pre-date the vibes," says akLaff, "as well as the energy that brings a ritual feeling of raising the spirits in the room."

That world-conscious spirituality, bolstered by his continued musical ministry, and over 30 years teaching at Wesleyan, has empowered much of Hoggard's recorded output in the 21st century. "I play in church every Sunday that I can," he says. "There was a time when the saints would be like, 'oh, this is bringing too much jazz into the church.' But at this point they are, like, 'bring it.' I teach a course called: Sacred and Secular African and African-American Musics. The assertion is that, in the pre-1500 (European colonization) era, there were tens of thousands of years of the development of African culture, of which music is one aspect. One great thing about Wesleyan is that it has stuck strongly with its concept of a broad vision of what is human, what should be studied in an institution of higher learning, and what is, specifically in music, humanly organized sound, which is the underlying philosophy of the discipline of ethnomusicology."

For those attending this month's (or, for that matter, any) Jay Hoggard concert, not only is a musical class part of the experience, but also a reintroduction to the vibraphonist's works. His good will and erudition continue to raise the level of his art—and, hopefully, the number of listeners who may discover his veteran talent and versatile abilities.

For more info visit jayhoggard.com. Hoggard is at Marcus Garvey Park Aug. 7 (part of Jazzmobile Summerfest). See *Calendar*.

Recommended Listening:

- Jay Hoggard — *Solo Vibraphone* (India Navigation, 1978)
- Jay Hoggard — *Mystic Winds, Tropic Breezes* (India Navigation, 1982)
- Jay Hoggard — *A Night In Greenwich Village* (Muse, 1996)
- Jay Hoggard/James Weidman — *Songs Of Spiritual Love* (JHVM, 2004)
- Jay Hoggard — *Harlem Hieroglyphs* (JHVM, 2016)
- Jay Hoggard — *Retro Focus* (JHVM, 2023)

LEST WE FORGET



IOLA BRUBECK

WOMAN OF MANY PARTS

BY MARILYN LESTER

The truly inspiring Iola Brubeck (1923-2014) could never be called a "power behind the throne," not that it would have mattered to her. She was indeed a partner to husband Dave Brubeck, fully equal alongside him, pivotal in personal and professional roles. Iola was a driving force as a lyricist, creative business manager and administrator, tour manager, confidante and advisor. She was also the mother to six children: musicians Darius, Chris, Dan and Matt; the theater- and dance-leaning Catherine (who passed in 2022); and Michael who, due to health issues stemming from childhood,

lived a quiet life, passing away in 2009. Married to Dave for 70 years, Iola outlived him by two, joining him in death in March 2014. The children's devotion to Iola, to both parents, is palpable. The four who remain are vibrant, living legacies whose commitment to furthering their Brubeck heritage speaks volumes.

Iola Marie Whitlock was born 103 years ago this month on August 14, 1923, in the northern California town of Redding. Dave was born on a horse ranch in Concord, CA, a man "with a steel backbone, high ideals and a tough work ethic," according to Chris Brubeck. "My father once said it was like being raised in two different homes at the same time, a hardworking cowboy culture ranch-house and a...house in the scorching hot, burnt-brown grazing fields of Northern California." Iola was a highly-accomplished student, winning several statewide awards for public speaking, debate and essay writing and graduated as the valedictorian of her high school class. She matriculated at the College of the Pacific in Stockton, CA, a student of drama and radio production, where she met the budding

pianist and her soon-to-be lifemate. The attraction was immediate, but it was wartime, and upon graduating in 1942, Dave joined the Army, the pair marrying that year when Dave was home on leave.

Iola continued her studies, winning a radio drama contest and working as a freelance radio actress. Upon Dave's discharge, both pursued graduate education at Mills College, where she studied philosophy and creative writing. Early days were marked with struggle as children began arriving in 1947 and Dave was working in the San Francisco Bay Area to build a career. Matt Brubeck reflects, "I doubt Dave would have had such great success without Iola's unwavering support, business sense and artistic collaboration. It's hard to sum up the extent of Iola's impact on his career..." Dan Brubeck adds, "Iola really believed in him. And Dave could get very insecure and down in those dark early years."

Then in the early '50s, inspiration struck in the

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two hours, and he said, ‘OK, great.’” It’s the one and only Quincy Jones live recording, which is not a bootleg and not produced by Quincy since 1958. And once Jones legitimized TCB’s efforts to distribute the recordings, other artists quickly followed and TCB was able to put together its vast catalog. “We got Louis Hayes, Woody Shaw, and it went on and on. Dizzy Gillespie. Slide Hampton...It’s absolutely gorgeous,” Ischer enthuses.

Pianist Marc Copland participated in a unique project for the Swiss Radio Days series in 2022. He recorded a solo piano set where he dueted with a pre-recorded track of himself playing an additional piano line. “That Marc Copland project was absolutely beautiful,” Ischer says. Copland adds, “Peter was and Barbara is just great people, really interested in just supporting the music and putting out quality product.” Pianist Lynne Arriale recorded several contemporary TCB projects as well, including a “red line” release, titled *A Long Road Home* (1997). “I had a wonderful experience with TCB,” she says. “Peter was incredibly supportive. He was a phenomenal musician himself, and so he really supported and promoted the artists on the label and did everything he could to help.” Trombonist Ed Neumeister recorded a “yellow line” series album *The Mohican and the Great Spirit* (1996). “That was my first recording as a leader,” Neumeister fondly recalls. “We came through Switzerland, and Peter heard us play. He was the kind of guy you just couldn’t not like—friendly, personable, he respected us (and) knew what we were doing...It was a great opportunity.”

Today, with some outside help with social media and distribution (TCB is distributed in the US through Dot Time), Frei Schmidlin continues with unwavering determination. New releases may come in dribs and drabs (this year the label released new music by near-nonagenarian, German pianist Klaus Koenig), and digitization and distribution of the label’s archive remains a challenge—but Frei Schmidlin is resolute. “Barbara is just a lovely person,” Arriale says. “I’ve been in touch with her over the years since Peter passed away. It’s great that she’s decided to keep TCB going. I know she’s been putting out projects, but it takes a lot of energy to run a record label to say the least.” “Slowly, but surely, we’re progressing!” Frei Schmidlin says with a laugh.

For more info visit tcbrecords.com. TCB artists performing this month include: Jon Davis at Jazzcultural Aug. 17 (with Paul Bollenback); Roni Ben-Hur at Smalls Aug. 6 and Five Spot Jazz Aug. 16, as well as Horan’s Landing (Sleepy Hollow, NY) Tuesdays (with Mark Morganelli); Buster Williams at Mezzrow Aug. 1, and at The Side Door Jazz Club (Old Lyme, CT) Aug. 8 (with Benito Gonzalez); Steve Nelson at Dizzy’s Club Aug. 11 (as leader) and Jazzcultural Aug. 1 (with Steve Davis) and Thursdays; Dizzy Gillespie All-Star Big Band at Blue Note Aug. 11-16 and Duane Eubanks at Matthiessen Park (Irvington, NY) Aug. 13 (with Tony Jefferson). See Calendar and 100 Miles Out.

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The hard choice of catching only part of Bill Frisell’s set and that from the back was compensated to a small degree by getting to experience him in the county fair setting of the Jazz Discovery stage and, to a greater degree, how beautifully Tardy (himself a frequent Frisell playmate) fit in with the trio. Cécile McLorin Salvant played a set that included songs by Bob Dorough and Cy Coleman, a few of her own and a couple of selections from her astounding new album, *With Every Breath I Take*, although without the orchestra. Backed by a trio including her ever stalwart pianist Sullivan Fortner, she showed that a keen sense of vocal interpretation can weather multiple arrangements and settings, even of her own songs. Exquisiteness

maybe shouldn’t be such a reliable quality, but Salvant delivers like the greats. Her set spilled over into the first part of the Orrin Evans Trio, who evidenced the unhurried ease of old friends.

It is, or has become, a jazz festival tradition to book non-jazz acts, “jazz” seemingly having become a catchall term for catchall programming, so attendees also got the Americana of the Dip and The Revivalists, the groove of Ana Popovic + Cimafunk and first night closer Patti LaBelle, who didn’t pull from her 2017 jazz album but instead from her upcoming R&B album, connecting immediately and consistently with the audience in a charming and confident concert. We also got the Miles Electric Band (M.E.B.) celebrating the Davis centennial and the Skidmore Jazz Institute Faculty All-Stars marking John Coltrane’s 100th, tributes to two musicians who radically broke from tradition. M.E.B. is led by drummer (and Davis’ nephew) Vince Wilburn, Jr, with rotating players. At least on this night, it seemed a showcase for trumpeter Keyon Harrold, and why shouldn’t it be? But the ground Davis broke ends up being jammy as repertory. Likewise, the Coltrane tribute was no doubt heartfelt but lacked oomph—at least for the first half, before the main stage and saxophonist Lakecia Benjamin called. At least in spirit, her set seemed more of a Coltrane tribute than were the Skidmore stars. Hard-edged, modal post-bop, with heavy chordal piano, called the master to mind even before Benjamin’s rendition of “My Favorite Things”, dedicating it not to John but to Alice Coltrane. Elsewhere, shades of Latin rhythms and her Washington Heights upbringing shone through. She closed with an impassioned “I Wish I Knew How It Would Feel to Be Free”.

Benjamin also gave Dianne Reeves her second shout-out from the stage, following Salvant’s the previous day. Reeves’ own afternoon set opened with her scatting through Fleetwood Mac’s “Dreams” and included a take on “What’s New?”, which foreshadowed her forthcoming Coltrane/Johnny Hartman tribute album with Branford Marsalis. The soon-to-be septuagenarian’s voice was in fine form, as was that of the 82-year-old LaBelle. Both also sang barefoot—there may be a lesson there. The high point was a handful of songs in duo with guitarist Romero Lubambo, including a lovely “Our Love is Here to Stay”. The Sunday spirit carried on in Kyle Russo’s New Orleans piano with Beethoven interpolations and some more muscular rhythms than might be expected, and in vocalist Sasha Dobson’s with violinist Charlie Burnham, drawing influence from ’60s French pop and classic country. But much of the day fell in Saturday’s shadow, one of the few shadows to be found under the bright, hot sun. Still it was a fine weekend in a beautiful park, carrying on in the honored, Jazz on a Summer’s Day tradition.

For more info visit spac.org

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“college circuit,” a sheerly brilliant idea based on the notion that college kids largely didn’t have the funds for jazz clubs. And according to son, Chris, she changed the business model of jazz. Iola wrote to hundreds of colleges, providing a 40-page guide on how to organize a Dave Brubeck Quartet concert. Tremendous success—and a fan base—followed, leading to albums such as *Jazz Goes to College* and *Jazz at Oberlin*. No wonder Dave called her his “greatest inspiration.” But according to Iola biographer, John Bolton: “She was his biggest fan.”

In 1959, the landmark hit album *Time Out*—with Paul Desmond (alto), Eugene Wright (bass) and Joe Morello (drums)—was released, leading to a major 1960 relocation to Wilton, CT, close to the major cultural, media and entertainment hub of NYC. “One of her greatest contributions to Dave’s career,” says Chris, “was to encourage him to keep working with Desmond

even after they were on the outs at times. She always talked my dad back into working with Paul because she knew they had a legendary magic in their musical language.” In Wilton, the Brubeck home was itself a hub, becoming known as the “Wilton Hilton.” Iola added welcoming hostess to her resumé, as musicians, friends, associates and family were welcomed to the pastoral grounds. Like Ginger Rogers, who famously said she made all the moves Fred Astaire did, but backwards and in heels, Iola was called on to handle a spouse’s huge fame and popularity. Darius Brubeck muses, “My mother ran a complicated household, raised six children, dealt with schedules and itineraries and kept a diary. It seemed natural to me growing up, but now I understand what it must have been like to be constantly busy and on deadline. Right from the beginning, she must have believed that Dave Brubeck would become ‘Dave Brubeck.’”

All the while, her creativity flowed freely and abundantly. A seminal composition, 1962’s musical, *The Real Ambassadors*, starring Louis Armstrong and Carmen McRae, with original lyrics by Iola, broke ground as a commentary on racial segregation and the hypocrisy of the US government promoting American freedom abroad while failing to address racism at home. The indefatigable Iola also wrote lyrics for songs such as “In Your Own Sweet Way”, and for Dave’s sacred works, including *The Light in the Wilderness*, *The Gates of Justice* and *Truth is Fallen*; she wrote liner notes and initiated the *Dave Brubeck Newsletter*, a communication tradition still carried out by the Brubeck children. “Many people after meeting our mother would say there was something very ‘regal’ about her, it glowed from the inside out. She emoted a sense of authority and kindness simultaneously,” Chris observes. “Our family was extraordinarily blessed to have such an elegant, wise, talented, loving mother guiding the family through post-WWII years into the next century.”

For more info visit brubecklivinglegacy.com/who-we-are/iola. *Photo of Iola Brubeck at Brubeck home, 1940s (Oakland, CA) [Courtesy of The Brubeck Collection, Wilton Library]

Recommended Listening:

- Louis Armstrong, Dave Brubeck, Lambert Hendricks & Ross—*The Real Ambassadors* (CBS-Columbia, 1961)
- Dave Brubeck—*The Light in the Wilderness* (Decca, 1968)
- Dave Brubeck—*The Gates of Justice* (Decca, 1969)
- Dave Brubeck—*Truth is Fallen* (Atlantic, 1972)
- Dave Brubeck—*La Fiesta De La Posada* (CBS-Columbia, 1979)
- Dave Brubeck—*Songs* (Naxos, 2005)



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National Jazz Museum in Harlem 58 West 129th St., 2PM 8/6 - Ra Kalam Bob Moses and the Heart Breath Ensemble* 8/13 - Bernice Brooks and Friends* 8/24 - Charlie Parker Jazz Festival: Monday Night Jam feat. Kim Clarke, Roxy Coss, Anisha Rush, 6PM *and livestreaming on JFA Facebook and YouTube Brooklyn Museum 200 Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn, 2PM 8/16 - Peter Apfelbaum Heiroglyphics Sextet 8/23 - Chemo Corniel Riverside Park West Harlem Piers W. 125 St & Marginal St, 7PM 8/7 - Trio Cachimbo This project is supported in part by an award from the National Endowment for the Arts, the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of the Office of the Governor and the New York Legislature and by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council and by the Howard Gilman Foundation.   	Hudson River Park Jazz at Pier 84 555 12th Ave, 7PM 8/5 - Pucci Amanda Jhones 8/12 - Ghanniyya Green Blues BBQ Festival - Pier 76 408 12th Ave, 1PM 8/15 - 2nd Stage: feat. the Hammond B3 organ: Radam Schwartz, Mel Davis, Kathryn Farmer, Gregory Lewis - Organ Monk Sings Charlie Parker Jazz Festival In Partnership with City Parks Foundation, NJM, The New School, Studio Museum, Stay for the Credits, Summerstage, and Ariana's List Studio Museum, 144 W. 125th St, 1PM 8/23 - James Stewart Quartet // Screening of <i>Sun Ra: Do The Impossible</i> Glass Box at The New School 55 W. 13th St, 6PM 8/25 - Eddie Allen Quintet preceded by a student ensemble El Sol Brillante, 522 E. 12th St, 5:30PM 8/26 - Xiomara Laugart feat. Reverse Audio Harlem Rose Garden, 6 E. 129th St, 5:30PM 8/28 - David Lee Jones Quartet
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