

TCB RECORDS

TAKING CARE OF BUSINESS

BY ANDREW SCHINDER

That well-known mantra of Elvis Presley and Bachman Turner Overdrive—“taking care of business”—is one that motivates Barbara Frei Schmidlin, who continues the legacy of her late husband, Peter Schmidlin (1947-2015), in owning and operating Montreux-based TCB Records. One of the jazz epicenters of Europe, the Swiss city is of course home to the Montreux Jazz Festival, whose first edition was in 1967. Peter Schmidlin, a drummer from nearby Basel, spent several decades as a professional musician, playing with some of the finest jazz musicians as they passed through the area, including at the annual festival. Realizing that making a living as a musician was sometimes difficult, in the late '80s he moved to recording, producing and releasing local and international jazz artists, formalizing the TCB label in 1991. According to Frei Schmidlin, the name

was derived from the local musicians' goodbye: “Take care and TCB!”

“In the '90s, the business would work quite fine,” reports Frei Schmidlin. “You could still sell CDs. We had fantastic musicians. We even had a TCB night at the Montreux Jazz Festival in 1999.” She also notes that her husband had to do everything himself, taking no salary. “It was just his baby.” Since Peter's passing in 2015 (when Frei Schmidlin took over), she began operating the business in her spare time for love of the music. As a tax attorney, she grew up in a jazz household and has always been a passionate jazz fan, continuing her late husband's relationships, and additionally cultivating her own network in the local and international jazz communities. But continuing the label's business has been challenging. Distributors have come and gone, and COVID-19 was a major setback. But Frei Schmidlin is determined. She knows that TCB is an institution and a resource, which drives her to persevere at all costs.

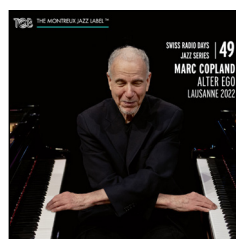
TCB is unique among labels in its catalog classification system. The label assigns different subcategories of albums with color codes: red for

the traditional bebop/post-bop/hard-bop; black for world jazz; blue for Swing era offerings; yellow for contemporary jazz and green for its “Swiss Radio Days” series. The latter is a service greatly important to jazz culture, as it consists of releases of remastered recordings of decades-worth of performances by jazz masters who have passed through Switzerland and recorded sessions for Swiss Radio. The catalog is rich and deep: Charles Lloyd, Cannonball Adderley, Art Blakey, Miles Davis, plus many others. Swiss saxophonist and journalist Yvan Ischer was a friend and collaborator of Schmidlin's and was heavily involved in Swiss Radio, having hosted a long-running local jazz show. He also helped Schmidlin in the conceptual development of the series. Quincy Jones' big band appeared on the first Swiss Radio Days series release, and getting Jones' permission to put out the album was challenging. “I was basically ringing Quincy's and his lawyers' doorbell,” Ischer says. Over two years later, they were eventually able to achieve success. “We talked to him for almost

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Backyard (with Barry Harris Trio)
Roni Ben-Hur



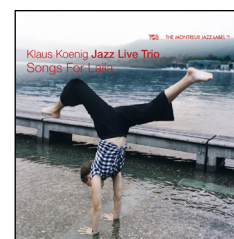
Alter Ego
Marc Copland



Geneva 2007
Dizzy Gillespie All-Star Big Band



Swiss Radio Days, Vol. 33
Nat “King” Cole/Quincy Jones



Songs For Laila
Klaus Koenig

VOXNEWS

SUMMERTIME

BY TESSA SOUTER

And the music is: HOT!

LISTENING...Singer-songwriter **Somi** has a beautiful new album, *What Does It Take to Bloom* (Salon Afrikaana), her first collection of original songs in six years. Written and recorded between Dakar, Lagos, Paris and NYC, it explores the ongoing process of staying faithful to oneself amid life's dissonances. **Katie Bull's** *The Hope Etudes* (Orchard of Pomegranates) is an improvisational meditation on love and hope, mixing originals (some collectively improvised on the spot) along with totally reimagined versions of “Light My Fire” and “Oh, What a Beautiful Morning” [sic]. Ethereal-voiced Danish vocalist-composer **Randi Pontoppidan** fronts Paper Trio's gorgeous *Light in the Dark: The Music of Carl Nielsen*. Nite Bjuti, the visionary Afro-Caribbean trio featuring vocalist **Candice Hoyes**, with bassist Mimi Jones and percussionist Val Jeanty, blends Haitian drum rhythms, electronics and spoken word to create a completely original sonic experience. Their *minwi* (Intakt), already nominated for the German Record Critics' Award Quarterly Critics Choice, envisions a future rooted in empathy and mutual care. West Coast singer-songwriter **Mark Winkler** (his music has been recorded by Dianne Reeves, Dee Dee Bridgewater and Liza Minnelli, among others) has a new album, *Love Comes First* (Café Pacific), featuring six originals and five standards, including “More Than You Know”, his late husband's favorite song. **Sarah Elizabeth Charles'** latest, *Dawn* (Ropeadope), is an all-originals, gorgeous, heartfelt tribute to her sons and her late brother. Another all-originals project, **Maryanne De Prophetis'** *Come O Light* is a beautiful tribute to her husband, the late, great pianist Frank Kimbrough. Boston-based vocalist **Dominique Eade**

appears on two Sunnyside releases: pianist-composer Armen Donelian's *Inquiry*, and *Roots & Byways*, the latter with nonagenarian pianist Ran Blake. The duo's third recording together, it showcases the depth of their musical connection with a selection of standards, pop songs, film music and folk tunes. **Denise Donatelli's** star-studded *Take My Breath Away* (Savant) features arrangements by musical director and producer, pianist Geoffrey Keezer. Hot Jazz star **Bria Skonberg's** *Brass* is a fun romp that puts the focus firmly on her trumpet playing (only one vocal on the entire album) while her *Indigo* (both albums on Cellar Music) is an exquisite, Gil Goldstein-arranged showcase for her vocals, as well as trumpet. **Sara Gazarek** has produced the debut album of **Nicole Yvette**: *Say Yes* is a bluesy outing of mostly originals, with a guest spot from **Kurt Elling**. **Champion Fulton** also wore the producer's hat for young singer **Isabella Isherwood's** debut, the aptly named *The Sweetest Sounds* (Sabrina).

DON'T MISS...Surprisingly, for such a phenomenal live performer, **Catherine Russell's** *Live at Lincoln Center* (Dot Time) is her first live release. Invited to perform for JALC's 2023-2024 season theme of “Community and Consciousness,” she crafted a program honoring The Hot Club of New York, a community of enthusiasts who gather weekly to listen to vintage jazz and blues on 78 rpm shellac records. Catch her live at Little Island with Louis Cato + Ron Carter (Aug. 20-24) and Charlie Parker Jazz Festival in Marcus Garvey Park (Aug. 29). Russell has also just co-produced (along with guitarist Gerry Leonard, who together toured in David Bowie's last band) *Into the Blue*, the debut EP from vocalist **Layla**, who she has been mentoring the past ten years. Passionate and heartfelt vocalist and composer **Claudia Acuña** celebrates *Ave de Luz* (Delfin), a beautiful album rooted in her Chilean heritage and shaped by the rhythms, songs and instruments she grew up with. It is probably her most personal statement yet. Catch her at Brooklyn's Billie Holiday Theater (Aug. 7). The always brilliant, always reaching **Cécile McLorin Salvant** at Little Island

in duo with Sullivan Fortner (Aug. 15) and in trio (Aug. 16), hopefully playing songs from her stunning new album, *With Every Breath I Take* (Nonesuch), which was recorded with the Metropole Orkest. Vocalist, pianist, arranger and songwriter, **Nicole Zuraitis** celebrates *The Devil I Knew* (La Reserve) at Dizzy's Club (Aug. 5) —part of her 80-city world tour! Arriving hot on the heels of her GRAMMY-nominated live album, *Live at Vic's Las Vegas* (La Reserve) it is a transcendent 20-track epic investigation of relationships, told in five parts and interspersing her compositions with poems by iconic female poets Dorothy Parker, Emily Dickinson and others. Also at Dizzy's Club, celebrating her self-released debut album *Stars*, the soulful **Shenel Johns** (Aug. 20) and **Dida Pelled** (Aug. 19). At Birdland (Aug. 4-8), **John Pizzarelli** celebrates the release of *Dear Mr. Bennett* (Green Hill Music), a tribute to Tony Bennett, whose centennial is this year. Bennett was a frequent collaborator with Pizzarelli's father, guitarist Bucky. Also paying homage to Bennett is **Lucy Yeghiazaryan** at the Queens Jazz Trail Concert Series (Aug. 27). The Charlie Parker Jazz Festival uptown in Marcus Garvey Park features **Ekep Nkwelle** (Aug. 28) and downtown, at Tompkins Square Park, the superb singer-songwriter **Vanisha Gould** (Aug. 30). The effervescent **Samara Joy** is at the Chautauqua Amphitheater (Aug. 28). **Dianne Reeves** is at the Montclair Jazz Festival (Aug. 15) with Christian McBride, Patrice Rushen and the Spanish Harlem Orchestra, an event that promises to be epic. **Jaana Narsipur**, whose album *The Re-Collection* features jazz arrangements of Britpop standards, is storming up the charts. She appears at Five Spot Jazz (Aug. 9). **Nancy Kelly** is at Dante Park (Aug. 19). **Kaushik Viswanath** is at Jazz WaHi Vocal Series (Aug. 3). **Marianne Solivan** is at Joe's Pub (Aug. 26). The ever-authentic **Paul Jost** (whose voice you may have heard on Orrin Evans' Captain Black Big Band's GRAMMY-nominated *Walk a Mile in My Shoes*) is at Saint Peter's Church (Aug. 7). And **Alexis Cole's** trio is at Westchester Collaborative Theater in Ossining (Aug. 1).

(LABEL SPOTLIGHT CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11)

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.

(SARATOGA FESTIVAL CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12)

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

(LEST WE FORGET CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10)

“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)

 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.   	FREE CONCERTS www.jazzfoundation.org 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 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 - Kiomara Laugart feat. Reverse Audio Harlem Rose Garden, 6 E. 129th St, 5:30PM 8/28 - David Lee Jones Quartet
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