

VISION FESTIVAL

BY ARIELLA STOK

BROOKLYN GUITAR FESTIVAL

BY TOM GREENLAND

SARATOGA JAZZ FESTIVAL

BY KURT GOTTSCHALK



Joe Morris @Abrons Arts Center



Vernon Reid, Eric Gales @Warsaw Brooklyn



Cécile McLorin Salvant @Saratoga Jazz Festival

The night before the music started, 30-odd people sat at Anthology Film Archives (AFA) watching film portraits of the music's elders—some gone (e.g. Kidd Jordan and Charles Gayle), some very much still with us, such as pianist Dave Burrell, who would be on stage for Vision Festival's 30th anniversary (Jun. 23-28). Looking around AFA, nearly everyone present was an artist playing the festival later that week. During the break they greeted one other. Asked how he was doing, tenor saxophonist James Brandon Lewis answered, "Managing the illusion. You know it's all just an illusion?" Festival founder Patricia Nicholson Parker told the room the spirits were with us: "Their music is with us and we can access it any moment." She recalled the sign that hung over the door at Studio Rivbea—the Lower Manhattan Sam Rivers loft where she and her husband, bassist William Parker, met in 1972—a sign, which addressed to everyone who wasn't in the room: "Tell them what they missed." That is roughly the assignment.

For the 2026 edition of Arts For Art's Vision Festival—six nights at Abrons Arts Center on Manhattan's Lower East Side—two honored artists were chosen, and the distance between them is an apt portrait of the festival's ethos. Guitarist-bassist Joe Morris is an educator at New England Conservatory of Music who codified his ideas about improvisation in the book, *Perpetual Frontier*, rendering the practice legible even while defining it as perpetually becoming. Woodwinds musician and trumpeter Daniel Carter, who closed the festival, swore off playing changes decades ago, refuses charts, and picks collaborators not by status but by openness—an oral philosopher who plays as readily with musicians 50 years younger as with coevals like bassist Parker. The festival holds both as equal goods.

Joe Morris' night was five configurations wide. It opened with a duo, with Nicole Mitchell coaxing multiphonics from her flute, while electronics turned Morris' electric guitar into something like a spacecraft, the two sounds merging until you could no longer disentangle which was coming from which instrument. Whenever the echo-soaked tones drifted toward dreaminess, they were yanked back into dissonance, refusing to coast. A string quartet followed—Tomeka Reid, Melanie Dyer, Solomon Caldwell—playing Morris' compositions in the lineage of Wilber Morris, Billy Bang and Fred Hopkins; a passage of relentless

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Those attending the first (and hopefully not last) Brooklyn Guitar Festival (Jun. 12-13) could engorge themselves with almost fifteen hours of music: four acts the first day at Warsaw ballroom, and nine more on the closing Saturday at Arlo Hotel. Co-curated by Joel Harrison and Alex Skolnick, the event's timing was apropos: James "Blood" Ulmer had recently passed (Jun. 3); West 8th Street, site of Electric Ladyland Studios, had just been renamed Jimi Hendrix Way (Jun. 10); and—though attendees couldn't know it yet—later that night the New York Knicks would end their 53-year NBA championship drought, less than an hour after Al Di Meola, the festival's final act, had finished his encore.

The line-up was diverse. For the jazz folks, there were long-established stars: Di Meola, Bill Frisell, John Scofield and Mike Stern, as well as younger, equally stellar players: Harrison, Steve Cardenas, Lolivone de la Rosa, Nir Felder, David Gilmore, Gilad Hekselman and Adam Rogers—plus blues rockers Eric Gales, Greg Koch, Ally Venable and Jackie Venson, acoustic finger-stylist Andy McKee, and two (for want of a more precise term) "eclectic avant-shredders": Skolnick and Vernon Reid. Two sets paid tribute to Scofield and Jeff Beck, respectively, and the aura of Hendrix hung in the air: his name dropped, his tunes covered, his influence heard in many participants' playing.

Friday's opener was Jackie Venson, who, in lieu of a full band, played and sang her songs along with a drummer and backing tracks—which could've killed the immediacy of the performance if not for her manifest talent and distinctive style blending pop, funk, George Benson-style jazz and Hendrixian psychedelia. John Scofield's trio set—with Vicente Archer (bass) and Bill Stewart (drums)—proved that, at 74, he's still one of the most creative improvisers playing, reeling out long narratives chockful of plot points, punctuated with crunchy (sometimes audacious) comping chords, redolent with funk and soul—a standout performance. Equally impressive in his own right was Adam Rogers' DICE trio powered by the uber-funky drumming of Nate Smith. Wielding a wide-open Stratocaster tone with a deft touch on whammy bar and wah-wah pedal, Rogers mixed chunky chording, bluesy bends and chromatic but lyrical phrasing that would've made Hendrix proud to have been an inspiration. The night concluded with the Jeff Beck tribute kicked off by Skolnick's muscular but nuanced reading of "Freeway Jam". The

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Assembling a two-day, 22-act music festival is no doubt something like putting together a jigsaw puzzle in which the pieces don't actually fit. Artist schedules are just one variable that certainly can force difficult decisions. Still, putting Bill Frisell's trio with guest saxophonist Greg Tardy on the smaller stage at three in the afternoon was at best a surprise. Having them overlap with Cécile McLorin Salvant on the main stage was if not an unfortunate necessity, then malignant neglect. Fortunately, the Saratoga Jazz Festival (Jun. 27-28) attracts audiences enough to keep both stages occupied.

Day one of this 49th annual event was filled with difficult choices and seemed unevenly stacked against the second. First up was a New Orleans second line from Brooklyn at 11 am to make it clear for anyone not sure where we were at. Brass Queens brought tradition, energy and taut arrangements, crowd-pleasing even before the Motown medley and Prince cover. Second was First Meeting—Gonzalo Rubalcaba (piano), Chris Potter (tenor, soprano), Larry Grenadier (bass) and Eric Harland (drums), who had encountered one another before and released a recording last year. They played an easy groupthink groove in the '60s Blue Note tradition with open flow energy. Potter stunned, especially on soprano, or when pushing his tenor into the soprano range, and his interplay with Rubalcaba suggested they were having a sublime good time. Harland and Grenadier were endlessly in-the-pocket inventive.

The first competing-stages dilemma (the two are a short walk apart, but usually fairly well sonically isolated) pitted Tyreek McDole's slightly yelping take on the male vocal tradition against Terri Lyne Carrington on the main stage. There was enough time to devote a bit to McDole before catching Carrington's Social Science playing songs off their upcoming *Trip the Night Fantastic*. It's a full band, with keys, flute, guitar, bass and three (sometimes four) singers, plus the leader's drums—not quite the same lineup, or the same sound, as on the front-and-center, heavily produced album. They sounded, arguably, even better, thanks in part to the clear and expansive sound in the amphitheater (although there was a small and persistent feedback problem throughout the weekend). The music was big and warm, falling between jazz fusion and contemporary R&B, infectious grooves messaging justice. The bluesy "Solidarity Song" was a highlight.

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tribute also included Harrison, Reid and Rogers, but even these prodigious talents were hard-pressed to match the larger-than-life presence of **Eric Gales**, who, hunched over his Stratocaster, playing left-handed and upside-down, huge hands engulfing its neck, unleashed a torrent of notes and emotion on “Goin’ Down”, then topped himself on “Cause We’ve Ended as Lovers”, finally leading the five other guitarists in a charge over Stevie Wonder’s “Superstition”.

Friday was hard to top, but Saturday offered even more. **Andy McKee**, an acolyte of the Michael Hedges school of acoustic fingerstyle, employed a gorgeous tone and unusual extended techniques, his hands and fingers dancing up, down, over and across the guitar with exquisite choreography. **Greg Koch**, a master chicken-picker, coaxed a plethora of sounds from his Telecaster, including two of the festival’s trickiest licks: a cello-like effect created by rapid rolling of the volume knob, and another executed by dragging his right thumb along a string to emit a series of rising harmonics. **Ally Venable** joined him onstage, trading riffs on Howlin’ Wolf’s “Killing Floor”, then led her own set of rockin’ blues and yet another Hendrix cover with powerful down-stroked phrases, fast strums and gritty vocals.

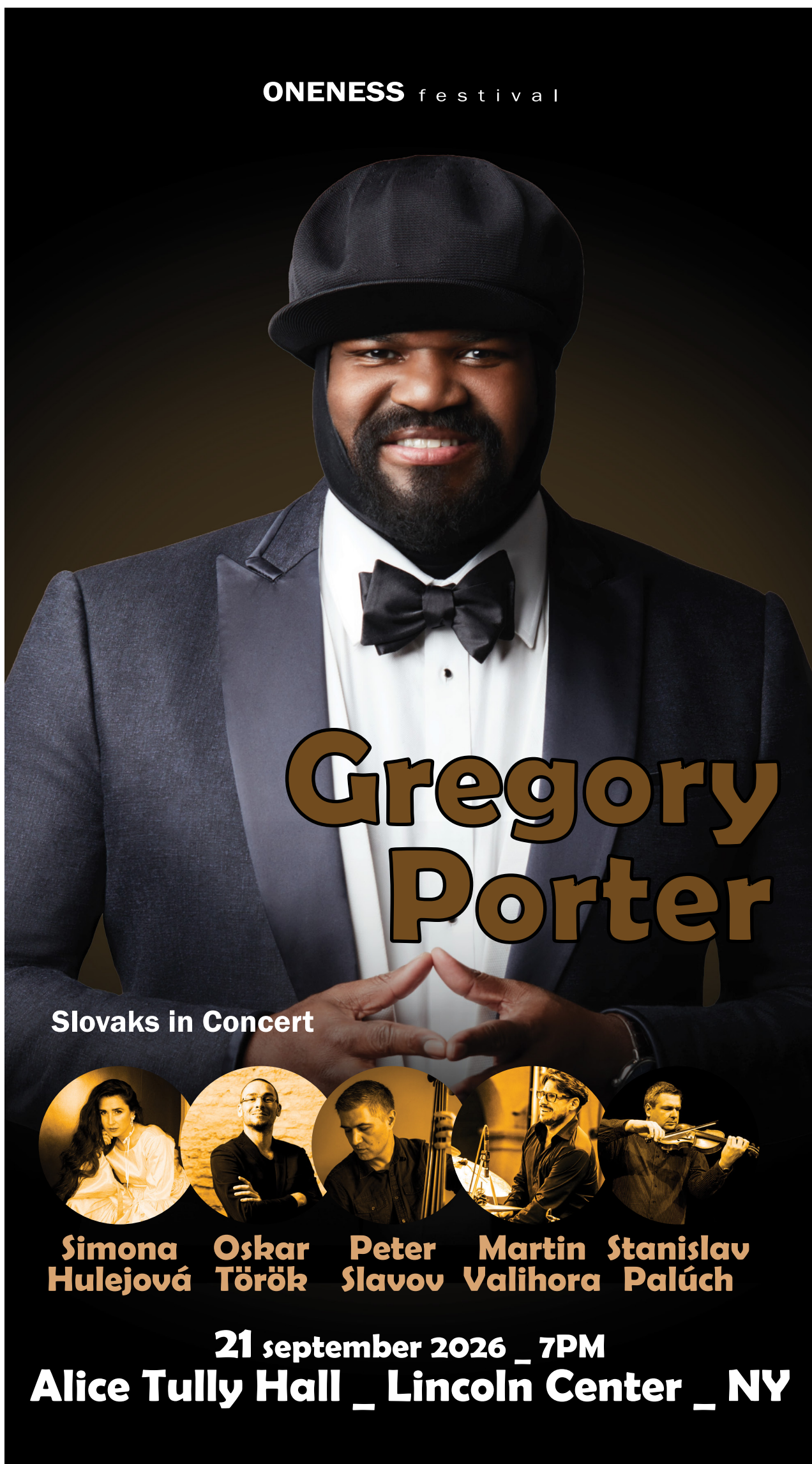
The Stardust Reunion Band presented **Joel Harrison**’s original songs with vocals by Everett Bradley, Nicki Richards and Keith Fluitt, the leader adding tasty touches on slide guitar, and **Nir Felder** a trip-hammer solo on electric. Co-curator **Alex Skolnick**’s set with his trio—Nathan Peck (bass), Matt Zebroski (drums)—was another festival highlight, showcasing his range and versatility as each number (one a fresh take on Aerosmith’s “Dream On”) morphed through a series of mood- and mode-swings, the leader executing astounding passages that belied his calm poise. **Mike Stern**’s set showed, like Scofield, that he’s still (at 73) in the prime of his powers, his damaged but in no way deterred right arm oscillating like a flywheel over rapid runs, yet equally capable of hushing the crowd with sensitive melody readings and tender chording. His guitarist-wife **Leni Stern** also earned house for her on-point soloing.

The next living legend to appear was **Bill Frisell** who, at 75, was the senior member of the septuagenarian squad. Playing a camouflage Telecaster, covering tunes including “I’m an Old Cowhand” and the James Bond theme, John Barry’s “You Only Live Twice”, his trio set was a paragon of space and decorum, though prodded by the time-warping antics of drummer Timothy Angulo. In a sea of shredders, Frisell bucked the tide by making the most of each note, his musical message heard in pregnant silences floating between notes.

The John Scofield tribute showcased a bevy of (mostly) younger talents: de la Rosa, Cardenas, Felder, Gilmore and Hekselman. Each played a Scofield tune alone and/or in duo with another guitarist, backed by Jerome Harris (bass) and Rudy Royston (drums), the latter’s simmering pulse an inspiration to all. Felder’s take on “Camp Out” was a standout. Reid opened his set with “Trouble in Mind”, a testament to the late “Blood” Ulmer, rocked Hendrix’ “Are You Experienced?”, then worked his fingers and (18!) pedals to find those storytelling tones. Last was **Al Di Meola**—at 71, the youngest senior shredder—who presented his set in two parts: first an acoustic duo with Isaac Romagosa Torrellardona (who deserves an award for most relaxed playing technique); second an electric quartet playing the high-voltage fusion he’s famous for. He too was in peak form.

Judging from the sheer quantity and high-quality of guitar excellence on display at the festival, we can cautiously, optimistically look forward to a second annual go-round.

For more info visit bklynguitarfest.com



ONENESS festival

Gregory Porter

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Simona Hulejová Oskar Török Peter Slavov Martin Valihora Stanislav Palúch

21 september 2026 _ 7PM
Alice Tully Hall _ Lincoln Center _ NY

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Festival. I’ve actually been recently traveling in African countries for months, and have found a lot of beauty, a lot of giving, a lot of generosity, a lot of altruism. The Africa we see in the news is mostly portrayed in a very negative way. However, there is hope, as Dr. Weston ebulliently proclaimed in his composition “African Sunrise”: we have a shared ancestry and humanity. We must unite in our common goal as custodians for Mother Earth. Africa, through its arts and culture, is a unifying paradigm by which all of us will benefit.

NYCJR: You have worked with many musicians. Who has stood out to you besides Randy Weston?

BLUE: Sam Rivers. I toured with his Winds of Manhattan. He did a whole tour with eleven saxophones, no rhythm section. He taught me to write in a way that made things interesting. Also, Chico Hamilton had a way of connecting with the audience, telling jokes, little stories. Then there was my first European tour, which was with Abdullah Ibrahim in 1977. One of the highlights performing with him was with Miriam Makeba in Berlin. I was blown away by her artistry, her integrity, and what she stood for as a person. I also toured with Chris McGregor from South Africa and Archie Shepp was a special guest.

NYCJR: You spent significant time in Paris as well as across Africa. How did those environments reshape your sound? Were there particular rhythms or tonalities from West Africa that became lasting elements in your musical language?

BLUE: They definitely shaped my sound. Also, my heritage: Trinidad, Jamaica, listening to the music I grew up with of R&B and funk. In Africa in the ’70s, I heard rhythms that sounded like funk, like James Brown. Musicians I heard in Mozambique reminded me of the second line of New Orleans funeral tradition music. As far as reaching people, bringing people together, rhythm is your heartbeat, rhythm is at the forefront. Rhythm in Africa is infectious: it is the heartbeat that brings people together and it’s integral to all musical genres one finds in the Motherland.

NYCJR: You play alto and soprano saxophones, flute and kalimba. Do you experience these instruments as different voices telling the same story, or do certain emotions call for a specific instrument?

BLUE: Different songs call for a different emotional voice. Some of my songs I play on more than one instrument; sometimes I feel the vibe on flute, at other times on soprano. I can tell when I’m writing a piece which instrument will fit well.

NYCJR: Let’s talk about your latest recording *Planet Bluu* (JAJA). You assembled a talented group of younger musicians plus veteran trombonist Steve Turre. You describe the album as a sonic sanctuary, free from war, racism and intolerance. Given the turbulent state of the world right now, how did creating this album feel different from your past recordings?

BLUE: *Planet Bluu* is the dream of a place where we don’t have fighting, we don’t have wars, we don’t have privilege for one people, we don’t have passports, and we don’t have ICE arresting people. Everybody’s free, everybody lives in harmony. Musicians are held in high regard because they are *guerisseurs*, healers. A lot of the music was composed from the kalimba, then I went to the piano and added the harmonic chords, a bridge.

I’m going to Morocco to play with Gnawa musicians. We’re going to honor Randy Weston. At the core of their music is healing. They hold spiritual ceremonies in which they heal people through music. My core belief is

that music is a healing force, and that’s the story behind *Planet Bluu*.

NYCJR: Your music has a very spiritual component.

BLUE: I appreciate that. Spirituality and music are synonymous for me. Randy used to say, “I’m an instrument being played by the Creator.” When I play, I (too) am a vehicle for the Creator. Jazz was born out of adversity. It’s a music of survival. Art Blakey had a beautiful saying: “Jazz washes the dust off of everyday life.” We’re going to have trials and tribulations, but music just helps us get through.

NYCJR: Critics often point to the restraint and economical phrasing in your recent work, favoring depth and space over speed. Was there a turning point where you consciously embraced this approach?

BLUE: That was not always the case. I think as you mature, you start to embrace Monk’s concept of “the note you don’t play is just as important as the note you do play.” When you’re young, you have all this energy and dexterity, you want to say a million things, you play solos, you play fast. As you get older, you find out that you can make the same statement with fewer notes. Before he died, I got a call from Frank Wess. He was a father figure to me. He said, “When you practice fast, whatever you practice fast goes out fast. It leaves you. But if you practice slowly, it stays with you.”

NYCJR: If someone listens to your music 50 years from now, what do you hope they hear beyond the notes?

BLUE: Someone who has love and forgiveness in his heart. That’s what I want them to hear through the music. That it’s music for all of us to come together as one family. And tap our feet—and have a good time.

For more info visit tkblue.com. Blue and ARAQ (African Rhythms Alumni Quintet) plays tribute to Randy Weston and Melba Liston at Marcus Garvey Park Aug. 14 (part of Jazzmobile Summerfest). Blue’s Planet Bluu is at The Django Aug. 15 and Englewood Public Library (Englewood, NJ) Aug. 20. See Calendar and 100 Miles Out.

Recommended Listening:

- Dollar Brand [Abdullah Ibrahim] Quartet—*Africa-Tears and Laughter* (Enja, 1979)
- Talib Kibwe—*Egyptian Oasis* (Cryonic, Inc.-Anaïs, 1986)
- Randy Weston—*The Spirits of Our Ancestors* (Verve, 1991)
- T.K. Blue—*Eyes of the Elders* (Arkadia Jazz, 2000)
- Randy Weston and his African Rhythms Sextet—*The Storyteller* (Motéma Music, 2009)
- T.K. Blue—*Planet Bluu* (JAJA, 2023-24)

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strumming stopped so abruptly the audience gasped in one body. With Parker and pianist Matthew Shipp—relationships going back to the late ’70s and early ’80s, respectively—Morris returned to his clean tone, clusters and snaking scales against Shipp’s octave splashes, the trio cycling in and out of rhythmic consonance without ever letting the pulse settle. For his quintet the honoree switched to bass and began playing before realizing nothing was coming out. “He’s so humble he doesn’t even plug in his bass!” cornetist Taylor Ho Bynum yelled from the audience. The night ended with an octet of his students, Morris conducting by hand signals, the ensemble deliberately never resolving, swelling on his “bring it” gesture to a grand finish. Afterward, the sidewalk filled with alumni, and as he wheeled his bass up Grand Street, people shouted his name after him: “Joe Morris!”

The circle closed two nights prior to Vision’s final day, when **DoYeon Kim**—the gayageum player who had watched Morris from inside that octet, waiting for his direction on opening night, then was featured as part of saxophonist Ingrid Laubrock’s Grammy Season—returned, this time leading her own group, Wellspring. Her band—Laura Cocks (flute), Henry Fraser (bass), Tom Rainey (drums)—sizzled under the resonance of an instrument Kim is reinventing in service of something with no obvious precedent. “Let’s get on fire!” she yelled, then launched a piece that felt like a manic march. Between the bookends, the reinventions kept arriving.

Bassist **Luke Stewart**’s Silt Trio, augmented by Chris Williams (trumpet) and Angelica Sanchez (piano), premiered a Wadada Leo Smith composition, while Smith witnessed from the front row the spaciousness and simmering fire, its James Baldwin narration detonating into free energy. (The venue’s strict ten o’clock curfew bumped Kaoru Watanabe’s set entirely, a casualty of Arts For Art’s chronic surplus of programming and long search for a home that suits its loose relationship to clock-based time.) In duo, pianist **Craig Taborn** and cellist **Tomeka Reid** (her register entirely shifted from the Morris strings set) built an instant composition by accretion. The former placed noisemakers on piano strings, while the latter bowed so vigorously she produced only the ghost of a sound. Electronicist **Val Jeanty** and Nicholson Parker (dance and spoken word) made the week’s most singular hybrid: face paint, a red branch sprouting from Nicholson’s head, drum pads that sounded like the ancient instruments they sampled before fracturing into dublike dissipation, folkloric ritual threaded through technological gossamer. **James Brandon Lewis** with **Alexis Marcelo** (piano) closed out night three with tenor blasts and gospel animism, braids of saxophone climbing into the stratosphere. “I needed that,” more than one person said on the way out.

“Are you ready for a cosmic future?” Nicholson Parker asked, introducing a band led by 102-year-old **Marshall Allen**, with Burrell (piano), Parker (bass), Andrew Cyrille (drums) and Darius Jones (alto). Allen came out front with a blare, his synthesizer wobbling the music into orbit. At one point the whole band locked onto a single held note—a halcyon moment of beatitude. The nominal leader stood periodically to play, projecting a power that argued with his birth certificate. Immediately following was drummer **Trae Crudup**’s Milford Graves tribute, setting a small statue on the stage before erupting into a drum solo. Shara Lunon joined, her voice fractured through live electronics, narrating the South Carolina Negro Act of 1740—the law that banned enslaved people from drums—until the set (with saxophonist Alfredo Colon and bassist Gervis Miles) became a séance: a history that outlawed drumming, answered by drumming.

The festival’s finale belonged to **Daniel Carter**. It began with him alone on alto—that instantly recognizable instrumental voice, a meditation of fragile beauty. Parker and Shipp joined to form their drumless trio, Seraphic Light, hovering in delicate space. Then the stage filled, becoming Black Octopus, with **Hamid Drake** (who had performed two nights prior with Parker as the Black Cherry duo) among a crowd of the younger players Carter has spent decades seeking out, thriving on the new, shunning anything reified. A large improvising orchestra honoring the least front-and-center figure in the music made the point: the freedom Carter embodies isn’t a solo property, it’s a condition you create for other people.

In one of the films at AFA the night before the festival officially began, Charles Gayle had said it: “Music is sharing. Sharing your life.” Joe Morris codified it; Daniel Carter lives it; the festival, now at 30, keeps building rooms where both can happen. Tell them what they missed.

For more info visit artsforart.org

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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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