

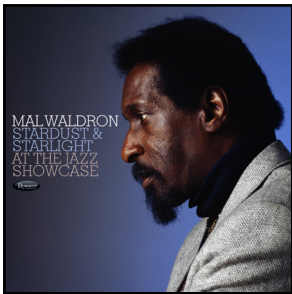
**Memento**  
**Marilyn Crispell/Anders Jormin** (ECM)  
by David Cristol

Closely associated with the ECM label, Swedish bassist Anders Jormin has appeared on 30+ album releases since 1993, starting with *Dona Nostra*, which appears to be pocket trumpeter Don Cherry’s final studio album; American audiences might best know Jormin from a string of Charles Lloyd’s mid ’90s recordings for ECM. Pianist Marilyn Crispell has been as, if not more, prolific within the same timeframe, including a recent partnership with saxophonist Joe Lovano and his remarkable Trio Tapestry trilogy. The first encounter between the elegant and sensitive Jormin and like-minded Crispell can be heard on the former’s *In Winds, In Light* from over twenty years ago, an album whose structure is programmed, opening with four free improvisations before transitioning into written compositions by both musicians.

Titled after its track with the shortest running time, their newly-released *Memento* offers music of the thresholds—elusive, inconceivably nuanced, immune to ostentation and overstatement. Its 38 minutes of mostly modal improvisations and compositions explore the notion of memory and loss. While “memento” has come to be most used meaning a souvenir in English, the original Latin means “remember” and as the well-known phrase, *memento mori*: “remember you must die.” Thus, Crispell offers a tribute to the young victims of current wars, and another one to the late bassist and past frequent collaborator, Gary Peacock (the heartbreaking “Dragonfly” for solo piano closes the album). Other album selections stem from the pianist’s recollection of a visit to the coasts of Cornwall to newer versions of songs recorded in previous eras with different setups and instrumentations.

An antidote to our mindlessly noisy times, *Memento* best exerts its magic through focused and exclusive listening: not background music by any stretch, its sparseness and lightness of touch only lead to an increased and sometimes overwhelming intensity of emotion. This musical impressionism strikes a perfect balance between clarity and abstraction, joy and sadness. It’s one for the ages.

For more info visit [ecmrecords.com/product](http://ecmrecords.com/product). Crispell is at *The Maverick* (Woodstock, NY) Aug. 22 (with the CMS Legacy Ensemble). See 100 Miles Out.



**Stardust & Starlight: At The Jazz Showcase**  
**Mal Waldron** (Resonance)  
by John Sharpe

Mal Waldron’s *Stardust & Starlight: At The Jazz Showcase*—a previously-unreleased live recording (available as a limited edition double-vinyl or single CD) drawn from club owner Joe Segal’s personal

archive documenting a weeklong engagement in August 1979—captures the pianist at a revealing juncture, balancing his austere late style with a surprisingly direct program of standards. Waldron’s career followed an atypical arc, and after a drug-induced breakdown in 1963, he had to relearn his instrument, and gradually developed a much darker, more percussive style that leaned towards the avant garde. This recording, with only two originals, stands as an outlier in his output at the time, perhaps a nod to the jazz club environment as well as the practicalities of working with limited rehearsal time and a house band of Steve Rodby (two years prior to the bassist joining and spending the following three decades with guitarist Pat Metheny) and Wilbur Campbell (the legendary Chicago drummer, who frequently accompanied such Windy City royalty as saxophonists Johnny Griffin and Von Freeman). However, Waldron’s sense of time—his *own* time—remained so strong that he didn’t really need assistance: he performs three of the nine tracks entirely unaccompanied and a fourth nearly so.

The album opens with a brooding rendition of the pianist’s own “All Alone”, conjured from simple ingredients: somber chords and shimmering right-hand tremolos. Moments of consolation and desolation vie with one another in a deeply affecting performance. Rodby enters just before the close, with imaginative, melodic touches. Waldron’s other composition, his well-known “Fire Waltz” (originally recorded on the pianist’s 1961 *The Quest* with Eric Dolphy and Booker Ervin and again the same year live *At The Five Spot* with Dolphy and Booker Little), proves almost as compelling. He digs into distinctive minimalist variations, building tension and subsequent release in a miniature version of his approach to freer settings. Even on “All God’s Chillun Got Rhythm” and “Stella by Starlight”, taken straight with bass and drums, the pianist sustains repeated motifs just that bit longer than might be expected, creating an elevating frisson of discomfort.

At the heart of the album lie three solo pieces. Waldron renders “I Thought About You” as a ballad packed with drama, while he litters a dancing “It Could Happen to You” with playful quotes, fleetingly alighting on “Oh! Susanna” and Thelonious Monk’s “Locomotive” among others, before he turns to the real thing, as he carves out his own spaces in a close reading of “Round Midnight”. The pianist takes a back seat on the final two cuts, “Old Folks” and “Stardust”, on which bebop royalty Sonny Stitt (on alto saxophone) poignantly holds court, alternately stately and note-filled, to the audible delight of the audience. *Stardust & Starlight* catches Waldron, whose centennial was last August, at his most relaxed, but he still twists familiar material into a private conception of mood, memory and time.

For more info visit [resonancerecords.org](http://resonancerecords.org)



**The Latin Side of Chick Corea**  
**Conrad Herwig** (Savant)  
by Pierre Giroux

Trombonist Conrad Herwig has never treated his *Latin Side of...* series as a mere exercise in rearrangement, and *Latin Side of Chick Corea* is no exception. From his new album’s opening bars, it is clear that these performances are fresh interpretations rather than

affectionate reproductions. Corea’s music has always welcomed rhythmic adventure. While the honoree’s melodies remain instantly recognizable, Herwig and co-arranger Bill O’Connell, surround them with vibrant Afro-Caribbean rhythms, inventive harmonies and room for the musicians to stretch, making familiar material sound surprisingly new.

The album’s ten compositions span every stage of Corea’s remarkable career and receive thoughtful, imaginative treatment from a stellar group led by Herwig, with Craig Handy (soprano, tenor, flute), Alex Norris (trumpet, flugelhorn), O’Connell (piano), Ruben Rodriguez (bass), Robby Ameen (drums) and Mauricio Herrera (congas). Opener is “Matrix”, a clever programming choice, signaling that this is not a “greatest hits” tribute centered on “Spain”, a number which is this tribute’s closing track. By saving that number for the end, Herwig builds anticipation and lets listeners appreciate the depth of Corea’s catalog before arriving at his most celebrated composition. As for “Matrix”, one of Corea’s early gems, it bristles from the opening notes and quickly establishes the album’s adventurous spirit. The ensemble attacks the tune with confidence, transforming its post-bop complexity into an exhilarating Afro-Latin groove. One of Corea’s earliest and most sophisticated compositions, “Tones for Joan’s Bones”, receives a thoughtful reimagining. The intricate harmonic structure remains intact, yet the Latin rhythmic undercurrent lends the piece unexpected warmth and buoyancy. Herwig, alongside Handy on tenor and O’Connell, offers solo interjections that unfold with graceful inevitability. “Humpty Dumpty” is among Corea’s most rhythmically playful creations. Herwig, Handy and O’Connell are again front and center, delivering solos filled with unexpected twists and shifting accents, as the ensemble showcases its

**R E C O M M E N D E D**  
**N E W**  
**R E L E A S E S**

- **Alternative Guitar Summit—Honoring Pat Martino, Volume 2** (HighNote)
- **Amiri Baraka** (Leroi Jones)—*New Music-New Poetry* (Modern Harmonic)
- **Bobby Bradford, Mark Dresser, Hafez Modirzadeh—Sonic House Reunion** (NoBusiness)
- **Caktus x OJKOS—Øyeblikk** (Sonic Transmission)
- **Paul Carlon Trio—Between Us Three** (Truth Revolution Recording Collective)
- **Christopher Dammann—Dead Words** (Shifting Paradigm)
- **Daniel Erdmann’s Thérapie de Couple—I wanna hold your hand, François** (BMC)
- **Hayes Greenfield—Painting in Sound** (Sunnyside)
- **Alden Hellmuth—Tether** (Leiter)
- **Simon Moullier—Ceiba** (s/r)
- **Naïssam Jalal—Landscapes of Eternity** (Les Coleurs Du Son)
- **Per Texas Johansson Orkester Omnitonal—På Musikaliska Kvarteret** (Moserobie)
- **Virginia MacDonald—In Search Of...** (Cellar Music)
- **Elsa Nilsson Band of Pulses—Liminal** (Adhyâropa)
- **Nite Bjuti—Minwi** (Intakt)
- **Linda May Han Oh/Melissa Aldana—Beneath Lifted Skies** (Biophilia)
- **Cécile McLorin Salvant—With Every Breath I Take** (Nonesuch)
- **Oliver-Smith Incomparables—Stomp Your Stuff** (Turtle Bay)
- **Smithsonian Jazz Masterworks Orchestra—Ellington Masterworks** (MCG Jazz)
- **Nate Wooley Columbia Icefield—A Silence Opens** (Pyroclastic)

precision and imagination. “Windows”, one of Corea’s most harmonically beautiful compositions, serves as the emotional centerpiece of this release. The leader here treats it with sensitivity, and Norris contributes a thoughtful flugelhorn solo that complements its theme.

“Spain” arrives not as the obligatory, closing crowd-pleaser but as the culmination of the musical journey. The familiar anthem bursts with renewed vitality, and the exemplary solos by Herwig, Handy and O’Connell bring the session to its exhilarating conclusion.

For more info visit [jazzdepot.com](http://jazzdepot.com). Herwig is at *The Pocket Aug. 10, 17, 24, 31* (with Mingus Big Band) and *Birdland Theater Aug. 14-16* (with Mingus Orchestra). He is also at *Montauk Playhouse Cultural Center* (Montauk, NY) Aug. 8 (part of Hamptons Jazz Fest). See Calendar and 100 Miles Out.



**Breathe**  
**Miki Yamanaka** (Cellar Music)  
by Ken Dryden

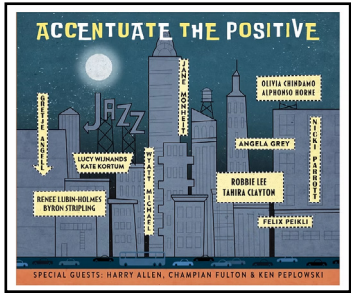
The Japanese-American pianist Miki Yamanaka has been a creative force in recent years with her steady output of inspired originals interpreted by collaborators who bring out the essence of her works, in addition to touring worldwide and occasionally playing in other groups. Her band has included drummer Jimmy Macbride (who is also her husband) and bassist Tyrone Allen, while this session adds tenor and soprano saxophonist Nicole Glover, a close friend of hers and another rising star who has shared the bandstand with the pianist.

Most of the selections are originals, a mix of the leader’s new and old works. The intense post-bop “Indigo” includes an intricate unison line by the saxophonist and bassist, with Yamanaka’s driving piano and McBride’s prominent percussion. The late organist Akiko Tsuruga, a good friend of Yamanaka’s, composed “Dancing Cats”, a funky, soulful piece that is a natural fit for Glover’s spirited tenor. The pianist’s fiery “Tucson” celebrates a city that she loves to visit, as this twisting, uptempo theme finds her burning on all cylinders with the explosive solos that she trades with Glover, while Allen’s interactive bass and Macbride’s rhythms audibly inspire their bandmates. The title track, a gorgeous ballad, is dedicated to the pianist’s father who died last autumn. The spaciousness of the composition allows the listener to catch the subtlety of each player’s contribution (e.g. Glover’s burnished tenor solo certainly invites comparisons to masters such as Ben Webster).

Yamanaka revisits her older work “Dandelion Puff”, which she recorded on her 2012 debut release *Songs Without Lyrics*. This trio arrangement reveals how she has grown as an improviser, utilizing space and restraint in her playing to showcase the facets within this early compositional gem. “Pre-school” represents the pianist’s more-quirky side, as she inserts Thelonious Monk-like humor, sudden twists and a constantly-shifting tempo. Glover adds a suitably playful soprano solo. “Delayed Flight” is a riot for anyone who has been exasperated with repeated travel delays. The leader, along with the saxophonist and bassist, whistle in unison in the introduction, then Glover handles the boarding announcements in the interim as the piece tries to take off. The cadence, however, suggests that

passengers received yet another announcement of dreaded delay or even cancellation, culminating a delightful session that retains its sounds of surprise with each repeated listening.

For more info visit [cellarlive.com](http://cellarlive.com). Yamanaka is at *Birdland Theater through Aug. 2*. She is also at *Smalls Aug. 14* (with Willie Martinez) and Aug. 28, as well as *Mezzrow Aug. 30* (with Jamile Staevie Ayres). See Calendar.



**Accentuate The Positive**  
**Various Artists** (Songbook Ink)  
by Marilyn Lester

The latest release from Jazz at the Ballroom/Songbook Ink, *Accentuate the Positive* is a collection of songs from the ’30s and ’40s in celebration of America’s 250th birthday, featuring 21 tunes that bolstered American spirits during The Great Depression and World War II. The multiple vocal artists contributing to the album are also graced by the presence of the late clarinet and tenor saxophone master, Ken Peplowski who, on a big burner of Ellington’s “It Don’t Mean a Thing (If It Ain’t Got That Swing)” along with Norwegian clarinetist, Felix Peikli, created a legacy-making, breathtaking, whirlwind version of it. Peplowski’s brilliance is also apparent on a sweet delivery of “That’s All” (featuring singer Lucy Wijnands), with a clarinet button beautifully ending the tune. Appearing throughout is Harry Allen (tenor) and on two tracks, Klas Lindquist (alto).

In addition to Wijnands, vocalists on the album include Jane Monheit, Tahira Clayton, Kate Kortum, Angela Grey, Wyatt Michael, Renee Lubin-Holmes, Gretje Angell, Olivia Chindamo, bassist Nicki Parrott, trumpeters Alphonso Horne and Byron Stripling and pianist Robbie Lee (the latter provides features on all the vocal tracks). Horne offers a sunny “On the Sunny Side of the Street” featuring his clear, clarion playing, while Stripling’s fine baritone and bright trumpet brought the famously minor key “Blue Skies” into an uptempo, happy place. Rising star Kate Kortum (winner of the 2025 Sarah Vaughan International Jazz Vocal Competition), with a hint of her Texas accent intact, delivers a relaxed but swinging “Stompin’ at the Savoy”, plus a lively “It Had to Be You”.

Last month six shows at Birdland (Jul. 3–5) were timed for the Fourth of July weekend and presented in memory of Peplowski (who passed away in February at the age of 66). Appearing at the July 4 second set were vocalists Chindamo, Grey and Michael, each performing three numbers apiece, plus vocalist-pianist Lee. Also on board were Peikli, Liany Mateo (bass) and Bryan Carter (drums). From the album, Chindamo sang an uptempo “Let’s Face the Music and Dance”; crooner Michael reprised his bouncy “Too Marvelous for Words”; and Grey, with Peikli, offered “I’ll Be Seeing You”. Lee sang two numbers from the release: a slinky “Makin’ Whoopee” and “You’d Be So Nice to Come Home To”. Peikli with “Moonlight Serenade” no doubt made the spirit of Peplowski proud.

Those titular wise words of Johnny Mercer, “accentuate the positive,” are as necessary now as ever before. This album, as intended in title and music, is not only an antidote to a country now deeply divided, but stands as a terrific release for those who love songbook standards beautifully arranged and executed.

For more info visit [songbook-ink.com](http://songbook-ink.com)

# UPCOMING SHOWS

AUG 11–16

**DIZZY GILLESPIE BIG BAND**

AUG 17–18

**SIMON PHILLIPS & PROTOCOL 6**

AUG 20–23

**HIROMI: THE PIANO QUINTET FT. PUBLIQUARTET**

AUG 24

**STEPHAN MOCCIO**

AUG 25–30

**ARTURO SANDOVAL**

SEPT 1–2

**BTRFLY**

SEPT 3–4

**GHOST-NOTE**

SEPT 11–13

**DAVID MURRAY QUARTET**

SEPT 15–16

**THEO CROKER X NICHOLAS DALEY: SONIC TAPESTRY**

SEPT 18–20

**CHRIS DAVE x MESHELL DEGEOCELLO x ERIC GALES**

131 W 3RD ST, NEW YORK, NY 10012  
212.475.8592 • [BLUENOTEJAZZ.COM](http://BLUENOTEJAZZ.COM)