

UNEARTHED GEM



Portraits at the Penthouse: Live in Seattle
Bill Evans (Resonance)
by Marc Medwin

Augmenting the already impressive catalog producer and Resonance co-president, Zev Feldman, has amassed, *Portraits at the Penthouse: Live in Seattle* is another variable in the ever-intriguing Bill Evans equation. These superb 60-year-old recordings from Seattle's Penthouse were made for broadcast by radio host, Jim Wilke, and his archive affords this glimpse into a trio previously undocumented in the Evans discography.

In May 1966, the trio of Evans, Eddie Gomez (bass) and Joe Hunt (drums), formed the previous month, arrived for a residency at the Penthouse. While there's no shortage of Evans/Gomez documentation, *Portraits at the Penthouse* is now the earliest. It's also the only album to include Hunt, who played with Evans on and off for about a year. As with all of Feldman's lavish packages, multiple perspectives purvey these historical details. We learn that Hunt and Gomez would practice together, and

the relationship is palpable. While Hunt expresses some discomfort with the trio's take on "Autumn Leaves", Gomez' is one of the only solos on the album eliciting applause from a rapt audience. Dig the two-note phrases the bassist initiates beginning at 1:32, Evans laying out completely, and the whiplash pace with which Hunt echoes them. The polite audience acknowledgement ushers a slightly bewildered Evans back in, but like those succinct Max Roach solos enhancing Charlie Parker records, bassist and drummer have made their point.

It's a magnificent trio. They can swing like mad, as the abbreviated but poignant "Nardis" Evans solo, drenched in percussive blues and dyadic syncopation, makes abundantly clear. Far from what the Miles Davis-penned tune would become in later years, this trio seethes with distilled energy. But they can just as easily dig deep into a ballad, as happens on a luscious "'Round Midnight" rendering. Hunt's brushwork is exquisite and precise, mirroring the nuance informing Gomez' sinewy slide within the first minute and Evans' always multihued articulations. The trio rides each minute change via arcs and angles, and their gestural symbiosis is quietly stunning. It could be posited that restraint governs the dialogue a bit too completely, but the music-making equals that from any of Evans' best-known trios. In anticipation of the pianist's centennial (three years from this month), there should and hopefully will be more from this group in the catalog.

For more info visit resonancerecords.org. "A Celebration of Bill Evans" tribute is at *The Pocket Aug. 12*. See Calendar.



La plus belle saison
Emilie-Claire Barlow (Empress Music Group)
by Marilyn Lester

Canadian singer-arranger Emilie-Claire Barlow, solidly established up north for over 25 years, is Toronto-born but currently moves between her hometown, Montreal and Southern Mexico. Along the way she developed a connection to the music of the Francophone province of Québec, releasing her 15th studio album, *La plus belle saison*, sung entirely in French.

The album's eleven tracks (all by Canadian and French songwriters) blend chanson with samba, folk, pop and jazz. The opener is a lively, traditional musette, "Dans les rues de Québec", written by one of France's most iconic singer-songwriters, Charles Trenet. Guitar-driven, with a lively Lex French trumpet feature, it sets a mood and reveals Barlow's smoky vocal tone and assured delivery. In contrast, a modern take of French *amore* follows with a Latin-tinged "Quelles sont les chances" (uncredited) in which Barlow and guest vocalist Damien Robitaille offer a flirtatious duet.

Samba appears in "J'ai rencontré l'homme de ma vie" (Luc Plamondon, François Cousineau) and pop-funk in "Jerrycan" (Anique Granger)—a highly contemporary, percussion-driven tune with hip

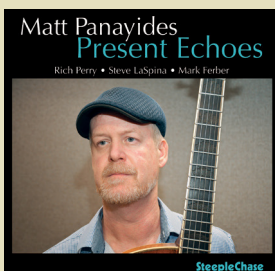
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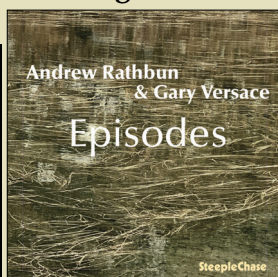
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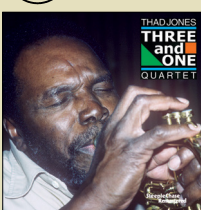
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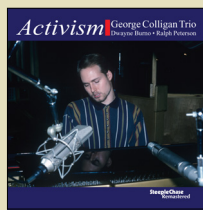
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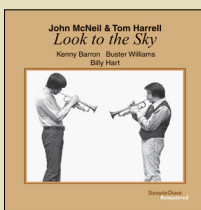
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Nat Adderley Jr. Trio

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8/23: Union Center Jazz Festival @Union Country Arts Center (Union, NJ)

8/29: Charlie Parker Jazz Festival @Marcus Garvey Park (Harlem, NY)

9/27: White Plains Jazz Festival (White Plains, NY)

...I hope you can come to the show-s! *Took So Long*, Nat Adderley Jr.'s **first-ever** album as leader (which spent five weeks at number 1 in Jazz Week charts) will be available for purchase.

NATADDERLEYJR.COM