

GLOBE UNITY



Trilogie + 15: A Tribute to Albert Mangelsdorff
Frankfurt Radio Big Band, Nils Wogram,
Jim McNeely (Nwog)

Parabólico: Reflections on Gilberto Gil, Vol. 1
Gaia Wilmer Large Ensemble (Sunnyside)

Jagged Edges & Elegant Lines:
The Music of Ayn Inserto
WDR Big Band with Sean Jones (Summit)
by Daniel A. Brown

This month we explore three recent releases from the international big band scene: two offer tribute, while the third offers us insight into the vitality of contemporary jazz composition. With their diversity of approaches and material, each demonstrates that the jazz big band—an entity emblematic of the sophistication and compositional freedom of jazz—remains in good standing.

A key liberator of 20th-century European jazz from the influence of its American precedents, German trombonist Albert Mangelsdorff (1928-2005) is honored in *Trilogie + 15: A Tribute to Albert Mangelsdorff*. In this live concert recording from 2018, the Frankfurt Radio Big Band, featuring conductor-arranger Jim McNeely (whose one-year death anniversary is this month) and

trombonist Nils Wogram, offers an impressive large-scale reimagining of *Trilogie – Live!*, the one-off 1977 summit between Mangelsdorff, electric bassist Jaco Pastorius and drummer Alphonse Mouzon. Here “Trilogie” begins with droning, low-register multiphonics from Wogram, then opens into its core heraldic theme; the performance is prodded along with tasteful arpeggios by deft bassist Hans Glawischnig. The minor-second vamp of the original “Foreign Fun” is transformed into a swirling, hallucinatory dirge with rising and falling solo turns in the style of a phantasmagoric Mingus piece. “Accidental Meeting” is a kaleidoscope of timbres and song forms, with each section of the ensemble offering tonal and melodic ideas. It is nice to see a somewhat obscure album from a half-century ago receive this kind of recognition, and the playing and arranging throughout *Trilogie + 15* make it a success.

A tribute to a living legend, *Parabólico: Reflections on Gilberto Gil, Vol. 1* features the Gaia Wilmer Large Ensemble honoring the now-84-year-old Brazilian singer-songwriter and political exile-turned-progressive politician. Brazilian saxophonist, composer and conductor Gaia Wilmer has previously recorded tributes to Egberto Gismonti and Caetano Veloso; here, her 19-strong ensemble (which includes members of Darcy James Argue’s Secret Society and the Afro-Latin Jazz Orchestra), and guest vocalist-percussionist Mônica Salmaso, interpret seven Gil compositions. Elegiac opener “Overture: O Nascer De Cada Dia” floats along on a cloud-bed of woodwinds and soft brass, gradually buffeted by piano and bass. Clocking

in at nearly 12 minutes, “Oriente” gives the band a chance to flex their chops; bold, shifting, call-and-response passages are met with equal confidence by Salmaso’s vocal performance. “Parabolicamará” offers another gentle, pensive foray into the grandeur of Gil, with darting arpeggios dancing over the bedrock of syncopated rhythms.

Jagged Edges & Elegant Lines: The Music of Ayn Inserto features the Cologne, Germany-based WDR Big Band and trumpeter Sean Jones performing original works by Singaporean-American composer-bandleader Inserto to impressive effect. Inserto has described her compositions as being “either on the beat or off the beat.” The album’s ten compositions reveal this to be true. Opener “Eshel Sketch” uses shifting chromaticism, the syncopated horn lines breaking into an equally unpredictable swinging section for solos, including a blazing turn by Jones. “Down a Rabbit Hole” is a potent slice of postmodern jazz composition, taking a minor-key vamp and fractalizing it into altogether new rhythmic forms. The unison lines of “The Artist”, with its subdued drum beat and alternating melodic blasts from the brass frontline and the piano and bass, coaxes Jones to deliver savvy trumpet lines across the instrument’s full register. In total, *Jagged Edges & Elegant Lines* lives up to its title, providing a worthy mix of unpredictable rhythms and melodic ideas.

For more info visit nwog-records.com, sunnysiderecords.com and summitrecords.com. The Gaia Wilmer album release concert is at Dizzy’s Club Sep. 11-13. See Calendar.

MIDDLESEX
COUNTY



SEPT 23 – 26, 2026
FREE
middlesexcountyjazzfestival.org

Wed, Sept 23 | 7:00 – 9:30pm | WOODBRIDGE *Parker Press Park, 400 Rahway Ave.*
Shayna Steele Quintet • Eli Yamin Jazz & Blues Band • Woodbridge HS Jazz Choir

Thu, Sept 24 | 5:30 – 8:30pm | NEW BRUNSWICK *Liberty Square Park, 150 Neilson St.*
Camille Thurman with the Darrell Green Quartet • Cocomama

Fri, Sept 25 | 7:00 – 8:45pm | CARTERET *Performing Arts Center, 46 Washington St.*
Lance Bryant & Shout! Big Band • Jeff Levine

Sat, Sept 26 | 5:30 – 9:45pm | METUCHEN *Metuchen High School, 400 Grove Ave*
Mingus Big Band • Dave Schumacher & Cubeye
Metuchen High School (MHS) Jazz Ensemble and MHS Orchestra • Metuchen Dance Centre



Grant funding has been provided by the Middlesex County Board of County Commissioners through a grant award from the Middlesex County Cultural and Arts Trust Fund.

