



Join Us To See Our

September

LINEUP

including some of your favorite artists!



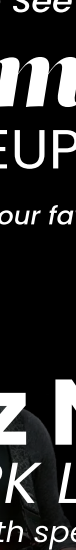
Oz Noy
MARK LETTIERI
 with special guests

Thursday, September 10th at 8:30pm



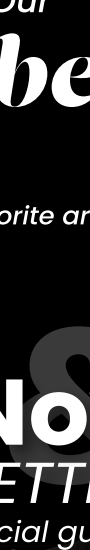
Stanley
JORDAN

September 11th & 12th at 8:30pm



Adam
HAWLEY

Friday, September 18th at 8:30pm



A Concert Honoring
Pat
MARTINO
 featuring 11 amazing performers!

featuring Nir Felder, Oz Noy, Dave Stryker, Adam Rogers, Paul Bollenbeck, Ed Cherry, Sheryl Bailey, Joel Harrison, Alain Mednard, Rez Abbasi, & Jeff Miles

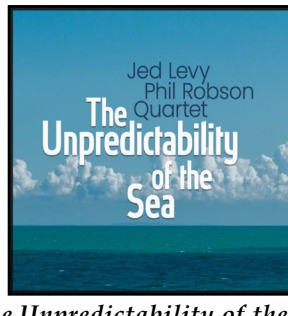
Saturday, September 19th at 8:30pm



Check out our website to get the latest updates on upcoming shows!

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1650 Broadway + 51st · New York · NY · 10019
 Below Ellen's Stardust Diner!



The Unpredictability of the Sea
Jed Levy-Phil Robson Quartet (Livia)
by Scott Yanow

Tenor saxophonist Jed Levy has worked with Jaki Byard, Ron McClure, Jack McDuff, Chico O'Farrill, Peter Leitch, Hendrik Meurkens and Mike Clark, recording at least a dozen albums of his own along the way. He has a mellow tone and a relaxed style even when playing fast double-time runs. Levy met British guitarist Phil Robson at a New York club and for a time their quartet performed in NYC, San Francisco and Europe. During the COVID-19 era, Robson (who has worked with David Liebman, Benn Clatworthy, Claire Martin, Alex Dankworth and Christine Tobin) moved to Ireland. But since Levy and Robson enjoyed working together (the two have similar styles), they recently put together a new quartet with English bassist Mark Hodgson (formerly with Bill Bruford's Earthworks) and the prolific Italian drummer Roberto Gatto to record their first album together.

Performing five songs apiece by Robson and Levy, the quartet could be said to be playing modern cool jazz. While none of the originals' melodies will stick in one's mind or are particularly hummable, they nonetheless offer inventive chord changes that challenge musician and listener alike. Other than an occasional uptempo number such as "Now", the music is generally a bit melancholy and laid back, most obviously on the mournful "Love Loss" and the brooding "Why" (the latter a response to gun violence in schools, Levy overdubbing on several tenor saxophones).

While Hodgson has a few solos and Gatto gets a spot on "3 Chord Trick" (the drummer also contributes a memorable introduction to the title track), they are heard primarily in the background, offering quiet support of the session's co-leaders. Robson's playing behind Levy blends in well and gives the saxophonist a comfortable foundation no matter how complex the tune. Although the pieces are more modern (at times the lead voices are a little reminiscent of the saxophone/guitar pairing of Lee Konitz and Jimmy Raney) the quartet here creates cool-toned music that generates heat just below the surface.

For more info visit liviarecords.com. Levy is at The Django Sep. 13. See Calendar.



in this body
Sparklmami (Verve/slowplay)
by Sophia Valera Heinecke

From the opening moments of *in this body*, Sparklmami's debut release, listeners are lifted up. A radio dial spinning across worlds of rhythm, memory and desire, the music is crisp yet carries listeners in a dreamy, wash, cinematic in its timing and its emotional

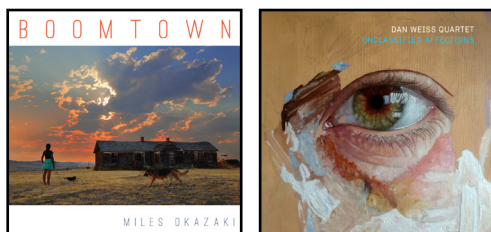
breadth. William Corduroy's bass gives a sense that you've walked onto a soundstage, the star of a show, but it's Sparklmami, the audacious conductor, who serves as a guide across their reliable narratives, improvisations and compositions.

Josh Jessen's keyboards and synths are this album's connective tissue, guiding the music smoothly between moments of reflection and points of action. "Vaga Interlude" establishes an air of mystery, blending futuristic sounds with echoes of memory, while the Bembé rhythm evoked on "Penso en Voce" adds a vibrant pulse. On "Grounded", saxophonist Kenneth Leftridge Jr. offers a wistful rebuttal to stagnation, as this sonic world is not one trapped in nostalgia. Over a beat that flourishes into something like samba, the leader plays with the double meaning of being grounded: are we children being punished or are we holding it down in the midst of wave after wave of chaos? "5 am" wakes up with a punchy bass lead-in and fades out mid-thought, the last vibrations of Sparklami's voice letting us know there is no resolution. Tracks that fade in and out (the album's signature) seem to represent something eternal. We as listeners are privileged to tune into one little piece of it.

Voice charts compel shifts from station to station. Sparklmani nudges the dial, scanning through the soundtrack of their life, traversing spoken-word articulation with a formal, almost British lilt, so different from cantando, which drips with pleasure and from the jazz singing that ricochets from the subconscious. Some tracks, such as "quisiera", contain many shifts; it begins with a whimper of classical piano, then dissolves into gentle bass, a resigned doo-wop stroll into an exclamation, "ay mi madreita". Jessen's keyboard textures swirl with the vocals, pulling from wash to wakefulness. This movement between languages, literal and figurative, embodies the album's central motif: the soundtrack of a life, ever evolving and borderless, is both reality and fantasy. A crisp 24 minutes leaves you wanting more.

in this body is an album that puts Sparklmami in your ear and keeps them on your mind, inviting you to savor every note and every memory it awakens.

For more info visit store.ververecords.com. The album release concert is at Central Park Summerstage Sep. 2 (part of "Verve's 70th Anniversary"). See Calendar.



Boomtown
Miles Okazaki (Pi Recordings)
Unclassified Affections
Dan Weiss (Pi Recordings)
by Tom Greenland

Guitarist Miles Okazaki and drummer Dan Weiss have been hanging out, socially and artistically, since they met as students at Manhattan School of Music in 1998. In addition to expertise in mainstream jazz practices, they share an affinity for ulterior influences, such as Indian and additive rhythms, as well as eclectic compositional approaches derived from the graphic, plastic, visual and literary arts. Each has a new record out (*Boomtown* and *Unclassified Affections*, respectively) on which the other appears. Both records, not surprisingly, are full of surprises.

Like many a science fiction writer, Okazaki understands that constructing novel, fanciful worlds takes time, patience and close attention to detail, small choices having potentially large consequences. Two of his previous trilogies of albums explored two

BOXED SET

**Verve Records: The Sound of America
Various (Verve)
by Marilyn Lester**

This year, powerhouse jazz label Verve celebrates its 70th anniversary, and this thoughtfully-curated boxed set of music has been released to mark the occasion. And what a job it must have been, compiling tracks for this 4-LP (180 heavyweight vinyl) or 2-CD collection. That task was accomplished by co-producer and Norman Granz biographer, Tad Hershorn, who also wrote the liner notes. Record producer and Verve founder, Granz, was an impresario to be reckoned with. By 1956, he had already established himself in the jazz world, producing as well as managing a few independent labels, including Clef and Norgran. Famously, he created Verve to provide a safe and secure home for Ella Fitzgerald, whose *Song Books* series for the label remains one of its greatest achievements. By the time Granz sold Verve to MGM in 1961, he'd established a stable of iconic figures, including Billie Holiday, Charlie Parker, Oscar Peterson, Louis Armstrong, Dizzy Gillespie, Sister Rosetta Tharpe and many, many others.

Verve was more than just a cool label: Granz made advances in production, with larger commercial possibilities in mind. He championed high-fidelity sound and released his albums with upmarket, distinctive artwork. Verve artists also benefited from a large degree of artistic freedom. That largesse was canny on Granz' part, as it led to a greater spectrum of artistic creativity, which listeners still enjoy to this day. The collection is wide-ranging; there are vocal tracks, instrumental tracks (including Charlie Parker with strings), Beatnik poetry and stand-up

comedy. The four LPs here each feature two sides of four tracks, while the two CDs contain 15 tracks apiece, all the work of "golden age" artists.

It's fair to start with Granz' pre-Verve inspiration, a series of concerts he began producing in 1944 under the title Jazz at the Philharmonic (JATP). Granz was a civil rights activist who was especially frustrated by racial discrimination in the music industry. The first JATP concert, at Philharmonic Auditorium in LA, was a multiracial benefit to raise bail for imprisoned Mexican Americans from the Sleepy Lagoon murder trial, and to support the Los Angeles Urban League. With these concerts, Granz elevated the image of jazz beyond segregated urban clubs and venues. "Blues (1st B-Flat Blues)", from the inaugural JATP concert, runs a little over ten minutes; it's a burner featuring Illinois Jacquet and Jack McVea (tenors), J.J. Johnson (trombone), Nat King Cole (piano) and Les Paul (guitar) in a high-energy jam session format. The track is a lesson in jazz history, from the era when swing was yielding to bebop. Jacquet's high-register screaming dominates much of the track, and his performance was a huge hit, as you can hear from the delighted audience cheering in the background. Recorded live, a youthful Ella, under the wing of and in duet with Armstrong, displays her greatness to come in "You Won't Be Satisfied (Until You Break My Heart)". Fitzgerald is heard again in a rehearsal capture of Billy Strayhorn's "Chelsea Bridge" with the Duke Ellington Orchestra—a piece of pure gold, not only for the legends in the room, but because of her vocal interpretation of a tune without lyrics. Johnny Hodges, who spent most of his career with Ellington, but who also fronted his own groups from time to time, is represented with his orchestra on "Castle Rock". Out front, his alto tone and creative ideas are a reminder of why his artistry remains an aural mystery, a wonderment never to be reproduced or approached by anyone since.

Vocal contributions to the set are plentiful and mighty, crossing from pop to jazz, including Holiday, Margaret Whiting, Mel Tormé, Bing Crosby, Fred Astaire and Anita O'Day. The latter jazzes up the 1932 ballad "Lullaby of the Leaves", composed by Bernice Petkere (lyrics by Joe Young), once known as the "Queen of Tin Pan Alley", and largely forgotten

today. And speaking of forgotten, Rose Murphy, a pianist-vocalist known for her babyish voice, is represented with "You Were Meant for Me". Other idiosyncratic choices on the collection are the four non-musical cuts: Jack Kerouac (sounding much like *Twilight Zone*'s Rod Serling) reciting his observational piece, "The Subterraneans"; an excerpt from a routine by social critic and political satirist Mort Sahl, "The Future Lies Ahead"; a stand-up piece by frequent TV guest Jonathan Winters, "Football Game"; and Shelley Berman's "Department Store", a truly hilarious piece that's a reminder of the comic talent of these OG storyteller comedians.

Pianists are represented by Oscar Peterson ("Tenderly"), Bud Powell ("Like Someone in Love") and Art Tatum, whose staggering ability to insert as many notes and creative ideas as possible into a melody is showcased in "I'll Never Be the Same". Teddy Wilson is paired with Lester Young on "Taking a Chance on Love"; Wilson introduces the melody with sprightly Tatum-esque embellishments before Young enters at the halfway point, taking up the melody with mildly boppish riffs, his tenor smooth and cool. Count Basie and His Orchestra offer "New Basie Blues" and "Thou Swell" (with vocalist Joe Williams): it's pure Basie hard swing. And as the old commercial goes, "Wait! There's more!"—Coleman Hawkins ("Picasso"); Benny Carter ("Flamingo"); Roy Eldridge ("Dale's Wail"); Buddy Rich ("Can't We Be Friends?") and many others, including Charlie Parker, Lionel Hampton, and a supergroup of Dizzy Gillespie, Sonny Rollins and Sonny Stitt performing "On the Sunny Side of the Street" (from their *Sonny Side Up* album recorded in 1957).

This aptly named set, *The Sound of America*, leans heavily into songbook standards, which is a strength, considering the history of the label and the time period encompassed. It is an aural feast, a compilation that will be savored by listeners time and time again.

For more info visit store.vervarecords.com. "Verve's 70th Anniversary" is at Central Park Summerstage Sep. 2 (featuring Samara Joy, Christian McBride, Sparklmani, Mei Semones & Friends "Play the Music of Getz/Gilberto" and others). See Calendar.

disparate, carefully delimited musical ecosystems. With 2024's *Miniature America* he began work on a third trilogy, *Boomtown* being the second installment. This new world has a larger population: Jon Irabagon (soprano, tenor), Caroline Davis (alto), Anna Webber (tenor, flute), Jacob Garchik and Kalia Vandever (trombones), Matt Mitchell (piano), Christopher Tordini and Hannah Marks (bass), plus Okazaki and Weiss. The detet functions less as a big band than a mercurial mixture of small ensembles, wherein individual personalities feature prominently. The local residents seem less prone to grandiose statements than to brief, intimate exchanges with their immediate neighbors. Indeed, many of Okazaki's tunes sound like transcribed conversations with overlapping dialogue, something like a Robert Altman film. We can discern Okazaki's intentions in the morphing themes and intricate rhythmic schemes, yet in this third world, more so than the previous two, the author appears to grant its denizens tacit permission to bend (or even break) rules at whim, such that law and order constantly threaten it to collapse into outlaws and disorder. While this doesn't actually occur, the looming prospect is thrilling.

Weiss' *Unclassified Affections* is a quartet adventure with Okazaki, Peter Evans (trumpet) and Patricia

Brennan (vibraphone). His leadership style is similar to that of Dan Briggs, the original head of TV's *Mission: Impossible* spy squad—a man who favored brains and ingenuity over brawn and bravado. Listening to the record you might not even realize Weiss is heading the mission because, rather than drawing attention to himself, he draws on the diverse strengths of his crack team. Even his extended soliloquy on “Holotype” is a model of decorum and thematic unity, though if you listen closely, the suave shifting of 3-over-4 and 4-over-3 polyrhythms is quite impressive. His compositions are often structured by two- or three-part, radically syncopated counter-lines, each fiercely independent of the others. In the midst of such complexity, Weiss might introduce a basic 4/4 rock pattern with a backbeat, only in this context it won't sound so simple, even as it anchors and organizes the surrounding chaos. Evans—whooping, popping, yodeling, hocketing—is an incessant catalyst, taking his horn down paths less trodden. Okazaki, equally pliant and inventive, sometimes functions as surrogate bassist. Brennan's tolling bell tones, slow tremolos and quicksilver arpeggios generate the warmest waves of the session.

For more info visit pirecordings.com. Weiss and Okazaki are at The Stone at The New School Sep. 11 (with

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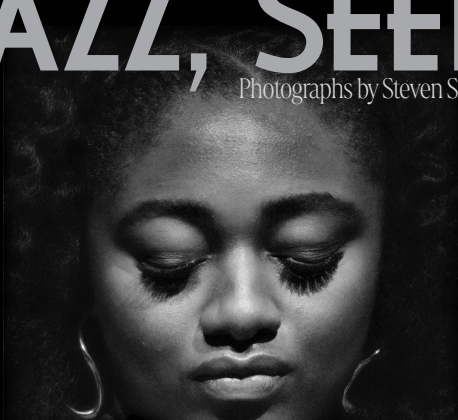
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Mitchell). Weiss is at Smalls Sep. 21. Okazaki is at Close Up Sep. 24 and "The Monkathon: Miles Okazaki plays Thelonious Monk" film screening is at Roulette Sep. 22. See Calendar.

JAZZ, SEEN

Photographs by Steven Sussman



EXHIBITION OPENING
Thursday, September 10 at 5pm
The Jazz Gallery
1158 Broadway, 5th Fl
New York City, NY 10001



JAZZGALLERY.ORG for more details