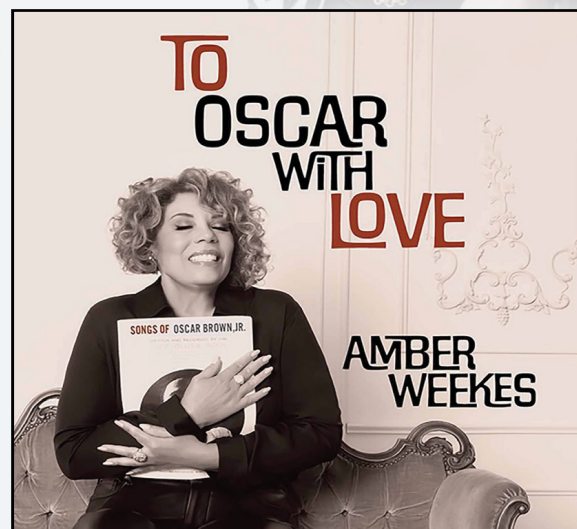


TO OSCAR WITH LOVE

**AMBER WEEKES
CELEBRATES
OSCAR BROWN, JR.**



**"ONE OF THE BEST VOCAL JAZZ
ALBUMS OF 2026."**

- PARIS MOVE

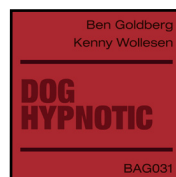
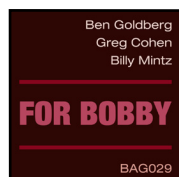
**"WEEKES HAS SUCCESSFULLY FORGED
BROWN'S WORK INTO ANOTHER
DIMENSION WITH ROUSING
ARRANGEMENTS. HER VOCAL PROWESS
IS AGLOW."**

- AMSTERDAM NEWS

**"AMBER POSSESSES A GREAT VOCAL
STYLE, BOTH PURE, YET WITH A SASSY
EDGE, THAT FITS RIGHT IN WITH
SOPHISTICATED, ULTRA COOL LYRICS
THAT OSCAR PROVIDES."**

- AUDIOPHILE EDITION

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**For Bobby
Spillway Four
Dog Hypnotic
Ben Goldberg (BAG Productions)
by Mike Shanley**

Sometimes keeping up with prolific musicians can pose a challenge. Clarinetist Ben Goldberg wrapped up his summer with no less than eight releases, all recorded over the past few years, with varying instrumentation and a crew of comrades and co-conspirators. If these three recordings provide any indication, the clarinetist puts together his albums—even digital ones—in the classic sense: distilling a session to a tight 45 minutes on average, rather than cramming in everything in the name of completion and space-filling. All three sessions here display his compositional ideas, which maintain a strong link to classic works even as they maintain an experimental edge. Lean and concise (many tracks come in at radio-friendly lengths), they all sound infectious from the start.

For Bobby refers to cornetist Bobby Bradford, who initially planned to take part in Goldberg's recording session with Greg Cohen (bass) and Billy Mintz (drums) but wasn't able to make it. While an additional horn would have complemented the setting, the trio exploits the wide-open space. "For Bobby – part one", one of six hat tips which appear out of numerical order, comes later in the set and encapsulates the trio's camaraderie. Goldberg and Cohen begin playing rubato, before launching into a call-and-response theme. Mintz, often and typically understated, but always present, plays an extended snare and brushes solo, which slowly builds in suspense. His mallet work and Cohen's impeccable brew of double stops and glissandos get the spotlight on "Snow Note", which, along with the ballad "May 8", reveals the depth of the bandleader's engaging writing.

"For Bobby – part four", reappears on *Spillway Four*, a quartet session with John Ellis (tenor), John Hébert (bass) and Hamir Atwal (drums). Where the trio version went from out of tempo into hard swing, this one has a funky groove with a bass vamp built on the original melody, which allows the horns to jump off then return to the theme at the close. With Ellis as Goldberg's foil (each one hard-panned to a speaker), both frequently bounce ideas off one another, as the rhythm section pushes them along. "Actual False Alarm" switches things up, with a film noir feel that gives everyone a bit of space in a tight three minutes. A playful feeling threads through the album, from Goldberg's often angular playing to some melodic, Thelonious Monk-like ideas.

Kenny Wollesen has a musical connection to Goldberg that dates back to the early '80s and includes bands such as New Klezmer Trio and the bebop thrash of Junk Genius. Their longstanding rapport feels apparent throughout the duo's *Dog Hypnotic*; one selection actually begins with the two of them casually discussing what notes will work! Hearing Wollesen's bass marimba resonating with Goldberg's clarinet makes even "Dear Mother I've Come Home to Die" (a Civil War-era song) sound uplifting. Producer Michael Coleman adds sonic tricks in a few places, providing distorted beats to "Python", and making the vibraphone sound like an outer space transmission in "Forward and Back". Similar effects shift the clarinet from background to foreground in "Drop Off", with steady percussion turning the track into a surreal sideshow soundscape or, in "Say Goodbye", incidental dream music.

The one element that stays consistent through these three releases is Ben Goldberg's commanding clarinet playing. His full-bodied tone has a presence that brings

simple melodies to strong life and fits easily in any setting. His latest spate of albums does not include a solo set, but he could, and probably will, pull that one off too.

For more info visit bengoldberg.net/bag_production. Goldberg is at Big Bar Oct. 11, 18. He is also at The Jazz Gallery Oct. 15 and Firehouse 12 (New Haven, CT) Oct. 16 (both with Angelica Sanchez). See Calendar and 100 Miles Out.



**It's the Great Pumpkin, Charlie Brown
Vince Guaraldi (Craft Recordings)
by Patrick Romanowski**

Just in time for jack-o'-lantern carving and haunted hayrides, this month marks the 60th anniversary of *It's the Great Pumpkin, Charlie Brown*, which Craft Recordings is celebrating with a special, spooky orange pumpkin-shaped vinyl reissue of the iconic Halloween-themed score by pianist Vince Guaraldi.

Originally broadcast on CBS on Oct. 27, 1966, *It's the Great Pumpkin...* was the third *Peanuts* TV special for which Guaraldi wrote and arranged the music, and it became one of the most beloved of the 15 in the series with music by Guaraldi. The soundtrack was recorded by a sextet, which included Guaraldi (piano, celesta), Ronald Lang (woodwinds), Emmanuel Klein (trumpet), John Gray (guitar), Monty Budwig (bass) and Colin Bailey (drums). For the production, Guaraldi and Robert G. Hartley handled the combo arrangements, while bringing in composer John Scott Trotter to help with the larger orchestrations.

The score has Guaraldi working at his creative zenith, capturing the luminous spirit of autumn as Linus, Lucy, Snoopy and the gang venture off for a memorable Halloween adventure. Many of the compositions were written in a minor key, giving the instrumental passages a ghoulish atmosphere and a cool, melancholic tone that glides elegantly from track to track with Guaraldi's signature groove. The album's lyrical centerpiece is "The Great Pumpkin Waltz", a magnificent track that captures the sweeping impressionistic bliss of Guaraldi at his finest. The song features Lang's delicate flute accompaniment alongside Bailey's crisp brush textures, with some brilliant baroque guitar flourishes from John Gray. On a definitive version of "Linus and Lucy", the familiar uptempo theme pops with a fresh arrangement, which is enlivened by Lang's dashing and expressive flute work. Some of the more concise and peripatetic animation cues include "Trick or Treat", "Breathless" and the lighthearted "Red Baron", along with the eerie "Graveyard Theme", which plays during the film's opening title sequence.

Working alongside Craft and their own LMFP label, Sean and Jason Mendelson (the sons of *Peanuts* producer Lee Mendelson) continue to champion the legacy of Guaraldi's musical genius, and do a wonderful job reissuing these titles with unreleased bonus tracks and a myriad of fun design features.

Whether you're getting ready to head out to the local corn maze with the family or going for a meditative walk in the park to ponder the autumn leaves, *It's the Great Pumpkin, Charlie Brown* is definitely one to have on rotation this season.

For more info visit craftrecordings.com