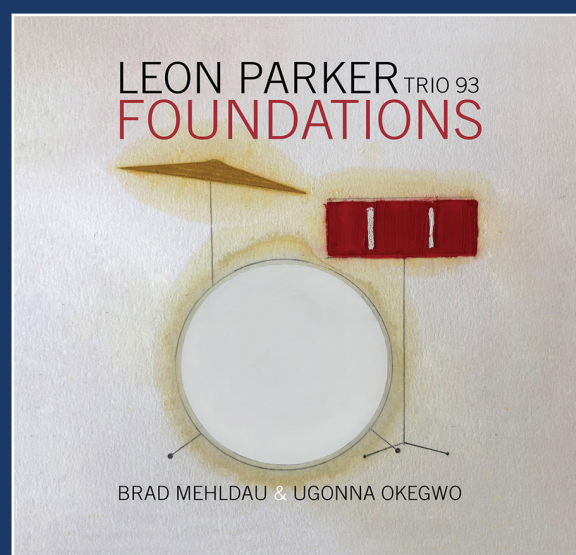
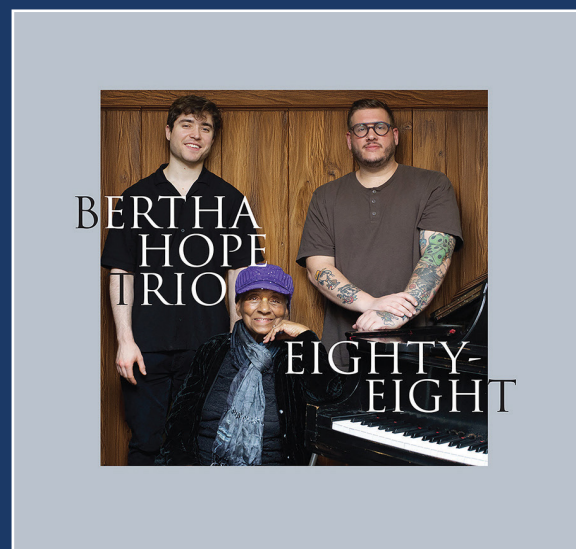




LEON PARKER TRIO 93
with **BRAD MEHLDAU &**
UGONNA OKEGWO
FOUNDATIONS
SSC 1758 / AVAILABLE NOW

The early 1990s ushered in a new crop of distinctive young voices in the New York City jazz community. Leon Parker caught the attention of many with his unique approach to playing the drums, often playing with only a cymbal. A complete self-starter and individualist, Parker produced and recorded his first recording, *Foundations*, in a one-shot performance in 1993 with none other than pianist Brad Mehldau and bassist Ugonna Okegwo. Finally getting its first release, *Foundations* provides an early snapshot of some brash young talent that would go on to shake the jazz world.



BERTHA HOPE TRIO
with **BEN WOLSTEIN (b) &**
ERIC BINDER (d)
EIGHTY EIGHT
SSC 1769 / AVAILABLE NOVEMBER 27



www.sunnysiderecords.com

Although he's closer to 90 than 80, a bit cautious nowadays as he climbs stage stairs, pianist **Roger Kellaway** becomes a fountain of youthful invention when sitting down to play. Cavorting is probably a better descriptor, because he rarely sits still. Mouthing everything he plays, eyebrows arching upwards as his mouth droops downwards, shoulders hunched, arms arcing up and outwards, long spidery fingers extended like claws, he's an eerie echo of Dr. Caligari in the 1920 silent film. If the mood so moves him, one of his legs is liable to lift and kick, his trademark bright socks flashing in the spotlights, accentuating a musical climax. Such was the spectacle at a one-off trio concert given by Kellaway, with John Goldsby (bass) and Terry Clarke (drums) at The New School's Arnie Lawrence Hall (Oct. 2), an overdue reunion for the group. The set included standards "If I Were a Bell", "Singin' in the Rain", "Strike Up the Band", "Take the 'A' Train"; plus Kellaway's delicate "I Have the Feeling I've Been Here Before" (written for Carmen McRae), tender "Love of My Life" (written for Jorjana, his wife of 60 years) and trembling, odd-metered "Autumn". Goldsby brought three tunes, including "Sergio", a bossa in 3/4 time. In comparison with Kellaway, Goldsby and Clarke were relatively staid, revealing their mastery through tasteful restraint and close correspondence. The pianist, for his part, never allowed the sight of his theatrics to supersede the sound of his music: swinging, soulful, intelligent, intuitive, carelessly virtuosic, childishly mature.

— Tom Greenland



Roger Kellaway @Arnie Lawrence Hall

Here's a recipe for musical sublimity: two virtuosic masters, two superb sidemen and one icon of jazz composition. The **Renee Rosnes Quartet's** "Monk's Sphere" residency at Smoke (Oct. 8) celebrated Thelonious Monk's quartets and his birthday two days out. Night two's second set opened with Carl Allen's dramatic, percussive drum intro on "Ba-Lue Bolivar Ba-Lues Are"; by the tune's conclusion, the importance of tenor saxophone (Nicole Glover here for Charlie Rouse then) as the forward instrument in the quartet configuration became apparent. Pianist Rosnes, in her own abundant features, proved no shrinking violet. She has Monk in her hands, and while Monk's playing was percussive and hers is light, often ethereal, she remains a stunning interpreter of the intellectual complexities of the canon. Rosnes and Glover seamlessly embroidered Monk motifs and themes with their improvisations. On the balladic "Pannonica", Glover's soprano tone proved as pure as her tenor's. The propulsive energy of "Bemba Swing" made it a toe-tapper. The rising arc of the haunting "Round Midnight" featured a significant feature for bassist David Wong. A surprise treat was a spotlight for Monk as arranger, with a reading of "Honeysuckle Rose"; this was a highly-improvisational version, yet it offered clear windows into the melody. The outro, a generously rendered, uptempo, swinging "Hackensack", yielded strong statements from all four musicians, including fun trading between Wong and Allen and extended features for Glover and Rosnes—a memorable way to count down Monk's Oct. 10 birthday.

— Marilyn Lester



Nicole Glover @Smoke

Trio Nu, comprising Noa Fort (vocals), Mat Maneri (viola) and Lucian Ban (piano), made its fourth gig at Gowanus' Ibeam Brooklyn (Oct. 4), following a brief but sparkling set by flutist Michel Gentile and drummer Rob Garcia, two old friends who sound like it when they play together. As Trio Nu began with their opening free improvisation, it was immediately apparent that something was amiss with Maneri's amplification system, which was emitting continuous snap-crackle-pop noises. Not so disruptive when the band played loudly, but very much so in quieter moments. Troupers all, the trio forged ahead with Fort's "'Til Tomorrow", an angular yet lyrical theme doubled by voice and viola, with chunky responses from piano, followed by Ban's equally angular, lyrical "Paul Motian". On "Sophia's Grace", a tribute to her late, beloved cat, Fort's body moved in close choreography with the precipitous intervals she was singing, wrists cocked and fingers curled as her arms described delicate semicircles—like someone playing a theremin—even as Maneri and Ban engaged in a close repartee of their own. After all this, the amp, like a bad case of tinnitus, simply refused to stop buzzing. Maneri accepted defeat, switching off the noisome nuisance to emerge triumphant as his unamplified viola found its niche in the ensuant acoustic ambiance. After two settings of Paul Celan's poems and a gorgeous reading of Annette Peacock's "Albert's Love Theme", the trio pitched it up for a rowdy, rousing closer: Maneri's aptly titled "Screech".

(TG)

If there's a sentient afterlife where the departed can peer into the earthly plane, one can only hope that *Bouncin' with Bud: Bud Powell Birthday Celebration* at Birdland Theater (Oct. 4) was a balm for the supremely talented and transformative bebop pioneer of the piano, whose life was painfully troubled. The three-night event was birthday-adjacent (Powell was born Sep. 27, 1924) and offered a quartet of brilliance—Tardo Hammer (piano), Pasquale Grasso (guitar), Lonnie Plaxico (bass) and **Steve Smith** (drums)—who unleashed the best of Powell with unabashed delight. Opening with the title song, the room caught the vibe, owing much of that to leader Smith, a wizard at the kit and purveyor of joy, happy at a work he makes seem completely effortless. When it came to "Un Poco Loco", Smith drove the fun in the polyrhythmic party, from cowbell to every percussive trick in the Afro-Cuban playbook. Adding color throughout, Grasso, a master of the guitar, was front and center, a marvel to watch with technique that gave equal weight to incredibly dexterous left and right hands. Through other tunes, including "Tempus Fugit" and "Parisian Thoroughfare", Hammer and Plaxico served mostly as support. Hammer added creative ideas to his improv and solos, but the arrangements didn't necessarily inform the listener about Powell's style or innovations; the program was solidly owned by Smith. Plaxico's mere presence was awe-inspiring—he is a superb and creative timekeeper, standing tall and supremely assured, like a towering oak holding musical ground.

(ML)

At Hunter College's Lang Recital Hall (Oct. 1), master multi-instrumentalist **Scott Robinson** presented a debut listening session for the 13-minute first movement of his new project *Reach for Tomorrow*. This genre-defying work-in-progress, so far seven (!) years in the making, can only exist in a recorded format; it features the majority of Robinson's legendary instrument collection, expanded even further through overdubbing, especially for some of the rare woodwinds—more of them are heard simultaneously than actually exist in the world. Before presenting the recording, Robinson gave an engaging description of his creative process. Without a preconceived notion of form, he has been building *Reach for Tomorrow* entirely from improvised material, often fleshing out passages with ensemble textures. Despite this short, spontaneous framework, the composition told a cohesive story, like a lucid dream perhaps. The music was full of sonic extremes such as high and low pitch and deep and edgy timbres. Robinson's appreciation for classic science fiction was on display throughout, with lubricious, otherworldly harmonies over retro-futuristic drones. His absurd sense of humor shone through for listeners gathered here, in, for instance, breakneck interludes where grumbling saxophone multiphonics were juxtaposed with bulbous honks from mysterious instruments. The ending, with electronic noise suggesting an arriving spaceship, was a fitting cliffhanger leaving the assembled eager for the second movement, whenever that is ready—and hopefully not another seven years!

— Elijah Shiffer



Scott Robinson @Lang Recital Hall

Pianist **Sylvie Courvoisier** led her trio at The Jazz Gallery (Oct. 2) in two sets of originals from the group's four albums to date. Drew Gress (bass) and Kenny Wollesen (drums) made light work of the leader's often highly-advanced compositions; together, the three were tightly attuned listeners and playful improvisers. Courvoisier's music is full of contrasts, with a vibrant range of dynamics and density. Many themes contained important pauses and interruptions; grooves and swing time might appear suddenly, then just as abruptly fracture into abstract passages. In these transitions, the trio showed the confidence to turn on a dime. Multi-tempo selections, including the opening "Éclats for Ornette", seemed to approach hard bop from an avant garde standpoint. "Nags Head Valse" displayed a slapstick sense of humor in stop-and-start rhythms; the more mechanical "Imprint Double" and "Circumbent" were similarly eccentric. Solos in these pieces were not over chord progressions but instead built on short loops, as in "Just Twisted", or ambient textures such as on "Birdies of Paradise". Numerous compositions revealed the influence of Olivier Messiaen in Courvoisier's writing, with jangly harmonies recalling the 20th-century composer's interpretations of birdsong. The pianist really gave the venue's new Steinway a workout, using ball-tipped mallets and similar implements on the strings to create droning, sliding backgrounds. Her own solo on first set closer "La Cigale" entered prepared-piano territory, full of percussive rattles and sparking buzzes.

(ES)

After the previous weekend's rainouts, Arts for Art's InGardens series finally arrived at First Street Art Park under clear skies (Oct. 3). Music spilled into Houston Street traffic and up into the trees. **DoYeon Kim's** gentle singing swelled into a roar over the snapping strings of her gayageum (traditional Korean zither) and gabby fluke-mogul bowed, scraped and struck her violin, while TJ Borden sustained cello drones; their rhythms ricocheted into a jagged groove, then thinned into phase-shifting repetitions. Kim later translated her Korean words: "What else do we need for happiness besides this day?" Multi-instrumentalist-poet **Janice Lowe's** Museoetry, a trio with Gregory Kage (bass) and Warren "Trae" Crudup III (drums), circled the phrase "something of joy," folding a tribute to the late Black Arts Movement poet David Henderson into its buoyant, soulful set. **William Parker's** trio of Aakash Mittal and Crudup widened the circle again. Mittal's searching alto and flute playing climbed over Parker's bass and Crudup's deep drumming. Parker held up his finger to test the wind. Looking up, he directed the audience to notice the birds who had gathered overhead, their cooing a kind of appreciation. At the closing drum circle, Parker switched to guembri, Patricia Parker traded verses of revolution with Baba Don Babatunde and everyone was invited to play music and dance. Mittal's four-year-old daughter Nishad approached Parker for the mic. She sang a long, om-like note. The music made room for her and it lifted the whole ensemble.

— Ariella Stok



DoYeon Kim @First Street Art Park

At two years, Lower East Side's Close Up venue celebrated the community it has built with its inaugural six-night Orchard Street Jazz Festival. A highlight was the duo of guitarist **Mary Halvorson** and drummer **Tomas Fujiwara** (Oct. 4), whose repertoire traced a lineage of independent, pioneering female minds—Mary Lou Williams, Abbey Lincoln, Carla Bley and Melba Liston—alongside the duo's originals and a closing piece by Bill Frisell. Organized in continuous sequences, the compositions seemed to discover their affinities with one another. Halvorson and Fujiwara's deep rapport dissolved the division between guitar and drums, making these distinct voices part of an extended, unfolding narrative. Fujiwara's "Nudge Storms" opened in a psychedelic thicket of textures, clearing into the tender oddity of Williams' "Pisces" and Lincoln's "Throw It Away". Halvorson's runs on "Line to Create Madness", written for their trio Thumbscrew, suggested Charlie Parker's velocity and asymmetry. Fujiwara pummeled the kit with brushes, at once delicate and commanding. Bley's "Ida Lupino" swelled with melodic pleasure before giving way to Fujiwara's scuzzy "June" and Liston's ballad "Just Waiting". Near the end, Halvorson's "Folded Secret" (from *Bone Bells*, her 2025 duo album with Sylvie Courvoisier) splintered from chiming notes into guitar sparks. Frisell's untitled lullaby was bathed in echo, dissolving into Halvorson's eerie synthesizer tones. The music had extraordinary scope for a duo, and a startlingly unified sense of where to go next.

(AS)

WHAT'S NEWS

The **Jazz Gallery** has announced it has a limited number of seats available in its chair sponsorship program. You can have your name, or the name of a loved one, permanently affixed directly to the back of one of the seats for up to \$750 (for those of you who grabbed a copy of this Nov. issue and reading this closer to the Oct. 23 streetdate, then the following info will be especially relevant to you: act fast, as TJG is offering chair naming for a \$600 discounted rate through the month of October). It's a great way to show support for one of our favorite jazz venues. Be a TJG cheerleader, or as the venue suggests: "chairleader"! In other TJG news: our congratulations go out to the venue's Artistic Director Rio Sakairi who will be the eleventh recipient of the annual Bruce Lundvall Visionary Award. The ceremony takes place Jan. 13 at Jazz at Lincoln Center's Appel Room as part of Jazz Congress 2027. The annual award recognizes individuals who have demonstrated extraordinary leadership and vision in expanding the audience for jazz, and who have made a difference for artists, the music and its patrons. Previous award recipients include Randall Kline, Brice Rosenbloom, Christian McBride, Terri Lyne Carrington, Darlene Chan, Barry Harris, Danilo Perez, Dee Dee Bridgewater, John Clayton and Lee Mergner. For more info visit jazzgallery.org and jazzcongress.org.

Last month, 27-year-old French vocalist **Malou Oheix** was announced as the winner of the 2026 Herbie Hancock Institute's International Jazz Vocals Competition at Paris' Fondation Louis Vuitton (the first time in the event's nearly four-decade history that the competition has been held outside the US). Hosted by Academy Award-winning actor Jeremy Irons, the event also included a tribute to the late, renowned architect Frank Gehry (1929-2025), a longtime Board member and friend of the Herbie Hancock Institute of Jazz, as well as the architect mastermind behind the Fondation Louis Vuitton. Gehry's widow Bertra was in attendance. The judges included Dee Dee Bridgewater, Roberta Gambarini, Angélique Kidjo, Gretchen Parlato and Gregory Porter. Oheix's first-place prize included a \$50K scholarship; second and third places went, respectively, to Georgia Heers and Lucy-Anne Daniels. For more info visit hancockinstitute.org.

"Impressions of Jazz," a photo exhibit now up at **Jazz Forum** (Tarrytown, NY), runs through January 2027. Curated by Jazz Forum Art's Chief Operating Officer Clara Winder, the exhibit includes work by NYCJR's very own Anna Yatskevich (including B&W portraits of Cécile McLorin Salvant and Roy Hargrove), Edward Bear Miller (whose paintings include Miles Davis, Nina Simone, John Coltrane and Billie Holiday), photographer/painter Adam Zarucki and Jazz Forum Artistic Director and photographer/drummer Darrian Douglas (his photos include musicians such as Bria Skonberg, Chris Pattishall and Amina Scott). For more info visit jazzforumarts.org.

The top five finalists have been announced for this year's **Sarah Vaughan International Jazz Vocal Competition** (aka the "Sassy Awards"), to be held on Nov. 22 at New Jersey PAC (Newark, NJ) as part of the TD James Moody Jazz Festival. Drum roll please.. Alyssa Algood (Chicago, IL), Vahn Black (Detroit, MI), Angélique Nicolas (Paris, France) and NYC's Nathan Farrell and Jackie Ribas will compete for top honors in front of judges José James, Gretchen Parlato, Jason Olaine, Lillias White and T.S. Monk. For more info and tickets, visit SarahVaughanCompetition.com.

In addition to NYC's burgeoning jazz club renaissance, there have been numerous, newly-opened record stores, further expanding the warp and weave of the tapestry of the city's jazz landscape. Adding to veteran shops such as Jazz Record Center (Chelsea), Downtown Music Gallery (Chinatown/Lower East Side) and Academy Records (Flatiron District)—be sure to make a visit to any number of the following new(ish) stores: Human Head (the Brooklyn shop opened a new location on the Upper East Side), Sweet Peanut Records (Upper West Side), and—opening just last year—Poise (Bed-Stuy, Brooklyn), Finer Sounds (Boerum Hill, Brooklyn) and Rough Trade Below (the newer, rink level extension of midtown's Rough Trade street-level location). In other record news, there's the annual **WFMU Record Fair**, which returns to Manhattan for three full days (Nov. 6-8) at Metropolitan Pavilion (125 W. 18th St). For more info visit wfmur.org/recfair. All music to one's ears, though we do have some unfortunate news to share: NYCJR bids a farewell to Park Slope's Fifth Avenue Record Shop, Brooklyn's oldest record store, which has permanently closed after 60 years in business.

To submit news items email ldgreene@nycjazzrecord.com