

JAZZFESTIVAL SAALFELDEN

BY DAVID CRISTOL

CHARLIE PARKER JAZZ FESTIVAL

BY MARILYN LESTER

MONTEREY JAZZ FESTIVAL

BY SCOTT YANOW



Delphine Joussein @Museum Schloss Ritzen



Ravi Coltrane @Tompkins Square Park



Charles Lloyd @Monterey Fairgrounds

The end of August is replete with progressive-minded music manifestations in Europe, such as Météo-Mulhouse (France) and Willisau (Switzerland). With over 50 concerts, the 46th edition of Austria's Jazzfestival Saalfelden (Aug. 20-23) offered a wide array of unconventional approaches. En route to the site, rain showers, vast expanses of green and a dip in temperature felt like a new lease on life after relentless heatwaves, drought and fires on the continent. Amidst imposing alpine scapes, new and recurrent attendees indulged in a free music spree, with jazz hikes and forest gigs in addition to events in the city's venues.

Many groups consisted of musicians of various nationalities and backgrounds, showcasing artistic kinships beyond borders. One example, **Lava Quartet**, was an alliance of Portuguese low-tone master Gonçalo Almeida (bass), Catalan pianist Jordina Millà (previously heard in a duet with bassist Barry Guy) and two Germans—percussionist Wieland Möller and Almut Kühne, the latter who was not so much a vocalist as a profuse sound-maker, nuanced and wary of overplay. With unorthodox tools, they established a fairytale sound world, at once enchanting, dark and scary, to journey through. An auspicious start for the festival.

Female-led bands were a common sight, starting with **DaughterDaughter**, an all-distaff quartet of Amalia Dahl and Camila Nebbia (saxophones), Elisabeth Coudoux (cello) and Sun-Mi Hong (drums). Scored sections coexisted with a fair bit of improvisation, with Nebbia delivering a gripping unaccompanied solo. Tyrol's **Yvonne Moriel**'s sextet performed her original suite "Strange Motion". The piece flaunted a variety of styles, with dramatic course alterations that took listeners from incisive swing to spiritual jazz by way of an Afro-dub groove, a showpiece for electric bass and a tune suffused in warm Rhodes chords. The leader's proficient saxophone playing carried the versatile ensemble, which also included harpist Miriam Adefris. Flute player **Henriette Eilertsen**'s trio was an initially quieter, folk-inspired affair, distinctly Nordic in feel and implemented at an unhurried pace, but it had more grit in store than one might have surmised from the first songs. Pianist **Marta Sanchez**' quintet had a plus-one in guest trumpeter Cuong Vu, who additionally participated in a number of acts at the festival. His solo turns, over the leader's astutely-woven melodies and harmonies, were treats for the ears, as were those

Since 1993, the annual outdoor Charlie Parker Jazz Festival, founded by Sam Turvey, has paid homage to the legendary "Bird," who lived at 151 Avenue B, bordering the East Village's Tompkins Square Park, the original sole location of the event. Now, long a part of City Parks Foundation's SummerStage, the free concerts span three days (this year: Aug. 28-30)—two in Harlem's Marcus Garvey Park and the big wrap-up in Tompkins Square Park.

Two acts performed on opening night (presented in partnership with Jazzmobile): the **Bill Saxton Harlem All-Stars** and **Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra (JLCO)**. The 80-year-old saxophonist Saxton—who some time ago bought a brownstone in Harlem (formerly the address of Tillie's Chicken Shack, Covan's Morocco Club and Monette's Supper Club, where legends Fats Waller, Willie "The Lion" Smith and, later, Billie Holiday performed), which in 2006 he opened as his own club, Bill's Place—is steeped in hard bop tradition. Playing with his quartet of mostly students, Saxton smoothly spun out Parker's "Blues for Alice" and "Dewey Square", plus two songbook standards from Parker's *With Strings* album: "Star Eyes" arranged as a rumba, and "I Didn't Know What Time It Was"—all taken in a pleasing, mid-tempo comfort zone. The relaxed and voluble leader ended his set with a Dukish, verbal "Love You Madly" send off, and a classically boppish original, "Beneath the Surface".

The ever-reliable mainstay of NYC big band jazz, the JLCO presented a full program with hosting and musical direction by alto saxophonist Sherman Irby. As per tradition, most every member received a feature during the set, and all tunes were arranged by the band's musicians, past and present. Opener was Parker's high-energy "Klactoveedsedstene" followed by a brassy Thelonious Monk tune, "Raise Four"; between the trumpets and drummer Obed Calvaire's beats and prominent cowbell, the mood was like a bull ring in Madrid. Guest trumpeter Marquis Hill exhibited his staccato style of playing on Woody Shaw's signature tune, "The Moontrane", while rising-star vocal guest **Ekep Nkwelle** dove into the legendary Langston Hughes-Nina Simone collaboration "Backlash Blues" with appropriate fierceness. Closer was Betty Carter's "Tight", a swinger that showcased Nkwelle's aptitude for vocalese and the musicians' rhythmic dexterity.

Day two in Marcus Garvey Park was a tasty smorgasbord of talent with **DJ Kultured Child** (aka

From the main stage at the Monterey Fairgrounds, Ravi Coltrane enthused: "Monterey is the world's greatest jazz festival." While that claim would certainly be disputed by fans of other major events, northern California's Monterey Jazz Festival (MJF), now in its 69th year (the oldest annual festival to be held at the same venue), unquestionably ranks near the top. During a period when many so-called "jazz festivals" water down their content with non-jazz groups in attempts to boost attendance, virtually all of the dozens of groups that performed at this year's MJF (Sep. 25-27) were "jazz" or (in a few instances) blues, with five stages operating simultaneously over the weekend. Under the direction of artistic advisor Gerald Clayton and artistic consultant Jason Olaine, the lineup this year was particularly strong, mixing together up-and-coming talents (e.g. Kate Kortum, Bokani Dyer, Denise Thimes, Dabin Ryu) with classic veteran performers, local groups and college bands.

Joined by a trio that included pianist Tyler Henderson, singer **Kate Kortum** displayed a swinging style with original phrasing, powerful and expressive long tones and a real feel for bebop. **Bokani Dyer**, a pianist from South Africa, is 40 and better known in his homeland and Europe than stateside. He often took a short rhythmic and generally wordless vocal before creating McCoy Tyner-inspired piano solos. It seems strange that the veteran singer **Denise Thimes** is not better-known; her paucity of recordings certainly has not helped boost her profile. With a larger-than-life personality onstage (and featuring co-star, tenor saxophonist Doug Lawrence), she consistently swung on a set that included a dramatic rendition of Nina Simone's "Four Women". Pianist **Dabin Ryu**, who led a trio with bassist Joe Martin and drummer Johnathan Blake, hinted at times of early Cecil Taylor (circa 1960) and Jaki Byard. A real powerhouse.

As with the best jazz festivals, some of the key artists appeared multiple times in different settings. Among those who popped up regularly were drummers Blake and Brian Blade, bassist Larry Grenadier, pianists David Kikoski and Gerald Clayton, tenor saxophonist Melissa Aldana and trumpeter Ambrose Akinmusire, who was cast in Miles Davis' spot in Gregory Hutchinson's Kind of Now project.

Trombonist **Nick Finzer** paid tribute to J.J. Johnson during a well-conceived hour with the stellar rhythm section of Isaiah J. Thompson (piano), Rufus Reid (bass)

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 30)

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 29)

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 31)

(CHARLIE PARKER CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12)

Angélica Beener) spinning cross-genre tunes during breaks and as an antecedent to the start of the program, which featured Nicole Glover and three scions of jazz: GRAMMY-winner Catherine Russell (daughter of Luis Russell and Carline Ray), Nat Adderley Jr. (son of Nat Adderley and nephew of Cannonball Adderley) and Joshua Redman (son of Dewey Redman). **Nicole Glover**, a member of Christian McBride’s Ursa Major and supergroup ARTEMIS, continues to create the illusion that playing the tenor is an effortless exercise. Her confident, smooth-as-silk playing, with forays into dynamic fingering and assertive statements, plus low-note squonks, were taken at a similar mid-tempo pace over seven boppish tunes. Mystically, Glover’s saxophone emulated a flute on one piece. Closer was finally an acknowledgement of Parker with “Perhaps”.

Catherine Russell’s ensemble featured pianist Miki Yamanaka and music director-guitarist Matt Munisteri. Over eight tunes, Russell exhibited confidence, musical chops and supreme, yet organic polish. Typically, her setlists feature songs that are little-performed but acutely worthy. Highlights were a blues, “Take the Hand Off the Clock”, as well as “Never Too Old to Swing” and a keenly semi-satirical and humorous “Women Be Wise”. Songbook standards arrived with “Alone Together” (with a ripping guitar solo) and “Exactly Like You”. Closer was a burner of a Latinized “Unchain My Heart”, ending a perfect set of music.

Showman pianist, the uber-charming **Nat Adderley, Jr.**, with his trio, offered about a half dozen tunes executed in dynamic pop, rhythm and blues and boppish style. From his longtime collaboration with Luther Vandross he presented “Superstar”, and a Stylistics hit, “People Make the World Go Round”, plus the bluesy Carole King number, “(You Make Me Feel Like) A Natural Woman”. To say Adderley was a hit would be an understatement. A vigorous standing ovation led to a jazz-arranged encore of “Theme from Fiddler on the Roof”, leading to yet another vehement standing O—a tough act for **Joshua Redman** to follow. Redman emanated cool, playing both tenor and soprano. From a hymn-like “A Message to Unsend” and “Borrowed Eyes” to “Amica” and the closer of Parker’s “Big Foot”, he displayed impeccable, stylish chops, consistently giving his band ample space to stretch out and shine.

Closing day in Tompkins Square Park opened with the loquacious, Betty Carter-influenced **Vanisha Gould** (an acquired taste). She presented about a half-dozen originals; the most intriguing was a tune written for her cat, with the expected lyric of “meow” dotted in with frequency, much to the amusement of the packed park. Drummer-rapper **Kassa Overall** followed with a percussion-heavy group, exploding with a set of funk, hip-hop and otherwise ultra-high energy tunes. Given that in the ’60s, Tompkins Square was a hippie hangout, many of the grey heads in the audience went wild over the jazz equivalent of acid rock, and a standing ovation followed the group’s closer.

Drummer-magician and 2022 NEA Jazz Master **Billy Hart**’s quartet began with an original by longtime Hart pianist, Ethan Iverson, “Hampton Hawes”, a tribute to the West Coast pianist and bebop pioneer. The tremendously charming Hart provided a backstory for each number, including a composition for his daughter, “Song for Balkis”, and an homage to John Coltrane via “Ohnedaruth”, which he declared was Trane’s “spiritual name.” Closer was another dedication, the dramatic “Lorca”, for the anti-fascist Spanish poet Federico García Lorca. The tune’s Iberian forms and rhythmic intensity could well make it a revolution’s anthem.

In this centenary year of John Coltrane and his immense talent, festival closer was the quartet of **Ravi Coltrane**, the saxophonist son of John and Alice. Brightly engaging, he played a classic bop set celebrating his father, playing both tenor and soprano in long expositions of each piece. Particularly stirring in musicianship and

emotional evocation of the author were “Naima” and the latter-period composition “Expression”. A hat tip to Parker, “Segment”, taken at burner tempo, closed the festival, putting a button on another year of supreme musical enjoyment and excellence.

For more info visit cityparksfoundation.org/charlieparker

(LEST WE FORGET CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10)

deeply committed to the act of intuitive improvisation, including on her electronically-adapted accordion. She developed techniques and software that allowed individuals with physical or cognitive disabilities to make music and participate in group improvisation. Oliveros was also an avid practitioner of t’ai chi.

Two archival recordings released by Important Records this year show something of Oliveros’ creative output beyond, but very much involving, listening: *Triple Point*, with saxophonists Jonas Braasch and Doug Van Nort, and *Two Days in Dreamland*, with Miya Masaoka (koto) and Issui Minegishi (ichigenkin). Masaoka remembers the 2014 *Dreamland* sessions as being permeated with “a sense that life is transitory, everything is transitory, you have to create the moment because you don’t know if it’s going to come back—a lot of that is compatible with Pauline’s spirit.”

According to Masaoka, the Oliveros sphere of influence stretched even to the later work of Miles Davis and the free-flow of the Grateful Dead. “She was a major figure in contemporary music,” Masaoka says. Oliveros’ role in the tape center at Mills College changed the face of electronic music. “She brought it to another level with her term ‘deep listening.’ She was always very early, a pioneer in electronics and sound, and always unafraid of doing new things. She had a foot in academics and a foot outside, and she was free to ramble in that way.”

The Oliveros archives are spread through several institutions, including the New York Public Library, UCSD and, until this year, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (RPI) in Troy, NY. Chase hopes for a day when the archives can be housed in a central location with dedicated staff. “The CDL [Center for Deep Listening] and all Deep Listening courses are being eliminated from RPI due to budget cuts,” according to sound and media artist Stephanie Loveless, who served as director of the CDL. She also edited *A Year of Deep Listening: 365 Text Scores for Pauline Oliveros* (Terra Nova Press, 1996), a collection of scores by more than 300 composers dedicated to the deep listening practice.

Oliveros’ work “has been deeply influential in ways that aren’t necessarily named but have been important in the current art movement,” Loveless says. “She was so playful but always reverent. Listening itself is such a buzzword, not only in contemporary art but in the wellness world, and she occupied a space between the two...I think it’s important and very much in tune with Pauline’s ethos and spirit that deep listening doesn’t become a fossilized practice but that it’s always renewing itself through all of the practitioners.”

For more info visit paulineoliveros.us

Recommended Listening:

- Pauline Oliveros — *Reverberations: Tape & Electronic Music* (Important, 1960-70)
- Pauline Oliveros — *The Wanderer* (Lovely Music-Important, 1983)
- Pauline Oliveros, Stuart Dempster, Panaiotis — *Deep Listening* (New Albion, 1988)
- Deep Listening Band — *Then & Now Now & Then: Celebrating 20 Years* (Taiga, 1990-2006)
- The Space Between (Philip Gelb, Pauline Oliveros, Dana Reason) — *With Barre Phillips* (482 Music, 1998)
- Pauline Oliveros, Roscoe Mitchell, John Tilbury, Wadada Leo Smith — *Nessuno* (I Dischi Di Angelica, 2011)





dizzy's club

NEW YORK CITY'S BEST JAZZ CLUB

NIGHTLY SHOWS • CRAFT COCKTAILS • SKYLINE VIEWS

MON-SAT
7PM & 9PM

SUNDAY
5PM & 7:30PM

LATE NIGHT
THU-SAT, 10:45PM

➔ **GET TICKETS**
JAZZ.ORG/DIZZYS

NOV 6-7 | ROSE THEATER

MARSALIS' SWINGING CITIES

THE JAZZ AT LINCOLN CENTER ORCHESTRA WITH WYNTON MARSALIS

Celebrate the global language of jazz and the spirit of place in *Marsalis' Swinging Cities*. Featuring his *Vitoria Suite*, *Shanghai Suite*, and *Marcia Suite*, the program reflects **Wynton Marsalis'** global journey, distilling the cultures, experiences, and connections he and the **Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra** have formed across these years.

NOV 13-14 | ROSE THEATER

THE EDDIE PALMIERI EXPERIENCE: AN ALL-STAR CELEBRATION

Join us for an all-star concert honoring the lifelong devotion of pianist, arranger and composer **Eddie Palmieri** (1936-2025) to Afro-Caribbean music and jazz. His longtime collaborators—saxophonist **Louis Fouché** and bassist **Luques Curtis**—music direct a star-studded lineup of Palmieri alumni, including **Brian Lynch**, **Conrad Herwig**, **Herman Olivera**, **Nelson Gonzalez**, and more, to showcase his music across the decades.

NOV 20-21 | APPEL ROOM

JOURNEY THROUGH JAZZ: THE GREAT AMERICAN SONGBOOK

THE JAZZ AT LINCOLN CENTER ORCHESTRA

The **Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra**, under the music direction of **Chris Crenshaw**, presents its sixth season of *Journey Through Jazz*, the popular and informative concert series exploring the fundamentals of jazz through performance and narrative. This edition delves into the Great American Songbook.

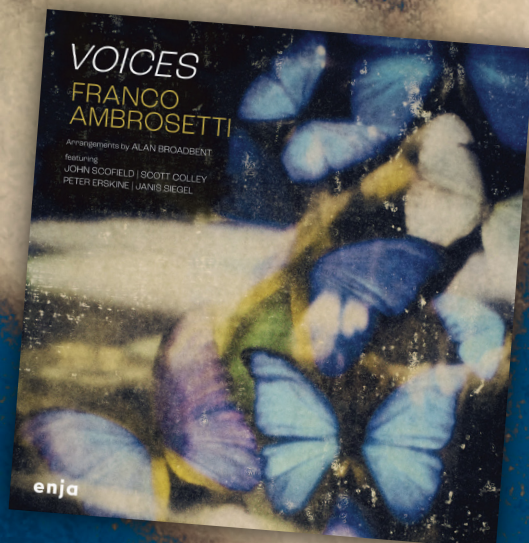
Part of the Lynne and Richard Pascualano Jazz Series, this is a pay-what-you-choose performance.

JAZZ LINCOLN CENTER

GET TICKETS JAZZ.ORG

enja yellowbird
enjarecords.com

presents:



VOICES FRANCO AMBROSETTI

Arranged by
Alan Broadbent

with

John Scofield
Peter Erskine
Scott Colley

and the voices of
Janis Siegel,
Aubrey Johnson,
Carolyn Leonhart,
Kevin Osborne
& Trist Curless

„VOICES is a healing
tonic in these stressful
and divisive times. It's
what we need now.“

— Bill Milkowski

Distributed by MVD

(SAALFELDEN CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12)

by Cuban tenor saxophonist Roman Filiu (a frequent employee of Henry Threadgill and David Murray) and alto saxophonist Alex LoRe.

A case of last-minute replacement reaching highlight status, the septet *You're What's for Dinner* was assembled from the pool of musicians present at the fest. After an appropriately in-your-face intro, rhythm monsters in drummer-percussionist **Jim Black** and bassist **Ingebrigt Håker Flaten** locked into a series of grooves for the other players to give their all. Vocalist and soundsmith Zanshin, seated on the floor and hunched over the electronic gear and knobs in front of him, contributed some arresting textures.

Britanny's **Erwan Keravec**, on the peculiar-sounding and -looking bagpipes, gave two solo sets, one atop a tall church tower that resounded across the whole city and one on a rowing boat on the Ritzensee lake. He also had a first-time encounter with **Rob Mazurek** (trumpet, piccolo trumpet, whistle, shamanic chanting and dancing) and **Lukas König** (drums, electronics). Heated segments, featuring adept percussive mayhem from König (a member of The Sleep of Reason Produces Monsters), modal cogitations and ominous ambient textures were heard, with continuously-wailing pipes courtesy of Keravec's circular breathing.

Over three days, flutist **Delphine Joussein**, who took part in a 70-strong fanfare covering Albert Ayler's *Truth Is Marching In*, was one-half of Trunk with trumpeter Aymeric Avicé and one-fourth of vigorous quartet Sauvages Paradis with compatriot Eve Risser (organ, piano, flute, vocals). Joussein then brought her silver flute and effects pedals to the Museum Schloss Ritzen for a solo set dubbed Calamity, also the title of the latest release on her Gigantonium label. Joussein proved a perfect fit for the fest, and the crowd in the gallery beamed with enthusiasm. Forget any carefree, bucolic notions associated with the instrument. Incendiary blowing, tongue slaps, foot-triggered loops, with only occasional acoustic hiatuses—the sounds were for the most part augmented, filtered and altered, the flute a conduit for sound, preferably dirty and overdriven, with onomatopoeia thrown in as punctuation. With an antifascist stance, Joussein built a piece on words from Etienne de la Boétie's "Discourse on Voluntary Servitude" (1577). Such attitude and contents made for informed, consistent protest music.

Two excellent sets came in the form of trios in the age-old acoustic piano format, which melded the impromptu with a contemporary chamber feel. German-Serbian pianist **Tamara Stefanovich**, known for her performances of works by Boulez, Bartók and Stravinsky, joined forces with bassist Jonas Westergaard and drummer Christian Lillinger (moving like a martial artist behind the kit). Stefanovich and the bassist faced each other, eyes locked as in a duel, as the pianist provided liaison for the ultra-kinetic set. **Industriesalon** was ace pair Christian Weber (bass) and Michael Griener (drums) together with classically-trained Serbian pianist Marina Džukljević. Their album was one of last year's best surprises, and the concert amply confirmed that impression. Improvised music simply doesn't get much better.

Next up was a trombone-led, three-guitars extravaganza. **Jacob Garchik's** *Ye Olde 2: At the End of Time* featured the combined talents of Brandon Seabrook, Mary Halvorson and Jonathan Goldberger, who brought their distinctive poetry to compositions tailor-made for them, while drummer Vinnie Sperrazza maintained a dazzling propulsive energy throughout. Saxophonist-clarinetist **Chris Speed's** *Yeah NO's* reunion was a hoot, in its original line-up of trumpeter Cuong Vu, e-bassist Skúli Sverrisson, whose delightful touch is not unlike Steve Swallow's, and Jim Black. The quartet first appeared in 1997. Now nearly 30 years later, it was time for a happy throwback to the buoyant Downtown NY brand of jazz regeneration, with

maximal interplay. The first hour belonged to the early years and the remainder to new tunes, just as good, and on their way to becoming an album.

The merriment ended with the Spiritual Unity Session organized by bassist **Lukas Kranzelbinder**, with a number of artists taking turns at the jam-packed Nexus bar. The first-time encounter between trumpeter Avicé and the ubiquitous drummer Black made sparks fly by virtue of sturdy, steadfast playing.

The festival lived up to its reputation with more vital, uncompromising acts on display than the most dedicated visitor could hope to witness. Its 47th edition is scheduled for August 19-22, 2027.

For more info visit jazzsaalfelden.com/en

(LABEL SPOTLIGHT CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11)

online." Typically, musicians contact him with sessions that have already been recorded, mixed and sometimes mastered, with the players already paid. Through his agency Thirsty Robot Media, Golombisky provides art, layout design and publicity. "Together we work out the best strategy for release and timing, and I help get the album ready for sale and for streaming platforms," he explains. "Once sales start coming in, the artist keeps 80 per cent of the profits."

The Brooklyn-based Swedish flutist Elsa Nilsson, who now has four albums on the label (with another pending), recalls of her first album for the label in 2022 (*Atlas of Sound – Coast Redwoods*): "I recorded it the year before and once it was mixed and mastered, I pitched it to Matthew and he was on board...Longevity of vision and involvement in the process is something I really appreciate," she continues. "It adds a level of world-building to the artistic process. Matthew brings an open-mindedness and an eye for design to the projects. *Atlas of Sound*, for example, is released as a book and the design is used as a template for the subsequent releases. The creativity, support and input around the creation of the merch with my out-of-the-ordinary ideas for the multimedia project is what I appreciate about ears&eyes."

The COVID-19 interlude was when Golombisky realized that there didn't have to be physical copies of every release, and now some of the label's product is only available as digital downloads. Still, every session is on Bandcamp, because, as he says, "about 99 percent of sales came through Bandcamp. As for the streaming platforms, we specifically hold off for a while. After the excitement of a new release settles, we talk with the artist about when it makes sense to bring the album to streaming, and eventually it does make its way there." More ears&eyes projects about to be released include ones from several Argentinians: drummer Santiago Lacabe, pianist-singer Lucía Boffo and singer-songwriter Julián Muro. Also on tap is one from Slovene saxophonist Igor Lumpert as well as some archival sessions.

Golombisky may be very occupied teaching and running a one-person imprint, and when asked if anything is planned for the label's 20th anniversary, his immediate response is: "Oh snap...not yet!"

For more info visit earsandeyesrecords.com. ears&eyes musicians performing this month include: Caroline Davis at Roulette Nov. 7 (part of M³ Festival), Nov. 18 (with Qasim Naqvi), The Jazz Gallery Nov. 20 (with Alexis Cuadrado) and Bar LunAtico Nov. 24 (with Arthur Kell); Davis and Gregg Belisle-Chi at Reason & Ruckus (Poughkeepsie, NY) Nov. 6; Leo Genovese at Nublu 151 Nov. 16 (with Igor Lumpert), Bar LunAtico Nov. 17 (as leader) and Symphony Space Nov. 20 (part of "Coltrane 100"); Noa Fort at Rizzoli Bookstore Nov. 1, Roulette Nov. 8 (part of M³ Festival), Threes Brewing Nov. 11 and Five Spot Jazz Nov. 15; Elsa Nilsson at Lydia's Café (Stone Ridge, NY) Nov. 21. See *Calendar* and *100 Miles Out*.

(INTERVIEW CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6)

and drummer Dave King] were going to move in this different direction and was I interested? I was, like, yeah, of course! So that was pretty simple. They got Chris, and then we had this plan to do a bunch of rehearsing over the summer and had these gigs at Yoshi's at the end of September, and made sure we were prepared for that.

NYCJR: Does touring with a group like that, initially known for its covers of Nirvana, Blondie, Aphex Twin and Rush, expose you to a wider audience?

MONDER: It was definitely great for us [Speed and I] to just walk into this thing that was already set up to tour, a really popular scenario.

NYCJR: Who does most of the writing for the band?

MONDER: It's mostly Reid and Dave; Chris has a couple of things he's contributed, and I have one thing. I've tried to do more, but, as I've discovered, it's not that easy to write a Bad Plus tune, [at least one] that really works for that band. As much as I write, it's not always geared towards that configuration.

NYCJR: And what is a "Bad Plus tune," exactly?

MONDER: Well, I think there's a priority on the song, on relative simplicity.

NYCJR: Something accessible? Whistleable?

MONDER: Yeah, accessible, but in the best sense, you know?

NYCJR: So, what's accessible in the best sense? *[laughs]* Are you talking about preserving artistic integrity?

MONDER: Yes, but what does *that* even mean either? Like, what determines quality? Integrity? I don't know, because one person's corniness will be another person's profundity. What makes a great melody resonate? It could be an earworm, but it could also be trite.

NYCJR: It's a difficult topic: how to write a good melody.

MONDER: There are certain metrics that you can follow, techniques and general rules of tessitura and [having] a peak and a low point, and there's the form, of course. But what makes a resonant phrase? It's very intuitive for me, so I don't necessarily keep the first thing I hear, but it could be a starting point, sometimes it's the ending point. And maybe I'll determine that this is a melody that really works for me, and I feel good about this, and somebody else will think that this is maudlin crap, or whatever. So obviously it's really subjective. You can follow all the rules of how to write a good melody, and it could still not be inspired. Otherwise, AI could write all the greatest melodies on earth just by following rules.

NYCJR: How does The Bad Plus manage to be both popular and experimental?

MONDER: It gets back to the idea of what makes a good Bad Plus tune. It's being accessible, and yet interesting, and maybe a bit challenging. There's the balance between accessibility and challenge, and maybe some friction. If everything is frictionless, it's dubious that there's much substance there.

NYCJR: Do you apply this to your own work?

MONDER: I'm not really trying to do anything. I'm not trying to make it a statement. I put a high value on lyricism—and again, it's very subjective, because one person could hear lyricism where another can hear absolute dissonance and chaos—but I've always been

attracted to a great song and I—not with every piece—definitely try to put that concept into even the most complex compositions.

NYCJR: How do you communicate these ideas with your audience?

MONDER: For me, you have to get through any barriers that your audience might have. I feel the way that people do that successfully is by fully experiencing what they're doing on such a deep level that that experience is communicated to the listener, no matter what their level of experience is. I'm going to go back to Coltrane again: nobody had a more advanced intellectual understanding of harmony at that time as he did, but he was so popular because of the sheer spiritual power of what he was doing. And I think that he was able to overcome obstacles that people might have encountered through that. I think if your message is pure enough and deeply felt you can get away with more in terms of levels of complexity or dissonance or harmony.

NYCJR: Who comes to Bad Plus shows? What do you sense of the group's draw?

MONDER: The responses have been great. A lot of young aspiring musicians are coming out, and seem to be listening for all the right reasons, the right reasons being that they're showing attention, and that they've developed their attention to where it feels like they can understand a message. If there's a questionable trend going on it's that a lot of the ways music is consumed or apprehended is in short clips of various things. You're only going to get so deep. You're not going to develop a theme. What I value in an improvisation is I want to see where somebody's mind is taking me in real time, over time. A clip of forty seconds of some crazy impressive thing—that's a completely different animal. I think we're gearing our attention more towards that, and that's what people are valuing, and it's just a completely different way of consuming music than I'm used to.

I still make a point of listening to—at this point in my life—mostly classical music. I'll put on an entire symphony and listen to it from beginning to end. I won't open my eyes for an hour; I won't look at my phone—it's just a complete immersive experience. I feel that's almost a diametrically opposite experience of a lot of what's being presented as performance, especially online. But I feel like a lot of people are coming out with that ability to be attentive for that period of time. And that's encouraging.

For more info visit benmonder.com. Monder is at Le Poisson Rouge Nov. 12 and The Kimmel Center (Philadelphia, PA) Nov. 14 (both with The Bad Plus' "Farewell Tour"). He is also at Bar Bayeux Oct. 31 (with Tony Malaby) and Greenwich House Music School Nov. 5 (part of "Celebrating Frank Kimbrough"). See Calendar and 100 Miles Out.

Recommended Listening:

- Marc Johnson—*Right Brain Control* (JMT, 1991)
- Ben Monder Trio—*flux* (Songlines, 1995)
- Ben Monder/Bill McHenry—*Bloom* (Sunnyside, 2000)
- Ben Monder—*Amorphae* (ECM, 2010)
- Ben Monder, Tony Malaby, Tom Rainey—*Live at the 55Bar* (Sunnyside, 2020)
- The Bad Plus—*Complex Emotions* (Mack Avenue, 2023)

(MONTEREY CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12)

and Lewis Nash (drums). As part of their farewell tour, the last version of **The Bad Plus**—with founders in bassist Reid Anderson and drummer Dave King, plus guitarist Ben Monder and saxophonist Chris Speed—were heard during a late-night performance. Another farewell of sorts was heard from **Jazz at Lincoln Center**

Orchestra, led by Wynton Marsalis for one of his final times before he moves on at the end of the 2026-2027 season. Surprisingly, nothing was said about that onstage, and Marsalis took only one full-length solo. The band was in typically brilliant form on a versatile program that ranged from Jackie McLean to Jelly Roll Morton's "The Pearls" and included guest spots for Kortum and Cécile McLorin Salvant, the latter who sang surprising recreations of Swing Era classics "Sentimental Journey" and "Why Don't You Do Right?".

Three days after what would have been his father's 100th birthday, **Ravi Coltrane** was in outstanding form with his quartet, digging into "A Love Supreme", "Equinox", "Naima", the rarely-played "Expression", "Giant Steps" and a combination of "Dahomey Dance" and "India". Also outstanding was drummer **Sylvia Cuenca's** Bridging Generations, a sextet with Wallace Roney Jr. (trumpet), Rico Jones (tenor), David Kikoski (piano), Essiet Essiet (bass) and Will Martins (percussion). **Joey Alexander**, who first recorded when he was 11, has continued to evolve. Now 23, he played a stunning set that included a dazzlingly-rapid version of "Stella by Starlight", which displayed technique at an Oscar Peterson level. Drummer **Akira Tana** headed a fine hard bop/soul jazz trio of Atsuko Hashimoto (organ), Yutaka Hashimoto (guitar) and Jackie Ryan (vocals), and also featured on one song, the masterful Ali Ryerson (flute). Singer **Michael Mayo** made the case for being one of today's top male jazz vocalists. His scat singing, which incorporated both low notes and falsetto, was outstanding—and akin to a top-notch saxophonist, he was inventive in his choice of notes. Highlights included a funky version of "Just Friends", "Four" and unaccompanied (using electronic looping) on "I Didn't Know What Time It Was".

A much-ballyhooed duet meeting by **Herbie Hancock** and **Ron Carter** was on and off kilter, with Hancock frequently playing brilliant ideas and then abruptly stopping, giving the impression he was unsure about what was next. The duo unfortunately did not have the chemistry that one would have expected; Carter's unaccompanied variations on "You Are My Sunshine" took honors. Much better was **Cécile McLorin Salvant's** wide-ranging hour with Glenn Zaleski (piano), Yasushi Nakamura (bass) and Kyle Poole (drums), each of whom were at the top of their game. What other singer could credibly perform a set that included the folk song-inspired "Ghost Song" (the title track to her 2022 album), a witty and very theatrical version of Kurt Weill's "Barbara's Song", Bob Dorough's "Devil May Care", a dramatic "Is This Really the Way Men Live" (in French), Burt Bacharach's "Wives and Lovers", Arlen/ Yarbarg's "Over the Rainbow", Gregory Porter's "No Love Dying" and "Black Wing and Silver Hue", the Greek war song from 500 B.C.?

The highpoint of the weekend was provided by 88-year-old tenor saxophonist-flute player **Charles Lloyd**. Exactly 60 years ago, at the 1966 Monterey Jazz Festival, Lloyd performed "Forest Flower", with his legendary quartet of Keith Jarrett, Cecil McBee and Jack DeJohnette, which became a hit recording. His current quartet is Gerald Clayton (piano), Larry Grenadier (bass) and Brian Blade (drums), and while some of Lloyd's recent recordings might be considered fairly gentle in comparison, his tenor playing this night featured plenty of raw energy, forceful ideas and a consistently beautiful sound. From the start, he had each member of his group smiling at his ideas, and, as the set progressed, the leader himself looked extremely happy with the music's results. The joy was felt through a variety of grooves, folkish ballads, a complex but childlike calypso piece (with frequent and humorous tenor-piano unisons), plus a lengthy version of the highly-anticipated anniversary recreation of "Forest Flower". It was the perfect climax from a memorable weekend.

For more info visit montereyjazz.org