

THE INDEPENDENT JOURNAL OF CREATIVE IMPROVISED MUSIC

Artforum

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JAZZ NEWS

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BOOK REVIEWS

DVD REVIEWS

OBITUARIES

VOLUME 41 NUMBER 3

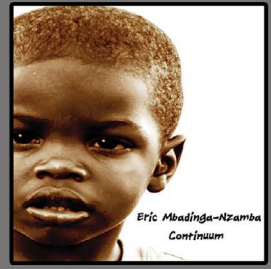
JULY, AUG, SEPT. 2015



DIM13NSiON – Imagur



Jass & Bazz – Eklektok



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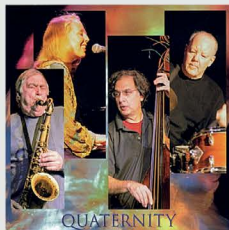
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Steve Griggs
Earshot Jazz Magazine,
December 1, 2014

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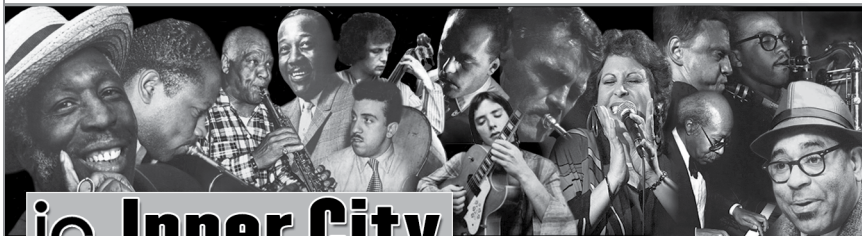
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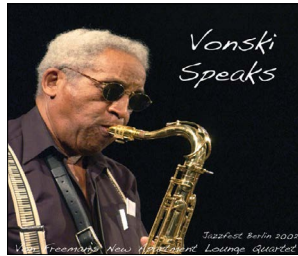
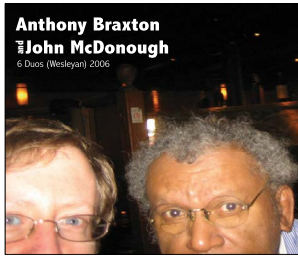
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"This is beautiful and meaningful work" - Cadence Magazine

10 New Releases

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#397 Demian Richarson 4tet *Wake Up For Those Who Care To Listen*

#398 Jimmy Bennington Trio *One More Beautiful Ballad*

#399 David Schnitter 4tet *Nursery Rhymes for the 21st Century*

#400 Burton Greene with R*time *Burton's Time*

#401 Demian Richarson 4tet *All's Well*

#402 David Haney *Solo*

#403 Jimmy Bennington + Demian Richarson Trio *Exotic Coda*

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#405 Demian Richarson & Dominic Duval *A Moment in Time*

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#1235 David Haney & Bernard Purdie *Selling It Like It Is*

#1236 Jimmy Bennington Trio *The Walk to Montreuil* w/J.L. Masson, B. Duboc

#1237 Ernie Krivda *At the Tri-C Jazz Fest* w/C. Black, M. Hayden, R. Gonsalves

#1238 Steve Swell's Nation of We: *The Business of Here...Live at Roulette*

#1242 Barry Wallenstein *Luck These Days* w/A. Birnbaum, V.Chauncey, N. Haiduck

#1243 Kazzrie Jaxen Quartet *Callicoon Sessions* w/C.Krachy, D.Messina, B.Chattin

#1244 JCA Orchestra *Stories* w/H.Honshuku, J.Hobbs, R.Stone, P. Scarff, N.Zocher, M.Cho

#1245 Mack Goldsbury's Quintet *Feat. Maciej Fortuna Live At CoCo's* w/S.Mahoney

#1246 Eهران Elisha Ensemble *Continue* w/H.Elisha, S.Bardfeld, D.Bindman, K.Filiano

#1247 Marilyn Lerner-Ken Filiano-Lou Grassi *Live in Madrid*

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 Lou Grassi

CIMPfest 2009
live in Villach, Austria.

CIMPoL 5020-5024: **CIMPfest 2009: LIVE IN VILLACH, AUSTRIA**

Complete with Producer and Engineer notes recounting all the action. Completely live and featuring Avram Fefer (alto + tenor saxophones), Bill Gagliardi (tenor saxophone), David Hofstra (bass), Dominic Duval (bass), Jay Rosen (drums), John Carlson (trumpet), John O'Gallagher (alto saxophone), Ken Filiano (bass), Ken Wessel (guitar), Lou Grassi (drums), Michael Bisio (bass), Stephen Gauci (tenor + alto saxophone)

DISK 1: Michael Bisio 4tet **DISK 2:** William Gagliardi 5tet **DISK 3:** Stephen Gauci 4tet
DISK 4: Jimmy Halperin & Dominic Duval Duo / John O'Gallagher Trio
DISK 5: Avram Fefer 4tet / CIMP Orchestra

CIMPoL 5027-5030: **Trio-X - Live on Tour 2010**

Iowa City - Champaign - Waukege - Ann Arbor - Mount Rainier

Completely live and featuring Joe McPhee (pocket trumpet, flugelhorn, tenor + soprano sax) Dominic Duval (bass), Jay Rosen (drums)

DISK 1: Trio-X - Live - Iowa City, IA and Champaign, IL **DISK 2:** Trio-X - Live - Waukege, IA
DISK 3: Trio-X - Live - Ann Arbor, MI **DISK 4:** Trio-X - Live - Mt. Rainier, MD

New CIMPoL releases:

5026	Eric Plaks Quintet	Live at Bronx Community College
5041	Mat Marrucci Trio	Live at Jazz Central
5042	Teresa Carroll Quintet	Live at Dazzle

Earlier CIMPoL releases:

5001	Trio-X: Joe McPhee - Dominic Duval - Jay Rosen	AIR: Above and Beyond
5002	Odean Pope	Serenity
5003	Joe McPhee & Dominic Duval	The Open Door
5004	David Bond Quintet	The Early Show (live at Twin's Jazz)
5005	Salim Washington	Live at St. Nick's
5006-5012	Trio-X: Joe McPhee - Dominic Duval - Jay Rosen	Live on Tour 2006
5013	Gebhard Ullmann + Steve Swell 4tet	Live in Montreal
5014	Ernie Krivda	Live Live at the Dirty Dog
5015-5019	Trio-X: Joe McPhee - Dominic Duval - Jay Rosen	Trio-X - Live on Tour 2008
5025	Seth Meicht and the Big Sound Ensemble	Live in Philadelphia



Creative Improvised Music Projects

There are three distinct and symbiotic components to CIMP's philosophy: the Art, the Production, and the Listener.

Pursuing Art for art's sake is easier said than done, but we try. We do not expect to make money with the label, and we judge all of the releases on aesthetic criteria only. We work with musicians who have clear visions, originality, dedication, and passion for their purity of statement. The musicians must also be able to express these attributes in real time with no external fixes.

Far too many creative efforts are born from marketing concepts. Debates about the intersection of art and commerce will last forever, but it is clear that whenever the primary goal is marketing, art will be compromised. We strive to create an atmosphere that is as free from artificial forces as possible, an atmosphere that simply allows the art to emerge and exist.

Many musicians are accustomed to being relegated to the role of note creators, creating notes that someone else (engineer, producer, label) will use to create his own vision of what the artist was trying to express. We think musicians should be heard on their own terms. Before each recording session we try to make all the musicians aware that the only restrictions and limitations here are between their ears; that there is no arbitrary set of rules to please an establishment. We think people will enjoy the music that we record because it is great music, created by great artists, and allowed to exist on its own terms.

In order to present uncompromised art, we observe 2 objectives during Production. First and foremost, we do not compress the music signal. When you limit, or compress, the dynamics of an artist's expression, you squelch and change their art. Creative improvised music thrives on dynamic range, it is as much a part of the music as the notes that are created. Every note has several parts wrapped up in its package, and the degrees of loudness or softness are as crucial as the timbre or tone. With CIMP's natural dynamic sound, one can aurally ride with the music, gaining much greater insight into its creation and message, experiencing its power and passion just as the artist envisioned it.

The second issue concerns recording technique. In order to not invade the creative process of the music while recording it, we use minimalist mic techniques and only record in pure stereo. There are no headphone mixes, drum booths, bass rooms, baffles, or anything else to get in the way with the communication between members of a group. Successful engineering here means being as unobtrusive as possible. To further this cause we do not do any mixing, overdubbing, splicing, enhancing time, equalizing, or any other means of changing or fixing the signal. When you listen to a CIMP production, you hear how the artists themselves envisioned the music, *not* some engineer's concept of how the dynamics of expression should be represented.

For every release on this label, a cover is created that expresses another artist's vision of how this music speaks to them. Our covers are as real as the music inside, binding the label in a visual way, expressing a bigger purpose than immediate sales.

The integrity of every CIMP release is attended to by those involved: Artists put forth uncompromised expressions of their music and contribute a written statement in the booklet that accompanies each disc. In addition, every CIMP release is endorsed by the Producer and the Engineer, who contribute personal comments and insights about the recording. Recordings that can not stand up to these personal endorsements are not issued.

The third portion of this symbiotic relationship is the Listener. Even at its broadest level, improvised music has a niche audience. CIMP productions occupy a niche within that niche, reaching an audience interested in approaching art on its own terms. For these listeners, CIMP is becoming known as a label that will stand up over time, continually rewarding those who pay close attention to the music, though our techniques make it possible for even casual listeners to glimpse the strength and beauty of the playing. The greatest rewards come to those who take the time to be as uncompromising in their listening as the musicians were while creating the music.

We have set high standards across the board and hope that in the long run this approach will become appreciated by a growing audience. We work hard to ensure that CIMP recordings reward repeated and in-depth listening, presenting the Art in such a fashion so that—to have a front row private concert seat experience—one need only put the music on and listen.

"CIMP ... has almost instantly become the leading North American label of its kind. With clean, unprocessed live to two-track engineering and a uniform approach to cover art and booklet design, CIMP has developed an identity that will serve them well for the long haul. CIMP's catalog is already brimming with the type of personnel connections between releases common to great labels..." Bill Shoemaker, *JazzTimes*

"...up until now, nobody has structured an entire catalog around new/ avant-garde jazz with the emphasis on sonic excellence. CIMP aims to change all that. With minimalist, purist microphone techniques and honest, no-frills engineering, **CIMP offers an alternative to the often casually recorded avant-garde discography.** ... The overall flavor is of a homegrown product crafted with great care. ...the results are impressive. ... Musically, these discs are full of gems." Carl E. Baugher, *The Tracking Angle*

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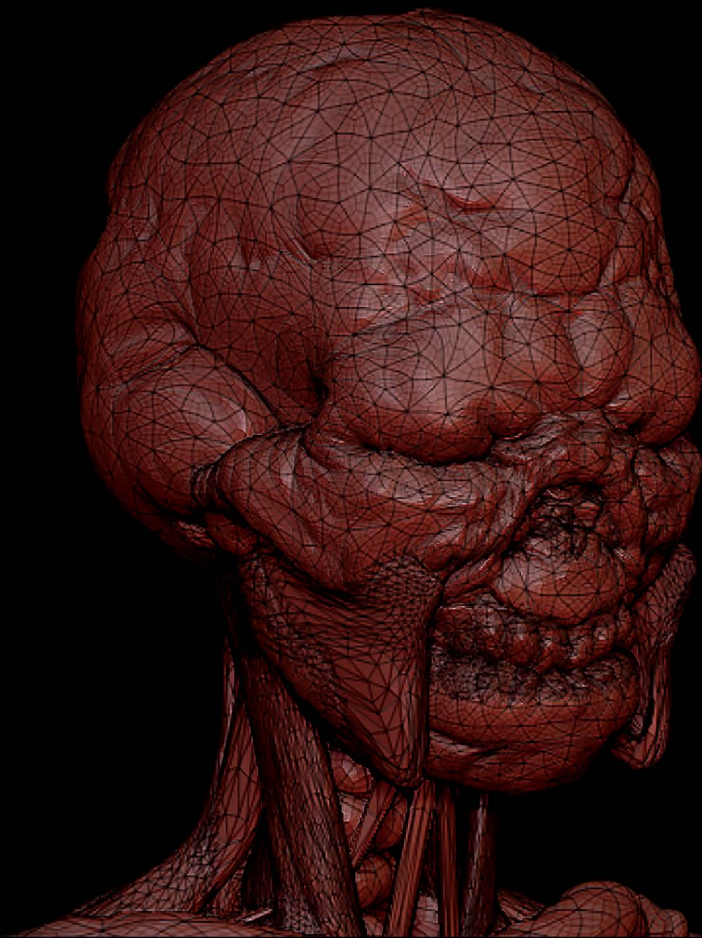
"...supreme recording... puts that of the major labels to shame." "hi-fi stunners..." "If jazz has been rocking in its cradle of compression & EQ-ed homogeneity too long, CIMP's turn to recorded truth is just the bucket of iced water the somnolent form requires." Ben Watson, *HiFi News & Record Review*

"CIMP packages bear a clear mission statement: **'What you hear is exactly what was played.'** The label means it.

The sessions are recorded live to digital two-track, with zero processing effects and no editing ... authentic performances with a vast dynamic range." Sam Prestianni, *Jazziz*

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- *JazzNytt, Norway*.



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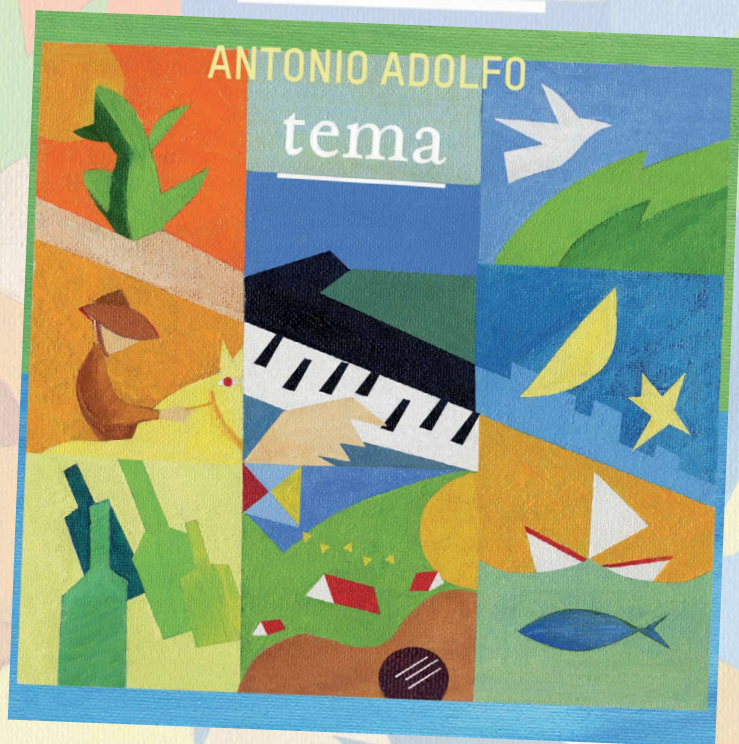
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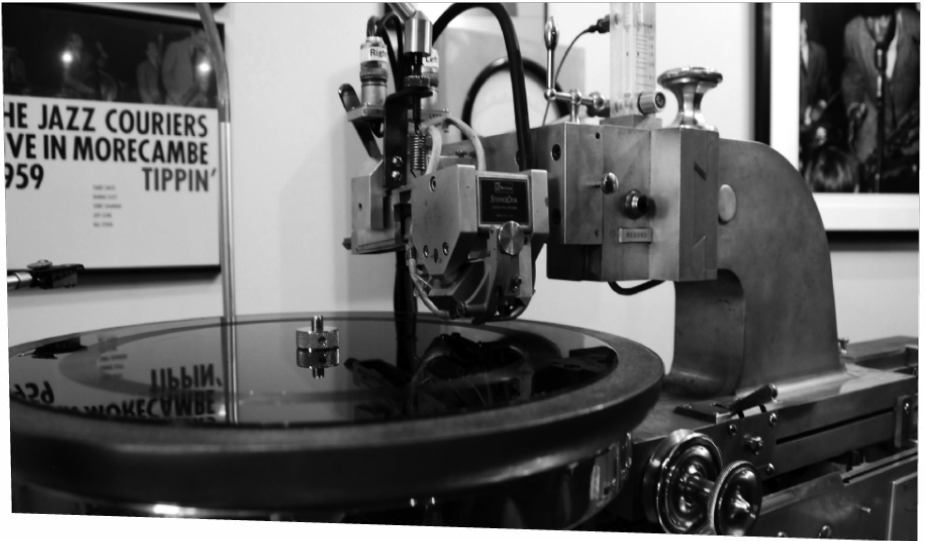
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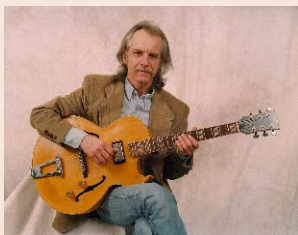
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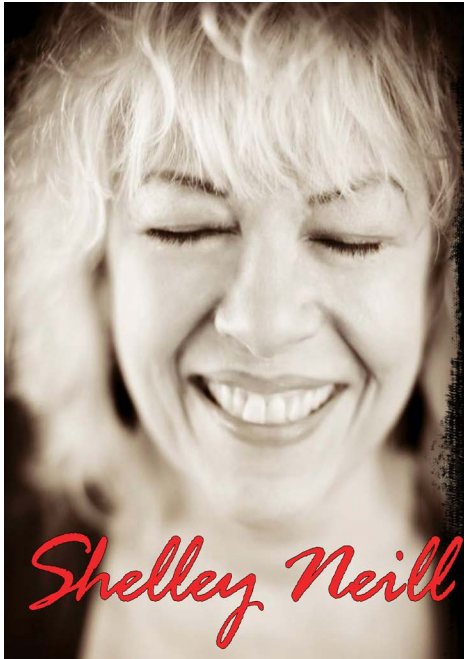
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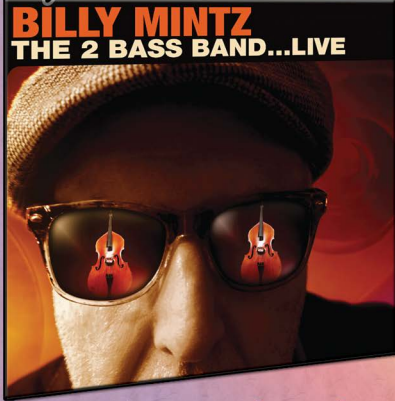
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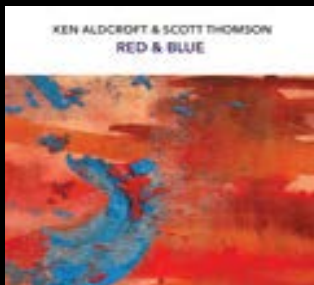
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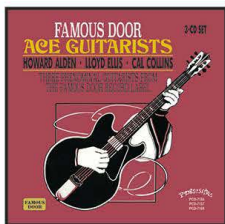
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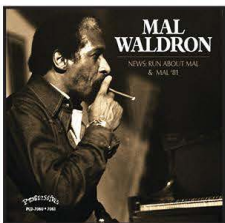
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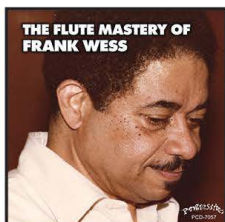
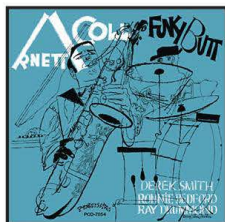
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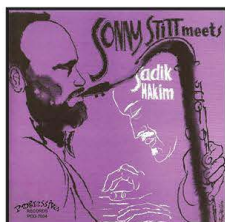
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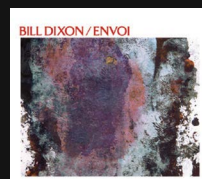
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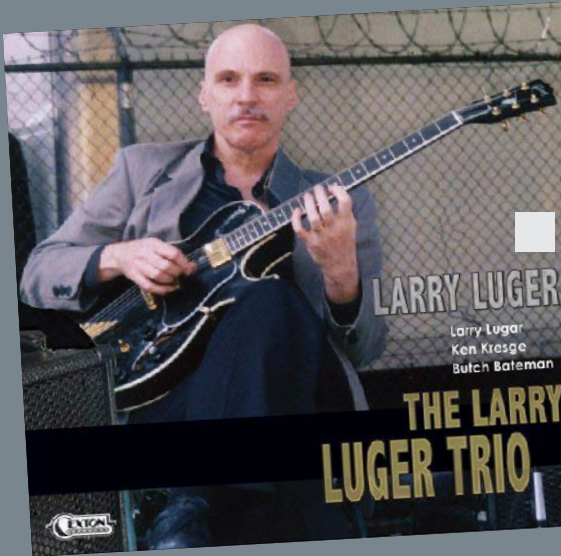


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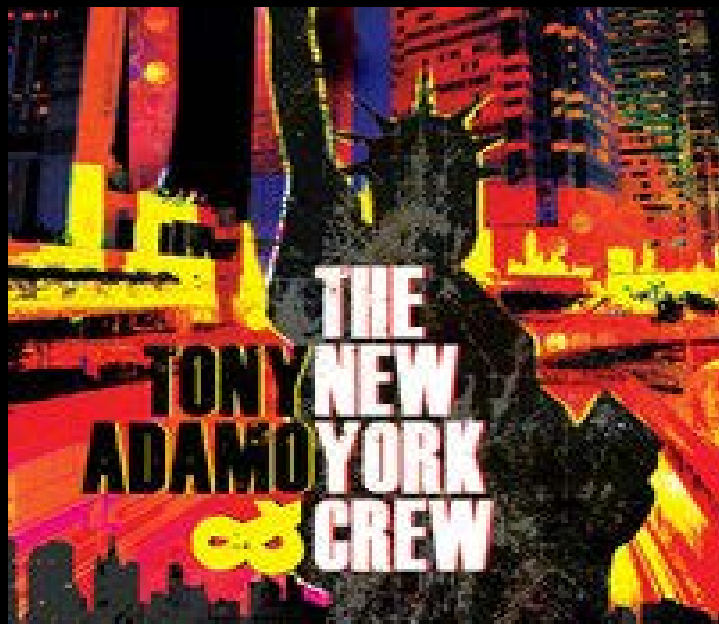
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acc: accordion
 as: alto sax
 bari s : baritone sax
 b: bass
 b cl: bass clarinet
 bs: bass sax
 bsn: bassoon
 cel: cello
 cl: clarinet
 cga: conga
 cnt: cornet
 d: drums
 el: electric
 elec: electronics
 Eng hn: English horn
 euph: euphonium
 flgh: flugelhorn
 flt: flute
 Fr hn: French horn
 g: guitar
 hca: harmonica
 kybd: keyboards
 ldr: leader
 ob: oboe
 org: organ
 perc: percussion
 p: piano
 pic: piccolo
 rds: reeds
 ss: soprano sax
 sop: sopranino sax
 synth: synthesizer
 ts: tenor sax
 tbn: trombone
 tpt: trumpet
 tba: tuba
 v tbn: valve trombone
 vib: vibraphone
 vla: viola
 vln: violin
 vcl: vocal
 xyl: xylophone



July, August, September 2015
Vol. 41 No. 3 (414)

Cadence ISSN01626973
 is published quarterly and annually by
 Cadence Media LLC,
 P.O. Box 13071, Portland, OR 97213
 PH 503-975-5176
 Email: cadencemagazine@gmail.com
 www.cadencemagazine.com

Subscriptions 1 year:
 First Class USA: \$65
 Outside USA : \$75

PDF Link and Annual Print Edition: \$50, Outside USA \$60
 Managing Editors: Colin Haney, Zim Tarro

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ALL FOREIGN PAYMENTS: Visa, Mastercard, Pay Pal, and
 Discover accepted.

POSTMASTER: Send address change to Cadence Magazine, P.O.

Box 13071, Portland, OR 97213

Published by Cadence Media, L LC.

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Cadence Magazine Editorial Policy

Established in January 1976, Cadence Magazine was a monthly publication through its first 381 issues (until September 2007). Beginning with the October 2007 issue, Cadence increased in number of pages, changed to perfect binding, and became a quarterly publication. On January 1, 2012 Cadence Magazine was transferred to Cadence Media L.L.C. Cadence Magazine continues as an online publication and one print issue per year. Cadence Magazine, LLC, is proud to continue the policies that have distinguished Cadence as an important independent resource. From its very first issue, Cadence has had a very open and inclusive editorial policy. This has allowed Cadence to publish extended feature interviews in which musicians, well known or otherwise, speak frankly about their experiences and perspectives on the music world; and to cover and review all genres of improvised music. We are reader supported.

Cadence essentially always has been and remains "the best independent magazine of Jazz, Blues, and Creative Improvised Music that money can't buy."

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Contributors

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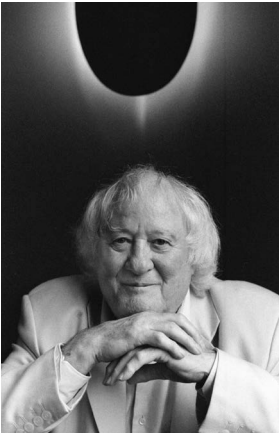
ROBERT D. RUSCH (Papatamus, Obituaries) got interested in jazz in the early 1950s and, beginning with W.C. Handy, has since interviewed hundreds of musicians. In 1975 he started Cadence Magazine, handing it over to David Haney in January 2012. He has produced over 600 recording sessions of unpopular music and currently paints unpopular canvases.

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JEROME WILSON (CD Reviews) is a long time music, film, and comic strip fan who works for the Navy and lives in the Washington, DC area.

Feature - Emil Mangelsdorff



EMIL MANGELSDORFF

Text and photographs
by Patrick Hinely

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It's hard to imagine this compact, gentle man of 90, a senior statesman in German jazz, as a juvenile delinquent, much less an enemy of the state, but Emil Mangelsdorff was once considered both by the Nazi government. His teenage crime was playing decadent music of non-aryan races and other rootless cosmopolitans, music we know as jazz.

He was made to pay: after being smacked around in a cell for 3 weeks by the Gestapo, he was conscripted into Hitler's army and sent to the Russian front. By war's end, he was a Soviet prisoner, spending the next 5 years in Latvia, mostly scraping rust off of old ships, a task he says was far more pleasant in summer than winter. He did both. Though their barracks was within sight and easy walking distance of the Baltic, only once in those 5 years were the POWs allowed to go to the beach. Not for nothing was it called hard labor.

After being repatriated in 1949, he came home to a nascently-burgeoning musical scene in Frankfurt am Main, jumped right in, and has played a pivotal role in its ongoing development ever since. In the postwar years, Frankfurt was the hub of the wheel for German jazz, which was a phenomenon unto itself, given that in so many ways, it had to start with less than nothing, in times of deprivation and devastation, yet evolved not only into something, but something of unique worth, strength and durability. As part of this, Mangelsdorff is a testament not only to survival, but to the triumph of the human spirit over adversity.

He turned 90 in April, and L+R Records issued a compilation of Mangelsdorff's work on that label, spanning from Jutta Hipp's quartet in 1954 up to his most recent album, recorded in late 2013 and early 2014. He's not made all that many albums under his own name, but he has recorded a lot, mostly for Hessian Radio (HR), where he, along with his younger brother Albert and their long-time colleague Joki Freund, were among the co-founders of the Frankfurt-based network's Jazz Ensemble, in 1958.

Feature - Emil Mangelsdorff



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Emil Mangelsdorff quartet concert, (bassist Vitold Rek in background)
JazzFest Berlin, House of the Berliner Festspiele November 3, 2010

Feature - Emil Mangelsdorff

HR's Jazz Ensemble (HRJE) may not be unique in all the world, but it's close to it, and is an unusual arrangement which at least qualifies as nice work if you can get it. Members are guaranteed 3 recording days per month, royalties from which don't quite constitute enough to make a decent living, but do provide enough work to form the basis of a freelance career. Originally, this was to keep good musicians available in Frankfurt, the alternative available at the time being to join big bands which were constantly touring. The rubric of the HRJE eliminated the necessity of frequent touring, and made it possible for members to create and bring their own music to the group, which would then present it to the listening audience, as well as offering the opportunity to work with all sorts of guest artists.

Those jazz artists of note who have passed through Frankfurt in the past 57 (and counting) years and not played with HRJE would be a shorter list than those who have. Mangelsdorff has flourished alongside this wide range of guests in the company of his own estimable colleagues. He's not traveled much – one could say Emil is to Frankfurt as Tony Coe is to London, a world-class player who remains primarily local by choice. Coe simply doesn't care to travel by air. In Emil's case, he may have been so glad to finally get home from the war that he's been willing, ever since, to let the world come to him. It has.

His younger brother Albert, the innovative trombonist (1928-2005) was more of a traveler, and his international peregrinations did much to raise the profile of German and European jazz in general. As adults, their sibling relationship may not have always been smooth, but their mutual musical efforts always clicked – Emil's proclivity for swing and Albert's open-ended take on cool jazz made for a combination that suited a resurgent nation and made them among Germany's most in-demand players.

Their work alongside one another in the HRJE was consistently top-drawer, and seldom more creatively steered, from early on, than by tenor saxophonist and arranger Joki Freund. The 4 movements in Freund's 1956 "Vier Temperamente" gave each brother a solo section (the others going to trumpeter Dusko Goykovic and Freund himself) and within that context, all evinced their likes and inclinations as described above, as well as hinting at what they had in mind beyond absorbing the then-prevalent American styles, much of which would come to pass in the fullness of time.

Steve Swallow tells of a youthful summer abroad with his bass around 1960, playing his ass off in Frankfurt's Jazzkeller "under the benign nightly tutelage of the Mangelsdorff brothers," whose teaching classroom was the bandstand. Swallow says he always felt respected as a musician and a human being by these frighteningly talented brothers, one tall and one not. German musicians of Swallow's age group have similar tales, some less reverential.

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EMIL MANGELSDORFF, portrait, November 4, 2010
Salon Belvedere, Savoy Hotel, Berlin



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Former MPS office manager Lisa Boulton (left) served as translator for my interview with Emil Mangelsdorff. Salon Belvedere, Savoy Hotel, Berlin, November 4, 2010.

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Both brothers play on Freund's seminal 1963 album YOGI JAZZ (along with Eberhard Weber and Wolfgang Dauner, among others), and Emil's flute solo on Ellington & Tizol's "Caravan" is a force of nature. Not that this was the first time Emil had righteously shredded at a recording session: as a member of the Hot Club of Frankfurt, he takes a wild accordion (yes, accordion) solo on "Stomp," recorded in 1941, when Emil was all of 16 years old. Not necessarily a pretty sight, but a spirited statement from a young man beginning to feel his oats in strange times of much bad weirdness.

That collaborations by the Mangelsdorff brothers were less numerous with time is attributed by many to bickering between their wives, but there is more to it than that. After I first met Emil 5 years ago and began my preliminary research, I couldn't help but notice that many of my German colleagues in the critical community were reluctant to talk about him. At first I thought this might be a stylistic-partisan thing: Albert was the avant brother, while Emil was the trad, and, in the jazz press, avant will trump trad 9 times out of 10. Albert was no longer there to speak for himself, and there seemed to be a hesitation about speaking in favor of Emil, lest one appear to be speaking against Albert.

That was part of it, but not all: it gets worse, and it's the critical community which comes out looking bad, not either of the Mangelsdorff brothers. It was a classic set-up, in the supposed service of contriving an ongoing journalistic story line, no matter how bogus, which too many writers seemed perfectly willing to buy into, perhaps to garner more ink (which could translate as job security back in those days when space was so preciously limited in print publications) and it pitted the brothers against one another, based solely on their preferences for different styles of jazz. This whole approach ignored the facts, but that didn't stop anyone from fanning the flames.

Nor was theirs the only case of such misguided media machinations: I distinctly recall their fellow German, pianist and composer Alex Von Schlippenbach, longtime leader of the Globe Unity Orchestra, telling me, some 10 years ago, about being involuntarily cast, in the mid-60s, by the press as the rebellious, anti-jazz bad boy, who was said to have created his groundbreaking new work in order to thumb his nose at the jazz establishment. I could practically hear his teeth gnashing – still, 40 years after the fact - as he explained that he and his friends had simply wanted to try something new. They weren't against much of anything in particular beyond nuclear weapons and US involvement in Viet Nam.

This insistence on 'either/or' distinctions rather than embracing the 'and/also' possibility that, for instance, both Emil and Albert Mangelsdorff were making valuable contributions to the music seems ludicrous now, and such behavior is, alas, hardly unique to the German press. What is most sad in this is that such invented divisions

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– along with quarreling wives - kept them from working together in Albert's later years. The trombonist made a duet album with alto saxophonist Lee Konitz (ART OF THE DUO, on ENJA), but he never made one with his alto saxophonist brother Emil. I have to sigh wistfully when I think about what a beautiful conversation that could have been.

Emil's stature in the Frankfurt scene is well-illustrated by the cover the a 2-LP set on Telefunken (yet to be reissued on CD) from the mid-70s by the Frankfurt All Stars, CITY JAZZ: FRANKFURT-MAIN STREAMS. In the predominant photo, he stands front and center among the 9 players in what is called the Frankfurt Jazz Ensemble, with colleagues including his brother on one end and Freund on the other, and pianist Bob Degen, bassist Guenter Lenz, saxophonists Guenther Kronberg and Heinz Sauer, and drummer Ralf Huebner. Three other bands are seen in smaller photos on that same front cover, and Emil is a member of every one: his own quartet, Freund's Jazztett and last – but not least – a fusion aggregation called From. Incidentally, in one of the HRJE's earliest publicity photos, from 1961, a performance shot with those same 5 horn players gathered around a radio mike, Emil is also the central figure.

He's had the respect and affection of his colleagues and peers all along, and, in the past few years, he has also received major local, state and national recognition as a cultural icon. He has as much work as he wants, and, not surprisingly, at his age, has become a lot more particular about what he chooses to do with his time. He gives presentations at schools, showing children a copy of his letter from the Gestapo, warning that his antisocial tendencies could put his entire family in a concentration camp. The question he poses to the kids is somewhat simpler: "Can you imagine a government that arrests people for the kind of music they play?" He knows whereof he speaks, and continues to do his share to assure that it will never happen again. He also introduces the kids to jazz. Everyone wins.

While neither of his most recent albums, 2007's *BLUES FOREVER* or 2014's *STOLEN MOMENTS*, could be characterized as groundbreaking, both are solid efforts with world-class playing, assaying a repertoire that includes the swing era, but also bebop and more modern composers whose oeuvres evolved from those traditions. More on those and some of his earlier efforts below.

Though I'd never seen Emil before, when I heard him with his quartet on opening night at JazzFest Berlin in 2010, it felt like a warm gathering among friends – not just the musical conversation with his fellow players, but also their rapport with the audience. The repertoire encompassed Gillespie, Parker, Silver, Kern, and, to close, Emil's own "Blues Forever." The versatile pianist Thilo Wagner shone throughout, as did bassist Vitold Rek and drummer Janusz Stefanski, knowing when to pour it on and when to hold back. And while alto may be my least favorite member of the saxo-

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phone family, I was won over: had Emil played all night long, I would have gladly stayed and savored every note...

Selected discography (limited to albums available on CD) -

UNDER HIS OWN NAME:

SWINGING OIL DROPS (recorded 1966) – L+R. His first solo album appeared when the Beatles were at their height, but the closest he came to making any concession to rock was adding Volker Kriegel on guitar. It is an unapologetic celebration of the swing music Emil had loved since first hearing it on Radio Luxembourg in the 1930s. He plays alto, clarinet and flute, while Joki Freund hits both soprano and tenor saxes – and piano!

MEDITATION (recorded 1986 and 1994) – L+R. He plays duets with American-born pianist Bob Degen and Hungarian-born guitarist Attila Zoller as well as quartet numbers with his band of the day. This is his most 'out' project under his own name, yet it never sounds overextended. The players pull interesting responses out of one another.

THIS SIDE UP (recorded 1992) – L+R. Save for bassist Gerhard Bitter, Emil's present quartet is on board, and they play all original material, primarily Emil's, and cook. This is sweet stuff, polished but not so polished as to not also be lively.

BLUES FOREVER (recorded 2007) – L+R. His current band plus guest trombonist Clemens Greve on 3 tunes, the repertoire all from the jazz swing and bop canons, plus Emil's own title tune. The renderings are faithful to the composers' intentions, assuming their intention was for those who play the music to put their own personal touches on it.

STOLEN MOMENTS (recorded 2013 – 2014) – L+R. Joining his current quartet are Manfred Schoof on trumpet, Joe Gallardo and trombone and Wilson de Oliveira on tenor sax. The repertoire is wider and the playing is wider open. If I was going to get only one of his albums, this would be the one. It's just downright fun.

TUNE IN! (recorded 1954 – 2014)- L+R. This compilation from all of the above-listed albums and then some appeared earlier this year, covering the waterfront from Jutta Hipp to the present day. It's a good assortment but more of a sampler than a summation. It skims the surface of a deep well.

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WITH THE JAZZ ENSEMBLE OF HESSIAN RADIO:

THE OPA HIRCHLEITNER STORY (recorded 1958) – Bear Family. Based on a rather clever and hilarious tale, worthy of Grimmelshausen or Guenter Grass, concocted by his brother Albert to lay out the history of jazz, there is much to savor here as the band structures itself around the music and vice-versa. It is a delight to hear them discovering their own independence as they negotiate the story line.

ATMOSPHERIC CONDITIONS PERMITTING (recorded 1967 – 1993) – ECM. Emil plays on 20 of the 31 selections with guests of several generations and nationalities. Few will like everything they hear here, but fewer will like none. One can almost hear the organization stretching – successfully - to encompass a musical scene no one could have foreseen only a few years earlier.

PERPETUAL QUESTIONS (recorded 1999 – 2004) – HR Music. Further explorations by the ensemble in new formations and permutations, keeping up with the changing times without forgetting their origins.

UNAUFFAELLIGE FESTANSAGE (recorded 1999 – 2008) – Jazzwerkstatt. The cast of characters changes and the quest evolves but the beat goes on. They'll try most anything, and it usually works. After more than 50 years, the group remains viable and flexible.

WITH JUTTA HIPPI:

Emil's 1954 recordings with the German pianist have been sliced, diced and repackaged many times over, and differing assortments, all worthy, are available via:

THE LEGENDARY JUTTA HIPPI QUINTET – Fresh Sounds.

COOL DOGS AND TWO ORANGES – L+R.

NEW SOUNDS FROM THE OLD CONTINENT: EUROPEAN JAZZ – Membran (disc #8 from this 10-CD nice-price box set).

Here is a sad story, but these recordings are gloriously cool and hot at the same time. Hipp's own playing was deemed worthy of recording by no less than the Blue Note label, and Emil and Joki Freund weren't just along for the ride. They earn their keep and make clear they've got places to go.

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WITH OTHERS:

YOGI JAZZ – Joki Freund Sextet (recorded 1963) – Sawano. This is a kind of touchstone for German jazz, presaging what would come later in the decade from MPS and subsequently from ECM. This is as 'out' as Emil ever got – Freund too, for that matter – but they always brought it all back home by tune's end, somewhat in the manner of the late Kenny Wheeler: listening to their process takes you somewhere, somewhere scenic, somewhere good, then returns you, changed for the better.

EASY STREET – Inge Brandenburg with the HRJE (recorded 1959 – 1961) – Bear Family. Brandenburg's story is even sadder than Hipp's, but she had climbed high on her ascendant when she recorded these 20 tunes with the HRJE. She combined elements of Billie Holiday, Judy Garland and even Frank Sinatra, and the band does more than merely back her up. At the time she still didn't speak English, making her phonetic pronunciations even more uncannily on the money.

THE VERY BEGINNING:

SWING TANZEN VERBOTEN! (recorded 1933 – 1945) – Proper. It's a 4-CD set of primarily historical interest (the Nazi-sanctioned groups proving time and again, painfully beyond any doubt that they couldn't even, as the saying goes, swing at the end of a rope), but disc #1 includes the aforementioned Hot Club of Frankfurt's "Stomp" with Emil's accordion solo. An auspicious beginning...

AFTERWORD:

My hope is that this overview of Emil Mangelsdorff will prove to be only my first run over the target, though into what form it shall evolve can only be known with time, which is a roundabout way of saying this isn't the whole story...yet...



Photo Credit: Ken Weiss

April in
Scandinavia

Lotte Anker
Interview

By Ken Weiss

One of Scandinavia's strongest improvisational and free Jazz performers, Lotte Anker [Lot-ah Ahnk-ah] is a triple threat on soprano, alto and tenor saxophone. Her interest lies not in cacophonous sessions but in spontaneous and expressive musical explorations that involve her bandmates. Anker works in many varied settings but her longtime trio with Americans Craig Taborn and Gerald Cleaver is especially adept at negotiating spectacularly colorful and breathless interaction. Born May 7, 1958 in Copenhagen, where she remains based, Anker studied classical piano as a child but grew bored with structured sound and sought the "weird" sounds found in the Scandinavian experimental Jazz scene in the '80s. She got a late start on sax, beginning at age 22, and studied music at Copenhagen University from 1980-84, participating in courses and workshops led by Joe Henderson, David Liebman, John Tchicai, Marilyn Mazur and David Murray. Although she considers herself mostly self-taught, Anker has a degree in composition from Copenhagen's Rhythmic Music Conservatory and had training there under Bob Brookmeyer and contemporary music Danish composers. Over the past quarter decade, she's collaborated with an exhaustive list of Jazz greats including Fred Frith, Tim Berne, Marilyn Crispell, Sylvie Courvoisier, Ikue Mori, Andrew Cyrille, Paul Lovens, Peter Brotzmann, Marilyn Mazur, Herb Robertson, , Phil Minton, Joelle Leandre, Craig Taborn, Gerald Cleaver and Marc Ducret, and also co-founded the Danish-based 12-piece Copenhagen Art Ensemble. This interview took place on February 19, 2015 in Philadelphia at Chris' Jazz Café, prior to a performance with Taborn and Cleaver at the Philadelphia Art Alliance.

Cadence: You've said in the past that you'd rather play all free improvisation. Is that still true?

Lotte Anker: All free improvisation? Did I say that? [Laughs] Well, I've done a lot of free improvisation the last ten years but I also play in orchestras and bands where there might be written music and I'm still composing on and

off. I like to do both free and composed.

Cadence: *Would you talk about the creating aspect of improvisation and composition?*

Anker: For me it's two different ways of trying to get closer to the same thing – the essence. I think both improvisation and composing nurture each other a lot and normally when I do compose, it would mostly be for larger ensembles because I think it could be hard to deal with free improvisation as soon as you are over five members in a band. I also like that you are able to control a certain structure in a musical piece. In a lot of smaller constellations, it's often free improvised and I think as a free improviser, I get a lot of ideas for compositional material and I also like when I compose, to try to incorporate a certain amount of freedom for the musicians. I've been trying to find new ways to combine composed structures with improvisation and sometimes it's free improvisation, sometimes it can be a little more structured improvisation where there might be some instructions but still a lot of freedom.

Cadence: *What's your relationship with Jazz? Do you feel connected to the Jazz tradition?*

Anker: In a way, [Laughs] I do. I definitely did when I started playing saxophone because that was part of my learning to play Jazz. I used to play more modern Jazz in the late '80s, but I think I have removed myself from the modern Jazz scene. I still feel connected in the way that the individual freedom and the improvisation, for me, is the call and the essence of Jazz and remains the most important thing.

Cadence: *What were your early influences in the music and what attracted you?*

Anker: As a saxophone player it was definitely Wayne Shorter, and I also started on soprano sax. I was a big fan especially of early Weather Report, and of course, I was also listening to a lot of Miles Davis, especially his electric period. Also, definitely John Coltrane, which came a little later. When I decided that I'm gonna' play saxophone, I wanted to find out what it was to improvise in a Jazz context, I started going back and learning about Jazz' history. In a way, I started with Weather Report and electric Miles and then went backwards through the '70s, '60s, '50s, and so on. I was studying music at the university in Copenhagen and there was a very good Jazz professor and a really good library with all the good records. I also started to listen to more of the free improv Jazz like the Art Ensemble of Chicago, Sun Ra and Ornette Coleman.

Cadence: *Do you feel that the playing of Wayne Shorter and John Coltrane still inform your playing?*

Anker: No I don't think it informs in that way but I might still have some things in my fingers which are not directly from them but maybe someone would be able to track down a certain similarity. I would like to mention one other person who was really important to me in terms of Jazz saxophone - John Tchicai - who was my first teacher and hap-

pened to live in Copenhagen at the time. He meant a lot to me.

Cadence: *Wayne Shorter is perhaps more popular than ever at this time. Do you still follow his work? Does he still influence you?*

Anker: I must admit I'm not really updated with his recent things.

Cadence: *So at the start of your musical journey, you were playing modern Jazz and not free Jazz?*

Anker: In a way, I started doing both. One of the first workshops I did was one that John Tchicai would lead every Sunday evening in Copenhagen. It could be a group of three to eight people and sometimes he would just bring a tune which we would play or sometimes we would just improvise or he would bring a certain game where we tried playing with certain rules. That was really fun and interesting for me. I played piano at the start at those workshops but then I got a saxophone and brought that. About a year later, I got a teacher who was more focused on Jazz – mostly modern Jazz but with an understanding of Jazz' history. Throughout all this, I was very aware of developing my own language. I also started writing my own music.

Cadence: *I read a quote of yours where you said you've always liked "weird sounds."*

Anker: That's true. I played classical piano as a kid but I remember being presented to modern 20th-century contemporary music and that had a very strong attraction for me. I don't know why, I just liked it a lot, Bartok, Stravinsky, Schonberg, and later Stockhausen. I found it really interesting.

Cadence: *Would you talk more about how John Tchicai influenced you?*

Anker: That was very early and it's kind of a paradox what I learned from him because the Sunday workshops were followed by going out and drinking tea and he would almost never comment on music but in some weird way, he got his point of views out there. I think he was meditating and he was studying Buddhism at that time, so maybe he was in kind of a non-judgmental thing, but he would say a little down-to-earth thing about something such as it's not in tune. We all had a lot of respect for him because he had a lot of charisma. Later, when I was older and had more of my own language, I played with him and I remember still having the same respect for him. He gave us technical exercises and he was a traditional teacher but his way of being, his tone, his melodic sense and phrasing, was influential to me at that time.

Cadence: *I'd like to ask a few questions related to gender and I'm sure that's not your favorite topic. How tired are you of talking about you being a female playing saxophone as an interview focus?*

Anker: How tired am I of that? I'm pretty tired [Laughs], but it's OK.

Cadence: *I spoke with [saxophonist] Ingrid Laubrock regarding asking you questions related to your gender and she said not to bring it up but it's a valid topic. When you took up saxophone in 1980, it*

really wasn't a common instrument for women. What obstacles have you encountered due to your choice of instrument?

Anker: Well, in Denmark there were already some female players on all instruments in Jazz and Rock. They were older and more the generation of the Women's Liberation Movement at that time. My heroes and what I wished to become like, were always men, like Wayne Shorter and John Coltrane. In terms of obstacles, it's hard to say because, as I remember, in the '80s, it was pretty liberal. There were not a lot of women playing but there was definitely a movement, there was a feeling of being pioneers. One of the first groups I became a member of was one of Marilyn Mazur's. She had an all-female group [Primi Band] with about ten musicians and that was a great way to come into the music scene, also because her music was interesting. There was a lot of performance and we had special clothes. When I look back, you could describe it as a Nordic, feminine version of the Sun Ra Arkestra. It was a way where you could be creative and try things out. I learned a lot.

Cadence: Why was it important that it be an all-female band?

Anker: That was Marilyn's choice. I remember her saying that she was playing in a lot of bands with only men and she really missed having a female band where we could also drink tea [Laughs] and be in a certain way. In terms of obstacles, maybe I've not experienced it much from other musicians, although maybe from some older Jazz musicians. I have memories of playing in one of the mainstream Jazz clubs and there'd be a handful of the older guys sitting at the bar looking at me like, 'can she really play over the chords? Can she swing?' I had the feeling that I had to prove a lot that I could actually do it, but on the other hand, a lot of young boys might have had the same feeling that this is an exam sort of situation with the older guys checking you out. I think the media has been a little weird sometimes. I don't even think of the gender issue anymore except that I can see in Scandinavia, where there have always been quite many female players and we have a tradition for gender equality, there was a backlash over the last 10-15 years in the number of female instrumental students at the conservatory. It went down and not up as expected. They are trying to change that though and I think it is already going up again.

Cadence: Was it important for you to have female role models early in your career?

Anker: I don't know if Marilyn Mazur was a role model but I remember the first time I saw her play, I was in the audience and I said, 'Wow! She can really play and compose her own music.' That was really inspiring for me but as far as saxophone, my role models were all male musicians.

Cadence: What other Scandinavian musicians have been influential and important to you?

Anker: Of course, John Tchicai as I have mentioned. Not that I play like him, but I was influenced by his mind and way of thinking. There

was a Norwegian group called Masquelero with trumpeter Nils Petter Molvaer, bassist Arlid Andersen, drummer Jon Christensen, and Jon Balke on piano that influenced me. The early Jan Garbarek was inspiring for sure. Later I got very familiar with the Swedish freeform scene and especially the group Gush with Mats Gustafsson, Sten Sandell and Raymond Strid. It's not that I was trying to play like them but they have definitely been very inspirational for me. There were a lot of great musician in Scandinavia. I was also inspired by a lot of the people I played with from the Copenhagen scene in the '80s but my main inspirations at that time were Americans.

Cadence: *You were initially a literature major in school before switching to music. What were you planning to do with that degree?*

Anker: I don't think I was planning that much. I just really liked to read books and to write, and I was interested in language. When I finished gymnasium [upper secondary school in Denmark], I was like what now? I talked to an older student for advice because I was split between studying literature at the university or music, and she said, "Don't apply for music, it's so old-fashioned." In those days, music studies at Copenhagen University was mostly Classical music except from some younger teachers and my professor who was good at Jazz history. You had to audition and be a good piano player and singer. I was both but the older student convinced me not to do it. But parallel to the literature studies I started playing more and more, and I got the saxophone and decided that I would go the music way and see if it worked being a musician. I auditioned for the music program at University and got in but I never finished because the things I really wanted to learn, improvisation and saxophone, I couldn't learn there, so eventually, partially because I was in some bands and we were going on tour, I dropped out.

Cadence: *Did you say that you are also a singer?*

Anker: I sang a lot as a kid in choirs and such but I have not sang, yet, in a Jazz improv setting. I've done a little free improvising and been singing in some theater pieces but it's another thing.

Cadence: *So you're going to hold on that Frank Sinatra album of yours?*

Anker: [Laughs] Yeah. You should never say never but I doubt there will be one.

Cadence: *Apparently it was a three month trip to Peru that convinced you to switch paths in school to study music. What transformational event occurred in Peru?*

Anker: I had a flute so I could have an instrument to play on during that trip and it happened to come in the transition where I had quit the literature study and I was free-floating for six months. Sometimes being away from your home helps you to see more clearly. When I came home I auditioned to study music and I bought a soprano saxophone.

Cadence: *During your time at Copenhagen University, you took*

workshops led by prominent artists such as Joe Henderson, John Tchicai, David Murray and Dave Liebman. Can you recall specific things that they taught you?

Anker: That's a good question. Dave Liebman came with the group Quest. I think they were touring Europe a lot in those days and would make workshops in a lot of schools. It was super inspirational for me and I think it had to do with the way they treated Jazz standards, which they switched and reharmonized in weird and abstract ways. Suddenly a chord in a melody which used to be a C7 was not a C7 anymore. It might not even have a chord name, it was just a sound, so chords were more like colors in a painting- an abstract but much more colorful thing. We were really inspired by that relation between improvised lines on certain sounds and the freedom it gave, but it was also demanding because in order to do it the way they did, you would need to know a lot of music theory. We rehearsed that a lot. It meant a lot to shape the way I was thinking - playing lines more freely over a certain sound. Joe Henderson? That was more about his spirit, it was fantastic. That was at a course in the countryside, outside Copenhagen. He was such a warm and sweet person, and I loved his playing. I listened to him a lot then and I still like his playing. I learned from his way of treating rhythm and his way of phrasing in a very flexible way. In his classes, we would have to learn some of his solos by heart, which actually was a little boring. I remember rehearsing choruses of "Relaxing at Camarillo," his solos. He would play phrases on the piano which we would learn and remember by heart. I still have it in my head and it was a little old-fashioned to learn it that way. David Murray came to receive the Jazzpar Prize and while he was there, he played with the saxophone quartet I was in and we worked with some of the World Saxophone Quartet arrangements, which was really fun. With him, it was more of the big spiritual tone and just hanging out with him.

Cadence: What do you consider to be most important about the time you spent learning from Bob Brookmeyer at the Rhythmic Music Conservatory?

Anker: The school had opened a new two-year post-program for compositional students and the people they took in were not necessarily students. I was not a student. It was for people who had already done an amount of composition. He had some irritating but some really good exercises. They were irritating because they were pretty straight with rules. He had what he called "White Note Exercises" where you are only supposed to use the white notes on the piano. You were to write phrases or melodic lines that would extend the typical two or four bar phrase amount. He wanted to exercise flexibility and lengths of melodic lines and, at first, everybody hated that exercise but when I found out what the point was, I found that it was really interesting. I also learned about big band writing although classic big band is not my favored orchestra instrumentation. But the best thing of Bob

Brookmeyer was that he had been a friend of Earle Brown, so he knew things about New Music and my writing was somewhere in-between Jazz and New Music. And the comments he would have on what we had been doing were nearly always super relevant, such as pointing out which part should be longer and where proportions were off.

Cadence: *In the early '80s, you were a regular at Copenhagen's famous Montmartre club. What were some of the more memorable performances you viewed there?*

Anker: The original Montmartre club, where, for example, Dexter Gordon and Ben Webster played a lot, was before my time. I went to the second version, the bigger club in the '80s. I lived close to it and I would go to the second set nearly every evening, so I learned a lot from just hanging out there. Performances I remember clearly were Ornette Coleman's Prime Time band, Sun Ra, the Art Ensemble of Chicago and Gill Evans' Orchestra. There was also Last Exit with Peter Brotzmann. I remember that because the audience was in shock and half of them hated it and left, and the other half just stayed there. I had never heard anything that was so brutal before [Laughs]. I don't even know if I liked it so much at that time but I was very fascinated by it, so I was staying, for sure. Later I liked it. I also saw Miles Davis play there for two nights. It was right after he had been off the scene for some time and he was coming back on it. He was still kind of fragile, his tone was fragile. And of course, I saw a lot of Danish and Scandinavian groups there and I also played there.

Cadence: *Did you have any significant interactions with performers there?*

Anker: There was sometimes some late hanging out with the musicians at the bar but I don't have any stories to tell.

Cadence: *What led you to co-found the Copenhagen Art Ensemble in 1996?*

Anker: I was a member of the pre-Copenhagen Art Ensemble called Jazz 90, which was also kind of a small alternative big band. The idea at that time was to make a revival of a more experimental, flexible large ensemble type, which there had been in the '70s and early '80s under the Danish Radio. The Danish Radio had the Radio Big Band and also something called the Radio Jazz Group in those days, and they were more experimental. In 1996, two leaders of Jazz 90 left and they asked trombonist Ture Larsen to take over and he asked me to help him. We took over, changed the name and some of the musicians.

Cadence: *Playing with the Copenhagen Art Ensemble meant that you were working under a conductor and with eleven other musicians. As a lover of freedom, didn't that feel constricting to you?*

Anker: No, I also like playing in big ensembles because you can do certain things musically and there's so many colors from the instruments. It was interesting because we played only new music written for that band. I also wrote a lot for that band and, like a workshop, you could try things out. As long as you have a good relationship to

the conductor, it's OK. Ture started conducting in that band and he knew we were all good improvisers. He also knew when to stop conducting and let people play.

Cadence: *One of the most impressive aspects of your work is who you've collaborated with, artists such as Fred Frith, Tim Berne, Marilyn Crispell, Peter Brotzmann, Andrew Cyrille, Marilyn Mazur and Paul Lovens? It's too long to name them all but it's a list of many of the top improvisers out there.*

Anker: Yes, I think so too. I don't know, it's not something I have planned in that way. Sometimes things work out. You network or you happen to meet certain people and feel that you have a certain connection, but a lot things for me started with my collaboration with Marilyn Crispell, for sure. I got to play here in the States more and I also met Tim Berne in the late '90s because he came to a concert we did in New York. Later, I wrote to him and asked if he would do a project with the Copenhagen Art Ensemble because I love the way he writes, it's super interesting and very personal music. He came over to Copenhagen and since then we've played on and off in some projects or smaller groups.

Cadence: *You've led a trio with pianist Craig Taborn and drummer Gerald Cleaver, two of today's most in-demand American musicians, since 2003. What's the history behind the formation of the trio?*

Anker: I had a trio with Marilyn Crispell and Marilyn Mazur, a bass-less trio, and we toured in the States, but some of the gigs, Marilyn Mazur couldn't do, so we played them as duo and later the same year, we had a tour in Scandinavia, which Mazur couldn't do either, so we needed a replacement. I remember Marilyn Crispell saying, "I just played with the most wonderful drummer. His name is Gerald Cleaver," and I had just heard Gerald with Tim [Berne] and Craig [Taborn] at the Knitting Factory and I thought the whole concert was amazing. We had a tour coming up in Scandinavia and I remember writing to Gerald. He didn't know me, I think maybe we had said hello, but he didn't really know who I was. [Laughs] You don't have to write this but in the Email for the subject I had written "April in Scandinavia?" So when he saw that, he thought it was from some, you know, there are always women offering things like, 'Hey, do you want to make April in Scandinavia?' He thought it was from somebody who was definitely not a musician and was very close to not replying to it but then he read a little more and saw that it was actually about music. He wrote back that he could do it and we played maybe for one year in that constellation but then the next year, in 2003, there was a small tour in Europe which Marilyn Crispell couldn't do. Gerald suggested Craig, who I had also heard, especially in Roscoe Mitchell's Note Factory band, and I thought he was amazing. The tour went really well and it felt like, OK, this is a new trio, and so we continued. But like you said, they are playing so much, and are in such demand that over the past few years, we haven't been playing that often, but I still feel

there's something very special about that trio.

Cadence: *What is unique about your trio with Taborn and Cleaver? What does playing with them allow you to do that you can't do with your other groups?*

Anker: Craig and Gerald have been playing together since they were very young and you can hear that. The way they communicate is very special and extremely intuitive, so for me, it has been quite a luxury to step into that, but I also feel that all three of us together is very special and have our own sound as a trio. I remember at the start, I brought some written material but it didn't take long before we found out that improvising freely worked out better for the trio. It's different from some of the other improvised or freeform groups that I'm in, in the way that we, in the Craig-Gerald trio, can play something that could be time, there could be some grooves, maybe in an abstract way, but still more groovy, more Jazz connected, I would say, than some of the other groups.

Cadence: *Do you experience a difference playing with Americans versus Europeans today?*

Anker: Yeah. It depends who it is, but there's a difference. When it comes to improvised music, I think, and I hate to generalize, it's not of course one-hundred-percent, but many of the players over here [in America], who are improvisers, might have more strong connection to the Jazz tradition in some way, in a good way, whereas some of the European improvisers, might have a stronger connection to some of the New Music in the way they create sounds. They might not always be so

Cadence: *Edge of the Light (Intakt, 2015) is one of your newest releases, a duet with (guitarist) Fred Frith. The recording was done with no predetermined concepts or plans. When doing a project like this, one that's totally in the moment, is there a process you use to prepare yourself ahead of time?*

Anker: No, not except I try to prepare myself to be aware and in the now or the present. It's a studio recording but we had been working in some other constellations at the Copenhagen Jazz Festival in the days before the studio session so it felt very fresh and new with the duo. It has just been lying there for a number of years [it was recorded in 2010] until suddenly [we determined] we should release this and then Intact Records put it out. Of course, I need to prepare my saxophone so I have playable reeds but besides that, it's more a mental preparedness, which I try to do also when I play concerts. I try actually to try not to prepare. The preparation is to try to empty yourself and being open to whatever comes in.

Cadence: *In the Edge of the Light recording notes, you say that you "love playing with stringed instruments." Why so?*

Anker: It's because of the blend of the sound of the saxophone and the sound of either guitar or cello or violin, viola or bass. It's something with the sound quality, the vibrations and tactility and both

instruments being good in playing long sounds, whereas piano, of course, is more percussive. And saxophone was invented originally as an outdoor string instrument. I play with fantastic piano players but it was nice to play with Fred on guitar, he's amazing, I think.

Cadence: *One of the pieces on the new Frith recording is entitled "Thief Breaks into an Empty House." Can you shed some light on that title?*

Anker: No [Laughs]! It was Fred who came up with that title but when I think about it, it might also have a little bit of Zen Buddhist picture in it like you really want something, and when you get it, you see that it's empty. You can really have a lot of philosophical thoughts about that. You know, in some ways I am influenced by Buddhism. I do yoga and I have experienced some truths, if you can use that word. Every time you really want something and then you get it, you get maybe disappointed, or maybe you realize that when you get what you wanted, it's not actually what you thought it would be. Maybe sometimes instead of trying to get something really hard, maybe it's better to practice to open yourself to be receptive to what comes to you so that you can actually see what you have and who you are. You might not even see what you have if you are really determined to get a special thing.

Cadence: *Are you saying that you're a practicing Buddhist?*

Anker: No, I'm not a practicing Buddhist but I am definitely very inspired by some of the thoughts. I am a practicing yogi. I try to keep up with it and it's good for when you travel a lot. It's good for my mind, concentration and focus.

Cadence: *In general, what is the significance of the song titles for your spontaneously improvised pieces?*

Anker: Some of them come up like on the Floating Islands recording [ILK, 2009], there were elements somewhat watery and floating, and there's pieces on there called "Backwards River" and "Floating," but then there's also a piece called "Ritual" and there's no magic about that. It has a very repetitive, ritualistic form in a way. Then there's the new duet release with Jakob Riis on electronics [Squid Police, Konvoj, 2014]. That's a little more conceptual because out of the session we took a lot of very slow motion pieces and both of us had the feeling that this is some kind of underwater feeling and so we chose titles from underwater subjects. The titles come after the music [on the freely improvised pieces]. The titles I pick for composed music, like what I did on the new What River is This recording [Ilk, 2014], I had the titles and then I wrote the pieces. Some of those titles are from dreams I've had and some of them are related to texts I've read or texts that are actually in the piece.

Cadence: *So when you go about naming a freely improvised piece, you listen to it to see what it reminds you of?*

Anker: Yeah, and what it reminds me of could come in many ways. It doesn't have to be that it sounds like a forest, it could also be on a

more Meta level, or illustrating a certain emotion or picture.

Cadence: *When you're playing, are you working to express a particular idea or mood or is it more about conversing and creating with your bandmates?*

Anker: I'm definitely concerned with creating with my bandmates because I see my role as an improviser in a group as, of course, I'm bringing in my voice and individual language, but I'm also part of a bigger picture which is bigger than me, and the best concerts are when you feel that everybody has been contributing to something which is actually much bigger than we are as individuals. I don't see it as conversing. Of course, there can be reactions to each other's musical statements or gestures, or sometimes not. It is more like individual voices bringing in their identity to create a piece together. So I think it's a mix of both.

Cadence: *You mentioned What River is This earlier, your new special project recording with an eight-piece group that includes Fred Frith, Phil Minton and Ikue Mori. The music's goal was to merge in and out of dreamlike landscapes and realities as a way to question reality. That's a pretty meaty concept. How did you make that work and what drew you to the concept?*

Anker: It was a commission for the Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival, which is a New Music festival in the UK, and the Wundergrund Festival in Copenhagen. So there was some restrictions [Laughs] and some guidelines. They had said you can create your own ensemble up to eight people and we don't want any Americans because we can't pay for their travel, and it would be good if there was some British and if there were some Classical musicians. As far as the compositions, the in and out of composed and improvised is maybe not so new for me because that's what I've been doing with my writing for a lot of bigger groups, trying to find new ways to do it. There are many challenges doing this in a larger group. The Classical players in the group are really good readers, while others in the group don't really read music, but then they have really good ears and some of them rewrote their own parts. I had to construct the music in a way so a lot of the true composed would be played by the Classical people and myself. There were other challenges in terms of dynamics because we had strings, which don't sound very loud, and then we had electronics, percussion and electric guitar. I had to deal with the broad span of dynamics in the writing process. The dream theme was inspired by having read some poems by Jorge Luis Borges. And I am very interested in dreams myself, and also the state between awake and asleep where the so-called reality starts to transform. So many of the titles are referring to dreams and dream pictures I have had myself. The text is from Danish writer Ursula Andkjaer Olsen.

Cadence: *Is there a certain ratio of structured composition to free improvisation that you target in your music? Also, are you aiming for a musical approach or abstraction?*

Aker: No, I don't have a certain ratio in that way. It depends on the piece and what the ideas are, but I've been doing very open compositions where it was more like graphical notation and I've also done pieces where it was much more through composed. Of course, the more composed it is, the more control the composer gets over the music. It also depends who you are writing for. In that way I'm having a Jazz background really because, as long as each individual is a strong player, I want them to have space and freedom enough to play their own voice.

Cadence: No one vocalizes like Phil Minton. How did you go about composing with Minton in mind?

Aker: I had heard him many times so I kind of knew what he could do but he has a lot of freedom in the pieces, so it's more like pointing out where he can do something and where not do anything. He also has some recited text and there's a part where he sings.

Cadence: Earlier you mentioned another 2014 release you did with Danish electronics expert Jakob Riis called Squid Police. So what's the meaning of Squid Police?

Aker: [Laughs] It's a very inside joke. It's because I have been in Hanoi working three or four times now, but my first time there was for the Hanoi New Music Meeting in 2009. Jakob Riis was also there and we were eating a lot and trying out many different restaurants and typical Vietnamese foods. It was fantastic food and that joke came out because we were checking out different types of squids and at some point, that expression about being the squid police came up and we laughed about that, so for some reason, we just took that name. Nobody knows what it means.

Cadence: Regarding your work in Hanoi, Vietnam, at least once you used Hanoi's traffic patterns as a creative source for your improvisations. Do you feel that elements such as local traffic patterns inform a populace in such a way that music inspired by it meaningfully connects with the audience?

Aker: I think it was meaningful in Hanoi because they got it right away. If you have been in Hanoi or other big cities in the East, it's such a cacophony of so many sounds that in one way, it can drive you crazy but it's also quite fascinating. In a way to survive the noise being in that city, it's like a John Cage thing really, instead of fighting against it, you have to open yourself to being in it and hear it as a big symphony. It's not so much the cars, they all drive mopeds now instead of bikes, and they all have weird horn sounds which creates all kinds of rhythms and melodies. It's like a river of mopeds sometimes. And then of course, you have all the shouting, and the sellers on the street. I think it is very fascinating, but after a period in the city, you are looking forward to some quietness. It's very quiet though at night. Where did you read that I used the traffic? I used it for a piece I wrote for some students there in an improvisation class I did. It was a lot of fun. The audience that was there came to hear this experimental music and

improvised music is not something you hear every day in Hanoi, at all. I remember that they were laughing a lot, in a good way, because they recognized some sounds and it made the experience more down to earth for them. It gave them something to grab onto.

Cadence: *What's most important to you that your audience should experience after seeing you perform live or from listening to your music?*

Aker: I don't think so much about it but I guess it's the same that I like to experience when I'm in the audience. I really like it when the music can open up this space with possibilities. Sometimes it can hit you hard emotionally but it can also sometimes be a more, not intellectual, but more in a mental way that makes your mind go to interesting places.

Cadence: *What are your interests outside of music?*

Aker: I don't have so many hobbies but yoga is one although you can barely call it a hobby. I read a lot, not as much as I used to but I always hope to get time to read again. I'm pretty interested in visual art and other art forms, and try to be oriented about what's happening. Also, I have a new hobby but unfortunately, I can't afford it. I like food and natural wine which is free of all chemicals and preservatives.

Cadence: *Do you have a bad travel story to tell?*

Aker: I had a weird experience in December, 2013 in New York where I was very jetlagged and I had just come back from Hanoi. I had been playing a gig at The Stone with Mephista (Sylvie Courvoisier, Susie Ibarra, Ikue Mori) and there were three of us in a taxi going back to Brooklyn and since it was so crowded, I put my saxophones in the trunk. I was the last one on the route and when we got to my stop, I asked the driver to open the trunk but he really didn't understand what I was talking about. He was a little spaced out and I kept asking him. Finally he started opening his door so I got out of the cab and closed my door and then he closed his door and just took off and I was standing in the middle of the night somewhere in Brooklyn. He drove really fast and I tried to run after him and yelled but he was gone. That had never happened to me before. I called Sylvie, and her husband, (violinist) Mark Feldman, said, "Call the police." So I called the police and they said to stay where I was but nothing happened. I stood there feeling really terrible. I called the cab office and reported it but they soon closed for the weekend. I had other concerts to play so I borrowed Tim Berne's alto saxophone and tried to survive the concerts. I must say that I really felt like shit. It's like losing your kids. I called the cab office again Monday and they were able to track the cab by GPS and they put me through to the driver and I was just super, super happy. He said he would drive them to me the next day which was Christmas Eve. I waited all day and he wasn't coming. I finally offered him eighty dollars and he came right away and it all ended in a good way. I'm sorry if that was a very long story.

Cadence: *The last few questions are from other artists:*

Gerald Cleaver (drums) asked – “Would you talk about the workshops you’ve done in Africa?”

Aker: Most of the workshops there have been in East Africa. I was with a saxophone quartet and we were invited to do some workshops in Tanzania around '91 with local musicians and singers. A lot of people showed up but most of them without instruments. We talked a bit about Jazz and then it was time for some music. I had an idea that we would do a simple theme, I think it was “Bag’s Groove,” as a choir piece, where it would use voices, along with the several saxophone and guitar players there. I made a form and how to build it up with first all the deep voices singing basslines, and then the melodies, and then more and more voices were added in. It was a really amazing experience because, first of all, the participants were fantastic singers, everybody had really strong and beautiful voices, but they started spontaneously making their own voices and it just became a really big choir with fantastic things going on, and then they started to improvise without instruction. I was conducting a little but I was touched to tears because that openness and natural way of just going into this, which for them was an unknown piece and territory, was so special.

Marilyn Crispell (piano) asked – “How do you feel your music has changed and developed since we first played together? I’m interested in how your concepts have developed.”

Aker: I still love melodies but some of my playing has turned into a more abstract oriented area. I still love playing melodic, but maybe a little more abstract melodic, or fragmented melodic, would describe it. And it’s very deep in me that when things get too tonal, there’s a little, not devil, but some voice in me that says, ‘Now I need to add another color which is a little out of whatever tonality that it is,’ just to give it some edge. If it gets too nice, I get a little uncomfortable [Laughs]. Of course, that’s a question of how you define nice. Marilyn is a fantastic piano player, I really love her playing. She likes a more Scandinavian, melodic feel, which I grew up with and I try to get away from, or at least twist it. But we can still meet in that, but it’s like I’m trying to get away from something which she loves a lot and is trying to get closer to, so in that way, we have been moving a bit in different directions. It’s been some time since we played together and I really hope to get to play with her again.

Frode Gjerstad (reeds) asked – “Why was Denmark so slow picking up the newer music?”

Aker: That’s a good question and he asked that because he knows us. I think there are many reasons but we talked about the Montmartre club earlier which was very important for all the Danish musicians and audience, especially in the '60s, the '70s, and into the '80s. It was a club where you could play for two weeks or more as an American soloist. So we had Dexter Gordon, Stan Getz, Ben Webster, and a number of other musicians staying there for longer periods of time, and of course, they greatly influenced the local rhythm sections who played

with them and, I think, this fascination with the type of music the Americans brought, formed that generation of Jazz musicians, those who are older than me in Denmark, and that became very influential to the Danish Jazz scene. Albert Ayler, Sonny Murray, and Cecil Taylor were also playing in periods at Montmartre, but as fantastic as this must have been for those who appreciated it, as I understand it, it also resulted in conflicts with the Montmartre staff, plus the audience shrank for those concerts. There are some weird stories about the doorman at the club telling people not to go in because they were playing “mad music” and supposedly there would be like four people in the audience. The Danes were not so strong in daring to find their own voice until later. I think both Sweden and Norway were much more ahead of us and sometimes I wonder if it’s also because both those countries have a really, really strong folk music tradition, much stronger than the Danish. I think these are the reasons why we were slow to pick up the newer music, the more modern Jazz and free Jazz. I must say, for myself, as a musician, it was hard sometimes growing up there. There were the “Jazz Police” in those days. That generation was more mainstream and had a lot of power.

Fred Frith (guitar) asked – “Is improvisation something that can or should be taught in an academic setting?”

Aker: Oh, man, what a question! That’s Fred giving me an irritating question because he knows I also teach improvisation.

More and more schools and music academies, including those in Scandinavia, are teaching improvisation – meaning ‘free’ improvisation or improvisation with no bonds to a specific genre - now and there are some interesting things coming out of that. Unfortunately, there is also the danger that it can stiffen in some academic discourse where it gets too formalized or detached and remote and kills creativity and that’s what improvisation is actually about. What can I say? I guess it depends a lot on the teachers. I’ve been teaching freelance improvisation for many years at several Scandinavian music academies and some other places. But it’s very much related to praxis. I think it can lead to many good and interesting things to have an academic view but you can’t lose the connection to what’s being played, and that’s the most important thing, after all. The music you hear, the sounds you hear at a concert, those are the things that count. There are lots of books about improvisation out now, and different ways of approaching it, but, no matter what, it’s not something you can read in a book. It’s something you learn by doing and a good improviser has to look inside into their own life and also listen to the world that surrounds them. And listen and reflect on which way you communicate with the people you play with.

Fred Frith also said – “It always amazes me that you seem to be equally fluent on all the saxophones – is there one that feels like “home” more than the others?”

Aker: If he had asked me that ten or more years ago, I would have

said the soprano. I always felt very close to it, maybe because it's nearly the same register as the voice, and it's also the horn I started on. The soprano I play on today is the only one I've owned. It's a good Selmer Mark VI which I bought in 1980. My attachment has changed though. The alto is the newest horn. For many years I owned a soprano and tenor but, for me, the tenor had a lot of Jazz connotations, so it was nice to start playing alto to try to get a little away from some of the Jazz habits that came along with the tenor. After I started playing alto, it changed my relation to the tenor.

Cadence: So which is "home" for you now?

Aker: They are all three "home," but three different homes. In periods, I spend more time in one or two of them.

Fred Frith actually has a third question that may not interest the readers as much as his other questions, but here goes - "Could you please book a table at Noma now for July to make sure we can eat there next time I'm in town?"

Aker: [Laughs!] Right, yes, I'll do that, right away. Noma is a restaurant that is known for New Nordic Cuisine. They only serve local products from Scandinavia and they are experimenting a lot in new things to eat and one thing is a certain ant, served live, that taste like orange. They have people foraging for them in trees and they're served in dessert. I think they are live, there have been a lot of jokes about that.

Cadence: Do you have any final comments?

Aker: I am very surprised by all the questions from Fred, but I'm happy about that.



Photo Credit: Ken Weiss



Victor Jones
Interview
by Zim Tarro

Q: So if you would start off, if you would be so kind as to just introduce yourself, with your name, where you're from and what you do.

Jones: Okay. Well, my name is Victor Jones, my good friends call me Ya-Ya, those who have known me for a long time. I'm a drummer and I also play trumpet, write music and produce records and I'm a recording artist. I've done a number of projects as a teenager.

I started out on what I guess would be called the chitlin' circuit with Lou Donaldson when I was a teenager, 17 or something – Jimmy McGriff and all those kind of guys, Jack McDuff and Dr. Lonnie Smith and that whole scene and a stint with George Benson. But this is just my drumming.

I came from “the Oranges” in New Jersey. I played in the high school wind ensemble and the marching band and the brass ensemble as a trumpet player. I studied that all through school; I never played drums at school. Then I got a scholarship to Berklee College as a trumpet player. And I was playing classical music on trumpet.

Anyway, fast-forward to Lou Donaldson as far as my drumming is concerned and the jazz thing is concerned. Before Lou Donaldson I was playing with a lot of R&B and rock bands around New Jersey Essex County area. And I was born in Norton, New Jersey but I was raised in the Oranges. But I played in that whole thing; we played in all the music of Ohio Players and Earth, Wind & Fire, of course, the music of the day and tons of James Brown. So these influences have entered my life and also rock influences, no doubt. I'm interested in contemporary music today and what's going on in the popular world. So what else can I say about that?

Q: One of the questions I had was about your transition to drums. Have you played drums while you were playing trumpet?

Jones: My transition from trumpet to drums. I mean I played the trumpet about four times a week. I did sessions on trumpet. But anyway, how I got into playing drums is I purchased a snare drums when I was I don't know how

old. I started playing trumpet when I was 11 and I played a snare drum when I was 12. I used to just play it to accompany my cousin, my beautiful cousin Tracy, who would play flute and I would play the trumpet or the drums. She was in the 4th grade and I was in the 5th grade. So I was just using the drums as an accompanying instrument. And then when I entered high school we had one of the best drum lines in all of the state of New Jersey. The East Orange High School drummer line was so sharp and so good that I started learning all those cadences just by watching them and hanging out with them. And the head of the drum line, his name was Carl Guthrie. Carl Guthrie started teaching me rudiments and I learned all the drum parts and all the cadences that the drummers were playing. I wanted to switch to drums and my high school teaching would not let me do it. He said, "No, we don't need drummers, we need trumpet players. So I just played drums at home basically.

Q: Yes.

Jones: I eventually got a drum set when I was probably 15 years old, which is probably late for most drummers. And I got my first drum set when I was 15. That was 1970 so that tells you how old I am. I started playing the drums with all these rock bands and it was like the drums took over and I could, you know, freely and open, and I knew ever song that came on the radio. And my family was a jazz family; they listened to jazz all around the house. It's not like I discovered jazz one day, it's the sound I was raised with.

Q: *What did your dad do for a living?*

Jones: My dad is kind of an artist himself. He worked at Clark Design. When you fly over an airport and it says "Norris Airport" and it's written in flowers – a landscape artist. He worked with flowers and, you know, he was – he had a green thumb. But that's what he did. He worked in the shop and he worked in the various parks, designing flowers. But he loved to listen to Dinah Washington and the music he listened to, you know, that was the age of the bebop cats. He was into all of that, from Benny Goodman to the Dorseys. So that was an influence for me without even me trying. It was just the sound that was around the house. My mother was also – she took care of the house and she loved Billie Holiday and Dinah and Ella and Louie and all that stuff, so it's something that's been in my family since I was born.

Q: *That's like growing up with classical music, you know? It's not classical but it's "classical." It will be classical.*

Jones: Yes, it's like folk music to my family, just a certain music that we were listening to. You know, Black people were playing this type of music and they were favorites and they were stars. I'm talking about the '30s or '40s. I mean jazz music was like what, you know like Snoop Dog – I'm talking about popularity – back in the '30s it was Duke Ellington and Count Basie and Louie Armstrong, that was popular music.

Q: I wondered if you could, for the sake of our audience, just sort of explain what the Chitlin' Circuit is and what it was and what your experience was working – it's a broad question.

Jones: I got flunked out of Berklee College of Music. Well, I went for a short period and then Lou Donaldson called and he said, "We're going on the road." And we started going to Texas and just – basically the Chitlin' Circuit was all of the Black clubs in the United States of America. That's how the Motown people used to travel. They played all the Black clubs in the United States and wherever else they could be. So they were basically small clubs in Kansas and St. Louis and even in California.

We traveled by car with Lou Donaldson and Mark Elf was the guitar player. I'll never forget, I was probably 17. I remember getting my driver's license and Lou would never let me drive the car. He'd let me drive the car but he'd never fall asleep, like, "Okay, you've got it. You can drive the car now."

Q: His eyes would be open.

Jones: His eyes wouldn't be open but he would never go to sleep. But anyway, there was a lot of driving involved. I'm very honored and proud of being on that scene. And people like Jimmy McGriff were involved in that and guys like George Benson was on it. We were always running George Benson on the road in those days. And then he got that really big hit, This Masquerade and he got out of the Chitlin' Circuit.

Q: I remember that hit.

Jones: He had that major hit and after that I didn't see him on the road any more. It's sort of like a springboard to go to the big works. And then I started playing with Stan Getz. That was a bigger world; there were major jazz festivals around the world, so...

Q: Flying everywhere.

Jones: Flying and then we're, you know, we played in Europe, we played in Africa, we played the world. We didn't play Asia too much but we played around the world. So that was a whole different scene. But everything that I've learned, I played the Chitlin' Circuit and learned about jazz drumming is from that period. No matter how hip I got, the basics come from that.

Q: I guess there's no replacing that, there's no way you could synthesize that, put that in a book or relate it into...

Jones: No way! Pat Martino is perfect example of somebody who came out through the Chitlin' Circuit. There's a lot of great artists, like the ones I mentioned – Pat Martino, even Coltrane, even Miles Davis played on the Chitlin' Circuit, come to think of it. He was playing in East St. Louis and the Midwest and down South and Detroit had a great music scene.

Q: I have a practical question here about the Chitlin' Circuit. I know that – I remember Julian Priester telling me when he was with, I think it was Dinah Washington, that there were some times they didn't

have any place to stay in a town even though they played there. You know, it was like...

Jones: There were those days also but I'm probably a bit younger than that. I know there were times, like even the most down guys, even all those jazz guys, Cannonball Adderly, where they would play in certain places and they couldn't stay in certain hotels. They'd had to stay in people's houses and all that. But it wasn't because of some racial thing, it was just because, you know. Or we stayed in these \$6 a night motels on the side of the road. I'll never forget, we were staying in motels and the motels were \$6 a night. I'm probably one or two generations younger than those guys where they say, "No Blacks" and segregation was kind of – I've never been through that. I'm kind of in another world.

Q: We were talking about the Chitlin' Circuit and I'm sure it provided a lot of real benefits as well as just the venue itself.

Jones: I think what I benefitted most was from the music itself, learning how the traditions as far as keeping time and, you know, if you're not happening then you're not playing. If it doesn't feel good, if people aren't partying and, you know, we used to play for dancers with Lou Donaldson, even with McGriff, we used to play in ballrooms. People would dance to jazz and blues and I loved it. And if your stuff wasn't happening and nobody was dancing, you're not going to be playing there much longer.

Q: Your body knows, if you have to dance to something, it can tell quicker than your mind can.

Jones: Absolutely. That's why I like playing for dancers. I like playing for people – I like playing for an audience that loves to dance. If they can really feel it they will get up and dance to help you through it.

Q: I never thought of that before but in the sense of – there's an idea that we have an instinctual form of intelligence and it's about eight times quicker than our rational, empirical form of intelligence. It's the instinct. I never thought that that's the best judge of music.

Jones: To me that's the best. I go to a lot of clubs in New York and I hang out and I go to various nightclubs. I mean back in the day I used to go to Studio 54, speaking of dance places. I used to go to every dance place and certain references, certain songs would come on and the whole crowd would get up all at once and dance to that. And I would be so curious and think, "Why can't I do that?" or "How do I do that?" But it all comes from – the whole place says "Yes!" I love that.

Q: It's spiritual.

Jones: It's a spiritual experience and it's a great complement.

Q: Yes, that music can be that powerful, that it can get everybody up and on their feet whether they want to or not. It's just inspired.

Jones: And I think – there are various kinds of jazz, there's soul jazz and there's smooth jazz and there's electronic jazz and there's acid jazz and Black. Whatever moves you, whatever makes people move, that's what I'm interested in. I think that jazz could still have that. It became

intellectualized and you sit down and you be quiet and don't take any pictures and don't eat and don't swallow and check us out. That's okay too, that's like a classical approach to appreciating music. But I prefer, you play in front of a crowd and see exactly how they react to it and make them react the way they would naturally react. Like when you play for children they just start dancing or they start screaming. Children, to me, are a great audience. I know about children because I have five of them.

Q: *You're right. They haven't put on all the filters yet to slow down their reaction.*

Jones: That's exactly right. I started recording with all sorts of jazz artists and R&B artists and, you know, I play with Michel Petrucciani, another genius virtuoso pianist. I played with him for years and played with Chaka Kahn. And people often asked, "Well, how do you play with Michel and then you play with Chaka Kahn?" And the answer is that Michel has the same beauty in his playing as Chaka has in her voice. Although they are different sounds, as a drummer I am drawn toward great rhythm and rhythms that make you move, whether it's playing with the top cymbal or whether you're playing a serious backbeat.

Q: *Yes, I was going to say anything that moves, in the really good sense of the word "moves," that really moves you. I keep getting reminded that as musicians we don't really think of everything in terms of categorizing of "Oh, I'm going to hear that guy because he does that style." You're responding to people in their attempts to make music.*

Jones: Because the spirit of great music, every music has a soul and has a spirit. I don't care who would see James Brown, he would blow anybody's mind, I don't care who would go hear Lester Young, he would blow anybody's mind. You know, he's a great musician; I feel what he's doing. That's all that matter to me, do you feel what I'm doing? Can you feel what I'm doing?

Q: *And you really have to witness that, don't you? You can't – you can hear it on a record but you sure can't – it's not the same. What are you up to now?*

Jones: I'm starting a trio now. I've played with trios a lot and I love playing with piano trios. But I'm starting a new trio that's going to sound like nobody else.

Q: *What does this trio consist of?*

Jones: Well actually it was technical a quartet but I'm calling it a trio because it's me and I've been playing with Theo Hill, a great young pianist in his late 20s – Theo Hill and the bass player who played in the Blues Brothers band. His name is Eric Jukell. So between Eric and Curtis Lundy, either one of them I would use, but Eric seems to be more accessible. Eric is an electric bass player, he plays 5-string, he plays fretless bass and he plays upright bass. But he's really an electric bass player and he was with the Blues Brothers. He's the one that on

all of those Blues Brother records. He basically plays changes, he plays odd meters, plays everything in perfect intonation, great solos and a heck of a nice guy. So I'm trying to – maybe I shouldn't talk so much about it because somebody else may take my idea.

Q: *I don't know. It doesn't really work that way.*

Jones: It's really cool. You know, I loved playing back in the old days in a trio with Joanne Brackeen then playing with Michael Petrucci and trio is such a great way to express yourself.

Q: *What is it about the trio that...*

Jones: Well, it hardly ever gets cluttered. It's just three individuals bouncing off – maybe it's the triangle shape that makes it work, because piano is a percussion instrument and if I find a piano player – playing with Michele, Michele and I had the same sense of rhythm. You know, if you find somebody with your same sense of rhythm – there are some piano players who are just playing free, so you can go there too but every now and then you've got to latch onto something and play a groove. It's just less clutter and it's just beautiful, you know, if you have a piano player who is really capable, who knows modern music and playing and modern chord structures from Monk on to Chic on up to Herbie and then the free stuff like Andrew Hill. Theo is a capable piano player. He came with me through Seoul, Korea. We had a gig there for three months in a club.

Q: *It seems like with a duo there's a lot of dialogue, right? Like you're responding – it's very clear what you're doing. And in a trio you have these options of responding to each other, parallel – you know, it's just sort of...*

Jones: Parallel and bouncing back and forth; it's a triangular shape and if you stay within that – remember Circles? I used to love that band Circles with Chick Corea and Barry Altschul and Dave Holland and Anthony Jackson.

Q: *That one escapes me.*

Jones: Anthony Braxton. When that group played trio, oh my gosh, it was just so futuristic and there.

Q: *Let's go back to the Afro jazz a little bit and just talk about your experience with...*

Jones: Okay, so what do you want to talk about?

Q: *Incorporating of the classic experience that you've gathered with these tremendous artists and then starting to work with younger people and not just work with them but to look for direction.*

Jones: Absolutely. The acid jazz theme, which was a great theme in New York and it was probably one of the only genres that got its origin in the UK, the only genre of jazz that had its origin in the UK. What acid jazz was, was DJs – with jazz musicians playing with DJs. DJs would spin and they'd find the grooves and saxophone players and trumpet players would improvise of the top of these grooves that the DJs were doing.

So how I got involved with it – with acid jazz – people call me one

of the people at the beginning of acid jazz. I don't know if that's true or not but I was there at the start of it. You know, there weren't any drummers drumming with the DJs so that's what I started doing; I started playing drums with the DJs before it was saxophone players or guitar or trumpet players blowing on top of somebody's spin.

Q: Yes, the spinning was by the drums, sort of, initially.

Jones: Yes, they were spinning and they were scratching. You know, that had two turntables and microphone so they were rocking with the two turntables and the microphone and the scratching. So I just started impersonating the scratching and doing the drum beats on the drum sets in events around New York City called Giant Steps which I was involved in and the Fugees [?] were involved in way back, you know, whenever the Fugees – Wycliffe and all that. They had Giant Steps, they had the Cool Earth [?]. There was this place called The Bank where these events took place. And I was thinking that this was like the next wave of where jazz could be because there were thousands of kids following this music. You go into a record shop – well, they don't have record shops anymore but back in the old days in record shops kids were the only ones that bought records. Old people would just buy – you know, they'd buy old music. They'd buy classical music, they'd buy old jazz. They didn't buy music by Groove Collective. There were kids buying all this music and I thought it was a breath of fresh air.

And so, I always hire and I always look to kids when I want to know about street culture, what's going on in the street, because that's where this music came from. I don't care whether it's Jazz music, R&B, Hip-hop, it all comes from street and it flickered up and made it sophisticated. He'd incorporate that into his symphonies.

Q: Yes! Herbie Nichols would draw people into a discussion and/or argument than then step back and play those Nichols notes for dialogues for his music.

Jones: Oh yes! Life we're talking about, just life. Somebody curses at you on the subway, "What the fuck was that?" And you think about, "Boy, that guy was angry." And you come home and you sit down at the piano and you think about that guy who just screamed at you in the subway and, "Oh, I can write a tune off of that!"

Q: It's much more accurate communication of history, right? Like it's not being filtered or gussied up or made to look nice. Do you want to know what happened? Well this is what happened. If we look at music as...

Jones: For some reason, someone – I mean I love bop music and any kind of music that's creative and moving but it's becoming so filtered and cleaned up. That's why I like African music and Brazilian music. They still have that the purpose of playing music is we're just presenting life to you. What happened today? I can go out in front of my store, my father's store, and sing and play my guitar and sing and tell these walking by, "This is what happened today." Not trying to gain

any money, it's just honest, true life I'm presenting to you.

Q: *I had mentioned that I interviewed Gunter Haupel in Germany and he was saying that he was living part-time in New York for years and he's got stories of going on his bicycle in the middle of the night to go to the river – I don't know which river – I don't know how many choices you have there of rivers, but...*

Jones: There's the East river and the Hudson river.

Q: *He was talking about early Rap and he was saying that you couldn't hear this innovate music in clubs, but you had to go to these little gatherings of people. He'd go to get fresh air on his bike because it was the only time he could get fresh air. And he noticed these groups of people and...*

Jones: Oh yes, absolutely! Rap music was like – what do you call those guys? They were storytellers, they were great storytellers. And what I liked about it in the early days – I'm talking about the Rap music 30 years ago, it was healthier, it wasn't gangster, it was like, "Okay, this is what happened and your mama did this and I saw your mama..." You know, it was fun, it was life. Nowadays it seems like the Rap they're putting out, they're just trying to jump on the bandwagon of Hip-hop and trying to make as much money as they can. I guess it's a reflection of the times, let's go and make some money and go to Dubai or whatever.

Q: *Rap came from some lighter sort of expressions of just enjoying yourself, happy to be alive.*

Jones: Enjoying yourself. And the break dancers were competing on the street and the rappers were competing with each other. I thought it was quite a healthy experience that they were presenting. They weren't gangsters, they were just poor kids coming up in really harsh neighborhoods. And instead of being gangsters, instead of going around looking for trouble, that's the kind of trouble they got in. It wasn't trouble, it was just healthy competition.

Q: *Yes, they were able to articulate the trouble.*

Jones: I remember being on a train – this reminds me – on the TGV in France and this little French kid started dancing like, you know, a really cool little dance. He was probably four or five years old. And then his mother just grabbed him and said "this is no good" and hit him. This kid was doing something really cool. I wasn't making noise or anything, he was just dancing. So I don't know, some cultures, they like to suppress the feelings. He could become a dancer or might have become a dancer or whatever and his mother was slapping him. So, you know, I have kids and the way I was raised by my grandmother and my mother and father would put on some music and say, "Let me see you dance!" It was part of our culture. And of course hambone and all that stuff is just using your body as an instrument because maybe, perhaps these people couldn't afford real drums or real instruments. And that's how scratching a turntable happened, kids didn't have any instruments and kids said, "We're going to use

your turntable, Mom!”

Q: Yes, we're going to scratch it.

Jones: And your records too. That style has been around for about 30 years now and people don't realize that the hip-hop style has been around for 30 years and it's not going anywhere. Anyway, getting back to segregation, New Orleans is a Southern place and down South, although they came up with some great music but you go down there and try to buy some real estate and you'll see how segregated it is.

Q: Yes, I couldn't believe it. It was such a shock. Well that about wraps it up. what are up to now?

Jones: So I'm here in my house. I live in Maplewood, New Jersey with my wife and my five children. I have a son that's 16 years old and a son that's 14 and a son that's 7 and 5-year-old twin girls, and a dog, my Danish wife and we still have a beautiful apartment in Manhattan. I've been playing with Michael Wolfe lately, with Melvin Davis and sessions around New York with Jake Hertzog – this is a kid and a name you should remember. His name is Jake Hartzog. Well that's about it for now.



Jalalu-Kalvert Nelson at Vox Populi Gallery in Philadelphia on 4/19/15, photo credit – Ken Weiss



Lina Allemano at The First Banana in Philadelphia on 5/15, photo credit – Ken Weiss



Spectral + Marshall Allen at the Philadelphia Art Alliance on 5/24/15
left to right Marshall Allen - Larry Ochs - Darren Johnston - Dave Rempis - , photo credit – Ken Weiss



Jamaaladeen Tacuma's The Outsiders Improvised and Creative Music Festival at the CEC in Philadelphia on 4/24/15
left to right -King Britt - Danny Ray Thompson - Jamaaladeen Tacuma- Webb Thomas - Marshall Allen, photo credit – Ken Weiss

Short Takes – International Jazz News

Philadelphia, PA – Philadelphia has a long history of growing innovative Jazz talent and ever since the demise of Ortlieb's Jazzhaus in 2010, it's been mostly left to Chris' Jazz Café to feature and nurture the next generation of Jazz artists. It's especially nice to have the homegrown veterans come back to the club and dazzle the youngsters. **Orrin Evans** (p), who grew up locally, celebrated his 50th birthday in style at Chris' on 3/20-21 with a quartet of bassist **Essiet Essiet**, drummer **Mark Whitfield Jr.**, and special guest and Philly native son, guitarist **Kurt Rosenwinkel**, whose family was present, including his cardiologist brother. Rosenwinkel, who's still based in Berlin, unfortunately, didn't get the grand treatment he deserved, he was introduced for the first set on 3/20 by the MC as "Kevin," which drew shouts from the attentive audience and an explanation from the MC – "It's been a long day," he said. Later, when Evans announced Rosenwinkel's name as part of the band, a listener yelled, "Go Kevin!" Minor matters aside, an early take of "All the Things You Are" was handled in a non-traditional way, especially by the guitarist. Rosenwinkel had his eyes on charts during most of the set but really shined when he soloed and could delve into his own thing. He had one solo that was especially notable, using equipment to alter effect, he turned his playing up an octave to make it sound like he was playing a flute. Evans, as always, was solid and addressed his craft in a most serious manner. Late set, when he introduced Essiet as the bassist, he said, "I learned a lot from him – good and bad!" We'll have to stay tuned for those stories, Evans was tightlipped to reveal them that night...Saxophonist **Steve Lehman's** rep continues to rise, especially on the heels of his 2014 recording with his octet. The Painted Bride Art Center and Ars Nova Workshop hosted his octet on 3/21 with sponsorship by Chamber Music America. Lehman, a brainiac composer who draws inspiration from heady concepts such as spectral harmony, is at his best utilizing the skills of a large ensemble. Armed with gunners **Mark Shim** (ts), **Jonathan Finlayson** (tpt), **Tim Albright** (tbn), **Chris Dingman** (vib), **Jose Davila** (tba), **Matt Brewer** (b) and **Cody Brown** (d), Lehman had an inauspicious start trying to get his microphone to work. Thankfully, there were no such setbacks with his music which was stunningly dense and shifted into knotty, tightly interwoven layers. He frequently dropped out members to create small groups and different sound collectives. His segmented alto sax playing added a percussive element to the music and he also took a fierce soprano solo that was wild and entertaining. He displayed his sense of playful humor, introducing Cody Brown as, "We like to call him 'Puddin', no, no, I'm only kidding." And then at set's end introducing Matt Brewer as, "We like to call him 'Puddin'!" ...Composer **George Crumb**, is positioned on the Classical side of the musical equation but his exploration of sound crosses borders. He taught at the University of Pennsylvania for more than thirty years and lives in the area. Bowerbird and Counter) induction presented a celebration of "George Crumb at 85" on 4/4 at the Trinity Center for Urban Life. Crumb, who's as gentle and kind as they come, was present with longtime friend and famed player of toy pianos, Margaret Leng Tan. A few of Crumb's works were presented, including *Vox Balaenae*, which called for the performers to wear black half-masks, and *Eleven Echoes of Autumn*, along with two pieces that were composed by two of his former students – Kyle Bartlett and Douglas Boyce. Crumb's composition *Mundus Canis* best showed his humor and love of dogs (he currently has six). The five suite piece is dedicated to five different dogs he's had and presents a character study of each one. He saves the mischievous dog for last (Yoda) and ends the piece with one of the performers yelling, "Yoda, bad dog!" ...**Vijay Iyer's** long day at Swarthmore College on 4/18 was two years in the making and

represented the culmination of the college's "Sound Breaks" symposium which investigated improvisation in liberal arts education. Iyer directed students early in the day and followed that with round table discussion and then presented two of his projects which had never shared a bill together – his trio with **Stephan Crump** (b) and **Marcus Gilmore** (d), a band that was touring a new recording at the time, and Tirtha which included **Prasanna** (el g) and **Nitin Mitta** (tabla), a group that had not played together for two years and is no longer listed on Iyer's site as an entity. Tirtha went first and fused Iyer's Indian heritage with his Western upbringing. Prasanna, from southern India, was an outright revelation exploding Carnatic melodies with blazing fingers and a Rock and Jazz mentality. He even hit on a warped Blues portion that was a stunner. After the hour-long first set, Iyer's trio, which has existed for over a decade, along with a more at ease leader. Iyer announced at the start, "Have you had too much music yet?" The consensus was no and the trio seamlessly worked up a quick lather after a gentle piano solo opening that featured light clinking of the ivories. They covered a Herbie Nichols tune and a tribute to Robert Hood, the late electronic artist, called "Hood" which had an attention grabbing pulse. Crump and Gilmore played with great freedom and control but never altered from the trio's trajectory as a unit...Fire Museum Presents continued to bang out shows in small venues with high rewards for listeners. Their 4/19 offering at Vox Populi Gallery featured **Jalalu-Kalvert Nelson**, a trumpeter-cornetist based in Switzerland, & the Transformational Music Ensemble, a large group of local standouts including **Dan Blacksberg** (tbn), **Tara Middleton** (vin), **Matt Engle** (b) and **Julius Masri** (d), led by **Keir Neuringer**, the locally-based saxophonist who spent time in Switzerland. Nelson lived in New York and was a part of the experimental Jazz scene there for a long time. He was neighbors with William Parker and, in fact, "I use to babysit his daughter (Miriam)," he said. And that was in the diaper days before there were Pampers!" Nelson began with a solo effort, switching between trumpet and cornet, and did four short segments in tribute to late, greats – Roy Campbell, Clark Terry, complete with shades and a "Mumbles" section, Butch Morris, which had self-conduction, and also Don Cherry. The Transformational Music Ensemble took the stage and joined Nelson in a group improvisation that was raw, ragged, and edgy. Nelson also presented a new piece as a duet with cellist **Tom Kraines** that he wrote on the bus trip from NYC earlier that day – "That's why it's all whole notes," he kidded. The presentation ended with the premiere of an impressive new work by Neuringer called "Philadelphia Suite," which was to demonstrate the Philly tradition of rising out of a bad situation and triumphing...The month of April continued to be packed full of all different sorts of Jazz delicacies in honor of Philadelphia Jazz Appreciation Month. **Tim Berne's** Snakeoil (Ars Nova Workshop) returned to town in the highbrow setting of the renowned Barnes Foundation on 4/24. Nestled underground, surrounded by a wall of hand-chiseled white marble imported from Israel, Berne (as), **Oscar Noriega** (cl, b cl), **Matt Mitchell** (p) and **Ches Smith** (perc, vib). Unlike his last venture to town, Berne actually played tunes from the new ECM disc he was touring in support of, although the guitarist who rounded out the ensemble on the recording was not present. No worries though, the music was still arresting, just with a different flow. Berne opened with some good humor in announcing that Mitchell, a Philly local, was the only member of the band that didn't come from Philly and then announced which local town each of the other members "came from" in Philly. It turns out that Berne knows the area as his grandmother lived in Jenkintown, just outside the city. The music was, as expected, bracing, thorny, complicated but filled with beauty. They read off charts but the music still felt organic and the quartet has had plenty of time over the years to build up strength as a unit and to split up into little pockets of expressive duos. Berne

and Noriega hit some squeals at times but never pushed too far where they tested limits. Mitchell was impressive in adding harmony and melody to areas. The final piece was “Embraceable Me,” a highlight of the night, and a telling representation of Berne’s handling of the Jazz tradition...Electric bassist **Jamaaladeen Tacuma** isn’t one to sit still too long, he’s got lots of ideas and, as he describes it, he pays “attention to details.” That’s how he organized a full pop-up, five-hour festival in just three weeks! His The Outsiders Improvised & Creative Music Festival, in collaboration with Leo Gadson’s The Producer’s Guild, was held on 4/24 at the CEC, and featured seven sets of improvisational music led by a wide array of artists, each of whom have had a relationship with Tacuma over the years. That’s how you make things happen quickly – dealing with friends. He was able to cobble together support from numerous sponsors, print t-shirts, offer food and drink, and beautify the space with large murals of Jazz figures created by a local artist. Tacuma, the sharpest dressed improviser on the scene, had a few clothing changes during the night, and was a gracious host, announcing each set and then rushing off stage to attend to matters. **Charles Cohen**, the Buchla Music Easel specialist, opened with the fiery horns of **Elliot Levin**, and then were followed by the **Dan Blacksberg** Trio; **Chuck Treece** (d) with **Richard Hill** (b) and **Tim Motzer** (g); **Ben Schachter**’s Re:Trio; **Ava Mendoza** (el g) with **Tom Spiker** (el b), **Jafar Barron** (tpt) and **Adam Guth** (d); a **King Britt** solo on electronics; and then lastly, Britt remained on stage for the big finale – a one-off set featuring the soon-to-be 91-year-old **Marshall Allen** (as, E.V.I.), **Danny Ray Thompson** (bari s, flt, perc) and Tacuma, who wore a smashing gold lame cap to match the Sun Arkestra outfits of Allen and Thompson. Local drummer **Webb Thomas** clandestinely made his way to the vacant drum set during the finale, which led Tacuma to jokingly say after the set, “So you did find a way to get on the festival after all!” The final set was a powerful spontaneous and fun lovefest. Anytime Allen performs around town, his joyful playing is a cause for celebration, and to have this great master musician, who’s as humble and unassuming as they come, still hitting at the top of his game at age ninety is truly a blessing. Kudos to Tacuma for making this staggering event happen on such short notice. Somehow he made it run on time and got the word out to attract a large, attentive crowd. He hopes to make it an annual event and, as far as the name “Outsiders,” it’s in reference to, “Artists who think outside the box, as creators and improvisers,” Tacuma explained. It’s not meant as an outsider to the mainstream of Jazz...As **Bobby Zankel** (as) was receiving congrats at the conclusion of another stellar extended presentation of his 14-year-old ensemble, The Warriors of the Wonderful Sound, this time featuring special guest **Don Byron** (cl) on 5/5 at the Painted Bride Art Center, he turned and said, “The band keeps getting better, doesn’t it?” And indeed it has. Coltrane’s “Acknowledgement,” a longtime Warrior favorite, got the juices flowing early, along with rounds of spirited solos and layered group playing. A few of the many standout performers were **Julian Pressley** (as), **Diane Monroe** (vin), **Stan Slotter** (tpt), and **Lee Smith** (b). Zankel’s “Lotus Flower” was a late highlight, especially once the leader explained that it was inspired by, “The most beautiful flower that grows with deep roots in mud. It’s a metaphor for our lives and how we need to emerge.” Byron took the gig on relatively short notice, he replaced Oliver Lake who had to cancel. Byron played brilliantly, especially on his solos, but seemed uncomfortable with the charts during the over 90-minute set. Post-set he said, “That was like playing (Anthony) Braxton. There were a lot of notes!” There was also a pre-concert discussion with writer **John Szwed** and Jazz performance painter **Jeff Schlanger** (whose artwork was hanging in the gallery) dealing with the history of art documenting live Jazz performances. Szwed led off the conversation with, “I’m not gonna’ ask you anything I don’t really want to know,” which drew laughs from the listeners.

Schlanger noted that, back in the day, he first began sketching with a pad and pencils during shows and, in time, he branched out to more extensive work. "We all have a different mode of expressing ourselves," he explained. "I started out in clay and I will end up in clay. It's the tactility of the human insides – that's what I hear." This event was the second in a series of three first Tuesday of the month presentations arranged by Ars Nova Workshop, starting in April. The other guests were **Rudresh Mahanthappa** and **Jaleel Shaw**. ...It's no secret that when most drummers get to present as a leader, they are featured front and center in the music, unlike their usual backup role. How interesting that **Tyshawn Sorey** would open his trio's set on 5/9 at the Phila. Arts Alliance (Ars Nova Workshop) with a three minute thickly hammered **Corey Smythe** piano solo. Once Sorey entered, along with impressive bassist **Gregg August**, the heavily textured and very dense music took off. Sorey made his presence felt throughout the long, non-stop set with changing moods and light ambient, somewhat minimalistic segments, broken up by pounding mallets on various areas drum areas. When Sorey pummeled his set with a late drum roll, the mood in the room instantly changed to something different. It was as if something clearing or spiritual had occurred. Perhaps it was just a wakeup call to the senses, but it was palpable. The leader was inventive with his playing and his actions. At times he just suddenly dropped all his drum sticks to the ground and even ran a stick across the finely stained old wood wall column next to him. As the music faded to an end, August looked at Sorey and quietly whispered, "Are we done?" "Yes" was the answer. Smythe was a powerful force on piano with seemingly endless runs of notes piled on top of each other and frequent ventures inside the piano body to alter sound. It was puzzling to watch him stare up at the musical charts in front of him but never turn pages. It turns out that Sorey had changed the script at the last minute, instead of playing music directly from their new CD, they just played what they felt with references to the written music. They succeeded in staying unbelievably connected and Sorey said, about the performance, "It made the album seem tame!"...Guitarist **David Torn** doesn't hit the road much, he was last on an extended tour in 2008. He's mostly in his sound lab doing film scores and producing, but he took a month off to go at it solo, starting in mid-May. One week into the tour, he played a captivating 70-minute set at the Philadelphia Art Alliance (Ars Nova Workshop) with a brilliant pink electric guitar (he said it was supposed to be orange but it came out pink) and a whole slew of pedals and nobs to loop to his heart's content. He was in a talkative mood between songs. After the first improvised piece, he explained that he needed a few moments between each section in order to reset all his looping devices and erase the stored memories. He was on a mission to give a taste of what he does at home which is not so much practicing, he just plays whatever comes into his head. His "tunes" were improvised off of known songs including the Grateful Dead's "Casey Jones," a Billy Cobham fusion tune, some Woody Guthrie, and "Angel Eyes," although much of the time the tunes were unrecognizably distorted and disrupted. Torn noted that, "I seem to know a lot of tunes that are never going to leave my head until I die, especially old commercials from the '60s." It was fascinating to watch Torn, considered to be "the Godfather" of looping, go about his work and how he manufactures sound. He left the stage with an apology (which was odd since he received a rousing applause), "If somebody thought I was going to play some sort of Jazz tonight, some sort of style, I'm sorry."...Museum Fire Presents booked a tripleheader on 5/15 at The First Banana with Toronto-based trumpeter **Lina Allemano's** Titanium Riot as the centerpiece. Allemano, who actually is hoping to migrate to Berlin ("It's very affordable and I like the vibe there"), has been spending time there and studying with trumpeter Axel Dorner. She was on an 8-gig tour in support of a new CD. Her performance

was in contours and contrasts, shaped by a number of mutes, and ran the gamut from sharp blasts, a luscious circular breathing segment, and atmospheric activity strengthened by her fellow rioters – **Ryan Driver** (analog synth), **Rob Clutton** (el b), and **Nick Fraser** (d). Allemano acknowledged Miles Davis as a big influence, one that’s hard to deny as a trumpeter leading a semi-electric band, but gave a nod to Dorner as her muse. Also on the bill this night was the connected duo of **Bhob Rainey** (curved ss), who now resides in town, and **Michael Szekely** (d), who trained with Milford Graves. While Rainey crafted altered sounds, at times squeezing the small horn’s bell against his left thigh, Szekely presented a maniacal eyes upward stare at the ceiling as he worked over his drum set. Lastly, came a quintet of local brawn, **Julius Masri** (d), **Travis Woodson** (el g), **Dan Blacksberg** (tbn), **David Fishkin** (ts, flt) and **Mike Watson** (b cl), who presented 27 minutes of a very conversational, slow burn to a frenzied finish with lots of good stuff in the center, including some fine bass clarinet and flute combo work and Fishkin’s late saxophone foghorn-esque blowing...**Marshall Allen** got to celebrate his 91st birthday one day early at the Philadelphia Arts Alliance (Ars Nova Workshop) on 5/24 with brand playmates - Spectral’s **Larry Ochs** (ts, sop), **Darren Johnston** (tpt), and **Dave Rempis** (bari s, as). The horn-only ensemble packed plenty of punch, potentially more than the room could hold, but for the most part, they were very successful in leaving space and paying tedious attention to each other as they generated mayhem or conversed, often deferring to Allen. The Sun Ra Arkestra leader manned stage right while the trio filled the left side. Allen alternated between alto sax (which he’s playing less of these days), EVI, and a Casio, and obviously enjoyed having the leeway to do his thing with support. He was in his ever-present playful mood, laying out a melody, at times nursery rhyme-ish, and hearing what was relayed back to him. At one point, his simple melody thread led to an impressive Ayler-esque conclusion. From mid-set on, Allen directed a good deal of his attention to the audience, playing his instruments directly towards the patrons, often as if he was sprinkling them with pixie dust. At one point, after walking the room, he turned around to his bandmates and “dusted” them from head to toe. Breaking after an hour, the Spectral members started to indicate that the set was over until Allen, who was only getting warmed up at that point, strapped on his alto and leaned against a wall and started soloing, in his tender, raspy way, shades of Ellington. Soon the others joined in for what was the night’s highlight – a beautiful segment of layered call and response with twists and turns. Johnston impressively added lush, muted trumpet and the music benefited from the four artists coming together as a quartet. Soon a spontaneous chorus of “Happy Birthday” slowly intensified from the audience, and Allen responded by picking up his horn to play Sun Ra’s “Opus Springtime” to pay back the love. He again walked the room, stopping in front of listeners to deliver a private concert and a blast of healing. This was the first time Allen had played with the members of the band and he got to do it over again the next night as they headed to Baltimore...**Marshall Belford Allen** was again on stage 6/2 compliments of Ars Nova Workshop, this time at Johnny Brenda’s, opening for Holly Herndon. Playing in duo with Man Man’s **Chris Powell** (d, elec), Allen spent most of the set on EVI and Casio, rather than his alto, blending sounds with the impressive Powell, whose rapturous opening electronic display added cool sounds and a come-and-go beat. Allen grew more comfortable on stage as the night wore on and Powell deferred more to the elder statesman, settling in on drums before returning to play electronics that were more conducive to what Allen was interested in. It all worked out well in the end and it was perhaps the perfect setting for Allen’s EVI and Casio work. The headliner this night was Bay Area electronica composer and theoretician **Holly Herndon**, who took the stage with an assistant who manned the video backdrop of 3D food flying around along with 2D people figures. He

also answered text message sent to his phone from the audience, displaying them on the screen. His first message was to, "Shout out scraaatch!" I'm not making this up. Herndon played in the dark as the monotonous image of food ran for the bulk of the set. The flying food grew old real fast – maybe the corncobs could eat the people? It would have been more exciting to have some light on Herndon to see what she was doing and also since she's a bit striking with red hair and deep blue eyes. Her set was techno driven and not much in the way of Jazz, but it resonated with the audience. Post-set, Marshall Allen spoke with her in the Green Room about the wonders of music. She asked, "Is it true that music can heal? I feel that the music has lost something," to which Allen explained that yes, it still can change and heal the world...Someone who firmly believes that music can change the world is **Wadada Leo Smith**, who played the Philadelphia Clef Club on 6/5 (Ars Nova Workshop) with his longstanding Golden Quartet in honor of the AACM's 50th anniversary. Smith, along with **Anthony Davis** (p), **John Lindberg** (b) and **Pheeroan akLaff** (d), performed sections from *Ten Freedom Summers*, Smith's acclaimed work that celebrates the Civil Rights Movement. "Dread Scott: 1987," "Freedom Summer: Voter Registration," Malik Al Shabaaz," "Emmett Till: Defiant, Fearless," and "Democracy" were all covered. The performance was much less in the chamber music arena than the recording and featured carefully crafted music woven with atonal sections from Davis, pulsating form from Lindberg and akLaff, and fragments of sound from Smith. Mid-set, the leader stood on the edge of the stage and said, "It's all about beauty. Actually, it's all about love, which is beauty...The music is about America and the universe we live in. Ten Freedom Summers is about more than civil rights, it looks at equality for everyone." The focus of the performance was not on soloing, there wasn't much of that at all, but Smith did take a late solo that was so beautiful and twisted that he had to motion to akLaff to smash his cymbal when the transfixed drummer missed the cue. Even akLaff was taken with the moment. At set's end, Smith announced that each member of the band leads and composes their own work and, "That's how you get that kind of beauty" out of a band...Ars Nova Workshop completed its mini-tribute to the AACM on 6/12 at the Philadelphia Art Alliance with a collective of three AACM members who each has spent time on the organization's executive board – **Nicole Mitchell** (flt), **Tomeka Reid** (cel) and **Mike Reed** (d). The group's modus operandi is to feature songs from other members of the AACM. Commencing with Roscoe Mitchell's "Jo Jar," his tribute to Joseph Jarman, which featured a stunning Mitchell blowing/singing segment that had strong Asian elements to it, and then Leroy Jenkins' "The Clown," which was highlighted by the Reid's arco solo at the start that included some echo effect and turned into some heavy sawing. Mitchell put on a head set and turned on her electronics to add effects. When some listener's cell phone played a melody for about a minute (what's up with that?), Mitchell looked at Reid as if to say, 'Can you believe this,' and Reid responded by playing back the sprightly cellphone melody before going into a bluesy pizzicato. Some Henry Threadgill, a couple Air pieces, and a medley of Fred Anderson and Jeff Parker tunes followed. Mitchell announced the next tune as being by someone who after she first played their music, "It made her want to throw out all my compositions." Anthony Braxton's "Cut One Comp 23B" gave the trio a hefty workout and included a nice circular breathing portion by Mitchell. Next up was Amina Claudine Myers' "Have Mercy Upon Us," which was preceded by Mitchell's announcement that, "As you can see there are women in the AACM and Amina opened doors for us." Mitchell pulled out her piccolo for the final tune - Ed Wilkerson's "Light on the Path." Reed, who was wonderful on drums all night, never overplaying and moving the pieces along, explained why there was no Muhal Richard Abrams composition this night – "We recorded one of his songs for the recording

in March but we haven't played it since. So we do have one we play." ...The **Bad Plus Joshua Redman** at the World Café Live on 6/13 was as successful as hoped. Redman totally allowed himself to be absorbed into the prosperous trio. He never overplayed and allowed the compositions to be the focal point, at least up until the song breaks when the hilarious banter from bassist **Reid Anderson** commenced. He started off by saying, "We're very proud of the name of the new CD – The Bad Plus Joshua Redman." Later, when Reid announced the next tune as a Reid Anderson piece, he stopped and said, "I think I just referred to myself in the third person. It's good to get a little bit of perspective sometimes." For the most part, there was a good balance to their set, although at times pieces ran long. Compositions by all four artists were performed and the crowd approval ratings audibly elevated as the night went on. Reid's "Dirty Blond" drew big cheers. "It's a good hair color, that's for sure," Reid explained. **Ethan Iverson's** "County Seat" was a lively romp and gave Redman really his first chance to break out. Before ending the set with Reid's "Silence is the Question," and then a raucous encore, Reid sang to the fans – "Everyone loves Philadelphia, it's the greatest city starting with P. So much better than Phoenix and Poughkeepsie. It's the place we all want to be. Before you go, there's just one thing you need to know. We have CDs for sale, lots of CDs for sale! ... That was written by Joshua Redman!" When a listener yelled, "Brilliant and shameless!" Reid answered, "Yeah, shame is overrated!" Post-set, Redman said the music wasn't written out for him. He just learned the tunes and most of the band's work is improvised anyway. He said, "The songs are not easy to play but there's not a lot of complicated notes. They don't write a lot of stuff just to be hip. They're very song-based." ...Incoming hits will be skipped this issue as the summer months lead to an exodus to the Jersey shore and bookings drop off. Ken Weiss

Short Takes – International Jazz News

-Toronto and Southwestern Ontario

REX HOTEL March: Special shows include: From New York: Joel Harrison GRToup, Matthew Stevens “Woodwork” CD tour; from New York and B.C. Ingrid Jensen & Eli Bennett with Gray Matter; From New York and France, The Kandinsky group. From Sweden and Denmark, Mike Murley & David Braid Nordic Project, Spotlight on Israeli Culture features Ehud Ettun Trio, and Kobi Hass, Guy Mintas and Anat Cohen Quartet; plus local groups such as Harley Card Quintet, the 2015 Juno Award winning Bob Rice Latin Band. Sundays it is the Excelsior Dixieland jazz Band, Mondays the U of Toronto and Humber College Jazz ensembles, Tuesdays it is the Richard Whiteman group, Wednesdays is Scott Kemp, Thursdays is Kevin Quain, Fridays it is the Hogtwn Syncopaters, and Saturdays is Dannie Marks.

April: Special shows include: From New York: ‘Nuf Said with Ted Quinlan and Vito Rezza; Russ Nolan CD release tour; From Switzerland, Gerry Hemingway with Crfts/Adams/Pearse; from England: Trevor Watts feturing Veryan Weston; From Montreal: Dave Turner featuring Robi Botos; and 2014 Juno winner Mike Rud; From Texas: The Funky Knuckles, from Nove Scotia, Gene Smith with David Brand, from Vancouver, Phil Dwyer featuring Larnell Lewis, plus the Juno award winning John MacLeod’s Rex Hotel Orchestra. On Sundays the Excelsior Dixieland Jazz Band is featured. On Mondays it is the U of Toronto and Humber College jazz ensembles, Tuesdays it is the Carissa Neufiled Group, Wednesdays it is the Ethan Ardelli Group, Thursdays it is the Ernesto Cervini Group, Fridays it is the Hogtown Syncopaters and Saturdays it is Danny Marks. **May:** Special shows include: From New York: Tim Reis featuring Robi Botos; the Eric Divito Trio; the Avi Granite Sextet; From Vancouver Miriam Snider Quartet featuring Bernie Senensky. From Montreal the Norman Marshall Villeneuve Jazz Sextet; from Chicago the Hans Luchs organ Trio and special daytime concerts featuring Musicfest Canada Youth Combos. On Sundays the Excelsior Dixieland Jazz band is featured. On Mondays it is the Peter Hill Group, Tuesdays it is the Matt Newton Trio, Wednesdays it is Ross Woodbridge Group, Thursdays it is kevin Quain, Fridays the Hogtown Syncopaters, and Saturdays it is Dannie Marks.

Jazz Room In Waterloo

March: 13, Jaron Freeman-Fox and The Opposite of Everything; 14 Canadian jazz Quartet; 19, Aviva; 20, Murley-Braid Nordic Project; 21, Gray Matter with Ingrid Jensen; 27 Alysha Brilla Srxtet; 28, Robi Botos Quartet. **April:** 3, Hwo with Dave Thompson; 4, Shirantha Beddage Quartet; 10, Kite Trio; 11, Richard Whiteman trio; 17, Andrew McAnsh Sextet; 18, Pat labarbara Quartet; 24, Joni NehRita Quintet 25, Allison Au, Quartet. **May:** 1, Ryan Cassidy Quintet; 2, Ethan Ardelli Quartet; 8, Brad Cheesman Group’ 9. Adrean Farrugia Trio; 14, Tower of Song, Leonard Cohen Tribute; 15 John Zadro Trio + guests; 16, Derek Hines Little Big band; 22, Rob Fekete Quintet; 23, Melissa Stylianou Quartet; 24, VICO: Sound of Dragon; 29, Rob Gellner Sextet; 30, Elizabeth Shepherd Quintet

London Ontario

Eric Stach has stopped his public series, but a smaller version is being hosted by Geoff Johnson, with many of the same players

Bernie Koenig

Short Takes – International Jazz News

Vancouver, BC –

The 30th Annual Vancouver International Jazz Festival happens June 19-July 1 in venues all over the city. Headliners include bluesman Buddy Guy, Chris Botti, Stanley Clarke band, the Bad Plus with Joshua Redman, Eliane Elias, Abdullah Ibrahim Mukashi 3 & Tower of Power. A series at Performance Works has Fred Hersch, Christine Jensen Jazz Orch. with Ingrid Jensen, Renee Rosnes 4tet, Kenny Werner 3, Bria Skonberg 5tet, Antonio Sanchez & Migration and Dave Douglas & High Risk. Cory Weeds is presenting a series at Pyatt Hall that includes Two Much Guitar & Bill Coon Double Quintet, Scott Hamilton with Tony Foster 3, James Danderfer 3, vocalist Jaclyn Guillou, Tim Tamashiro & Vancouver All-Star, s Jimmy Heath 4tet with pianist Jeb Patton, Adam Thomas & Julian McDonough, and the Jill Townsend Big Band doing a CD release of the music of the late Ross Taggart. Elsewhere, Louis Moholo-Moholo 4tet plays at The Ironworks. As always there are dozens of free concerts throughout the festival every day. See www.coastaljazz.ca for more information on all festival concerts...Later in July, saxophonist Steve Kaldestad is at the Sanctuary in Brentwood Presbyterian Church in Burnaby 7/22. See <http://brentwoodpc.ca/jazz-evensong> for info. Recent visitors to town include Sheila Jordan & Cameron Brown, a group from Smalls Jazz in NYC comprised of pianist Spike Wilner, Joe Magnarelli, Grant Stewart and Peter Bernstein along with local rhythm bassist Adam Thomas and Julian MacDonough; Harold Mabern with Cory Weeds sax, with Thomas and MacDonough and also Mike LeDonne with Cory Weeds and Oliver Gannon doing a CD release for 100th release on the Cellar Live – Condition Blue – a dedication to the music of Jackie McLean...For local jazz info and links, go to www.vancouverjazz.com.

Feature CD Review -

Tiempo Libre: Pan Americano

Cadence Magazine will be covering the work of Tiempo Libre and Jorge Gomez as they work with Artist Repertory Theatre in Portland, Oregon to develop the new musical: Cuba Libre. The following is a review of the band's new CD.

Henri Matisse once stated that “Jazz is rhythm and meaning” however when injected with the Latin fusion soul and harmonies it becomes more in tune to the heartbeat of a culture. The intense feel of Latin fused music pulsates into the heart of the listener and brings the experience to the boiling point of pure passionate desire with each push and play. Three-time Grammy award nominated band Tiempo Libre’s new release Panaamericano coming out on June 30th will flow through the veins of the populace, bursting in a multi-cultural aphrodisiac for the fan of the Latin feel.

Tiempo Libre, an Afro-Caribbean group has shifted the tectonic plates of their traditional style to expand their roots into a more global exhibit and showcase of music. Still their style but with highly diverse selections, that are intoxicating with successful yet unruly arrangements, making them the master mechanics of the Latin groove in 2015. The project is also making notice of where they are today from those days of yesteryear. Released in partnership with Universal Music Classics, Panaamericano is their first spin with Universal Latin Music Entertainment, a astute signing it was too, and proposes to be, note-for-note, their fertilization of a new and promising frontier.

From initial spin, the sounds of these seven gifted artists have a deeply physical and mental effect on their audience, as the jazz harmonies offer seductiveness in the performance of the numerous Latin rhythms. This in turn injects several emotions throughout the body, which offers the spirit within the listener a chance to call for a celebration of life. Panaamericano is not just another spin off the shelf; it's a new dimension in Latin fusion with a muscular romanticism coated in inspiration from a cultural foundation.

The band itself, led by founder Jorge Gomez is now expanding its sound from Beijing, China to Portland Oregon and beyond. The popularity and music sheets take flight in many directions with a sound that ignites the senses. In addition are the guest vocals such as Jean Rodriguez escalating the sounds of “Dime Que No” and Yunel Cruz taking a journey with the heartfelt spin “Someone to Love Me”.

The feel of the whole project is one of rejuvenation. This is a band that settles for nothing less than their best on stage and off. Prior to this spin all their craft focused around the Cuban flair however they sought a new direction and it was the right call, from the U.S. to South America, they felt the feel of the various cultures and let them escape through their music. From the first moment I spun its sound I knew this was act of heritage but not just theirs...Tiempo Libre was shifting company but not neglecting their past, just escorting US and Latin America onto their stage, front and center and it works!

Panaamericano has by far one of the most interesting and enjoyable spins this year. From opening cut “Monta Que Te Quedas” your interest is captured with its upbeat tones and precise instrumentals. This is a major breakthrough for a band that is known mostly for Timba and Cuban Classical however by Universal cutting the leash on Jorge Gomez, who also produced and recorded the project, and others, it opened a whole new world for the band, and the followers of Tiempo Libre, along with new fandom ready to emerge!

Keep it Tuned... Karl Stober

PAPATAMUS – A Diverse Collection of CD, DVD and Book Reviews

A NOTE TO READERS: I cover a lot of items in these columns and there is more in quantity that I do not write about. I choose to only write about things that I find of interest—usually that is due to quality of content and for that reason the coverage tends to be positive. This is sincere unsponsored coverage. Occasionally there is a conflict of interest and I note it. You can contact me at rdr@cadencebuilding.com. All mail will be acknowledged but anonymous mail *will* be ignored. RDR

GIANCARLO MAZZÚ [gtr] and LUCIANO TROJA [p] have had a professional association going back to the early 2000s and have recorded as a duo at least three times previous to TASTING BEAUTY [Slam 563]. Previously the duo has worked in standards while here the program is ten originals. This well-oiled duo plays a melodic program with drama and humor. I most enjoyed this date where the duo goes into each other in counterpoint and harmony. It's a big world but their big talent and big ears make this one of the top duos.

ROBERT KUSIOLEK's [acc/bando] QUI PRO QUO [Multikulti Project 003] takes patience *and* big ears to absorb all that is going on in the quartet [Elena Czekanowa-p, Pawel Postaremczak-ts/ss, Grzegorz Nowara-b/tuba]. This is a soundscape which at times chugs like a steam locomotive and at other times it is a quietly random metronome. Does it make connections? Not in the traditional sense but repeated listenings make compositions that went unheard at first. While not every moment for every instrument seems scribed I sense the structure is. If one wants a go at playing with sound this as good a bet as any. But a listener should be willing to turn off in order to turn *on*.

Quite coincidentally a group called EMIBATETT has released a CD with a similar name QUI-PRO-QUO-DIS [Schraum 25003]. This quintet [Matthias Muche-tbn Robert Landfermann-b, Philip Zoubek-p, Etienne Nillesen-perc] seems unofficially led by cellist ELISABETH FÜGEMANN, in that she wrote or constructed all the credited music for this date [3/14] which is a blending of experimental and improvised music. Originally the group was a trio, then Fügemann invited the pianist and percussionist and both *prepared* their instruments for the date. The music often sounds inspired by a tension built off of a l-o-n-g tone from the cello, building to a crescendo and eventually bringing things around to conclusion. The overall effect is of an experimental chamber group. One of the three free improvised tracks is a fine duo between bass and trombone. Even on the free improvisations the group never sounds lost or adrift, and there are a number of *compositions* which sound largely improvised. The musicality and sense of construction make this a most enjoyable listen.

Construction is a major strategy of HENRY THREADGILL's [as/flts] music. His latest recording titled IN FOR A PENNY, IN FOR A POUND [Pi Recordings 58] is with his group, ZOOID [Jose Davila-tbn/tuba, Liberty Ellman-gtr, Christopher Hoffman-cello, Elliot Kavee-perc] and it is a 2-CD affair [79:09]. It is made up of six compositions meant as a suite. The opening tracks on each disc serve as introductions to the suite. Each of the remaining four movements (tracks) showcases a different instrument/player paired up with the leader. Threadgill plays in subdued fashion on these pairings allowing the focus to be more on the other instrumentalist. I've never been too locked into Threadgill's methodology/strategy. In general I prefer to just listen to the composition and improvisation fresh, I'm fine that it can at times take a few listens before it integrates itself into my head as a unified music and composition. Threadgill says the piece is *intended to be played in chamber-listening spaces*. Perhaps so, but your listening room, less pretentious, works well also. It's a wonderful instrumentation with no particular color dominating, other than the intended featured instrument. Give this a chance.

Where to begin with pianist, composer, orchestra leader, SATOKO FUJII? Since the early 1990s she has released dozens of records as a leader and dozens in collaboration with her husband, Natsuki Tamura [tpt] and frankly to my way of hearing has a remarkably high success rate musically. She is one of a handful of artists that one is willing to get a new release of—sound unheard—she is that good. Fujii has great use of dynamics and writes specific parts to showcase individual players in a large orchestra. In that way, she is the Ellington of free jazz, not unlike Barry Guy's handling of writing for LICO members. In the past Fujii has issued music with orchestras from New York and Tokyo and manages to fill the band with some of the strongest players in those areas. Her latest recording ICHIGO ICHIE [Libra records 212-037] is a 12 member band [3 saxes, 3 trumpets, 1 trombone, 1 guitar, piano, bass and 2 drummers] called Orchestra Berlin. Offered up here are five tracks and almost 55 minutes of mesmerizing music, this is a *beaut*.

DIETER GLAWISCHNIG [p] brings along Hans Glawischnig [b] and Manfred Schoof [tpt/flg] on a live [2/28/15] concert recording called WINGED BY DISTANCE [Intuition 71309]. 13 originals by Dieter or his son form the backdrop for freely negotiated music. The elder forms a loose, often ethereal framework over which Schoof plays in and around while the bassist pretty much keeps continuity. These three are veterans and it shows in the ease and

joy of the improvisations; and there does seem to be real joy and respect emitted from the music. Mature instant composition.

Fortune records, whose recordings I covered at length in my last column, has issued another recording of interest. The quartet FUSK (Rudi Mahall [b-clt] Phillipp Gropper [ts], Andreas Lang [b], and Tom Christiansen [drm]) has issued SIEBEN ACHT GUTE NACHT (which I think means seven eight good night) [Fortune 0048/035], a live recording from Warsaw. This is a free jazz session where all the participants contribute and blend well musically. Christiansen lays down a supporting percussive carpet for the improvisation throughout. He is also credited with the 11 compositions [66:30] which are succinct and never overstay their welcome. A small but enthusiastic audience cheers things on.

Violinist SIMON FRICK on SOLO [Boomslang records 9120011 930415] sounds at times solo (impressive) and at times sounds like a combo (also impressive) thanks to a variety of electronics, pedals and repeaters. It is pretty exhilarating on most of the 12 cuts [8 originals]. Certainly "Smells Like Teen Spirit" never sounded so rearranged and demanding of ones ears as it does here. Frick takes the violin to its outer limits and gives the listener much to contend with in trying to absorb all the sound. Well Done.

There is a variety of sound woven together on MESOKOSMOS [Unit 4589] by the EVGENY RING [as] quartet [Sascha Stiehler-p, Dominique Ehlert-dms, Philipp Rohmer-b and on some tracks Bastian Ruppert-gtr is added]. The focus here is on composition [9 originals by Ring] and a group development, as opposed to development through individual solos. There are soloists but they are there to build the compositional form and development, so much so that after an enjoyable listen one has no particular sense of individual style/soloists but more rather a sense of musical dynamics of composition. As a result the tracks here seem somewhat like movements within the whole program. Individuality, cloaked in a group effort through composition.

A similar characterization could be made on LORIN COHEN's [b], HOME [Origin 82693]. Cohen composed and arranged the six titles here for the septet [Ryan Cohan-kbds, Donald Edwards-drm, Yvonnick Prene-hrm, Victor Provost-steel drums, Samuel Torres-perc]. The combination of vibes, steel drums and harmonica gives this date a breezy summer feel and the leader acknowledges that the Caribbean is one of the *homes* alluded to in the CD's title. It's not all *sand 'n' surf* but the harmonica keeps things from getting edgy and two tracks fade out which also keeps things from getting too serious. Pleasant but non-essential.

It would be hard to characterize DEVIN GRAY's [drm] latest RELATIVE RESONANCE [Skirl 028] as it is made up of a wide variety of strategies and colors. Gray is joined by Chris Speed [ts/clt], Kris Davis [p] and Chris Tordini [b]. The quartet runs through eight Gray originals played in a natural unread approach. The ease of the groups approach surprised me as the accompanying hype on the CD states, "the material is composition-driven while leaving room for some [improvisation]". That lead me to expect a more stilted sound than is present here. There's a lightness to this music which is surprising, involving and demanding in following the juxtaposing of the musicians against each other in a separate, but unified, journey. It was on repeated listenings where the parts of the whole made themselves present and the whole more enjoyable. Abstract but not arcane.

Tenor sax man IVO PERELMAN has issued a plethora of recordings on the Leo label. CALLAS [Leo 728/729] is a 2CD duo set with MATTHEW SHIPP [p]. This music celebrates the being of the iconic diva Maria Callas; a self destructive opera singer who rose to the heights of the opera world before flaming out in a similar fashion to Edith Piaf, Judy Garland and Billie Holiday. Recorded on 2 different occasions [3/13/15 & 2/27/15] it presents a total of 16 tracks [79:00]. Shipp and Perelman have worked together many times since the mid 1990s and this is one of their finest efforts. There is a natural flow to this music, perhaps because they are not encumbered by bass or drums. Shipp is very much in his element, in fact if you could strip out the sax this probably would hold up as a solo recital, even so there is a unity between the piano and sax lines. Quite a feat. Perelman, for the most part, stays in a mid-range and is very complimentary to Shipp's adventures. It's a co-led session and co-led it is.

TENORHOOD [Leo cd 714] is another duo date [3/14] this time with IVO PERELMAN [ts] and WHIT DICKEY [drm]. Besides the title track (which humorously is a drum solo) there are five other improvs; one each for Mobley, Webster, Coltrane, Ayler and Rollins. Any connections with the named artists and the music (except for the briefest quote of Rollins) is purely in the mind of the listener. Perelman is more volcanic on this session, as might be expected, and more obviously the lead voice. More tiring than the duo with Shipp but still a strong outing for both players.

As on the first two Perelman issues, here Neil Tesser writes excellent notes, for COUNTERPOINT [Leo 730] a trio date [9/15] by PERELMAN, MAT MANERI [viola] and JOE MORRIS [gtr]. Here the vibe is far different as one senses that the tenor man is showing great control in holding back as though a governor were on his instrument.

The make up here suggests a string trio and in fact when Perelman employs the high register it can have the affect of a violin. The session is made up as a 10 part suite [Part #1-10 48:00] freely improvised. Maneri and Morris never seem for a lack of ideas which keeps things moving nicely throughout.

Usually when a debut album comes out there is a certain glamor, technical or otherwise, put forth as to say, “*here I am, look at me*”. TRIOLOGOS [Paolo Bajardi-sax, Bruno Bajardi-perc, Mirco Bellabene-b] have issued TRACES OF CHANTS [Slam 562], a rather understated effort of sizable impact. I’m assuming this is their first release individually or groupwise. The eight compositions here are based on ethnic music from various countries [Pakistan/Italy/Argentina/Syria/Kenya/Japan] but except for an Eastern strain, that is at times is present, my ignorance is such that these influences are lost on this listener; this is jazz not *world music*. The group rarely ups a tempo and Paolo Bajardi maintains, for the most part, a modest range and an even pacing. It’s all very effective and easy, but not dull, on the ears. Massimo Bonomo-p is added on two tracks but even so this remains, in feel, a trio release of subtlety and power.

Another trio of interest is led by CHRISTOPH IRNIGER [ts] who along with Raffaele Bossard [b] and Ziv Ravitz [dms] has released OCTOPUS [Intakt 253/2015]. Irniger conveys an intimate, reasonably vibrato-less, mid-range tone free of any sense of anxiety. The ten originals [50:21] here—some quite beautiful, have a lullaby effect, juxtaposed by Ravitz who often lays out agitating rhythms on his drums. Bossard, when not acting as a bridge for musical sections, tends to shadow the tenor man. It’s all rather understated, not underwhelming, as its dreamy approach can overwhelm one with its introspection.

CHARLES MCPHERSON [as] made his recording debut back in 1960 and has rarely led a session where he shared the front line with another sax, preferring (when sharing) it to be a trumpet. On THE JOURNEY [Capri 74136] he leads a quintet [Chip Stephens-p, Ken Walker-b, Todd Reid-dms] and shares the front line with tenor man, Keith Oxman. As Sonny Stitt was burdened by the shadow of Bird, McPherson, a generation later, was in Parker’s shadow when he started out. It’s not a bad shadow to be in but it’s a two edged sword. Over the years McPherson has honed a harder rough tone while retaining the Parker fluency. He has a track record for making excellent bop records. The group and label are familiar to the Denver, Colorado area. They are sprightly and support McPherson well, especially Chip Stephens whose solos are pronounced and fresh. Nine cuts including standards [Spring is Here, Au Privave, I Should Care] and some fine originals [The Decathexis From Youth (by Stephens), Manhattan Nocturne (by McPherson)] make up the program. McPherson up to date.

Also from Capri Records comes BROTHERLEE LOVE [#74138] by the TERELL STAFFORD [tpt] quintet [Tim Warfield-ts, Bruce Barth-p, Peter Washington-b, Dana Hall-drm]. This is obviously very derivative, but freshly and thankfully so. Folks who have not developed an expanded taste in jazz and yet are bummed by the boring and gutless remakes of 60s bop will welcome this as it is a breath of *fresh* air. Seven of the nine tracks are Morgan originals (not the obvious) plus “Candy”, a tune associated with the trumpeter. Stafford contributes one track, “Favor”, which suggests some of the Morgan swagger. From “Hocus Pocus” through “Speedball” this is over 75 minutes of fresh engaging—still in the bop vernacular—jazz. Once more I am impressed by Tim Warfield’s strength.

If your joys are in mainstream jazz (this originally defined as the period between swing and bop) then you will be pleased by HARRY ALLEN’s FOR GEORGE, COLE AND DUKE [Blue Heron Records 641444 153220]. Allen is one of the relatively few 21st century players who, in his playing, seems to remember Coleman Hawkins. Allen is joined here by Ehud Asherie [p], Nicki Parrott [b/voc], Chuck Redd [drm/vbs], and on 3 of the 13 tracks [70:35], Johnny Rivero assists on percussion. The music is, as you might have guessed, by Gershwin, Porter and Ellington and it sticks close to the themes with plenty of room for improvisation. Parrott sings on 3 tunes and she is a delight. There certainly are some well worn compositions here but also some less referenced compositions in the mix. Blue Heron plans a catalogue of mainstream, blues and Latin—they are off to a good start.

PERRY BEEKMAN [gtr/voc] takes on Gershwin on S’WONDERFUL [Beekman 888295 249560]. He is joined by Peter Tomlinson-p and Lou Pappas-b in covering a program of 15 Gershwin tracks. Beekman has a nasal (touching on flat) mid-range voice and an enthusiastic delivery. His previous releases have covered Rodgers & Hart and Cole Porter.

Singer MICHELLE LORDI has released a notable CD in DRIVE [Creper Music no #]. An odd title for an album which suggests anything but *drive* in fact this is a laid back reading of ten tracks [You’re My Thrill, Imagination, True Love, My Ship, If I Only Had A Heart, I Fall In Love To Easily, My Ideal, Ghost Of A Chance, Now At Last, Drive]. She picks up the energy and takes an easy stroll on “If I Only...”, but otherwise she is Julie London intimate, straight

forward, clear and appropriately dreamy. Even so she builds up tension and is backed in various combinations by Orrin Evans or Tom Lawton [p], Larry Mckenna [ts], Madison Rast [b] and Dan Monaghan [drm]. The backing is perfect across the board and Orrin Evans does some wonderful, almost haunting, re-harmonizations on “I Fall In Love”. A very pleasant and understated album.

MICHELLE LORDI’s earlier CD, SINGS [no label or #], with Tom Lawton [p] and Aleck Brinkman [b], doesn’t have the breathy intimacy of the later release. Here on 11 songs [There Will Never Be Another You, Moon And Sand, The More I See You, Everything Happens To Me, Do It The Hard Way, Moonlight Savings Time, You Don’t Know What Love Is, Between The Devil And The Deep Blue Sea, Loverman, Cow Cow Boogie, Skylark - 30:01] she conveys an innocent forwardness which is quite appealing even with what seems to be some intonation issues. Notable, if imperfect .

Singer LAUREN WHITE has recorded EXPERIMENT [Cherry Pit 724101 778926], a CD *inspired by the recordings of Irene Kral*. Joining the singer is the Quinn Johnson [p] trio [Ray Brinker-drm, Trey Henry-b]. White has a reserved (and at times cabaret) delivery. Jodi Burnett [cello] and Kleber Jorge [gtr] each join in for 2 cuts and someone, uncredited, sings along with Johnson on a rather fun “Better Than Anything”. Quinn Johnson’s arrangements show some originality. Pleasant but not that engaging and a few fadeouts, curses.

KEN GREVES is a vocalist who combines cabaret and jazz in a most engaging manner. His latest release is NIGHT PEOPLE [Jazz Cat Records 1003] and it contains 14 tunes that includes some fine writing not referenced all that often [Night People, Small Day Tomorrow, Street Of Dreams, Moon And Sand, Let Me Down Easy, I Keep Goin’ Back To Joe’s] along with the more familiar [I Wished On The Moon, What A Little Moonlight Can Do, Midnight Sun, The Night We Called It A Day, Angel Eyes, Lush Life, One For My Baby, Don’t Let The Sun Catch You Cryin’]. To my ears there is a touch of Andy Bey in the drama he brings to a composition. There are times when his voice sounds a bit shaky when he reaches out of his mid-range but the weight he gives lyrics and his clear annunciation draws the listener in and is captivating. Lyrics obviously matter to this singer in the same way as one senses it does with Mark Murphy, though there is no auditory similarity to Murphy. This set is nicely backed by Frank Ponzio [p], Vito Leszczak [drm] and some very nice voicing from bassist Peter Donovan. I was particularly drawn to “One For My Baby”, a song I could live without, but here Greves avoids the sense of alcohol slobbering and turns the lyrics into a lilting *best* to his baby. Recorded 3/20/11, one assumes in one day.

THE FACE OF MY LOVE [Jazz Cat Records 1001], is KEN GREVES’ first recording and was recorded in 2008. Here one hears the same voice and vocal characteristics. Backing musicians are Wells Hanley [p] Tom Hubbard [b] and Jacob Melchior [drm] on 16 mostly familiar tunes, again from *the great American songbook*. And again the attention to lyrics is clear—in fact all the strengths exhibited on *Night People* are present here along with the believability he brings to the lyrics.

Still another date with KEN GREVES is found on VINTAGE & RARE: THE SONGS OF HAROLD ARLEN [Jazz Cat Records 1002]. This was recorded 2010/2011 and is volume 1 of a planned 10 volume retrospective of Arlen. Greves told me he already has enough tracks down for 4 more volumes, volume 1 came out 3 years ago so at that rate this may be decades in the making. The 12 Arlen compositions here have lyrics by Mercer, Harburg, Capote, Koehler and Ralph Blane, the latter is responsible for “I love A New Yorker”, from the 1950 film *My Blue Heaven*, a piece better appreciated as an instrumental. Backing, on this Arlen tribute, is from Hanley and Melchior, and Peter Donovan. Some of the songs here don’t seem to have the commitment that Greves exhibits on the other 2 releases. This may be because the program is predicated on a composer while I’d assume on the 2 other releases it was the lyrics that drew Greves to them. A note about the packaging on these 3 releases; they have a uniform look, an attractive 4 panel digi-pack with full liners and compositional credits. The only thing missing is the label number [taking a cue from 1003 I figured 1002 and 1001 for the first two]. If you pick up 1003 and enjoy it, try the others.

The AGATHE JAZZ QUARTET led by AGATHE IRACEMA [voc] has issued FEELING ALIVE [Neu Klang 4106]. The quartet is filled out by Laurent Coulondre [kbds], Jérémy Bruyère [b] and the very propelling drums of Pierre-Alain Tocanier. Iracema is a jazz singer—as opposed to a singer with a formal background that sings *jazzy* . The first impression is a reflection of Billie Holiday but it becomes apparent there is more to her as she improvises, scats and is obviously one member of a jazz group. Three of the 11 tracks here are Iracema originals sung in Portuguese (?) I’d guess, as she is Brazilian, her father is bassist Rubens Santana, her mother is French. Other tunes include; “I’ve Got A Crush On You”, “My One And Only Love”, “Softly As In A Morning Sunrise”, “Don’t Go To Strangers”. Fred Wesley [tbn] and Nicolas Former [tpt] guest on three tracks each. The quartet does a fine reading of Betty Carter’s “Droppin’ Things” but to their dis-credit allow a fade out on one tune. A formidable group.

AGATHE IRACEMA was formidable enough that it sent me back to referencing her earlier work. I can't date I'M GLAD THERE IS YOU [no label or number] but judging by the content I'd guess it is the earliest of the work here. Iracema's jazz instincts show in the nine tracks here which includes; "Fly Right", "Boplicity", "Song For My Father" and "Perdido" but she shows an unidentifiable accent and she is not integrated in the quartet [Juan Jimenez-b, Oscar Marchioni-p, David Grebil-drm] but rather a singer with backing.

BELIEVE IN ROMANCE [Deja Productions no number] is a short CD [20:43] but quite enjoyable. Again the jazz instincts are here ["Dat Dere", "Barbados", "The Man I Love", "I Got Rhythm"]. Recorded on 7/6&7/10 the accent is gone and the touch of Lady Day is back on "The Man..." The backing is the same as above with Sylvain del Campo [as] making strong guest appearances on two tracks. In addition to some hip scatting the singer contributes the title tune, again showing her writing ability.

AGATHE IRACEMA BRAZILIAN BAND MUSIC [Deja Productions 01] is from 2013 and presents her Brazilian music side. Again an EP [22:13] this time sung all in Portugese, six tracks including two penned by her father, Rubens Santana, who plays bass in the sextet. Pleasant, rhythmic, and with improvised passion but is not jazz.

On 5/12/14 THE AGATHE JAZZ QUARTET was back in the studio to do a Direct-2-Disc [5 of the 8 tracks] LP called I GOT RHYTHM [Deja Productions 005]. The personnel here is the same as on the *Feeling Alive* CD and 3 of the tracks ["Got Lost", "Softly As In...", "Blues"] are unmastered takes from that album. Other tracks are; "I Got Rhythm", "Hum Drum Blues", "Between The Bars", "Hit The Road Jack" and "Nature Boy". Again there is good space for all members of the quartet to be heard. It would seem Agathe Iracema can do it all; writing and in possession of a compelling instrument. Readers with interest in jazz singers would be doing themselves a favor to start by seeking out *Feeling Alive*.

TONY ADAMO has issued a new cd of his poetry, THE NEW YORK CREW [Urbanzone Records 888295 230711]. Adamo talks and talk-sings his 10 stories/poems which includes tributes to Picasso, Eddie Harris, Blakey, Charles Gale, NYC, etc, in a style he calls *hipspokenword* which sums it up nicely. The stories are full of macho braggadocio and full of *cool-s*, *funk-s* and *dig-s*. The stories are good and hold up well on repeated listens but what sells the hip-spoken-words is the fine backup ranging from a duo to a septet. The groups includes Mike Clark [drm], Tim Ouimette [tpt], Donald Harrison [as], Michael Wolff [p]. Something different for you auditory receptors-*dig*?

MICHAEL OIEN [b] opens his 3/6/14 recording, AND NOW [Fresh Sound New Talent 467] on a note of serenity ["In The Early Autumn"], the first of his eight originals. Then, like a dream unfolding, he increases the energy by "Mad To Live" the third track of the set. By the forth track this listener felt both a comfort with the group and a commitment to an involvement with what's to come. Oien is not so much a bassist leader as a conceptualist. The CD ends with "All My Trials" (soon be over), a reharmonizing of a traditional folksong, and a return to serenity, and for me warm memories of my folk listening days. Joining Oien on this seemingly honest session are; Matthew Stevens [acc & el gtr], Nick Vudeen [as], Jamie Reynolds [p], Eric Doob [drm] and on "Mad To Live" add Travis Laplant [ts].

JOEY ALEXANDER [p] was 11 years old when he recorded MY FAVORITE THINGS [Motema 171] in October 2014. I mention that as I'd be remiss if I didn't acknowledge the *elephant-in-the-room*. Alexander is an exceptional pianist for any age, so good as to overcome any skepticism this writer might have had prior to listening to his music. The program here is well worn standards [Giant Steps/Lush Life/My Favorite Things/It Might As Well Be Spring/"Round Midnight/I Mean You/Tour De Force/Over The Rainbow] and if not made fresh at least freshly played. There is one original, "Ma Blues"— a funky derivative blues. Back-up is drawn from Larry Grenadier or Russ Hall-b, Ulysses Owens or Sammy Miller-drm and on one track Alphonso Horne-tpt. Alexander, can drive and take ballads with aplomb. Welcome to a crowded field of other pianists who have the talent but not the *hook*.

To say SAL MOSCA [p], was *talented* would be an understatement, yet he is not celebrated by hundreds of recordings, and often a decade passed between releases. Mosca died in 2007 and a dedicated following keeps his artistry alive with posthumously released recordings (in this regard CadenceJazz records is preparing a 5 cd set of 5 concerts) the most recent of which is the TALK OF THE TOWN [Sunnyside1317], a 2 CD set of a nearly 2 hour solo concert at Amsterdam's Bimhuis. This is a wonderful example of Mosca's ability to take standards (and the concert is all standards) re-harmonize them, pick them apart, take them for a stroll and eventually return them home. Mosca comes out of the Tristano school but is more lyrical and often shows Tatum in his technique. If you're not familiar with this man's gifts any solo release should be heard, if you are familiar with Mosca this is recommended without reserve.

BILLY LESTER [p] was a student of Sal Mosca's and over the past 30 years has only issued five records as

leader, his sixth recording is titled UNABRIDGED [Jujikaan 002]. This solo set is made up of eight originals. It could be characterized as *conversations with myself* as they are improvisations with a pronounced individuality. They twist and turn in every direction. I've listened to this recording numerous times and it's still not familiar, still fresh. Lester is a dense and very much a two handed player, the left hand often holding the rhythm while the right hand goes off in fancy flights. These tracks were recorded between 2012 and 2014 and if one goes by his release average I guess somewhere between 2018 and 2020 we can expect a new Lester adventure. I look forward to it: sooner.

CLAIRE RITTER's [p] releases always have me in anticipatory excitement as she is a unique or singular artist who's only recordings are on Zoning records. Her latest is SOHO SOLO [Zoning 1012]. As suggested by the title this is a solo outing and it is arguably the best of the many recordings she has made. Previously there was a brooding quality to much of her work. Here her work is fun and playful but still loaded with substance. There is no fat on this recording of 20 tracks [45:09] the longest of which clocks in at 3:47. They are all originals except for "I've got the world on a string" and Ran Blake's "Breakthru". There are some lovely compositions here on music that ranges from slightly ragged stride (similar to Dave Burrell's working this area) to dreamy escapades, to impressionistic excursions—all fun and joyous. Claire Ritter strongly deserves greater recognition, perhaps this will bring it.

Claire Ritter was a student of RAN BLAKE's and holds him in high esteem. Blake has been the champion of *Third Stream jazz* for decades and helped found the Third Stream department at the New England Conservatory in 1973. His recordings usually have themes and dedications with *noir* often a theme or subtext. His recordings have ranged from straight bop to the most arcane. His latest is GHOST TONES [A Side Records 0001] and is a 17 track portrait of his friend and brilliant composer/pianist/theoretician George Russell. This recording draws on many of Russell's works, or music associated with him, along with some of his (Blake's) own originals and here Blake weaves suite-like the familiar and esoteric into his portraits of Russell. This is also a stunning example of Third Stream. Some of the works are solo or duo. There is also an ensemble made up of current and former NEC students. The ensemble is present on pieces like "Living Time" which wonderfully captures the music and momentum of that Russell composition. It takes many listens to fully get the secrets and unfolding of this music. It adds to the splendor if you're familiar with Russell's recorded work. My only complaint is I wish some of this music were developed further, as the tunes average under 4 minutes. That reservation aside, this is one of Ran Blake's most intriguing releases.

AYN INSERTO composed most of, and arranged all of, the 7 tracks on HOME AWAY FROM HOME [Neu Klang records 4097]. Leading Massimo Morganti's [tbn] *Colors Jazz Orchestra*, she has produced a very fine and exciting work. With this band of 5 reeds, 4 trumpets, 4 trombones and rhythm she shows touches of George Russell, Gil Evans and most definitely Stan Kenton in her arrangements. The CD was recorded in Italy [3/19 & 21/13]. Ayn Inserto is given to juxtaposing counter rhythms before opening up an arrangement to orchestrations for the reeds or brass groupings while leaving space for one, sometimes two or three soloists. Filippo Sebastianelli has a particularly exciting tenor sax solo on "Down A Rabbit Hole" but it is the arranging for the whole band that drives and succeeds so well on this winning CD. There is a touch of *stage band* in the presentation here, perhaps because the band is so tight and on the mark. Appreciators of Kenton will find this release particularly joyful.

Home Away From Home, rather than being a fluke, appears to be a continuation and affirmation of AYN INSERTO's talent as her first recording, CLAIRVOYANCE [label less 783707 312101] shares a brilliance with the second. This Ayn Inserto Jazz Orchestra date [12/20/03] comprises a 17 piece orchestra (members drawn from the Berklee area in Boston) augmented by guests, George Garzone [ts/ss] and Bob Brookmeyer [tbn]. Inserto wrote five of the eight originals and arranged all of the tunes while Garzone contributed 3 compositions. Garzone also played his butt off soloing on 6 tracks while Brookmeyer solos on 4 tracks. The only other soloist is Kyle Aho, a very gifted pianist. But the main soloist here is the arranger, Ayn Inserto. It is her work which so fills out, gives body and joy to music. To my surprise this earlier recording is less derivative, especially of Kenton, than the later recording. The only reservation on any of her recordings is the tune "The Chooch", which has Garzone doing a forgettable vocal. This track times in at 3:55 and is listed incorrectly as 10:41. Minor quibble in light of the whole.

In between those two recordings MUSE [Creative Nation Music 015] was released. On this date [1/19/08] AYN INSERTO again uses her Jazz Orchestra, again drawn from the Berklee world and again featuring George Garzone's talents as soloist and writer of three of the eight compositions. Other soloists are Allan Chase [ss/as], Carmen Staaf [p], Will Caviness [tpt], Rick Stone [as/clt/flt], Kelly Roberge [ts/clt] and Mark Cocheo [gtr]. Again the insistence of her arranging skillfully brings fine crescendos and leaves fine releases for often potent solos. While I enjoy her writing it would be interesting to hear, from a reference point of view, what she would do with

standards.

MARIA SCHNEIDER has a new CD out: THE THOMPSON FIELDS [Artist Share 137]. Schneider conducts her 18 piece orchestra through eight of her compositions inspired by her memories of growing up in Minnesota. Pastoral, it evokes the relationship to all things prairie; the wildlife, the weather, the barrenness and both the richness and nostalgia from the experience. Folks who have only had the urban experience may interpret it differently but either way this is powerful music and stands shoulder to shoulder to the work of Eddie Sauter. Complimentary to the work is the packaging. The cd is contained in a hard cover book with 58 pages (some fold out) of poems, memories, photos, illustrations and program notes. Music combined with packaging makes this one of the finest issues in the USA this year. The following are soloists: Scott Robinson [clt/bs], Marshall Gilkes [tbn], Greg Gisbert [flg], Donny McCaslin [ts], Frank Kimbrough [p], Lage Lund [gtr], Rich Perry [ts], Steve Wilson [as], Gary Versace [acc] Ryan Keberle [tbn] and Jay Anderson [b]. Evocative stuff.

FLORIAN WITTENBURG [p] has released ALEATORIC INSPIRATION [Nurnichtnur 114 10 23], a recording of eight mostly solo pieces utilizing piano and/or electronics. I was not familiar with the word *aleatoric* and asked Wittenburg for some clarification. He explained the meaning as *basically chance/random-based operations to generate music—like for example throwing dice and mapping that to musical parameters like pitch....(as concerns this recording) this was just a source of inspiration....(But) when I didn't like a chance-generated pitch I changed it....So in this case there is some human interaction before the final input.* Well, I learned something, to my ears it sounds like minimalist piano playing mixed with occasional ambient music. One piece that was particularly effective was “Dark Piece” [9:20] an insistent and repetitious piece aptly titled. I think one must approach this music by resetting your frame of reference. Initially, I got thrown off, trying to understand *aleatoric* instead of simply approaching it as a solo piano work. The droning electronic pieces were lost on these ears but electronics were only present on 2 tracks. Overall, a challenge that had some rewards.

ANDREW DRURY's [drm] CONTENT PROVIDER [Sound and Soup Recordings 50001] is also a challenge. Challenge can, of course, be one of the objectives of art and is not meant as a pejorative characterization. Here Drury and crew; Briggan Krauss [as], Ingrid Laubrock [ts], Brandon Seabrook [gtr], set up a dense medium wall of sound leaving very little space between the lines as it were. Drury's drums often incorporate the bass space, the guitar is often a sound board and the saxes often play in tandem—which unfortunately masks Krauss—one of the original sax sounds around. Six originals make up the CD plus a very slow and dense reading of Brownie's, “Daahoud”. The final piece, “The Band Is A Drum Set”, sounds like a free improv and a bit self-indulgent, characterization one might also make of Drury's solo set THE DRUM [Sound and Soup Recordings 50002].

LIVE AT OKUDEN [ESP 5007] presents a 5/15/12 duo of MAT WALERIAN [as/clt/flt] and MATTHEW SHIPP [p] on 10 original tracks. I'm not sure where Okuden is, possibly in Japan, and in the liners William Parker is purposely vague on anything about Walerian, Polish I believe. So the only thing to do is *listen* to the music, which is Parker's intention. If this was recorded at one sitting it sounds like it may have been sequenced in the same order it was recorded (the audience is only heard at the end) as it is toward the middle of the record when this duo really comes together to make some powerful music. On the first part of the release the playing sounds tentative and at other times parallel and un-together. Walerian only plays flute near the end, a breathy sound with Shipp's punctuations at times sounding like a harpsichord. Shipp always sounds directed and brings a good sustained tension at parts, but it takes a while for Walerian to find his place in the duo. By the last track “Encore”, tension released, they have their best go. So Shipp fans should enjoy this journey and Walerian shows he can cut it with the best. Overall interesting recording with some strong moments.

A duo, of another color, can be had on PLUCKY STRUM [Whaling City Sound 072] with HARVIE S [b] and SHERYL BAILEY [acc. gtr]. The cover art shows in exaggerated comic drawing a cat playing a guitar and a dog playing a bass, that, and the album's title led me to believe this was going to be some sort of clever hokum jazz. My error of assumption, don't judge a CD by its cover. What it is— is a pleasant album of 10 originals [four by S, six by Bailey]. Not a demonstration of blistering technique, though the technique is fine, just an understated set of nice, un-compromised, acoustic jazz. Nothing to be afraid of here.

A duo of yet another color is ART OF THE DUO [Neu Klang 4117] by DAVID TAYLOR [b.tbn] and DANIEL SCHNYDER [ss/ts]. This is a delightful and energetic, but *not* jazz, release. What it is is 25 compositions; 21 of them by Snyder and 1 each by Bach, Haydn, Gershwin and Robert Stolz, spread over 60:43. The execution is precise with Snyder's soprano sax work having a particularly engaging baroque piccolo quality to it. On four of the tracks Astrig Siranossian [vln] and Chouchane Siranossian [cello] take over the duo role on four sparkling Ivesian-like

Schnyder compositions. A few words regarding Dave Taylor, Dave is a classically trained musician, not a *jazz* artist, but having produced him a few times I've found him to have a natural ability at improvisation. That doesn't apply here of course. An artist of many talents, one demonstrated on this fine release.

The duo of the LALAMA BROTHERS, DAVE [p] and RALPH [ts], open THE CREPUSCULE VARIATIONS [Lalama music 820360 181221] with an absolute joyous reading of "Just In Time" going counterpoint in lines and harmony with each other. Following that comes a lovely ballad reading from the third member of the group, Nicole Pasternak-Lalama who graces seven of the 13 tracks. Sub titled "*on songs our parents gave us*" this is a record of well-loved standards. This is a smart recording, sentimental yeah but even if you are a pure ascetic *but* still appreciate good music (is that an oxymoron?), this is for you. Their parents gave them good.

RALPH LALAMA is also leading a trio on BOPJUICE [Smalls Live 0027]. Joining him on this live trio date are Joel Forbes [b] and Clifford Barbaro [drm]. Lalama, not in tone so much as structure, show a similarity to Sonny Rollins as he essays six selections (four standards and two originals). Bass and drums also get a shine on some nicely structured solos but it is Lalama's muscular solos that things are built around. The tenor saxist is pretty direct with his statements and gets right to the point as he leans in and brings his playing to the listener and a sense of joy with it. Juicy bop indeed.

GENE ESS [gtr] has also put out an album reflecting personal truths in ETERNAL MONOMYTH [simp records 141105]. Here he marries an essence of Japanese music (he was born in Tokyo) with over riding jazz sensibilities. There is a suggestion of the Pentatonic scale in this music but overall it is a gentle, but a very real, jazz date with fine solos contributed by Ess and John Escreet [p]. Also complimenting the music is the soft and comforting vocals and wordless vocals of Thana Alexa whose singing adds another color complimenting the music. Also aboard are Thomson Kneeland [b] Clarence Penn [drm]. The program on this September 2014, date are eight Ess originals, "a discovery of my [Ess'] own personal truths". No complaints here.

CHARLES EVANS is one of a few baritone sax players who have come to prominence in this millennium, and like the others, that I am aware of, none of them sound like Gerry Mulligan or Harry Carney. His latest recording is On BEAUTY [More is More Records 152]. This is a concept session dealing with *beauty*. The nine part construction begins with "Introduction" and ends with "Ending Beauty". The quartet is bass-less which adds to the contemporary *classical* feel of the whole. Pianist Ron Stabinsky does a remarkable job in tying the different parts together. Also present is Dave Liebman [ss] and Tony Marino [b], an associate with Liebman since the early 1990s. Evans plays the whole range of the bari and there are brief interludes here when he is in the soprano sax range. Liebman's roll is often that of playing counterpoint or playing harmony to Evans' lines. Not so much a jazz record, in feel, as a modern classical piece.

BRIAN LANDRUS [bari, bass sax, b clt, b flute] is another fine baritone sax player to emerge in this millennium. His latest CD is THE DEEP BELOW [Blueland Records 2015]. This group is a trio [Lonnie Plaxico-b, Billy Hart-drm]. Landrus draws on various instruments on 11 originals and three standards [Sophisticated lady, Giant Steps, I'm A Fool Too Want You]. Landrus has some of Jeru's tones but is closer to Serge Chaloff never-the-less he is very much own man. "Giant Steps", (the "Tunisia" 4 bar break of the Coltrane era) is taken on bari, a cappella, and is a pleasant and fresh reading of the musical challenge. As is often the case my comments on some albums may be suspect when I have had professional dealings with an artist, such is the case here as I've helped produce 2 CDs with Landrus. Those recordings aside, to my ears, this is his best to date. And while I'm on the subject of fine baritone players and conflicts of interests I will simply mention that GLENN WILSON has a new release on Cadence Jazz Records, TIMELY [CJR1255]. Do I like it ? What do you think?!

RICH HALLEY [ts] has been turning out fine music from his Pacific North West base since the early 1980s. Since the late 1990s his trio has included Clyde Reed [b] and Carson Halley [drm]. On CREATING STRUCTURE [Pine Eagle Records 007] he brings along Michael Vlatkovich [tbn], with whom he has added to his trios over the years and who is one of the more interesting, if lesser known, trombonists around. Halley goes a bit left of center on this recording, of 16 originals, in that the entire session "*is entirely free improvisations*". Exactly what that means I'm not sure as while some of the material sounds free form, some parts sound like they clearly have a preconceived structure. Halley assures me it is all freely improvised and an indication of the groups ability. Halley has a squirmy style, improvising a line then digging in and exploring it further. This style is best here *sans* Vlatkovich, who when present tends to encourage the horn men to make surface jabs at sound, not getting down to deeper exploration. An honest effort but not entirely successful to my ears.

CHRISTOPHE SCHWEIZER [tbn] calls his group (*tongue-in-cheekly*) Young Rich & Famous and his record

GRAND GRACE [Between the Lines Records 71241]. In his liners, Schweizer says the music on this CD is *all about joy*. There is certainly a joy conveyed by the group [Wanja Slavin-as, Oliver Potratz-b, Christian Lillinger-drm] but it is not all lighthearted over the nine original tracks [55:07] as there is a good amount of music that also suggests yearning and searching. Wanja Slavin is a new name to me, or at least one perhaps I should have been paying more attention to. He is very impressive as he has an assured sound and mercurial attack and is a good contrast to the leaders more blunted mid-range playing. Lillinger does a wonderful job of punching out a rhythm of sorts and Potratz keeps a sense of rhythmic unity behind the players no matter how arhythmic they might get. Worth a listen.

I lost track of CHRIS VADALA [ss/as/ts/flts] after his 20 year tenure with Chuck Mangione. He rarely impressed me as he lacked the drive of Gerry Niewood, who he replaced in the Mangione bands. So I was glad to renew his acquaintance on EASTERN STANDARD TIME [Art of Life records 804640 104421], a co-led date with guitarist RICK WHITEHEAD's trio [Barry Heart-drm, John Previti-b]. What got my immediate attention was the uptempo opener, "Secret Love", on which Vadala and Whitehead roar. Things calm down and then even gets a tad generic on "Doxy" and "Gentle Rain". Things pick up again on Vadala's original "It's A 'U'", a brief uptempo tune, built off the changes of "There Will Never Be Another You". The rest of the standards on this ten track CD, are pleasant but *light* as Valada favors his soprano which lacks the gravitas of his tenor, as on "Secret Love". Rick Whitehead gets in some nice licks but clearly is in a supportive role as he was for his many years as a member of the USAF Airmen Of Note.

If you're a fan of Chicago or Blood Sweat And Tears, then THE CITY BOY ALLSTARS' recording, PERSONAL THINGS [City Boys Mike Productions 724101 256820] is sure to please. Led by MIKE MEROLA [gtr] this is essentially a 10 piece show/funk band with jazz licks and an essence of Latin. The majority of the 12 tracks feature vocals [Bill Kurz, Angel Rissoff, Horace Scott] all subservient to the *groove* and fitting well into the funky and solidly hip arrangements [Horace Scott II, Bill Kurz, Angel Rissoff]. With the exception of "Birdland" all the material is written from within the (above referenced) band and Al MacDonald [b], who wrote 4 of the tracks. A commercial recording with hooks that should play well on radio as well as in your (casual) listening room.

JACQUES LESURE [gtr] has issued a casual listen on a very nicely packaged gate fold CDR called CAMARADERIE [W3 records 3016]. Casual listening but with some bite—courtesy of Warren Wolf's vibes. Lesure is informed by Wes and presents a breezy program of nine tracks. The offering includes compositions by Milt Jackson, Donald Brown, James Leary and Bobby Hebb. Filling out the quintet are Eric Reed [p], Nat Reeves [b] and Willie Jones III [drm].

Pastoral with overtones of formal ragtime, ala Eubie Blake or William Bolcom, is how I describe SETH FARBER's [p], BY MYSELF ALONE [Red Wall Records 2930]. 11 originals majestically displayed by the pianist. Music for the melancholy or those who wish to reflect.

Even more relaxed is SWING ZING! [FV 15] led by duo guitarists FRANK VIGNOLA and VINNY RANIOLO. Thirteen well familiar tunes make up this CD with a mid century pallor. Guitarist Olli Soikkeli is very impressive—who is he? Audra Mariel [voc], along with guitarists Gary Mazzaroppi, Bucky Pizzarelli, Julian Lage, and Gene Bertoncini all make appearances on five of the tracks. An impressive guitaring retro look.

A 12tet calling themselves the GHOST TRAIN ORCHESTRA, led by BRIAN CARPENTER [tpt], has a new recording HOT TOWN [Accurate 5070]. The 12 period pieces [circa 1920-1930] are done in the period style and brilliantly bring the magic in the music to life. This is not some *tongue-in-cheek* campy effort by modernists, this is the real thing and not a sound or solo sounds out of the vernacular. It is only the clear audio that might suggest it is a 2014 recording. This edition of the band includes among others Andy Laster [as/bs], Curtis Hasselbring [tbn], Cynthia Sayer [bjo] and Dennis Lichtman [clt]. A moldy delight.

TIFFANY AUSTIN [voc] brings a distinctive retro sound to her CD, NOTHING BUT SOUL [Con Alma 001]. A great amount of credit must go to the arrangements which, when credited, are either by Austin or Howard Wiley [producer/ts/voc assist]. The tunes are quite original and evoke stride, bounce and jump, styles of earlier eras. The nine tracks includes six by Hoagy Carmichael [*Stardust/Baltimore Oriole/I Get Along Without You Very Well/Skylark/Georgia/Sing Me A Swing Song*] and three others [*I May Be Wrong/I Walk The Line/Tête-A-Tête*], all addressed in a fresh and original manner. Glen Pearson [p], Ron Belcher [b] and Sly Randolph [drm] complete the quintet. Tiffany Austin has a style that is in no great debt to anyone. She graduated from law school and I can only say *just what the world needs now.....a good singer.*

Another singer who reminds me of an earlier era is BRIANNA THOMAS who's album, YOU MUST BELIEVE IN

SPRING [Purpose Records 888295 056396] shows such style and assuredness that it is hard to believe this is her debut recording. She mixes four originals with seven standards and has fine backing from Yasushi Nakamura [b] and Ulysses Owens [drm] and guest spots for Russell Malone [gtr], Marcus Printup [tpt], Wycliffe Gordon [tbn] Nick Grinder [tbn], Tivon Penticott [ts] and Riza Printup [harp]. With shades of Sarah, Carmen and Dianne Reeves, but definitely her own self, this will be a nice discovery of vocal jazz fans tired of good, but faceless, *chirpers*. Thomas does most of the arrangements, which like her originals are notable.

KEVIN BACHELDER [voc], yes it is spelled that way, is a singer of another color on CHERRY AVENUE [Panout records 417215], backed by JASON LEE BRUNS' [drm] sparkling big little septet. Bachelder has a soft tenor voice and covers eight standards and one terrific original, "It Didn't Work Out That Way", on which he proves his *bona fides* as a soulful singer. The back-up is nicely arranged, with some notable drumming and arranging from producer Bruns. The only other non-original is, the notable, title tune, by Ron Blake [tpt/flg]. Briefly, this CD is a terrific sleeper and one I'm glad to encounter. A singer with a great range of emotion, carefully backed by Bruns' group.

Cherry Avenue was recorded 2/26/15 and I was excited to find a prior [4/29/12] recording with Kevin Bachelder and JASON LEE BRUNS. Recorded LIVE AT CATALINA JAZZ CLUB [Panout 1003212], here the septet [the JLB Jazz Collective] remains largely the same as on *Cherry Avenue*. The nine tracks on this CD are mainly standards starting out smartly with a funky "Cissy Strut". The tracks with Bachelder [Autumn Leaves, It Could Happen To You, Send In The Clowns] offers a chance to hear him live. Here he is noticeably the *soft* voice in a *hard* band but he is able, not from the beginning of a song, but soon, to build his power and forcefully take the spotlight. In short, he is an exciting singer. Again the band and arrangements are tight and fresh, hitting hard and on the mark with openings for potent solo work for the likes of Kim Richmond [ss/as] and Angelo Metz [gtr] in particular. For folks who think "Impressions" has little more to offer, there is a nice fresh outing on it here. A fine band with a fine singer and worthy of national attention.

Panout Records has also issued 3 Eps: JLB JAZZ COLLECTIVE WITH JASON GAMER [tpt] [#884502002450] which is a three tune set [2009] of pleasant jazz with one track of pre-prime Kevin Bachelder. JASON LEE BRUNS, THE EGREM SESSION [884502002591], is a field recording [1 track] from 2008 with Cuban players. And finally, THE JASON LEE BRUNS JAZZ COLLECTIVE [609132740312] comprises two fine tracks [2011] of Bruns originals including "Waltz For Desmond" featuring the alto of Zane Musa.

Fusion has now been with us for decades and almost from the beginning JOHN TROPEA [gtr] has been mining its well as leader or first call sideman. His latest is GOTCHA RHYTHM RIGHT HERE [STP Records1011]. Backed, in various combinations, by over 2 dozen *studio* players [Chris Palmaro, Steve Gadd, Lou Marini, Randy Brecker, Lew Soloff, Will Lee, Bob Malach, Scott Robinson, etc] Tropea goes through the timeless, easy listening routines of fusion, the difference being Tropea's, Wes inspired, soloing. 13, mostly Tropea, originals marred by too many fade-outs which make me think no one much cared where the tape loop was cut or someone didn't want listeners to know what happened or the musicians didn't know how to end the piece. Fusion fun-k.

Fusion fans might check out GLEN ACKERMAN's [b]; GLENIUS ALIEN LANDSCAPE [Blue Bamboo Music 027]. The bassist composed all of the 12 cuts and produced the album. All the familiar fusion touches are here; electric bass, keyboard, wha-wha guitar and a sax that rides happily over the usual four-four beat. At its most fusion-y it is never insipid and the groups often fall into making thoughtful music with some gravitas to it. Ackerman even indulges in some rather silly free-space-jazz. The music draws from a small handful of musicians. Those worth mentioning are; Woody Witt [reeds], Paul Chester [gtr] and Jeff Sipe [drm], not all the credits for players on tunes is accurate. A recording that offers far more than it suggests. High-brow fusion?

There is a sense of fusion in SAM TRAPCHAK's [b] recording LAND GRAB [Raw Toast Records 888295 269506]. That *sense* is brought about by Tom Chang's very electric guitar work, often in the higher registers ending in a slight whine, combined at times with Greg Ward's alto and Christian Coleman's slashing cum rockfish drumming which gives that *sense*. The six Trapchak originals run from moody to high energy and it is for that and the musical intelligence of putting this quartet together that he must get credit. A very listenable group/set.

Guitarist Craig Ebner steals the show at times from organist PAT BIANCHI on A HIGHER STANDARD [21-H 001 Records]. Bianchi plays the b-3 sounding like no other jazz organist that I'm aware of today, nor does he sound much like past players though at times I detected a sound that brought to mind Larry Young. More conservative than Young he handles a program of ten, mostly jazz standards, seemingly without hesitation. The third member the trio is Byron Landham, who has often been paired with Ebner. Organ fans should be pleased with this jazz date.

Fusion, in part, but with a greater bite and compositional range comes from MARK McGRAIN [tbn/alphorn],

and his group PLUNGE, on IN FOR THE OUT [Immersion Records 15-01]. The leader states this is “a 15 song cycle based on various stages of human entropy and beyond”. Perhaps so, but I prefer to just hear this as an unraveling of music [69:02] made by an involved septet of organ, drums, reeds and bass who make all sorts of noise and blends and create a tapestry out of 15 parts that are engaging and offer a delightful listen. The emphasis is as much, perhaps more, based on composition than it is on soloing. This is not a blowing session, though there is blowing, it is a conceptual recording. This is the leader’s (who has done other Plunge recordings over the past 20 years) first use of an expanded group and he writes for it beautifully. The septet often sounds like a larger group. His fusion of sounds and sequencing works very well. My suggestion is if you are downloading this to go for the whole not individual tracks. In other words, go all in for “in for the out”.

WHITE [Baixim 529] by INEKE VANDOORN [voc/keys] and MARC VAN VUGT [gtr] is not a jazz record but uses jazz elements. The ten tracks here are all originals, except for Silver’s “Peace” and Holland’s “Equality”, and feature, among others, Andy Sheppard [ts/ss], Sylvain Beuf [ts/ss/flt], Michael Vatcher [drm] on music that ranges from a Swingle Singers quality to more theatrical works. It all works very well, the music is melodic, Ms Vandoorn has a welcoming voice with clear enunciation which is especially important as the lyric content is original and thoughtful as she sing about life qualities. Dave Holland’s “Equality” with lyrics by Maya Angelou and Horace Silver’s “Peace” fit well into the thematic program. Particularly notable is the opening track, “Wallpaper”, which has the lyrical and lyric quality to be accepted as a jazz or cabaret standard. It took me a few moments to turn off my mind and retune it to this recording but the effort was worth it. This is beautiful and meaningful work.

That creative improvised music reflects a society is starkly reflected by the TRAYVON MARTIN SUITE [Jodamusic 003] by BILL COLE and JOSEPH DALEY recorded live [3/29/12]. There are a variety of instruments played here [didgeridoo, balaphone, wooden flutes, ocarina, sona, nagaswarm, synthesizer, euphonium and sousaphone] and I’m not sure in some cases who to credit with playing what. One thing for sure is it is *not* a trombone and tuba recording. Some of the material can get quite shrill as with the flutes and ocarina duets, at other times *native* as with the balaphone and didgeridoo. The nagaswarm adds a mournful ambience, as does the sona. It’s a moment in time and to borrow a line *attention must be paid* to police violence.

STEVE SLAGLE [as/flt] and BILL O’CONNELL [p] are also duo on THE POWER OF TWO [Panorama Records 005]. This is a rather bright and cheerful session. These two have worked together in other formats and the freshness of this session suggests that many of the 11 tracks here are first takes, though the liners don’t suggest such. What is suggested by the music is that these two enjoyed the date as they both seem to jump in with both feet. Slagle wrote five of the eleven tracks and the sessions impetus seems to have been inspired by the tune “KD Jr.” which he wrote on the occasion of Kenny Drew Jr’s death. Even so there is no dominate voice here—there are two evenly contributing voices and when one lets off the other picks the music up. Non-original compositions are “Peri’s Scope”(Bill Evans), “I’ll Wait And Pray” (Valentine/Treadwell) , “The Duke” (Dave Brubeck) and “Circle” (Miles Davis).

ANSGAR STRIEPENS leads the WDR big band of Köln on UNSUNG HEROES [Jazz Haus Musik 233] dedicated to architectural draftsman Helmut Jacoby (3 pieces) and German Coal Mining songs (7 pieces). The pieces for Jacoby [25:50] were recorded live [2/1/13] and have masterful writing sparked by fine hard hitting solos. The coal mining songs recorded live [5/1/10], make effective use of harmonica [Berthold Matschat] and again the big band writing is effective. An understanding of German would be handy as there are vocal parts [Insa Rudolph and Theo Bleckmann], much of which is unobtrusive to jazz enjoyment and includes a lovely “Die Gedanken Sind Frei”, a traditional folksong. I enjoyed most, but not all, of this. If I were downloading it, I might skip a couple of tracks.

Another state sponsored big band, NDR Big Band, lends their backing to DALE WILSON’s, TALL TALES OF JASPER COUNTY [Inarhyme Records 1008]. Wilson wrote, arranged and conducts this 18 piece band through the six part Jasper County Suite. There is a nice subtlety to the work which are memories, in music, of his grandparents house in rural Missouri. Knowing the premise of the suite adds to the enjoyment of the music as one can put their own imagined childhood adventures to the musical impressions of the suite. Dedicated urbanites, unfamiliar with rural life or the writings of Mark Twain, can still enjoy the suite as imagined urban mis-adventures. Woven into the writing are solo spots for Fiete Felsch [piccalo,as,flt], Lutz Buechner [ts, cln] Ingolf Buckhardt [tpt] and Dan Gottshall [tbn]. A smooth piece of musical impressionism.

The Czech National Symphony Orchestra, conducted and arranged by Vince Mendoza, does a marvelous job for RANDY BECKER, BOBBY SHEW and JAN HASENÖHRL on TRUMPET SUMMIT PRAGUE [Summit Records 658] recorded live on December 11, 2012. Besides being one of the trumpet soloists Hasenöhr is also the founder of

the CNSO. Listening to this program [Lost In The Stars, Caravan 1&2, Three And One, plus 2 Brecker originals] I am reminded of Chuck Mangione's 1971 recordings with the Rochester Symphony Orchestra, and if you liked that then this is for you. The backing here is not a *band* it's an orchestra and it sweetens and supports the trumpeters (there is one uncredited tenor sax solo). The results of the meeting is both beautiful and powerful. Special note is the joyous playing on Thad Jones' "3 and 1" and its use of Baroque trumpet filigree on the early part and end of the tune. Besides the uncredited tenor there is also a drummer only credited in announcement at the end, it sounds like Mendoza is saying Martin Bink (?), whatever his name is he plays a major part.

If straight ahead or hard bop, ala Art Blakey's Messengers, is your cup of tea then ADAM SHULMAN's [p] HERE/THERE [OAZ Records 22118] should fill your bill. Shulman presents a very strong front line [Mike Olmos-tpt, Patrick Wolff-as, Rob Roth-ts] and, with John Wiitala [b] and Smith Dobson [drm] filling out the rhythm, this sextet ties things down smartly. Shulman wrote all but two of the eight cuts and the whole is sequenced alternately between uptempo and tight ballads with those familiar hard bop harmonies present. There is nothing to my ears that is not derivative but the talent at writing and playing is obvious. And for that Shulman can take credit for this qualified success.

Bop, in the manner of BlueNote, can be found in BRYAN BOWMAN's [drm] recording, LIKE MINDS [Bryan Bowman Music 888295 261838]. The quintet [Ian Carey-tpt, Bob Kenmotsu-ts, Matt Clark-p, Doug Miller-b] shows plenty of individual ability on the 11 Bowman originals, but this recording suffers the same malady that afflicts a large percentage of new releases; *generic-ness*. What's missing is individual personality of sound to separate it from so many bop sessions. Professional, together, talented but generic.

STEVE DAVIS [tmb] is very adamant in his admiration for Jay Jay Johnson and it's readily apparent in his playing on SAY WHEN [Smoke Sessions1505]. He is joined by Eddie Henderson [tpt], Eric Alexander [ts], Harold Mabern [p], Nat Reeves [b], and Joe Farnsworth [drm]. Davis presents a program that is rich with J.J.'s music [6 of the 11 tracks]. Derivative though his sound may be it sure is nice to hear and reflect. Fortunately there is more to this date than nostalgia. Henderson is in good voice, I have often found him a more interesting player as sideman as opposed to the leader. Harold Mabern takes some nice turns, as expected, and the rest of the rhythm is right on top of things adding to the joyous feel of the date. Smoke seems to have taken their sessions into the studio now but when the label began, the recordings were live. They quickly have established themselves as a premium jazz label.

A trombonist of *another color* is RAY ANDERSON [tmb] a point confirmed on BEING THE POINT [Intuition Records 71313]. The seven compositions (by Anderson I assume) here range from a calypso, to an almost funereal dirge to playful ditties to free form extemporizing to a funky march. The title tune ends with a reading of the first part of prose printed in the notes. It is a piece of existential writing and *it is what it is* and perhaps that is the point. Overall a light program that goes down easily, besides Anderson the quartet is Gary Versace-org, Steve Salerno-gtr and Tommy Campbell-drm. Since the mid 70s Ray Anderson has proven to be one of the most inventive creative improvising musicians. Still on the scene and now in his sixties his instincts seem as inventive as ever.

On initial view FRANK LACY's [voc] MINGUS SINGS [Sunnyside1407], backed by The Mingus Big Band, had a primary draw. After the first listen I was turned off by what seemed a good idea but poorly executed. On further reflection and repeated listens I felt it captured a certain imprecise fluidity that many of the Mingus Workshops often exhibited. Here, Sy Johnson's arrangements capture the Mingus voicings. The problem is the recording is centered on Frank Lacy's voice, which is an acquired taste. The 15 piece band backing Lacy often overshadows his (already) not always clear vocals. A lyric printout would have helped understanding. Lyrics for the 13 Mingus compositions (2 recorded for the first time) are by Mingus, Doug Hammond, Joni Mitchell, Elvis Costello and Sue Mingus, Soloists are David Kikoski, Coleman Hughes, Craig Handy, Jack Walrath, Wayne Escoffery, Ronnie Cuber; Alex Norris, Alex Foster, Helen Sung and Mike Richmond]. Tiring if interesting.

Also from Sunnyside [4019] comes LASZLO GARDONY [p] in a concert recording from 9/29/14 called, LIFE IN REAL TIME. Joining Gardony's trio [John Lockwood-b, Yoron Isreal-drm] are Bill Pierce [ts], Don Braden [ts] and Stan Strickland [ts, b clt]. Gardony penned six of the eight tracks here. The two standards— "Lullaby Of Birdland" and "Motherless Child" get fresh treatment at the leaders hands. The horns make good use of the ample solo room provided and offer meaty blends, harmonies and solos. Sunnyside has helpfully provided solo order/identification, on the CD sleeve. Gardony's compositional abilities are given good display all around but especially on the opener, "Bourbon Street Boogie", a somewhat Professor Longhair-inflected *inspired* composition. 77 minutes of fine playing that passes quickly. One of the finest bop recordings I've heard this year and it is good to hear Billy Pierce

back in recorded action.

REISSUES/HISTORICAL

New from Mosaic comes the massive COMPLETE COMMODORE & DECCA EDDIE CONDON & BUD FREEMAN SESSIONS [Mosaic md8-259]. This is an 8-CD set and 44-page book of program notes. This is basically recordings of the *Condon Mob* from 1938 to September 1950. No matter whose name a session was released under, with or without Condon aboard, it was out of or part of the *Condon Mob*. Such was the catalytic influence of Eddie Condon on a genre of jazz known as Chicago, Dixieland or, yes, White Jazz. All those characterizations are misnomers and yet with some accuracy. There was jazz in Chicago prior to Condon, there was the Austin High School Gang (many of whom Condon played with) who were very influenced by the New Orleans players who had migrated north to Chicago in the 1920s. Dixieland, and its excesses, grew *out of a* New Orleans cum Chicago brand of jazz championed by Condon. It was legitimately a jazz genre in rhythm music, neither New Orleans nor Mainstream, which post dated Chicago. White—because its distinctive voice was more often than not played by Whites and was more easily found in their parlors. It must also be said in its time Condon was not racist and as time went on many fine Black players found a welcome in various *Mob* aggregations. So where does Bud Freeman fit into this picture? Freeman was of the Austin High School Gang recordings as early as 1927 in groups with Condon and more readily as a member of the *Mob* from the early 1930s on. A highly influential tenor sax man, who had pretensions to the British gentry, he also managed to maintain his own status as a jazzman and, in my opinion, was one of the most under acknowledged tenor giants in jazz history. Freeman brought a sophisticated smoothness to the tenor. This set has many gifts but not least of which are the Freeman led sides which have gotten relatively little reissue. For Freeman's voice alone, and there is plenty of, it might be reason enough to own this set. There are other reasons to get this set, one top reason being Pee Wee Russell, one of jazz' greatest voices, who is featured heavily in the earlier sessions and it is notable when he is absent. Also notable are the piano voices of Jess Stacy and Joe Sullivan. Three trumpeters of note, Max Kaminsky, Bobby Hackett and Wild Bill Davison, made their way through various aggregations during these years. And don't overlook the folks who dropped by on some of these sessions i.e. Jack Teagarden, Muggsy Spanier, Fats Waller, Teddy Grace, Lee Wiley, Bing Crosby and James P. Johnson, to name a few. Tying this up nicely are Dan Morgenstern's background notes to the connections and evolution of the Condon sphere and of Bud Freeman's career. Morgenstern's background on Condon and Freeman and some of the *mob* is more than perfunctory, and must have involved much research, add to this his extensive commentary on every session and you have what amounts to a book length effort and is invaluable to the music herein. And if this were not enough, producer Scott Wenzel came across some discs of outtake chatter between Milt Gabler (the originator of Commodore Records) and musicians, some of it transcribed in the book of program notes. As usual Mosaic is meticulous in research and production and deserves a big *thank you* !

In 1977 Chuck Nessa produced an album by IRA SULLIVAN [tpt/flg/ss/flt] which was released by Flying Fish as an LP and now has been reissued on Nessa as CIRCUMSTANTIAL [#35]. As is often the case with recordings by Sullivan this is an uneven affair. He is strongest on trumpet and flugelhorn and breathes new life into "Ipanema" with a fiery and bubbly effort to open the program. There is one previously unissued track here added to the original program of six. Filling out the quintet is Simon Salz [notable on guitar], Jodie Christian [p/el p], Dan Shapera [b] and Wilbur Campbell [drm].

Nessa has also reissued GENERATION [#25] with HAL RUSSELL's [ts/cnt/ shenai/vibes perc] NRG Ensemble [Chuck Burdelik-as/ts/clt, Brian Sandstrom-b/gtr/tpt,Curt Bley-b,Steve Hunt-drm/vbs] plus CHARLES TYLER [bari s/as/clt]. This is a valuable reissue (plus 2 previously unissued audition tracks) and it's my hope that it will spur new interest in Russell, the NRG (get it?) and Charles Tyler all of whom were too little documented but potent beings on the improvising scene. Tyler and Russell both died in 1992. Russell was a small, wiry man who exuded enthusiasm and energy and along with his ensembles he played big wiry music which exuded enthusiasm and energy. He seemed to attract youngsters ripe to play free and expressive. This was free jazz, but not unstructured, using sound patterns. On this recording [1/10/81, 9/9/82], is some guitar overdubbing— on one track— added 7 years later. Tyler and Russell spent years trolling the jazz world's backwaters, appreciated by the handful of passionate cognoscenti before starting to get greater attention from Europe, just prior to their deaths. NRG music indeed.

Fans, or completeists, of Jimi Hendrix should note CURTIS KNIGHT and the Squires' YOU CAN'T USE MY NAME [Legacy 8887507792]. The title comes from a recorded exchange between Knight and producer Ed Chalpin

with Hendrix about not putting his (Hendrix') name on the original releases. The 14 cuts here are the RSVP/PPX sessions [1965/66] and the accompanying 24-page booklet puts it all in perspective. A well done artifact that includes previously unissued material.

Guitar fans can hear a reissue of JOHN D. THOMAS' 11/86 Nabel recording SERIOUS BUSINESS [ESP 5006]. Some fancy guitar work here by the leader, on this short [38:01] reissue. Set in fusion which I feel takes away from the *serious business* of Thomas' talents. Average fusion sparked by some above average guitar work.

PLAS JOHNSON [ts] came to prominence at the nexus of boogie woogie and rock 'n roll when *race music* began to attract the white population resulting in *rhythm and blues*. This music was exemplified by a boogie line overlaid usually with backbeat and sax. In the 1940s and early 50s numerous small rhythm groups were recorded on numerous small (usually L.A. based) labels. Tampa Records grew to be more formidable than most of the small labels, making it into the LP era. Eventually that label and others were bought by VSOP records who originally reissued material on LP and continues reissuing material on CD. BOP ME DADDY [VSOP 2154] is reissued under Plas Johnson's name and the liners cite original material was from Tampa # 18 and 24 dating 1955, 56 and 57. (On the other hand the tray card states Tampa 21 and 54 with the dates being 1956 and 57 only. Alas I didn't have time to cross reference this before we went to press.) If you want a taste of big R'N'B honking tenor, or if that's your preference, try this. Included in the sounds are Ray Johnson's boogied piano and a number of frenzied drum solos. Bop [not quite] me daddy indeed.

SWEET SEPTEMBER [VSOP 52] is a reissue of the PETE JOLLY trio's [Chuck Bergholfer-b, Larry Bunker-drm, Howard Roberts-g, Nick Martinis-drms] recording for Ava Records [#39] of 11/15/63. This is bright and heavily swinging sides by a well familiar trio playing 10 standards [43:51], including "Oleo". Jolly sets up the tunes nicely often with dramatic block chords and then offers a release that flows in a hip un-cliched manner. Easy listening but heady as well. Roberts and Martinis are added/substituted on two tracks.

GULF COAST JAZZ [VSOP 125], is an important historical issue as it's the AMERICAN JAZZ QUINTET [Ellis Marsalis-p, Harold Battiste-ts, Alvin Batiste-clt, Ed Blackwell-dms, Richard Payne or William Swanson-b] From 2/19/59—or so it's listed. This is volume one of a planned 2 volume issue. Other than it is issued as a CDR this is a gem, a must for folks who want to hear some wonderful playing from Marsalis, Battiste, Batiste and Blackwell early in their careers. Liner notes do a good job of covering the music and circumstances of the music (originally recorded for Bump Blackwell's Famous Records) except it doesn't shed light on why 2 different bass players in a single date? Important music, good music, originals (most by Batiste) and contemporary over a half century later.

Also in the category of historical material is the DAVID ANGEL [as] big band: CAMSHAFTS AND BUTTERFLIES [VSOP 127]. I was not aware of David Angel in any form but I am now impressed with his writing and arranging as exhibited by this 2/75 and 9/73 recording. Scott Yanow's engaging 8 pages of notes will give some background and insight to the man and his music. Angel is apparently laid back and unconcerned with the hustle of promoting his music, which may give reason to his still being alive today, at 74. These were rehearsal recordings, Angel's preferred method of work, even so the material is finished. The music overall has a movie soundtrack feel with occasional modern dissonance thrown in. On Ellington and Strayhorn's "For B and D" (built on the changes of "A Train") the band is straight ahead swinging. This is also the first I have ever heard of that tune. Much of the success of this recoding is due to the excellence of the soloists which includes; Bob Cooper, Jackie Kelso, Bill Perkins, Bob Enevoldsen, Monty Budwig, Hal Espinoza, Chuck Flores, Jack Coan and Angel himself, among others. Very impressive on many levels and I am sure we now will hear more of David Angel. I hope so.

MIKE OSBOURNE's [as] DAWN [Cuneiform/Rune 392] is an historical issue of profound importance as it not only issues the first known recordings [6/9/66] by Osbourne but some of the earliest recordings of Harry Miller [b], Alan Jackson [drm] and John Surman [ss/bs]. These were some of the most important artist in forming a branch of British new music. I first became aware of Osborne in the mid '70s on a series of recordings he made for Harry Miller's Ogun records. It was one of the labels that made me aware that I had been asleep as concerned European improvised music developments. Osborne had a high biting attack, sort of Jackie McLean on speed. Wound up he never seemed to wind down, this is true particularly on the six tracks from August and December 1970, with Miller and Louis Moholo [drm]. On the four cuts from 1966 (three previously unissued) Osborne, when joined by Miller, Jackson and Surman, takes a more measured approach and gives a greater nod to Ornette Coleman. This music can be exhausting with its abundance of energy and ideas. This is a major find. Audrey Henkin's liner notes/tribute and numerous photos in the accompanying 12 page booklet puts a fine bow on this package.

LAST EXIT was a *high energy* cooperative quartet of SONNY SHARROCK [gtr], BILL LASWELL [b], PETER

BRÖTZMANN [sax] and RONALD SHANNON JACKSON [drm] who made a number of live recordings, mostly on the Enemy label, in the mid 1980s. Their last recording was a studio date from 1988, a relatively sober affair judged against some of their other efforts. This could be possibly due to the stability and confines of the studio. That recording, originally reissued on the short lived Venture label, is now reissued, again as IRON PATH, now on ESP RECORDS [4075]. Somewhat at the nexus of free jazz and iron rock it presages some of that styling that became more accepted by the turn of the century. 10 tracks as one spread over almost 37:00.

BILLIE HOLIDAY, to those who know her artistry, is magic and.....tragic. THE CENTENNIAL COLLECTION [Columbia/Legacy 888750 487629] brings together, arguably 20 of her best from 1935 to 1945 with various backing from what today would be considered all-star bands that included among others; Teddy Wilson, Benny Goodman, Ben Webster Johnny Hodges, Harry Carney, Artie Shaw, Bunny Berigan, Buck Clayton, Lester Young, Roy Eldridge and the list goes on. It's a beautiful collection and if you don't already have this material on other issues, or if you are not that familiar with the genius of Lady Day then get this disc. She conveys so much feeling in her delivery it's beyond words, past the cliches already written about her artistry. This is not some sort of *slap-dash* collection it's done with care and thought. Beautiful!

Avid has reissued The Bill Broonzy Story on BIG BILL BROONZY: CLASSIC BOX SET [1159]. This comes from an LP boxed set recorded in the spring of 1958 a day before Big Bill was operated on for lung cancer. Broonzy died 8/15/58. This is an outstanding 2CD set of music and oral history on his life and the blues. Broonzy was an important country folk/blues artist in many ways as influential as Blind Lemon Jefferson was on the development of early blues. Born in 1893, the 7th child of 21, Broonzy labored on plantations, served in the first World War and eventually went up to Chicago. Starting in 1926 he was heavily recorded often with blues and jazz artists. There is no sign of health problems here as he is in fine voice on the 35 tunes and accompanying oral history, often in response to Bill Randle's questions. Broonzy had an individual, self taught, identifiable style and it is evident on the more than two and a half hours of recording here, generous in his crediting of his associates and quick to respond to questions. This is one of the most important oral history recordings. This is seminal to anyone's collection of blues or jazz. Magnificent.

Also from Avid are two 2CD sets: YUSEF LATEEF; FOUR CLASSIC ALBUMS [1147] and YUSEF LATEEF; FOUR CLASSIC ALBUMS PLUS [1156]. The material on these not so classic albums comes from the following dates:[#1156] 4/9/57, 4/16/57, 6/11/59, 10/10/59, 4/5/57 [one track],[#1147] 10/11/57, 5/9/60, 4/9/58, 10/4&6/60. The music is reissued material from the catalogues of Savoy, Verve, Prestige, Riverside and Argo, a fair amount of it is not available on other CD reissues. Lateef, who died in 2013 at 93, had a music career that spanned over 70 years and included jazz (a name he did not like) and classical music. In addition he was a writer and graphic artist. His main *ax* was tenor sax but he was also accomplished on oboe and flute. These recordings include his first led sessions and while they are over shadowed by his later work they will give you a good look at his work on his variety of instruments. As a sax man his approach was fairly laid back, more introverted than extroverted. Of particular interest is the accomplished playing, on baritone sax, of Frank Morelli on the 4/9/58 date. Morrelli, from Detroit where this live recording was done, was I believe born in 1932 which would have made him 26 at the time of this recording. This, I believe, was his only recording, what became of him I know not. Any Detroit historians who can fill in some facts please contact me at rdr@cadencebuilding.com.

VIDEO

MUDDY WATERS [and friends] is the feature on SOUNDSTAGE: *Blues Summit in Chicago* [July], 1974 [Legacy [88875061719], a semi-informal TV gathering to honor Muddy Waters. Friends include Luther "Snake Boy" Johnson, Jerry Portnoy, Willie "Big Eyes" Smith, Calvin Jones, Pine Top Perkins, Junior Wells, Willie Smith, Mike Bloomfield, Nick Gravenites, Dr. John, Rollo Radford, Johnny Winter, Phil Guy, Koko Taylor. Buddy Miles and Willie Dixon. The sound is not great but the feeling comes across and it is fun seeing these, now mostly dead, bluesman again. This was the first broadcast of the PBS Soundstage series and one assumes there are many other videos of broadcasts from the programs and I'll also assume that they have improved audio. Tunes include: Long Distance Call, Mannish Boy, Wang Dang Doodle, Hootchie Kootchie Man, Got My Mojo Workin' and 5 others. There are worse ways to spend an hour. Fun.

BOOKS

Abrams Books has published TROMBONE SHORTY [40 10"X10" pages, full color \$17.95] by TROY "Trombone Shorty" ANDREWS, illustrated by BRYAN COLLIER. I was neither taken with the puffed up autobiographical tale or the illustrations (Jacob Lawerance-ish) which I found rather cold and lacking charm. I mention the book here because there is an age when children fall in love with children's books and if this may be one of them—it will give them some positive exposure to New Orleans rhythm music. This work is not the only one of its focus but it is the latest. Kids could have worse exposure.

Robert Rusch

BOOK REVIEW:

Images of America... New Orleans Jazz

By Edward J. Branley

Karl Stober

Renowned New Orleans jazz native Wynton Marsalis once stated, *"Jazz is not just 'Well, man, this is what I feel like playing.' It's a very structured thing that comes down from a tradition and requires a lot of thought and study."* Tradition the basis of truth however, for with every tradition, an origin is attached. Through the lens of history, jazz is seen in many different lights as well as birthplaces. More so than ever the one area where jazz is most associated with is the Big Easy... New Orleans to be exact! That is where author Edward J. Branley takes you, in this informative yet more so pictorial guide through the portals and alleys of New Orleans jazz history, from Jass to Jazz!

From living many of my days in this eclectic city, around every corner in New Orleans from Decatur Street to the infamous Bourbon Street, one finds the scent of jazz in the air. The city has grown since the days of Charles "Buddy" Bolden and Antonio Junius "Tony" Jackson but the pitch and fever of jazz is still strong. This is where the book ***Images of America New Orleans Jazz*** takes not only the novice of the groove but the seasoned trouper as well. The book has something for everyone with informative captions and some outstanding photographs arranged into an historical format.

The only drawback to the manuscript is I wish there was more verbiage throughout. The photos take you there but why do they take you there, is lacking in some photos.

Branley is very specific on his detail concerning names, dates, and times, backing up each caption with where he got the records. He shows his strict research labors in this guide through New Orleans jazz. As a matter of fact, he (Branley) will many times take you out of the New Orleans streets to examine a musician's journey whether it be Kansas City or New York. Case in point, in one caption he writes about NOLA native Louis Prima and his start in the city then to New York and Los Angeles where he opened in the Famous Door club, the rest is history. This is a major plus through the excursion of the pages.

Storyville, Lincoln Park along with other areas are documented numerous times through the script. In one picture Branley shows that Bourbon Street was a residential section of town as Storyville was the hot spot up to the 20th Century. A few places like the Absinthe House resided there and still does today.

Published by Arcadia Publishing, Branley's expedition through the history, street, and jazz greats of their time, educates and stimulates the fans and natives of the city both. It contains within its pages the trials and tribulations of the NOLA musician as some had even gone door to door for much needed tips. The book approaches the city and its iconic lairs and pulsating streets of the times. The city has changed and so has jazz but in the end, the foundation of jazz will always have its compass pointed towards Canal Street and the historical streets and alleyways of New Orleans and jazz!

Images of America New Orleans Jazz is a fine sit for those who look to engage themselves in this land of aspirations and at the same time a must shelf for those who have an empty space in their jazz library.

DVD REVIEW:

ARTIST: **Andreas Schaerer**

TITLE: **Hildegard Lernt Fliegen**

LABEL: **Enja DVD 7750**

TUNES: Suite For Murderers and Drinkers/ Brabblers/ Knock Code 3/ Seldom Was Covered With Snow and an Old Oak/ Don Clemenza/ Rimze Khala Rimze/ Rezitan Purije Purije/ Encore Mockbae 1:07:44

PERSONNEL: Andreas Shaerer, vcl, composer; Mathias Wenger, as ss; Benedikt Reising, as, bari s, bass cl; Andreas Tschopp tbn, tba; Marco Muller, bass; Christoph Steiner, d, marimba, typewriter Gottingen, October 9, 2013

Hildegard really flies!

I am somewhat familiar with Shaerer as having reviewed one of his CDs recently. On that CD he used mostly vocalese techniques which I love. Here he does some of that here but also sings straight in what I hear as in three languages: German, French and English. The opening suite, which goes on for some fifteen minutes, and in which he uses all three languages, reminds me a bit of Kurt Weill with its theatrical aspects, but also features excellent ensemble playing as well as solos by all hornmen, and Muller, with Muller and Steiner proving excellent support. In one of the transition sections of the Suite, the two rhythm players do a great duet.

“Brabblers” is a virtuoso vocal by Shaerer where he keeps a drum beat going while he does all kinds of other effects over and around it. This piece is a master class in using one’s voice.

“Seldom” begins with Steiner playing a rhythmic pattern with two fingers on the typewriter, which gets appropriate laughs from the audience, and then band comes in with Steiner moving to brushes on snare, but also moves back to the typewriter to play with the bass clarinet behind Shaerer’s vocal, as well as behind Reising’s solo. And after the song is over, Shaerer reads the nonsense that Steiner typed, with appropriate rhythm and facial expressions, which leads into the next piece. And then we get a trio beginning with a long solo by Muller, and with Shaerer vocalizing a trumpet part with Tschopp on trombone.

The encore features the horn players on wooden flutes and Steiner on kalimba.

On a final note, readers of my reviews know how critical I can be of drummers. Here, watching Steiner was a delight. He does a great solo on “Purije”. I loved his use of a towel on the snare during a solo by Wenger, which reminded me of Han Bennink.

This DVD is really great. Just go get it!

Bernie Koenig

CD review from Volume 41, No. 3, 2015
www.cadencemagazine.com

CD REVIEW: NEW RELEASE

ARTIST: DAVID VIRELLES

TITLE: MBOKO

LABEL: ECM

TUNES: Wind Rose (Antrogofoko Mokoiren) / The Scribe (Tratado de Mpego) / Biankomeko / Antillais (A Quintin Bandera) / Aberinan y Aberisun / Seven, Through the Divination Horn / Stories Waiting to Be Told / Transmission / The Highest One / Efe (A Maria Teresa Vera). 59:08.

PERSONNEL: Virelles (p), Thomas Morgan (b), Robert Hurst (b), Marcus Gilmore (d), Roman Diaz (Biankomeko, vcl). December 2013 (no location given).

Subtitled “Sacred Music for Piano, Two Basses, Drum Set and Biankomeko Abakua,” the latest release from the superb, singular pianist Virelles explores a rich (if imperfectly understood) wellspring in jazz. Virelles, now an in-demand pianist for the likes of Chris Potter and Tomasz Stanko, is slowly putting together an important body of work exploring the intersection between Afro-Cuban religion and improvisation. Most readers will be familiar with similar investigations in the past, but Virelles is a long way from Chano Pozo. This is understated, intense, and highly creative music from the start.

It’s not easy to balance two contrabasses and two percussionists, but Virelles sets up numerous different modes for creative interactivity. The disc opens with a super soft low-end piano rumble/drone, like the hush at the beginning of the ritual (and Virelles has indeed adapted many rhythmic patterns from originally ritual contexts). As he unfurls some interestingly craggy harmonic shapes alongside Diaz’s hand percussion, the music sounds wondrously billowing and grounded at the same time. Like the majority of the pieces on this record, it’s hushed and reverent, but still exploratory. Even when things get quite intense, as when Gilmore and Diaz mix it up on “The Scribe,” there is a ton of space.

As on his previous record (which also featured Diaz), Virelles is generally reluctant to spotlight himself much; and indeed, this music isn’t really so much about taking solos as it is about evoking different moods and atmospheres. This ranges from the harmonically suggestive bustle on “Seven” to the unabashed lyricism on “Highest One,” from the bubbling inventions of “Stories” to the spiraling, soft reflections of “Aberinan y Aberisun” (with its intense vocals). It’s varied stuff, and consistently engaging. Best of all, though, are those tracks which are the most intricately woven. “Biankomeko” is all intensely knotted chords and snake-out right-hand lines that connect early Cecil Taylor with Andrew Hill and Paul Bley, overlapping rhythms everywhere. In many ways the central track, it steadily increases in heat and intensity, the group doing a kind of circle dance through the chord changes, their freedom through context like a ritual in itself. Nearly as good is the brisk, click-clacking “Antillais,” filled with darkly pounding piano chords and two basses joining percussion as a field of rhythmic generators. In all, it’s another confirmation of Virelles’ singular music.

Jason Bivins

CD review from Volume 41, No. 3, 2015
www.cadencemagazine.com

CD REVIEW: REISSUE

ARTIST: **BUDDY TATE QUARTET**

TITLE: **TEXAS TENOR**

LABEL: **Sackville 3027**

TUNES: June Night / Someday Sweetheart / If You Could See Me Now / I'll Remember April / Georgia On My Mind / Alone Together / Bye Bye Blackbird / Isfahan / Lullaby of the Leaves.
47:20.

PERSONNEL: Tate (ts, cl), Wray Downes (p), Dave Young (b), Pete Magadini (d). July 16, 1978, Toronto.

On this disc we have a strong, assured studio run through chestnuts by an unassuming tenor master. Tate's in mostly good company here with a solid band. Drummer Magadini sounds occasionally a bit too splashy (though that may be due to sound, highlighting a kind of mid-range flatness in the toms and all kinds of cymbal decay), though it's no major demerit. As for Tate himself, any tenor player who doffs the hat to the Young-Webster lineage is alright in my book, and that kind of dynamic range and tonal charm is abundant here. His style is best heard, to my ears, on lush ballads like "If You Could" and the sultry "Isfahan," though spare a moment for his tasty clarinet on "Georgia" (with a fantastic solo by Downes, who clearly exults in playing alongside Tate) and the closer. It's a compact record, with most performances between 4-6 minutes, and the band more or less sails throughout. But nothing feels throwaway, since Tate plays with such economy (check "April" or "Someday Sweetheart"). And one of the real highlights is listening to bassist Young lock into this on "Alone Together," accentuating the downward gravity of some of Tate's phrases. Crisp and laid back, not merely polished, this is solid mainstream stuff.

Jason Bivins

CD review from Volume 41, No. 3, 2015
www.cadencemagazine.com

CD REVIEW: REISSUE

ARTIST: **THE SACKVILLE ALL STAR CHRISTMAS RECORD**

TITLE: **THE SACKVILLE ALL STAR CHRISTMAS RECORD**

LABEL: **Sackville 3038**

TUNES: Santa Claus is Coming to Town / We Three Kings / At the Christmas Ball / Winter Wonderland / Go Tell It On the Mountain / Good King Wenceslas / Santa Claus Came in the Spring / Silent Night / Let It Snow / Old time Religion. 49:04.

PERSONNEL: Jim Galloway (ss), Ralph Sutton (p), Milt Hinton (b), Gus Johnson (d). March 29 & 30, 1986, Toronto.

This is a slice of swinging Yule from nearly three decades past, where Galloway's lithe, spirited soprano brings these chestnuts to life in the company of a joyful, tasty trio. The opener has vague similarities to "If I Were a Bell" in this arrangement, with a buoyant surge from the whole group (Sutton, especially, sounds great). The laid back modal feel on "We Three Kings" sounds quite fine, with just a hint of the rhythmic feel of mid-period Coltrane (Galloway plays gracefully, leaving lots of space, just so slightly behind the beat). Hinton and Johnson are assured throughout, sounding majestic on the slow, rolling "At the Christmas Ball," where Galloway deals in a tone-bending way that harkens back to Bechet, fitting this material quite well. Smart arrangements give the program a varied feel, from the breezy swing of "Good King Wenceslas" to the trad reading of "Came in the Spring" and the exotic feel given to "Let It Snow." It's charming, infectious stuff, filled with undeniably, if unremarkably, good playing.

Jason Bivins

CD review from Volume 41, No. 3, 2015
www.cadencemagazine.com

CD REVIEW: NEW RELEASE

ARTIST: **SLEEPY JOHN ESTES**

TITLE: **LIVE IN JAPAN**

LABEL: **Delmark 835**

TUNES: Corrina Corrina / Broke and Hungry / You Shouldn't Say That / Tin Pan Alley / Holy Spirit, Don't You Leave Me / I'll Be Glad When You're Dead, You Rascal You / Stop That Thing / The Girl I Love, She Got Curly Hair / Divin' Duck Blues / When Your Mother is Gone / When the Saints Go Marching In / Introduction / Mary Come On Home / Rats in My Kitchen / Potato Diggin' Man / Fox Chase / Sleepy John's Twist / Welcome / Love Grows in Your Heart / Brownsville Blues / Jesus is on the Mainline. 73:26.

PERSONNEL: Estes (vcl, g), Hammie Nixon (vcl, hca, kazoo, jug), Hidekatsu Kimura (g on *), Kantaro Uchida (g on *), Kenji Hanaoka (b on *), Kazuo Shimada (d on *). November 27 & 29, 1974; December 16 & 24, 1976, Tokyo.

These vintage recordings of Sleepy John Estes in the company of the amazing Hammie Nixon are pretty satisfying if you like your Blues old school. Nixon's deep, gravelly voice contrasts well with Estes, and the same is true for the instrumental blend of guitar with Nixon's harmonica, kazoo, and jug. It's a program of serious, committed, authentic vernacular blues, no slick studio crap here. Their interaction is great on the many duo pieces, especially vibrant on "You Shouldn't" and "Broke" (with sweet harmonica playing). They're clearly comfortable in the format and are audibly improvising the set list in places (calling out "Tin Pan Alley" and confirming, for example). Whether plaintive, joyful, or libidinous, this stuff is woven into their DNA. Highlights are plentiful, and I especially enjoyed the awesome (if too brief) "Holy Spirit," the keening "The Girl," the dirty-as-hell "Potato Diggin' Man," and "Fox Chase," with its humorous vocalizations. The tail end of the program, from Tokyo, features some overly deferential guest bandmates. Things loosen up on the clap-along "Main Line" and the lazy, extended "Love Grows." But even if these performances don't connect, the duo stuff makes this one more than worth your while.

Jason Bivins

CD review from Volume 41, No. 3, 2015

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CD REVIEW: NEW RELEASE

ARTIST: VARIOUS ARTISTS

TITLE: THE BLUES & SALVATION

LABEL: Labor 7091

TUNES: Disc One: Who Told You Woman+ / Rainy Day# / Going Train Blues~ / Sweet Little Girl+ / Walk All Over Georgia~ / If I Had My Way* / There's Nothing Left to Say@ / Baby Please Don't Go#\$ / Blues in E* / Crucifixion* / Sermon* / His Name is Jesus% / Old Hippy@ / Come Down and See Me Sometime* / I Wonder What I Mean to You+ / I Wish I'd Gone to Birmingham@ / Candy Man*. 79:28. Disc Two: I Didn't Want to Join the Band* / When the Moon Goes Down* / I Got Him Now@ / Tell Me Who~ / Jesus Met the Woman at the Well* / Rolling Into Town@ / Honey Good Honey+ / There's Nothing Left to Say^ / Steal Away and Pray* / No Matter What You Do@ / Let Us Get Together* / Mayor Beame~ / One Woman Man\$& / Shoes by the Door+@ / I Feel Like My Time Is ... * / Can't Make This Journey by Myself* / You've Gotten Over Me@ / You Got to Move* / Another Skin@ / Lost John* / Lost John (instrumental)*. 71:30.

PERSONNEL: Rev. Gary Davis (g, vcl *), George Higgs (g, vcl+), Louisiana Red (g, vcl, hca ~), Lefty Dizz (g on "Going Train Blues"), Jemima James (g, vcl @), Brownie McGhee (g, vcl #), Alex Blake (b #), Brian Brake (d #), Sonny Terry (vcl, hca \$), The Wooten Singers (vcl %), Arnetta Aiken lead vocal %, Deneen McEachern (vcl ^), Bob Malenky (g, vcl &), Chris Berry (g +@^), Jim Baird (b +@^), Tom Latimer (kybd +@^), Sandy Darity (hca +@^). 1955-57, NYC*; 1974, NYC&; 1975, NYC~%; 1975, Hunter College, NY\$; 1976, White Plains, NY#; 2008, Durham, NC+@^.

This compilation is a mixed bag of style and delivery, and mostly delivers quite satisfyingly. Blues fans will spot some pretty illustrious names based on a quick scan of the personnel, and it's hard not to argue that luminaries like Reverend Gary Davis and Brownie McGhee steal the show. The former in particular is all over this comp, and several of his performances are genuinely memorable. He is incomparable on "If I Had My Way," a great feature for his distinctive guitar style (as is the instrumental "I Didn't Want to Join the Band"). And his performances here cover a lot of emotional territory. He's fantastic and introspective on "Blues in E," followed up by the hollering "Crucifixion" and a 6-minute (mostly) spoken sermon. Later he delivers a wonderfully raw "Come Down and See Me Sometime" and a majestic falsetto performance on "Candy Man." Throughout, he's raw, direct, and unadorned, his intense vocals energizing "When the Moon Goes Down," "Jesus Met the Woman at the Well," "Steal Away and Pray," and "Let Us Walk Together." George Higgs also turns in several earthy, gravely performances. Best is "Who Told You Woman" (with this killer line: "I cook my food on a hot plate right here in my room. I burnt your picture yesterday, I burn your clothes up soon"), with its sweet dobro, but nearly as good are "Sweet Little Girl," "Honey Good Honey," and the swinging "I Wonder What I Mean to You." There's some understated stuff from Brownie McGhee on "Rainy Day" and McGhee sounds great alongside Sonny Terry on a somewhat laconic reading of "Baby Please Don't Go." There's further traditionalism from oldsters Louisiana Red and Lefty Dizz on "Going Train Blues," and from Red alone on the slide feature "Walk All Over Georgia," the infectious "Tell Me Who," and the grooving "Mayor Beame." Like much of the music on this collection, the arrangements are smart and the performances unvarnished. Less known to me were The Wooten Singers (who turn in a rousing "His Name is Jesus"), Malenky and Terry (the fun "One Woman Man"), and the almost country-ish singers Deneen McEachern and Jemima James. The latter has several strong moments, getting close to Emmylou Harris territory on "I Wish I'd Gone to Birmingham" and "I Got Him Now," among others. While I was never quite certain as to the logic of who got included on this comp, it's hard to knock the quality of the music. Recommended.

Jason Bivins

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CD REVIEW: NEW RELEASE

ARTIST: **TAL GUR**

TITLE: **UNDER CONTRACTIONS**

LABEL: **No label, no number**

TUNES: ReGenesis / Time Tuning Day #2 / ReGenesis Day #3 / Under Contractions / Waiting for a Birth / Missiles Up Missiles Down / Time for Night / Time Tuning Afternoon #5 / Time for Fight / ReGenesis Dawn #7. 44:08.

PERSONNEL: Gur (straight as, ss), Eyal Maoz (g), Sam Trapchak (b), Nick Anderson (d).
December 2013-January 2014, Brooklyn, NY.

This apparently self-released record from a talented quartet is an interesting amalgam of improvisational approaches, a program realized with clarity and conviction by the assured players. They conjure a distinctive mood with the abstract texture of the brief opener, plaintive sax and sustained guitar washes tracing mutual shapes in the air. But once the date gets going, there's considerable energy in the form of odd, herky-jerk, four-way rhythms that are half-free and half-M-BASE-derived, with Gur once again holding tones over the churn (but he also digs in with stuttering guitar from the talented Maoz). I like the contrast between spaced out, antic guitar, and the more earthy sax and rhythm that's everywhere on this date. As a band, they've got some range, nicely rendering the laconic ballad "ReGenesis Day #3" or playing around with the rhythmic base of the slow march "Waiting for a Birth," which has some similarities with Paul Motian's compositions (and boasts some sensitive alto from Gur). As much as I enjoy the band's composite sound, and Maoz's diverse guitar work, I found Gur's playing really compelling above all. Whether navigating the tricky multiple meters of "Missiles" or the bustling space-jam "Time for Flight" (with its nice nod to Balkan music), he creates intensity through carefully constructed lines, rather than simply relying on force or extended techniques. It's a surprising record, one I very much enjoyed.

Jason Bivins

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CD REVIEW: NEW RELEASE

ARTIST: WADADA LEO SMITH

TITLE: THE GREAT LAKES SUITES

LABEL: TUM 041

TUNES: Disc One: Lake Michigan / Lake Ontario / Lake Superior. 41:46. Disc Two: Lake Huron / Lake Erie / Lake St. Clair. 48:35.

PERSONNEL: Smith (tpt), Henry Threadgill (as, flt, b flt), John Lindberg (b), Jack DeJohnette (d). December 20, 2012, NYC.

Yes, you're reading that correctly. It's Henry Threadgill, on someone else's record for the first time in practically forever. And it's Smith's Golden Quartet sans piano, basically. If you've paid any attention to the highlights of creative music over the last ten to fifteen years, you know that the term "purple patch" seems practically to have been invented for Smith's recent activities, not least his magisterial *Ten Freedom Summers* and his previous 2-disc release for TUM, *Occupy the World*. His fusion of Ankhration principles, an aesthetic foregrounding space and silence, and a deep vein of social criticism and optimism inspired by improvisational possibility, all this together makes Smith's music some of the most significant I know of. The clarity, range, and passion of the music-making of these masters surpass even the expectations that the lineup alone might create. The music opens vibrantly, exuberantly, like a wave crashing along Lakeshore. It sets a tone for these suites, signaling that the music will be urgent and dramatic but not excessively dense or rhythmically hidebound. At each moment there's a shared concern for variety of texture and timbre, and it's precisely here that it's so wonderful to hear Threadgill and Smith together in the company of the redoubtable Lindberg and DeJohnette. As is always the case in his writing, Smith builds in sequences for solo, duo, and trio improvisation, and this release contains several stunning alto trio sections, serious three-way heat (not to mention the crushing drum solo late in "Lake Michigan"). Smith pairs fanfares with dark hues, shifting weather patterns that reflect his understandings of American music. The methodology is heard to different effect on "Lake Ontario," which opens with an intense flute/bass unison that eventually leads, by way of structured material, to a trumpet and drums exchange of vast silences and cool tuned toms. After these billowing, tense moments, "Lake Superior" is probably the most rocking, punchy thing on this recording, filled with big blocky lines and an urgent throb where Lindberg and DeJohnette practically levitate. No matter the setting, Smith's trumpet is simply beautiful to hear, those gorgeous resounding notes that hang there like stars. Listening to him in the company of longstanding colleagues Lindberg (on whose own records Smith has also appeared) and the great DeJohnette to start "Lake Huron" is just a treat. It's as if they are playing the very elemental forces the music aspires also to be about, in touch with the act of creation. Some huge cascading drumrolls cue up another horn fanfare, and the piece stretches out in more sax trio exploration, with those incredible intervals and vast chasms of space in Threadgill's improvisation. Some tasty bass flute opens "Lake Erie," which boasts a section for what could almost be steel drums, a gorgeous textural section that's like lake and cloud exchanging moisture, and a dark unison theme that strides over it all. "Lake St. Clair" finds the quartet in another punchy, percussive mood, ranging from unison horn blasts to mute and flute. In its subtlety and intensity – chirruping horns, low arco, soft drum patter – you can almost hear this as a throwback to the ethos of early Air or Creative Construction Company; and certainly the basic properties of Smith's music have been long developing and growing. There's so much in this music of the history of jazz itself, all kinds of influences and possibilities and syntheses just wending gloriously, lyrically together. A truly exceptional recording.

Jason Bivins

CD REVIEW: NEW RELEASE

ARTIST: **CHARLES LLOYD**

TITLE: **MANHATTAN STORIES**

LABEL: **Resonance 2016**

TUNES: Disc One: Sweet Georgia Bright / How Can I Tell You / Lady Gabor. 42:37. Disc Two: Slugs' Blues / Lady Gabor / Dream Weaver. 42:15.

PERSONNEL: Lloyd (ts, flt), Gabor Szabo (g), Ron Carter (b), Pete La Roca Sims (d). September 3, 1965 and unknown date, 1965, NYC.

Dear reader, you would be forgiven for mistaking this for an ESP disc, given the exploratory nature of Lloyd's playing here (and what a band!) along with the venues (Judson Hall on the first disc, Slugs' Saloon on the second). Right after Lloyd left Cannonball Adderley, he had a regular gig at Slug's and, throughout his tenure at the famed venue, he invited loads of his contemporaries to join him, folks like Chick Corea, Jaki Byard, Reggie Workman, Tony Williams, Joe Chambers, and the stalwarts heard on this outstanding archival release. The Judson Hall set opens with some free-wheeling abstraction from Lloyd and the marvelous Szabo on "Sweet Georgia Bright," but it's not long before Carter and Sims get things cracking. On each of these generous performances, there's loads of easy, fluid interaction between horn and guitar. And Szabo will delight guitar freaks with his bright-toned and often percussive attack, and those spiky lines that unfurl patiently in his solos. As the tune heats up, Lloyd sounds like he's definitely feeling a Coltrane influence in his urgent, heavily intervallic lines. This makes for a vivid contrast with Szabo, whose style often makes use of nicely weird, almost sour little chords that suggest he might be an influence on later players like Ribot and Frisell. After some ragged hollering and cresting rhythm, Lloyd dials into a beautiful unaccompanied tenor intro to "How Can I Tell You." Further in, Szabo comps lushly as Carter and Sims provide supple, understated support. Perhaps most enjoyable from this set is "Lady Gabor," riding out on high-strung, funky guitar and spacey flute before blooming with melodic flourish. The second disc opens up with some raucous crowd ambience from Slug's, and the lazy blues Lloyd penned for the venue settles in nicely. This one's got some occasionally dodgy sound, but the music comes through as committed and creative. Sims and Carter just nail the slow swing, and both Lloyd and Szabo dig in lustily. The tight funky groove of "Lady Gabor" makes a winning return here, and it's a little hotter, Lloyd's flute a little earthier than on the Judson Hall date. My favorite passage features Szabo going into a trance-drone effect with open strings during his solo. The brightly lilting Lloyd piece "Dream Weaver" occupies much the same rhythmic territory, but features some pretty searing tenor. There's yet more buzzing, hypnotic guitar, and somehow the performance seemed to anticipate early John Abercrombie records just a touch. This is a well-nigh essential archival release.

Jason Bivins

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CD REVIEW: NEW RELEASE

ARTIST: GEORGE GEE SWING ORCHESTRA

TITLE: SWING MAKES YOU HAPPY!

LABEL: RONDETE JAZZ 1009

TUNES: Comin' Home / Bedrock / Lindyhopper's Delight / Sweet Pumpkin / No Moon At All / I Knows / I'd Rather Drink Muddy Water / Baby Won't You Please Come Home / Midnight In A Madhouse / The Road To Roscoe's / If I Were A Bell / It Was A Very Good Year / That's No Joke / You Say You Care / Hash Mash / Nature Boy / Evenin' / A Tribute To Someone / Blue Minor. 73:12.

PERSONNEL: Gee, ldr; David Gibson, tb; Hilary Gardner, John Dokes, vcl; Ed Pazant, as; Michael Hashim, ts; Anthony Lustig, bari s; Andy Gravish, Freddie Hendrix, tpt; Steve Einerson, p; Marcus McLaurine, b; Willard Dyson, d. 3/18/14, Brooklyn, NY.

The title pretty much tells you what you're getting. Not everything here is swing but it is all hard-driving big band jazz.

All the arrangements were done by trombonist David Gibson and his work is forceful and punchy. Tunes like "Comin' Home" and "Road To Roscoe's" have a hard boppish Horace Silver feel, "Lindyhopper's Delight" is a bouncy throwback to the days of the jitterbug and Larry Clinton's "Midnight In A Madhouse" is a quirky but hot bit of swing exotica. "Hash Mash" is a good approximation of bluesy Basie-ite swing with frisky solos by Gibson and tenor saxophonist Michael Hashim who also has a relaxed, cruising feature on "It Was a Very Good Year".

The band also contains two vocalists, Hilary Gardner and John Dokes, who have big, full voices adept at blues and soul. Unfortunately though everything they sing is at a jogging tempo, even a thoughtful song like "Nature Boy". It would have been nice to hear them do at least one slow song. With that one caveat, this is the work of a sleek, professional band that's very good at following its chosen mainstream path.

Jerome Wilson

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CD REVIEW: NEW RELEASE

ARTIST: **MEHMET ALI SANLIKOL**

TITLE: **WHATSNEXT**

LABEL: **DUNYA (no number)**

TUNES: What's Next? / Better Stay Home / A Violet Longing / Palindrome / On The Edge Of The Extreme Possible / The Blue Soul Of Turkoromero / Kozan March / N.O.H.A. / Gone Crazy: A Noir Fantasy.

PERSONNEL: Sanlikol, cond, p, harpsichord, kybd, vcl, rebab, ney, kaba, zarna, moog realistic; Mark Zaleski, as, cl, fl, ss; Sam Mehr, as, fl; Aaron Henry, Tucker Antell, ts, cl; Jared Sims, Kathy Olson, bari s, b cl; Mike Peipman, Jeff Claussen, tpt; Jerry Sabatini, Sam Dechenne, tpt, flgh; Clayton Dehalt, Randy Pingrey, Tim Lienhard, Chris Gagne, tb; Ido Meshulam, btb; Utar Artan, Lefteris Kordis, p; Phil Sargent, g; Fernando Huergo, el b; Bertram Lehmann, d, nekkare, cga, djembe; Engin Gunnaydin, d, perc, kos; Cem Mutlu, d. 5/12, 5/13.

This CD is by a more up to date jazz orchestra. Mehmet Ali Sanlikol is a Turkish-born, Boston-based musician who's studied at the New England Conservatory of Music and his work shows the influences of people associated with that scene like George Russell and Bob Brookmeyer. "What's Next" is aggressive, trumpet-driven big band shouting while "Kozan March" combines big band energy with exotic textures and a roaring tenor solo by one of the saxophonists. (The individual soloists on the CD are not identified.) Meanwhile "Edge Of The Extreme Possible" mixes sharp melodic percussion out of Pete Rugolo with bumpy Turkish rhythms and a slick, bluesy tension maintained by the rhythm section.

Tracks like "Better Stay Home", "Gone Crazy" and "Blue Soul" all sound like they came from the soundtrack of a 70's crime film, warm, funk-laden slabs of dread and unease, with Sanlikol's creeping harpsichord on "Better Stay Home" a particular highlight. The leader's Turkish roots come to the fore in the Middle Eastern background and processional feel of "Palindrome" and the serene Mediterranean air of "N.O.H.A." which features Sanlikol soloing on a Moog synthesizer against a warm mist of brass. Sanlikol is an impressive composer with his own style who mixes the familiar and the exotic very well.

Jerome Wilson

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CD REVIEW: NEW RELEASE

ARTIST: CHRIS POTTER UNDERGROUND ORCHESTRA

TITLE: IMAGINARY CITIES

LABEL: ECM 2387

TUNES: Lament / Imaginary Cities 1 Compassion / Imaginary Cities 2 Dualities / Imaginary Cities 3 Disintegration / Imaginary Cities 4 Rebuilding / Firefly / Shadow Self / Sky.

PERSONNEL: Potter, ts, ss, bcl; Adam Rogers, g; Craig Taborn, p, Steve Nelson, vib, mba; Fima Ephron, el b; Scott Colley, ac b; Nate Smith, d; Mark Feldman, Joyce Hamman, vln; Lois Martin, vla; David Eggar, clo. 12/13, New York, NY.

Chris Potter's Underground Orchestra does not have the personnel of a real orchestra but this combination of Potter's Underground Quintet with a string quartet has a rich, expansive sound. The focal point of this CD is the "Imaginary Cities Suite" which runs through a gamut of moods. It starts in "Compassion" with Potter rising majestically out of a mournful bed of strings before guitarist Adam Rogers goes on an extended electric tear that takes things into a heavy rock direction. "Dualities" increases the tempo and intensity with ecstatic tenor, nagging percussion, swaying strings and a wild marimba solo by Steve Nelson. "Disintegration" is a forest of eerie, weightless sounds featuring Craig Taborn on piano and Potter on soprano sax that eventually resolves into a brooding melody. "Rebuilding" brings the suite to a forceful conclusion with Potter powerful over shivering strings, Taborn and Nelson clanging and Rogers speeding like John McLaughlin over a funky rhythm section.

The rest of the CD similarly uses the contrast between the strings and the quintet to great effect. There is a lovely tension between Potter's tenor elegance and the strings' drama on "Lament", "Shadow Self" has him playing dark bass clarinet over the quartet, "Firefly" is a spot of spaced-out funk with Nate Smith setting a choppy, danceable beat and Fima Ephron taking a wicked electric bass solo and "Fly" is a beautiful, widescreen summation of the CD's beauty and force, everyone blending inspiringly on one last powerful theme. Chris Potter is on top of his game here as composer as well as musician.

Jerome Wilson

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CD REVIEW: NEW RELEASE

ARTIST: CHARLES MCPHERSON

TITLE: THE JOURNEY

LABEL: CAPRI 74136

TUNES: The Decathexis From Youth (For Cole) / Elena / Spring Is Here / Manhattan Nocturne / Au Private / I Should Care / The Journey / Tami's Tune / Bud Like. 54:56.

PERSONNEL: McPherson, as; Keith Oxman, ts; Chip Stephens, p; Ken Walker, b; Todd Reid, d. 4/21/14, 5/19/14.

Charles McPherson, a long-serving altoist so deep into the Charlie Parker school that he famously replicated Parker's solos for the movie "Bird". This recording pairs him with tenor saxophonist Keith Oxman in a quintet format. The two sound good together whether they are playing themes in unison or doing gliding solo turns. Their up-tempo work on "Decathexis", "The Journey" and "Spring Is Here" is clean and brisk and Oxman has a robust sound with a Coltrane influence that contrasts well with McPherson's heady avian flights. "Elena" is a graceful ballad and "Manhattan Nocturne" sports a pretty, tropical theme with the saxes moaning and sighing together nicely and Chip Stephens playing fine romantic piano. The one Parker theme present, "Au Private" is taken at a slightly slow tempo before McPherson plays his most tangled and ambitious solo of the set while Oxman gracefully bounds through the changes and Stephens digs his own funky groove.

Beside their work together each saxophonist gets a solo feature. "I Should Care" is a delicate but sensual duet for McPherson and Stephens while Oxman's piece, "Tami's Tune" is a soulful jaunt for tenor, bass and drums that lets Ken Walker and Todd Reid shine against Oxman's molten tenor. This CD is solid, lovely work from a legendary musician who can still bring it.

Jerome Wilson

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CD REVIEW: NEW RELEASE

ARTIST: JACK DEJOHNETTE

TITLE: MADE IN CHICAGO

LABEL: ECM 2392

TUNES: Chant / Jack 5 / This / Museum Of Time / Leave Don't Go Away / Announcement / Ten Minutes.

PERSONNEL: DeJohnette, d; Henry Threadgill, as, b fl, b rcdr; Roscoe Mitchell, as, ss, wooden fl; Muhal Richard Abrams, p; Larry Gray, b. 8/29/13, Chicago, IL.

Made in Chicago was made by men mostly in their 70's and 80's but it is as modern as any other music out there.

This is the live concert by a special band Jack DeJohnette assembled for the 2013 Chicago Jazz Festival featuring some of his old Chicago school buddies who went on to be integral parts of an organization of some renown known as the AACM. I was lucky enough to see this concert live and this CD captures just how special this show was.

The set starts at full blast with Roscoe Mitchell's "Chant". Mitchell and Henry Threadgill buzz around each other on saxophones while DeJohnette boils in the background. This leads to a spiraling solo by Muhal Richard Abrams and an astonishing honking and squawking soprano display from Mitchell in a relentless trio with DeJohnette and bassist Larry Gray.

Everyone except Gray gets at least one of their compositions in. Threadgill's "This" is one of his eerie flute features with a Japanese flavor, Abrams' "Jack 5" is a slow motion blend of rough alto noises, wary piano chords, booming bass and measured, thumping drums. DeJohnette's "Moment Of Time" features Abrams playing a lovely and dramatic melody as the saxes moan over him in an undulating, exotic fashion, while Threadgill's "Leave Don't Go Away" has a dramatic piano-drum duet that leads to snake-charming soprano from Mitchell and a seductive bass groove from Gray. "Ten Minutes" is an improvised encore, an invigorating all-out blow with Mitchell's soprano again rising above all.

These masters all lived up to their grand reputations on this show playing with passion and fearlessness and a lot of kudos also need to go to the unsung Larry Gray, a veteran Chicago bassist who knows these men and plays beautifully alongside them. This CD is every bit as powerful as the names on it would suggest. What more can you say?

Jerome Wilson

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CD REVIEW: NEW RELEASE

ARTIST: T.R.E. & STEFANO BATTAGLIA

TITLE: HORO

LABEL: ABEAT ABJZ 131

TUNES: CD 1: Gankino horo / Krivo horo / Bogarsko horo / Vlasko horo / Paunovo horo / Prava horo. CD 2: Invenzione III / Invenzione I / Forma III / Forma I / Forma II / Invenzione II / Invenzione IV / Invenzione V / Forma VI.

PERSONNEL: Battaglia, Alessandro Giachero, p, prepared p; Stefano Rissi, b; Marco Zanolì, d. 4/12-13/10, Bricherasio, Italy.

On this recording the Italian trio T.R.E. brings in a second pianist, Stefano Battaglia, for two CDs worth of compositions and improvisations.

The first CD's music is all composed with space, patience and stately melodies that feel like folk songs. On "Krivo Horo" every instrument clearly progresses along the mournful theme, the pianos complementing each other while Marco Zanolì's cymbal work sounds deep and exotic. "Vlasko Horo" has one piano playing full measured chords while the other, with dampened strings, thuds rhythmically. "Bogarsko Horo" has a solid bass strum and cymbal clatter underlining delicate piano trills that develop into a lovely romantic theme while in "Pravo Horo" the pianos chase each other in a bubble of dark, sensual uncertainty.

CD 2 downplays the emotional feel but continues to use space and silence in interesting ways with carefully timed interactions of the instruments. Press rolls and dampened piano notes play off each other like clock chimes on "Forma I". Stefano Rissi's bass delivers a close-miked throb which turns into rattling noise surrounded by piano string bowing and cymbal whines on "Invenzione II" and "Invenzione I" is a forest of rattling percussions invaded by a dancing bit of toy piano and doomy bass chords. All this makes a fascinating contrast to the rich romance of the first disc.

Jerome Wilson

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CD REVIEW: NEW RELEASE

ARTIST: DAVID HANEY

TITLE: NINE JAZZ STORIES

LABEL: CADENCE PROMO 1004

TUNES: The Sonny Rollins Bridge Story / Gunter Hampel on Why Thelonious Monk Danced / Jamaica / Steve Swallow recalls his trip to Jamaica with Herbie Nichols / John McLaughlin remembers his first session with Miles Davis / Annie Ross meets Sarah Vaughan / Twelve Bar Variation / Ab Baars recalls getting help from Misha Mengelberg / Wolter Weirbos Recalls a Concert with the ICP Orchestra / Gone Away to the Other Shore / Obo Addy Retells the Stolen Pants Story / Dominic Duval Studies Charles Mingus / David Haney Talks About Jazz Stories / Bye Bye Baby Goodbye. 78:00.

PERSONNEL: Haney, p, narration. 9/24/14, 10/10/14, Portland, OR.

One of the unique features of the online version of this magazine is that each issue contains short anecdotes from jazz musicians all compiled by our publisher David Haney. Here you can either read them or hear the musicians tell the stories in their own voices audio files. This disc presents these in yet another way, Haney reciting nine of the stories dramatically with his own piano accompaniment.

A few of these, like Sonny Rollins practicing on the Williamsburg bridge at night or John McLaughlin's first studio encounter with Miles Davis, are well known but gain a lot of flavor from the protagonist's own telling. Others, Gunter Hampel talking about Thelonious Monk or Dominic Duval's encounters with Charles Mingus, are warm examples of how these people feel about their own heroes. Then there are others that are flat-out hilarious like Steve Swallow's tale of playing with Herbie Nichols in a Dixieland band on an ill-fated cruise to Jamaica, Wolter Weirbos trying to drive a sluggish Misha Mengelberg to an ICP Orchestra concert, and best of all, the story of African drummer Obo Addy "borrowing" his brother's pants for a gig and barely surviving his brother's wrath.

Haney tells these tales with the dramatic flair of a Garrison Keillor with impish piano garnishes. He also throws in a few solo piano pieces like Nichols' "Jamaica" at apt intervals and even includes his own story of how he came to collect all these anecdotes. Reading the stories here in Cadence is entertaining in its own right but this is a unique and fun presentation.

Jerome Wilson

CD review from Volume 41, No. 3, 2015
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CD REVIEW: NEW RELEASE

ARTIST: **WOLFGANG SCHALK**

TITLE: **WORD OF EAR**

LABEL: **FRAME UP 673273-9**

TUNES: Midnight Prayers (Part 1) / Eating Melodies* / Round Midnight* / Toninho+ / Broadway Song+ / Written Tomorrow+ / Word Of Ear* / Blues 'n' Roll+ / Midnight Prayers (Part 2). 44:51.

PERSONNEL: Schalk, g; Helen Sung, p*; George Whitty, p, el p, kybd+; Michael Valerio, b; Tom Brechtlein, d. 6/11, Los Angeles, CA.

Wolfgang Schalk is a guitar player in the fluid lineage of Jim Hall who works at his craft nimbly in a quartet setting on this recording. He rolls up a nice bit of turbulence on "Eating Melodies" against storming piano from Helen Sung, and takes "Round Midnight" at a faster than normal pace with smart soloing over mobile bass and drums. His acoustic playing shows individuality both on "Within Tomorrow", where he flies around over George Whitty's electric piano, and "Word of Ear", where he combines prettily with Sung's gentle touch and Michael Valerio's humming electric bass. "Blues 'n' Roll" is tight, spiraling electric funk with Schalk fluttering and Whitty hitting a fuzzed out synthesizer like Jan Hammer and "Toninho" is a delicate piece of Spanish balladry that grows on you. This is a subtle but well-formed CD of modern mainstream jazz guitar playing.

Jerome Wilson

CD review from Volume 41, No. 3, 2015
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CD REVIEW: NEW RELEASE

ARTIST: GEORGE VAN EPS

TITLE: ONCE IN AWHILE

LABEL: JUMP 12-06

TUNES: Once In Awhile+# / Peg O' My Heart / It's Easy To Remember / Ain't Misbehavin' / Back Home / Kay's Fantasy+# / Love Is Just Around The Corner / Stars Fell On Alabama / I'm Gonna Stomp Mr. Henry Lee / Ol' Pigeon Toed Joad / Once In Awhile / I Wrote It For Joe*# / It's Easy To Remember / Ain't Misbehavin' / Peg O' My Heart / Love Is Just Around The Corner / Stars Fell On Alabama / I'm Gonna Stomp Mr. Henry Lee / Ol' Pigeon Toed Joad / I Wrote It For Joe / Tea For Two*# / It's Easy To Remember / Ain't Misbehavin' / Stars Fell On Alabama / Ol' Pigeon Toed Joad. 71:40.

PERSONNEL: Van Eps, g; Eddie Miller, ts; Stanley Wrightsman, p; Jack Ryan*, Phil Stevens+, b; Nick Fatool, d#. 3/21/46, 3/8/49, 4/1/49, 6/13/49, Hollywood, CA.

This is old school guitar from one of the original masters, the underrated George Van Eps. These tracks come from trio recordings he made in California in the late 40's and he actually only appears as the lead player four times, when in a trio with bass and drums. Most of the time he's teamed with pianist Stanley Wrightsman and saxophonist Eddie Miller, often just playing rhythm. Wrightsman and Miller aren't bad but Van Eps presence in introductions and breaks often gives an extra jolt to the music.

The standout pieces though are invariably the ones where he gets to stretch out, the busy but relaxed groove of "Kay's Fantasy", the intricate but seemingly effortless "I Wrote It For Joe", done both solo and with the trio and a version of "Tea For Two" where he anticipates bebop by improvising a new melody on the chords. Elsewhere Wrightson's stride piano sounds pretty hip on "Mr. Henry Lee" and "Ol' Pigeon Toed Joad" is an elegiac piece of old-time Southern melody with classy piano and slow, reflective guitar breaks. I don't believe there is a lot of Van Eps' work generally available out there. That makes this valuable to guitar fans even though his talent is mostly heard in flashes.

Jerome Wilson

CD review from Volume 41, No. 3, 2015
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CD REVIEW: NEW RELEASE

ARTIST: **DAVID FRIESEN CIRCLE 3 TRIO**

TITLE: **WHERE THE LIGHT FALLS**

LABEL: **ORIGIN 82677**

TUNES: DISC ONE: PLAYGROUND / DANCE WITH ME / LEFT FIELD BLUES / A ROAD LESS TRAVELLED / SAILING / GREEN HILLS SLOWLY PASSING BY / ZEBRA / UNFOLDING / DARK RESOLVE / DAY OF REST. DISC TWO: STEPPING STONES / REACHING FOR THE STARS / COUNTERPART / SONG FOR BEN / OVERLAND / BLUE 10 / CONTOURS / MY DANCE / TRIBUTE. 1:54:42.

PERSONNEL: Friesen, b; Greg Goebel, p; Charlie Doggett, d; Larry Koonse, el g (1, 3, 5, 7, 10) (2, 4, 6, 9). March 18, 2013, Osnabruck, Germany; April 2013, Tempe, AZ; January 25, 2014, Portland, OR.

Bassist/composer David Friesen's recent 2-CD volume, (1), contains almost two hours of consistently excellent music. The music is taken from three sources, a studio session (in Germany) and two live performances (in Tempe and Portland). Ten of the nineteen total selections were done by Friesen's "Circle 3 Trio" from the studio session and the Portland concert, while special guest Larry Koonse joined the trio on guitar for the nine selections representing the Tempe concert.

The common thread for all nineteen selections is the writing of Friesen, whose melodies and musical structures have an innovative spirit, making use of modern harmonies and time conceptions, and requiring dedicated listening to best appreciate them. A good place to start for a traditional listener might be two blues pieces, "Left Field Blues," an inventive blues line with a Monkian flavor, and "Blue 10," a swinging blues cleverly truncated to ten bars. Serving as strong openers for the two discs, "Playground" and "Stepping Stones" both generate verve and a sense of forward propulsion with their use of Latin-based rhythms in 5/4 and 7/4 time, respectively. A contemplative character is ever-present in Friesen's music, as illustrated by "Green Hills Slowly Passing By," "Dark Resolve," and "Reaching For the Stars." Repeated listening is merited for other pieces with more complex time conceptions such as "A Road Less Travelled" and "Overland," while vehicles suggesting a simpler and more optimistic view include "Sailing," "Song for Ben," as well as waltzes "Dance With Me" and "My Dance." The performances by everyone including Friesen are superior throughout, as evident on the up-tempo "Zebra," which opens with drummer Charlie Doggett setting a brisk swinging pace soon joined by Friesen, and followed by top-tier solos from pianist Greg Goebel and guitarist Koonse.

Don Lerman

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CD REVIEW: NEW RELEASE

ARTIST: **ERIC VLOEIMANS**

TITLE: **OLIVER'S CINEMA**

LABEL: **CHALLENGE RECORDS ZZ 76111**

TUNES: *ALADDIN / PRINCE HENRI / CINEMA PARADISO / LES VAPES / L'AMOUR DES MOULES / IMAGINING / SEGGIANO'S EVE / FELLINI'S WALTZ / SLOW MOTION / ROSEMARY'S BABY / PAPPILLON / SLOW TANGO / BAMBI / ROSA TURBINATA. 48:47.*

PERSONNEL: Vloeimans, tpt; Tuur Florizoone, acc; Jorg Brinkmann, cel. 2013, Austria.

Oliver's Cinema, the cleverly-named trio of excellent European musicians led by Dutch trumpeter Eric Vloeimans, on (2) present their thoughtful versions of film themes "Cinema Paradiso," "Rosemary's Baby," "Fellini's Waltz," as well as of original music by Vloeimans and the other group members. Since the early 1990s, Vloeimans has been an active performer in a wide variety of musical categories including jazz, classical, rock, funk, electronic, and world music. Two other multi-faceted performers, Belgian accordionist Tuur Florizoone, and German cellist Jorg Brinkmann, fill out the trio and prove to be fine musical partners with the expressive and laconic Vloeimans. Vloeimans's "Papillon" is a showcase (one of many) for the sensitive musical interaction which occurs first between Vloeimans and Florizoone and later between all three members of the group. Vloeimans's pure sound, a fine balance of dark and bright tonal qualities, enhances evocative pieces such as "Rosa Turbinata" and his own "Les Vapes." Florizoone, who had previously performed with Vloeimans in a duo format, provides a stellar and distinctive voice throughout, as featured on "Prince Henry," "Cinema Paradiso," and his own "L'amour des Moules." Cellist Brinkmann completes the group, occasionally bowing prominent lines or solos (for example, on "Imagining") while more often artfully playing bass-like and chordal background roles.

Don Lerman

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CD REVIEW: NEW RELEASE

ARTIST: **DARRELL KATZ AND THE JCA ORCHESTRA**

TITLE: **WHY DO YOU RIDE?**

LABEL: **LEO RECORDS CD LR 711**

TUNES: WHY DO YOU RIDE? A ZEN STORY / WHEELWORKS: ANY INTELLIGENT FOOL / WHAT DID ALBERT EINSTEIN SAY? / RIDING A BICYCLE / UNDER THE CLOAK OF WAR / STICKS AND STONES / THE MYSTERIOUS / WE ARE THE DANCERS / A BETTER TEACHER / SAMIBADGAL / JCA SAX QUARTET: MONK'S MOOD. 1:12:33.

PERSONNEL: Rebecca Shrimpton, voc; Hiro Honshuke, flt, EWI; Alan Chase, Jim Hobbs, as; Phil Scarff, ts, ss, spnino s, cl; Dan Zupan, bari s, b cl; Mike Peipman, Gary Bohan, Forbes Ghram, tpt; Bob Pilkington, David Harris, tbn; Jim Mosher, f hn; Bill Lowe, tba; Luther Gray, d; Norm Zocher, g; John Funkhauser, b; Joe Doubleday, vib; Mina Cho, p; Ryan Edwards, perc; Katz, g (1). JCA Sax Qrt: Jeff Hudgins, Daniel Ian Smith, as; Scarff, ts; Dan Bosshardt, bari s. June 18-19, 2013, Allston, MA (except track 11, recorded June 1999, Westwood, MA).

Inspired by a quotation of Albert Einstein that in part saluted the importance of bicycling, composer and avid cyclist Darrell Katz began to consider setting the Einstein comment to music. Further research into Einstein's words and thoughts led Katz to compose "Why Do You Ride?" and "Wheelworks," a suite of music dedicated to the perspectives of Einstein on cycling and many other topics, recorded by the Boston-based 19-piece Jazz Composers Alliance Orchestra with Katz as director. Vocalist Rebecca Shrimpton skillfully renders lyrics written by Katz, some of which are based upon the reported Einstein quotations, while the JCA Orchestra and its many top-flight soloists display great finesse in interpreting the many musical styles employed by Katz in this dramatic and often fanciful work. Two added instrumental selections further showcase the outstanding musicians of the group and the impressive writing and arranging ability of Katz, "SamiBadGal" and from a 1999 recording of the JCA Sax Quartet, "Monk's Mood."

Don Lerman

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CD REVIEW: NEW RELEASE

ARTIST: **MICHAEL MANTLER**

TITLE: **THE JAZZ COMPOSER'S ORCHESTRA UPDATE**

LABEL: **ECM B0022098-02**

TUNES: UPDATE ONE / UPDATE EIGHT / UPDATE NINE / UPDATE ELEVEN / UPDATE FIVE / UPDATE SIX / UPDATE TEN / UPDATE TWELVE (PT 1) / UPDATE TWELVE (PT 2) / UPDATE TWELVE (PT 3). 54:55.

PERSONNEL: Michael Mantler: composer/trumpet; Nouvelle Cuisine Big Band: Christoph Cech: conductor; Harry Sokal: tenor and soprano saxophones; Wolfgang Puschnig: alto saxophone, flute; Bjarne Roupé: guitar; David Helbock: piano; Radio String Quartet Vienna: Bernie Mallinger, Ingmar Jenner: violin; Cynthia Liao: viola; Asja Valcic: cello.

The ten selections from the Jazz Composer's Orchestra are intense dramatic works with dissonant harmonies, complex and abruptly changing rhythms, and unusual and unexpected melodic segments. Overall there is a mood of seriousness, ranging from foreboding to anxiety, to the music, which is often bombastic but is occasionally subdued. At its core is the development of its creative musical ideas. While no personnel listing was provided, the orchestra is clearly made up of superior musicians who perform this challenging material with great musical rigor. Improvisations largely in the modern jazz realm include a lyrical trumpet on "Update One," a powerful tenor saxophone on "Update Eight," and dueling saxophone soloists on "Update Five."

Don Lerman

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CD REVIEW: NEW RELEASE

ARTIST: SHAWN MAXWELL'S ALLIANCE

TITLE: BRIDGE

LABEL: CHICAGO SESSIONS CS0022

TUNES: BRIDGE / MONSTER SHOES / AVA / SECTOR 7-G / PLAN Z. 32:21.

PERSONNEL: Maxwell, as, flt; Casey Fitzpatrick, ss; Keri Johnsrud, voc; Stephen Lynerd, vb; Mitch Corso, g; Rachel Maxwell, Meghan Fulton, fr h; Stacy McMichael, b; Marc Piane, b; Paul Townsend, d. No date, Tinley Park, IL.

Saxophonists Shawn Maxwell and Casey Fitzpatrick front an ensemble in which up to ten musicians participate (though not all on each selection). Maxwell's unique original compositions frequently begin with recurring musical phrases in the rhythm section or elsewhere in the ensemble, such as the repeated three bar phrase in "Monster Shoes" which lays the groundwork for further development and solos from guitarist Mitch Corso and Maxwell. Subtle use of vocalist Keri Johnsrud is effective in adding texture to the saxophone line of the slow waltz "Ava." Maxwell's fine arrangement of his closing piece "Plan Z" is based upon an intriguing odd-metered line which is well-performed by the two saxophones, made into a larger sax ensemble presumably with overdubs, and bringing to mind the energy and dexterity of New York's 29th Street Saxophone Quartet.

Don Lerman

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CD REVIEW: NEW RELEASE

ARTIST: **PRISM QUARTET**

TITLE: **THE SINGING GOBI DESERT**

LABEL: **INNOVA 885**

TUNES: THE SINGING GOBI DESERT/ MESSAGES OF WHITE/ DREAM OF A HUNDRED FLOWERS/
THE THREE TENSES 68:25

PERSONNEL: Timothy McAllister, ss; Zachary Shemon, as; Matthew Levy, ts; Taimur Sullivan, bari s; Wang Guowei, erhu; Chen Yihan, pipa; Helen Yee, yangqin; Frank Cassara, perc; Hu Jianbing, sheng; Bright Sheng, cond; Nové Deypalan, cond; Huand Ruo, cond.

February 5-8, 2012; Conshohocken, Pennsylvania.

The latest release from the PRISM Quartet finds them paired with an ensemble known as Music From China. Together they perform a series of compositions by American composers who were born in China. With support from the National Endowment for the Arts, the University of Michigan, The Presser Foundation, The Aaron Copland Fund for Music Inc., and Pennsylvania Performing Arts on Tour, these musicians were able to travel to suburban Philadelphia to record these compositions. Although PRISM is already known as a champion of new music, they have outdone themselves with this latest recording. Not only is the music incredibly stimulating, but the performances are top-notch. The pairing of professional saxophonists with traditional Chinese instrumentalists creates a beautiful blend. PRISM's lush harmonies often provide an exceptional sonority for the other instruments to romp over. The favor is returned, though, when Music From China performs accompaniment duties as the saxophones explore advanced techniques. Although the music can be playful at times, it is not novelty music. In fact, both ensembles have created stunning realizations of serious compositions. Hopefully this release will bring to public attention the incredible contemporary compositions that are currently blossoming from the Chinese-American community.

Dustin Mallory

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CD REVIEW: NEW RELEASE

ARTIST: **ARNAODOV/SZYMAŃSKI/STEFFENS/PÄRT/XENAKIS/MINCHEV**

TITLE: **SONOGRAMS**

LABEL: **LABOR 7090**

TUNES: THYEPOLIA/ TWO STUDIES/ ECSTASY OP. 2^b/ ARBOS/ EVRYALI/ FOUR WATERCOLORS
AFTER PAUL KLEE OP. 63/ SONOGRAMS/ PARI INTERVALLO 78:11

PERSONNEL: Benedikta Bonitz, recorders; Angela Tosheva, p; Hansjuergen Froetel, vln;
Laurentius Bonitz, vln; Tor Røynesdal, vla; Richard N. Eade, cel; Christo Tanev, cel; Stoyan
Pavlov, Khandjari and triangles; Ventsislav Kindalov, bass recorder.

1996-1997, 1974; Sofia, Bulgaria and Hamburg, Germany.

Sonograms is a collection of chamber music performances that link together many late 20th century composers. Each piece in the collection was written by an Eastern European composer between 1960 and 2000. The pieces are composed in either a non-traditional or post-modern form of notation. The mix of traditional instruments and compositional style produce an album that sounds like a new generation's Collegium Musicum ensemble. The unifying elements of the program are set apart by the collage of different instrumentations for each recording. Examples include the solo piano performance of "Two Studies," the string quartet on "Ecstasy op.2^b," and the recorder-Khandjari duet on "Thyepolia." The recorder performances of Pärt's "Arbos" and "Paris Intervallo" embody the "holy minimalism" for which Pärt has become known. The recordings of "Sonograms" and "Ecstasy op.2^b" were released previously, but are making their first appearance on CD here. "Ecstasy op.2^b" is the only performance that was recorded in Germany during 1974 and is the only feature for the Panorma Quartet in this collection. The rest of the recordings were made between 1996 and 1997, and are just being publically released now. Although it may seem like a bit of a grab bag, the music is very intriguing.

Dustin Mallory

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CD REVIEW: NEW RELEASE

ARTIST: **I GIGANTI DELLA MONTAGNA**

TITLE: **L'ARSENALE DELLE APPARIZIONI**

LABEL: **SLAMCD 548**

TUNES: AL QANTAR/ AL GRAN SOLE (CARICO D'AMORE?)/ VN/ DUE FRASI/ REST/ MAMU/
CONCERTO SACRO/ GINESTRA/ ESTRATTO DA "WHISTELING" 69:00

PERSONNEL: Ferdinando D'Urso, as; Lorenzo Paesani, p; Ferderico Sconosciuto, cel.

January 27-28, 2013; Scordia, Cantania, Italy.

This new release from Slam Productions exposes the work of composer and saxophonist Ferdinando D'Urso. Recorded in Italy at the beginning of 2013, this trio brings D'Urso's blend of traditional folk, jazz, and classical concert music to our ears. Right from the opening "Al Qantar," the listener is introduced to a ballroom rhumba that quickly descends into spirited chaos before reemerging into a dance. The music uses customary songforms that often turn quickly into loose improvisation. "VN" is perfect example of this: D'Urso uses a growling technique on his horn that shouts his melodic phrases. Paesani and Sconosciuto have an opportunity for a duet of free improvisation before D'Urso returns to finish the piece. The music reveals D'Urso's fine compositional abilities and a nice assembly of performances.

Dustin Mallory

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CD REVIEW: NEW RELEASE

ARTIST: Aki Takase, Ayumi Paul

TITLE: Hotl Zauberberg

LABEL: Intakt 244

TUNES: Ankunft/ Der Schnee/ Analyse/ Was ist Die Zeit? (1)/ Hans/ Ewigkeitssuppe/ Eulenspiegel/ W.A. Mozart, Menuett. KV 1 G Dur/ Peerperkorn/ J.S. bach, Partita Nr 3 BWV 1006, Preludio/ Veränderung/ Donnerschlag/ Was ist Die Zeit? (2)/ Frau Chauchat/ Vetter J./ Zauberlied/ Was ist Die Zeit? (3)/ Finis Operis 52: 39

PERSONNEL: Aki Takase, p; Ayumi Paul vln Berlin May 2014

This is a classical record, with compositions by the two performers with two classical pieces added to the mix. I really enjoyed the record, both because of how much I like duos and because the music held my attention throughout.

I really enjoyed the four pieces in succession beginning with the Mozart piece and ending with "Veränderung." One thing these pieces show is how contemporary Bach sounds. His work fit right in. And the other pieces provide a nice contrast to the delicate melodies of Mozart.

The rest of the CD is a mix of short pieces reflecting different styles of contemporary classical music with the occasional bow to romanticism I also liked the recurring theme of "Zeit", once played by solo violin, once by solo piano and then in unison. Another highlight is the great bow work by Paul on "Donnerschlag."

Definitely for fans of the violin and of contemporary classical music.

Bernie Koenig

CD review from Volume 41, No. 3, 2015
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CD REVIEW: REISSUE

ARTIST: **Anthony Braxton**

TITLE: **Trio and Duet**

LABEL: **Sackville 3007**

TUNES: HM---421/ The Song is You/ Embraceable You/ You Go To My Head/ On Green Dolphin Street/ I Remember You 64:34

PERSONNEL: Anthony Braxton, as, clt, contrabass clt, chimes, bass d; Leo Smith, tpt, flgh, pocket trp, perc; Richard Teitelbaum, Moog synth, perc. Dave Holland, bass. Toronto, October 7, 1974

I am a huge Braxton fan, and probably have the original vinyl somewhere. I love the interplay between the trumpet, winds and synthesizer. Back when this record first came out, I probably heard it more in line with the experimental classical music I was listening to then, most likely because of the use of the synthesizer. But I also heard it as a jazz album. As the liner notes point out, this conflict of playing jazz with classical influences has been a problem for Braxton. But, and as time has shown, if people just opened their ears, they would realize how great Braxton is.

The opening piece, which takes up a full third of the CD is an original by Braxton and clearly shows minimalist influences. I especially like Smith's bits of sound, accompanied by percussion sounds and synthesizer.

The remainder of the CD is made up of the duo of Braxton and Holland playing standards, with the last two tracks newly issued. Braxton's tone on these tracks seems to me to be a bit warmer than usual, and Holland proves to be a great accompanist as well as a soloist. And what more needs to be said than getting a chance to listen to two masters interacting with each other. If you missed this record when it first came out, here is your chance to catch up on Braxton in a mellow mood.

Bernie Koenig

CD review from Volume 41, No. 3, 2015
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CD REVIEW: NEW RELEASE

ARTIST: **Fred Frith, Barry Guy**

TITLE: **Backscatter Bright Blue**

LABEL: **Intakt 236**

TUNES: Where the Cities Gleam in Darkness/ Big Flowers/ Breaking and Entering/ The Circus is a Song of Praise/ Little by Little/ A Single Street Stretched Tight by the Waters/ Climbing the Ladder/ Dependence over the Abyss/ Walking on Wire/ Moments Full of Many Lives 60:18

PERSONNEL: Fred Frith, elec g; Barry Guy, bass Guntershausen, August 14, 2007

This is an interesting CD with a long piece at the beginning and end with a series of short pieces in between. The opening piece sets the stage for the whole CD with both players pulling out all the stops. Frith creates walls of sound mixed with single notes while Guy provides a strong foundation, as well as adding to the wall of sound.

Though there are many pieces, I often had difficulty in determining when one piece ended and another began. So I just listened to the CD as one long piece with various sections. In this way certain pieces stood out: The bell like sounds Frith gets from the guitar on "Circus," his lyricism on "Street," and the use of voices on "Ladder."

Fans of these two musicians will love this CD as they perform excellently. They interact beautifully, with Guy provided monumental support with his big sound. On the longer pieces we get to hear Guy up front, as well as in his supporting role, and in a more interactive mode. And he also creates interesting sounds which blend nicely with Frith's guitar.

I must admit to not being a great fan of the electric guitar, but Frith turns the instrument into a whole range of instruments, at times sounding like a guitar, at others like a synthesizer, which is why I enjoyed this CD very much.

Bernie Koenig

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CD REVIEW: NEW RELEASE

ARTIST: **Grencso, Tickmayer, Geroly**

TITLE: **Trio Kontraszt**

LABEL: **BMC 215**

TUNES: Fragment I/ Fragment II/ Billiard/ Fragment III/ Fragment IV/ Slow Street/ Fragment V/
Fragment VI/ Ostinato Barbaro Prelude/ Ostinato Barbaro/ Fragment VII/ Fragment VIII/ Fragment IX/
Hoping/ Fragment X/ Bird Lover 48:38

PERSONNEL: Istvan Grenco ts, bass clt, alto flt; Steven Kovacs Tickmayer, p, org, harmonium, celesta;
Tamas geroly, d, perc, gardon Budapest, 27 October 2013

Like so many of those on Leo from Russia, here are three Hungarians playing in a similar mode: classically trained musicians improvising in a jazz manner. On this CD the forms change with the Fragments clearly in the contemporary classical vein, while the other pieces are jazzy. The fragments are all relatively short and reflect classical composition, even though at times we hear a nice jazzy saxophone as in "Fragment VII". "Slow Sreet" is very bluesy with some nice breathy tenor work by Grensco. And I love his bass clarinet on "Bird Lover".

My favorite tracks are the Ostinatos. The Prelude sounds classical, getting ready to introduce a long work based on the material presented, but the main piece is much jazzier and cooks. The foundation is an ostinato on the piano, which connects both pieces. And "Hoping" really cooks. The trio play extremely well together. This is especially apparent on the improvised fragments which sound composed, while the actual composed tunes "Billiard," "Slow Street," and "Bird Lover" have distinct melodies but are well developed by improvisation.

Bernie Koenig

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CD REVIEW: NEW RELEASE

ARTIST: **Gueorgui Kornazov “Horizons” Quintet**

TITLE: **The Budapest Concert**

LABEL: **BMC 216**

TUNES: Na Toni/ Children’s Song/ Veronique/ Budapest Suite: Pleveli/ Tango de Mars/ Balkan Spirit/
Cry/ Feux/ Love song 73:27

PERSONNEL: Gueorgui Kornazov, tbn; Emile Pariesien, ss; Manu Codjia g; Marc Buronfosse, bass; Karl Jannuska, d. Budapest, 8 September, 2011

In a sense the CD is in two parts. The first part has three tunes, while the rest of the CD is taken up by the “Suite”. While listening to the suite, which features Hungarian melodies, I kept thinking is this what Bartok would have done if he was a jazz composer? Not so much because there are classical elements here, which is not the case, but because of the inventive use of what, to my ears, sound like folk melodies.

I especially like the interplay between Pariesien and Codjia on “Children” and “Veronique” is a great showcase for Kornazov where gets all kinds of sounds from his horn. I wonder if some of those sounds are from the mouthpiece alone. Other highlights include the great solo by Buronfosse on “Blakan” and the solo by Jannuska on “Cry”.

In the old days of LPs, the suite would have been able to stand alone, but thanks to the CD format we get three extra tunes.

Bernie Koenig

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CD REVIEW: NEW RELEASE

ARTIST: Gualtieri, Allen, Valitutto, Parrish, Piazza

TITLE: Saturn's Rival

LABEL: PfMentum 079

TUNES: I/II/III/IV 44:02

PERSONNEL: Maxwell Gualteri, g; Susan Allen harp; Richard Valitutto, p; Ryan Parish, Winds; Anilla Piazza, perc Los Angeles, May 2011

Another record with a noise making electric guitar. Gualtieri likes to create what sounds like feedback noise with his guitar and then the others play on top of it. But he also takes long periods of doing it alone. After a bit it gets boring.

The others players have their moments: I really like Allen's harp, an instrument I quite like to listen to, and Valitutto turns in some nice playing as well. I would like to have heard much more percussion to stand up to the guitar, instead of some polite hitting of various things, and I also would have liked to hear some longer lines from Parish.

Since the first listening did not do much for me I put it to my test: I played it again while I kept busy answering emails and such to see if the music would force me Alas, it did not.

Bernie Koenig

CD review from Volume 41, No. 3, 2015
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CD REVIEW: NEW RELEASE

ARTIST: Han-earl Park, Catherine Sikora, Nick Didkovsky, Josh Simon

TITLE: Anomic Aphasia

LABEL: Slam 659

TUNES: Monopod/ Pleonasm (Metis 9)/ Flying Rods (Metis 9)/ Hydraphon/ Stopcock 70:46

PERSONNEL: Han-earl Park:g;; Catherine Sikora: ss, ts; Nick Didkovsky: g; Josh Sinton: bs, b clt tracks 1&5 Brooklyn NY, June 5 2013, 2-4 New York City, Oct 29, 2013

This CD is from two sessions: tracks 1 and 5 and then tracks 2,3,4. Tracks 1 and 5 are just a trio with the two guitars and Catherine Sikora on sax, and the other tracks feature the full quartet.

This group plays on the borders of free jazz and noise music. I say this as I play in both contexts, and, at times, the border is hard to define, as free jazz can approach noise, especially when the instruments in question lend themselves to noise, as do the electric guitars.

The two guitarists have different styles and complement each other, and the horns sometimes contrast and sometimes blend in with the guitars.

Having said that I must admit to not being a fan of the electric guitar. Indeed, I am not much of a fan of the guitar, period, though I do not mind an amplified acoustic guitar as much as an electric guitar. This is from a listening standpoint. Playing with them is another story, as I love working with Murray Favro of the Nihilist Spasm Band. So this record did not do much for me. But to be fair, people who do like the guitar will find much to like here.

As mentioned, Park and Didkovsky work well together with their contrasting styles, and both horn players listen carefully and fit in well. I especially liked Sikora's soprano as it worked with the guitars, and Sinton's bass clarinet provides some nice contrast.

Not for everyone, but guitar lovers take notice.

Bernie Koenig

CD review from Volume 41, No. 3, 2015
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CD REVIEW: NEW RELEASE

ARTIST: **Helen Bledsoe, Alexey Lapin**

TITLE: **Ghost Icebreaker**

LABEL: **Leo 704**

TUNES: Snow/ The Rising Star of the Falling Sky/ Settlement/ Ghost Icebreaker/ White oranges/
December (one Man's Day is Another Man's Dusk/ Into Thin Air 50:25

PERSONNEL: Helen Bledsoe, flt; Alexey Lapin, p, St Petersburg, Russia, December 27, 2012

On this CD it is impossible to tell whether these are composed or improvised pieces, or, as I think after a couple of listenings, a combination of both. And if this is the case, then the transitions from composition to improvisation are seamless. I say this as it is clear that these musicians have classical training and are aware of the contemporary classical music scene. And there are clear jazz influences as well.

The sound Bledsoe gets from her flute reminds me of a recording I have of Japanese folk music—a big open sound, and this sound contrasts beautifully with Lapin's staccato piano. Throughout the record, the interplay between the two is excellent. Each track is like listening to a conversation between to animated speakers on different subjects.

And both players get different effects from their instruments. On "Rising Star" it sounds as if lapin is hitting the inside of the piano to get a percussive effect, and on the title track it sounds as if he is bowing the strings of the piano. Bledsoe gets in some interesting growls and hisses as well.

My favorite track is "Settlement" where the two engage in a very spirited conversation: Both may be talking at the same time but they are also listening to each other.

In short another winner from Leo.

Bernie Koenig

CD review from Volume 41, No. 3, 2015
www.cadencemagazine.com

CD REVIEW: NEW RELEASE

ARTIST: Oliver Lake, William Parker

TITLE: To Roy

LABEL: Intakt 243

TUNES: Variation On a Theme of Marvin gaye/ Check/ Is It Alrighy?/ Bisceglia/ Flight Plan/ Victor Jara/ Of Us/ Bonu/ Net Down/ Light Over Sill Water Paints a Portrait of God/ To Roy 50:59

PERSONNEL: Oliver Lake as; William Parker, bass Brooklyn, NY January 14, 2014

What can one say about two masters playing together. A colleague has a term when great musicians play and make it sound easy, when you know it is not easy. He calls it “deceptively simple”.

I put this CD on fairly late thinking I would listen to a couple of tracks, and finish the next day, but before I knew it the whole CD had played. Which is a round about way of saying how great it is.

I have been fans of both of these players for years. I don’t know how many records I have with them, so I can hardly be objective here. Lake is a bit mellower than usual, though the sounds one expects from him are here, especially on “Net Down.” Parker turns some incredible arco work on “Flight Plan” and some interesting flamenco sounding strumming on “Victor Jara.”

But mainly this session is about how the play together, which they do very, very well. Parker always lays down a solid foundation which allows Lake to go off on his flighty explorations, and Parker’s solos are always great, with big sound.

In short a really great record.

Bernie Koenig

CD review from Volume 41, No. 3, 2015
www.cadencemagazine.com

CD REVIEW: NEW RELEASE

ARTIST: **Paola Porta**

TITLE: **Beginner's State of Mind**

LABEL: **Slam 561**

TUNES: Freedom of Speech/ Beginner's State of Mind/ Blue Room/ Isabella/ Round Trip/ Peace Keeping/ Soulful Dreams/ That'll Do/ November/ Raincoat Blues 51:55

PERSONNEL: Paolo Paorta, ts; Alessandro Majorino, bass; Alessandro Minetto, d. Bruino Italy, June 22, 23, 2013

A good almost old-fashioned bop recording out of the 60s. Something I hear a lot of on the Abeat label from Italy. Porta has a big sound without a lot of vibrato and he uses it effectively with his simple straightforward melodies and good solid solos. Every once in a while he sounds a bit like Sonny Rollins, and then he will throw in a long Cotraneish line. And Joe Lovano also comes to mind.

Majorino has a big, solid sound which comes through everything, and MInetto keeps things cooking in something approaching a Blakey style. Majorino's solos are solid and MInetto's big solo on "dreams" works fine with some help from Porta, as does his trading 8s on "November."

There are no surprises here. A good, solid performance by an accomplished trio who play well together.

Bernie Koenig

CD review from Volume 41, No. 3, 2015
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CD REVIEW: NEW RELEASE

ARTIST: **Rob Mazurik and Black Cube SP**

TITLE: **Return the Tides: Ascension Suite and Holy Ghost**

LABEL: **Cuneiform Records 8466**

TUNES: Oh Mother (Angel's Wings)/ Return the Tides/ Let the Rain Fall Upwards/ Reverse the Lightning
68:06

PERSONNEL: Rob Mazurek, cnt, electronics, vcl; Mauricio Takara d, cavaquinho. Vcl; Guilherme Granado kybds, synth, sampler, vcl; Thomas Rohrer, rabeca, electronics, ss, vcl; Rogerio Martins perc, vcl; Rodrigo Brandao, vcl Sao Paulo, May 20, 2013

This is a band I would probably enjoy playing with, but I do not enjoy listening to. I say this as someone who sometimes plays with a noise band (The Nihilist Spasm Band). I love playing with them but I do not particularly enjoy listening to them, even with me playing.

This group uses composition and improvisation, along with influences from a variety of sources, from classical to Brazilian folk to rock. On "Tides" I heard the influence of Frank Zappa.

All the tunes use some kind of repetitive foundation, whether it is a repeating pattern or a drone pattern, and improvisation takes place above this pattern. The electronics dominate, but Mazurik turns in some interesting cornet playing, especially on "Mother." And Rohrer turns in some nice soprano work on "Lightning." Also at various times one hears voices, though they are indistinct. It is as if the voices are just vocal sounds to add to the overall sound.

"Lightning" begins with the Takara on cavaquinho---a Portuguese guitar that is amplified, and then distorted through electronics. A Brazilian rhythm develops underneath the melody line, along with the steady electronic sound heard throughout the CD. And, like all the pieces here, as it develops, the electronic sound dominates, with the cavaquinho going into chant mode. And then Rohrer solos over the beat. Then things get quiet and a new drone starts, with voices, sounding almost like a religious chant.

An interesting CD for people who like electronics and drones, with a variety of influences thrown in.

Bernie Koenig

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CD REVIEW: NEW RELEASE

ARTIST: **MARY PANACCI**

TITLE: **HER PERFUME**

LABEL: **MaryPanacci 003**

TUNES: A Beautiful Friendship / How About You ? / Love Is Stronger Far Than We / Double Rainbow / Love Dance / Tangerine / I Wish You Love / Her Perfume / A Child Is Born / Almost Like Being In Love / Some Other Time. 46:47.

PERSONNEL: Mary Panacci, Natalie Panacci, John Alcorn, vcl; Luis Mario Ochoa, vcl, g, arr;; Anthony Panacci, p, org, acc, arr ; Mike Downes, Roberto Occhipinti, Collin Barrett, b; Kevin Dempsey, Mark Kelso, d; Rosendo (Chendi) Léon, d, perc; Art Avalos, perc; Steve McDade, Steve Crowe, Kevin Turcotte, tpt; Kelly Jefferson, Michael Stuart, Mike Murley, ts; Russ Little, Don Laws, tbn; Vern Dorge, bari s, flt; Ron Allen, Les Alt, flt; Andy Ballantyne, Don Englert, cl; John Johnson, cl, ss; Lenny Graf, ob; Rob Piltch, g; Shelly Berger, b, arr; Lenny Solomon, Lynn Kuo, Jayne Maddison vln; Claudio Vena, vla; Wendy Solomon, cel. - Mississauga, Ontario, Canada; no recording dates listed.

Produced by her husband, Anthony Panacci, who apparently spared no expense in setting the vocal jewel he believes his wife to be in as supportive a setting as possible, this CD documents a Panacci family celebration with, as Mary explains in her insert notes, "some great food and drinks with our musicians....simply enjoying "the hang." Indeed, the album insert offers a photo of many of the players still sitting at the "hang" table.

The album's jazz quotient might be said to rest squarely with Shelly Berger's energetically swinging "Tangerine" arrangement. And while Ms. P. sings well enough throughout, probably a little better than your Aunt Ida, there are times when a slightly shrill undercurrent breaks the sunny surface and the airily weightless vocals seem to falter. Finally, accompanied by only Rob Piltch on guitar, Mike Downes on bass and a very restrained Kevin Dempsey at the drum set, in her "Some Other Time," vocal, we hear Mary Panacci sound like an adult who has some experiential resources with which to inform a serious lyric. Most of the proceeding tracks might easily be dismissed as overly elaborated middle-of-the-road, easy-listening Pandora Pop.

Still, the album's repertoire has a few surprising quirks. The title tune is an original, attributed to the primary couple with an assist from Shelly Berger. In performance, Mary seems to be reaching for a sort of blues ambience, but the recording balance favors the tenor sax/organ duopoly and the lyrics never come clear, so I have no idea what it's exactly all about. The program goes on to touch upon Latin music with Jobim's "Rainbow" and Ivan Lins' "Dance, then spans the Atlantic to appropriate Francis Lai's "Love Is Far Stronger" from the 1966 movie soap, "A Man And A Woman." Over time, that song has had French, Italian and English lyrics appended. Mary sings them in English and Italian with full reverb enhanced orchestral support, and I must report that the song is still a bore. Then, too, there's another Gallic yawn on the docket with Charles Trenet's "Wish You Love." On "Almost," I believe we are treated to a brief, spliced in portion of the Panacci daughter, Natalie, singing the same song when she was just five years old. Precociously precious? You bet. And on only "How About You?," John Alcorn is invited to the "hang" to help Mary with the familiar Ralph Freed lyric. If producer Panacci was hoping for a few vocal sparks, he had to be very disappointed.

The best that can be said is that the sessions involved - and there had to be several- offered employment to a full contingent of musicians, along with food and drink and a certain Panacci family "hang" time conviviality. Isn't that enough?

Alan Bargebuhr

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CD REVIEW: NEW RELEASE

ARTIST: SAX GORDON

TITLE: IN THE WEE SMALL HOURS

LABEL: DELMARK DE-5018

TUNES: THE GLORY OF LOVE / IN THE WEE SMALL HOURS OF THE MORNING /WHEN I GROW TOO OLD TO DREAM / MY OLD FLAME / WHATEVER LOLA WANTS / BLUE AND SENTIMENTAL / BIG TOP BLUES / EASY LIVING / BUBBLES. 49:57.

PERSONNEL: Gordon, ts; Alberto Marsico, org; Alessandro Minetto, d. 9/17&18/2013. Bruino (Torino) Italy.

With a handful of solo albums under his belt and much session work, ex-Roomful Of Blues reedman Gordon (aka Gordon Beadle) has issued what this reviewer believes is his most realized work yet. Simply staffed by just organ and drum kit (no guitar, no percussion) the tenorist is tonally free to let his big-toned tenor soar over a program of ballads and blues in a no-frills manner that should bring smiles to veteran listeners over-saturated with big production settings. Organ aficionados should be well accustomed to Alberto Marsico who has paid more than his share of dues and stickman Minetto lays the time right in the pocket. Fans of Jimmy Forrest, Eddie "Lockjaw" Davis, Ike Quebec and others of that ilk will welcome this with open ears. Naturally "Big Top Blues" is a standout but all nine cuts managed to hold this writer's attention from the lightly swinging "Glory Of Love" to the ending swinger "Bubbles". Maybe a tad too heavy on the balladic fare but that's okay. Maybe the next one will be a burning live session. Easily recommended.

Larry Hollis

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CD REVIEW: NEW RELEASE

ARTIST: CHRIS FOREMAN

TITLE: NOW IS THE TIME

LABEL: SIRENS SR-5022

TUNES: NOW IS THE TIME / SHAKE A HAND(+)/ LONELY AVENUE(*)/ LIL' DARLIN'(+)(*)/ I COVER THE WATERFRONT(*)/ DOGGONE(*)/ COTTON BOY BLUES(+)/ THE PEEPER(+)(#). 53:44

PERSONNEL: Foreman, org, p(+); Andy Brown, g(*); Diane "Li' Sax" Ellis, as(#). 7/2&3/2014. No locations given.

After three compact discs and a DVD with his trio-mates Bobby Broom and Greg Rocking ham and a pair of sideman appearances with vocalist Kimberly Gordon, sightless Chicago organ master Chris Foreman has finally recorded his debut disc for the Sirens label.

For all intents and purposes it is a solo recital with the leader performing on organ plus piano added on four titles. He's joined on the Ray Charles anthem, the Basie classic and the following two numbers by guitarist Andy Brown whose smooth lines lack the bluesy bite of such organ-associated string stalwarts as Jimmy Ponder or Melvin Sparks. The final track finds Foreman in the company of altoist Diane Ellis rendering her best Hank Crawford impersonation on the composer's "The Peeper".

Elsewhere, there are covers of the Bird title tune and a pair of scripts from the keyboardist's admitted main influence, Jimmy McGriff, which lend themselves well to his Black gospel/blues-infused stylings. It is apparent that his long-running, solo one-night-a-week gig at the Windy Cities Green Mill has paid off big time.

Larry Hollis

CD review from Volume 41, No. 3, 2015
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CD REVIEW: NEW RELEASE

ARTIST: Dom Minasi/Chris Kelsey

TITLE: Woodstock To New York

LABEL: Tzazz Krytyk

TUNES: Fondness & Trepidation, Blues Ultimatum, Memories of Being Very Angry, Rod Serling, Di Dow, That Ain't the Blues, Say What?, Tip Toe, Eruption

PERSONNEL: Dom Minasi, Chris Kelsey 2014

The soprano sax that Chris weaves against Dom's splendid guitar makes for an improvised musical adventure you'll never forget! Tunes like "Memories of Being Angry" convey all the strident energy you might think of for a title like that, but this duo doesn't leave the listener out, either... you're right there with them, in the moment, for every note & every transition. This isn't the Woodstock all of us "boomers" remember; no Jimi or Carlos, but songs like "That Aint The Blues" are just as high-energy as the stage performances on Max's farm were... a truly impressive tune, to be sure! It was the laid-back pace on the beautiful "Tip Toe" that made my aural appendages stand right on up & take notice, though... this one definitely got my vote for favorite of the nine tunes offered up... one of the best reed/string duos I've heard in a long time. I give Dom/Chris a MOST HIGHLY RECOMMENDED, Get more information & listen to sample tracks at [their CD Baby release page](#) for this fine CD

Dick Metcalf

CD review from Volume 41, No. 3, 2015
www.cadencemagazine.com

CD REVIEW: NEW RELEASE

ARTIST: TRIO 3 + VIJAY IYER

TITLE: WIRING

LABEL: INTAKT 233

TUNES: THE PROWL / SYNAPSE II / WILLOW SONG / SHAVE / ROSMARIE / SUITE FOR TRAYVON (AND THOUSANDS MORE): SLIMM/FALLACIES/ADAGIO / WIRING / CHIARA / TRIBUTE TO BU. 69:55.

PERSONNEL: Oliver Lake, as; Reggie Workman, b; Andrew Cyrille, dr.; Iyer, p. 8/14-15/13, New York.

Three stalwarts of jazz have joined in a group, Trio 3, for their joint worldwide concerts. With over 130 years of combined experience performing with innovative jazz icons like John Coltrane, Cecil Taylor or Mary Lou Williams, Trio 3's members—Oliver Lake, Reggie Workman and Andrew Cyrille—continue to explore sonic potentials with varying styles and colors not only from the entire history of jazz, but also through the absorption of ideas from other cultures. Their travels, not to mention their interest in jazz without boundaries, led the trio to the Swiss Intakt label, which records other adventurous musicians like Ingrid Laubrock, Dave Holland, Mary Halvorson, Gerry Hemingway, Marilyn Crispell, Anthony Braxton, William Parker, Greg Osby, and Alexander von Schlippenbach. In 2009, Intakt released *Berne Concert*, a live Trio 3 album recorded in 2007 with Swiss pianist and Intakt vice president Irène Schweizer, with whom Cyrille had recorded a duo album in 1988. During the same year, Trio 3's recording with Geri Allen, *At This Time*, was made available. Thus was established the format for Trio 3's inviting of free-spirited piano players to record with the group. Additional recordings with Allen and Jason Moran followed. Equally adventurous and yet as thoroughly aware of the jazz continuum, Vijay Iyer now adds his own intellectual interests and musical personality to *Wiring*. True to form, Trio 3's new album includes some of the guest pianist's own compositions. Iyer's "The Prowl" opens *Wiring* with its modal basis for unison alto sax-and-piano darting about without the expected exclamatory zeal, as if its projected image were stealthy and in the shadows. The exclamatory zeal comes on the next track, Reggie Workman's crashing and thundering "Synapse II." That piece frees all four musicians into un-metered expression, even as it springs from written composition more than it appears. Workman's "Willow Song" is animated by its gospel element that Iyer introduces with his rubato solo. He combines slow blues with treble-noted dissonance, reminding listeners that Trio 3 covers the entire breadth of jazz styles, from this stirring and soulful outpouring of the spirit to its probes into the genre's future. "Rosmarie," in honor of Intakt Records co-founder Rosmarie Meier, develops from free improvisation, instantaneous with the intent of personalized collaboration that distinguishes the group. Even as Trio 3 and Iyer give and take and elaborate upon unrehearsed ideas, they retain a melodic quality, particularly from Lake, that contributes to the overall mood. Workman's expressive descending arco bass lines and plucked ostinato pulsing, as well as Cyrille's soft cymbal shimmers, provide the colors of the piece. Iyer's upper-register interjected note clusters and sprinkled fill-ins behind Lake, not to mention his growing tremolo volume toward the end of the track, indicate how well suited he is for Trio 3's musical ethic—and what a natural choice he was to join the group. Indeed, Iyer subordinates the force of his own individualism to join in Trio 3's collective spirit, wherein a group's personality rules. Nonetheless, the album's fulcrum, providing balance and social relevance, is Iyer's three-part "Suite for Trayvon (and Thousands More)," which comprehensively expresses his thoughts about injustice, as suggested by Trayvon Martin's life. Those parts—"Slimm," "Fallacies" and "Adagio"—leave much to interpretation and engaged discussion as the moods evolve from lightheartedness to sorrow and as the harmonies progress from major to minor. As on the other tracks, the percussiveness mixed with lyricism, Workman's flexible mastery of the bass, and Cyrille's supple support from varying colors and unforced drive—not to mention the group's immediate mutability—create authenticity of feeling that drives the music. Their cover of pianist Curtis Clark's jazz waltz, "Chiara," fits in with the other tracks of *Wiring* as the Trio 3+1 musicians adapt it to their personalities with a subdued delicacy of performance, Lake conveying melody with his tartness of tone and Iyer transforming it with harmonic substitutions. To compensate for Cyrille's virtual absence on "Rosmarie" or his respectful restraint on other tracks, Trio 3 chose to end *Wiring* with his remembrance of Art Blakey, "Tribute to Bu." Irrepressible too, Cyrille delivers a spirited drum solo with the seasoned drummer's avoidance of unnecessary pyrotechnics. His still-youthful exuberance draws in the other band members for brief improvised contributions of their own before Cyrille accelerates to a final cymbal crash.

Wiring is a solid recording during which, as always, its musicians value the exhilarating infinite potential of free jazz improvisation. Iyer joins in the trio's aesthetic spirit so seamlessly that one wonders which pianist will be their next logical choice.

Bill Donaldson

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CD REVIEW: NEW RELEASE

ARTIST: TOM CHANG

TITLE: TONGUE & GROOVE

LABEL: RAW TOAST RECORDS

TUNES: *SPINAL TAP/GOES TO 11 / DJANGOLONGO / VARIATIONS FOR PIANO OP. 27 / SLEEPWALKER / TONGUE & GROOVE / SCATTERBRAIN / BAR CODES / THE LOGOS / ENTANGOED HEART / SPINAL TAP TK. 2. 49:38.*

PERSONNEL: *Chang, g; Greg Ward, as; Jason Rigby, ts; Chris Lightcap b; Gerald Cleaver, d; Akshay Anatapadmanabhan, kanjira, mridangam; Subash Chandran, konnakol. 6/26/12, Brooklyn, NY.*

As the jazz curator of the Cornelia Street Café, Tom Chang continuously chooses for performance there some of New York's explorative jazz musicians. His choices are based not on commercial financial objectives, as for example a concert hall's might be, but upon the individuality and authenticity of the artists' musical searches. Even though Chang moved to New York in 1989 and has performed with some of the city's more adventurous jazz musicians like Tom Rainey or Rudresh Mahanthappa, not to mention backing talent like Luther Vandross, he waited until 2012 to record his first album, *Tongue and Groove*.

Chang's exposure to the abundant jazz talent performing at the Café no doubt helped him find just the right musicians for the recording. His goal involved the synthesis of various, and sometimes disparate, styles that he studied and learned during his journey from South Korea to Toronto to Los Angeles to Boston to New York, always absorbing the music and belatedly allowing himself to influence others with his own style too. Finally, *Tongue & Groove* presents an individualistic guitarist with his own sound who seemed to be waiting in the wings, even as curator, before taking center stage. And now he has.

Chang's sense of wonder for music, his joy derived from it, and his constant exploration of possibilities explain the range of styles epitomized by the title track. For it begins, not with a vamp or instrumental improvisation, but with the human voice (tongue). Thetakudi Harihara Subash Chandran improvises through konnakol, the Carnatic pitchless vocal percussion with its staccato precision of articulation. Though the practice of konnakol was fading, Chang's fascination with it led him to use it as the basis for jazz composition when he assigned pitches to Chandran's syllables. And Chang's group carries that concept even further when its members all develop from the konnakol a *groove* that concludes, after successive solos, with a repeat of the melody in fits and starts of quickly shifting meters.

The opening track, "Spinal Tap/Goes to 11," is an acknowledgement of Chang's inspiration by rock guitarists like Jimi Hendrix and Jeff Beck. Chris Lightcap's charging bass lines are soon joined by Chang's on guitar. The lineup of two saxophones allows for openness and quickness of improvisation, instant metrical shifts and elasticity of tempo that set up original, energetic and thrilling results. It's an understatement to write that the entire group is thoroughly engaged in the performances, establishing a unity of effort that bonds the group into common purposes. Saxophonists Greg Ward and Jason Rigby

don't engage in conventional parallel harmonic movement, but instead in telepathic interplay and twisting inventive lines, sometimes rippling, sometimes darting, sometimes daring.

Chang appears to revel in switching between the accompanist's and the soloist's roles as he propels the force of his performances in both the first and final tracks of the "Spinal Tap" theme as both tracks get progressively intense before the stop-on-a-dime finishes. Chang's tributes to influences are reflected not only in his song titles ("Djangolongo," "Entangoed Heart," "Variations for Piano Op. 27"), but also in the styles that he personalizes with his New York edginess. One would expect "Djangolongo" to be played on acoustic guitar, but not so. Instead, Chang uses the Django influence as a point of departure to express his own personality. Once again, the Carnatic influence emerges as Akshay Anantapadmanabhan's mridangam sets up the rhythms with its dhi patterns as an undercurrent to Chang's electric guitar solo before a jazz-based modified thani avarthanam finishes the piece.

Chang's tribute to the tango provides hints at its rhythms while avoiding its quick crescendos and passionate narratives, Rigby's dark improvisation recalling its haunting suggestions of danger. As for Anton Webern, Chang's group internalizes his serialism and broad intervals, expressively performed pointillistically without the restrictions of a written score. "Variations for Piano Op. 27" glides immediately into "Sleepwalker," which retains "Variations'" underlying percussive energy as Chang and Ward play non-conventional unison tone rows while Rigby improvises during the track's minute-long length. "Bar Codes," a song title of double meaning, as is the album's name, proceeds as a blues. Another example of Chang's affinity for tinkering with an existing form and stretching its possibilities, "Bar Codes" incorporates the grittiness of deep blues soulfulness with the tension of differing complementary meters.

As the Cornelia Street Café's curator, Chang believes in its mission of encouraging "the contemporary and new while keeping an eye on the past." At this point in his musical journey, Chang has taken that goal to heart, as *Tongue & Groove* suggests, even as the album introduces a passionately directed guitarist who has been hiding in plain sight for a couple decades.

Bill Donaldson

CD review from Volume 41, No. 3, 2015
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CD REVIEW: NEW RELEASE

ARTIST: PEGGY CONNELLY

TITLE: THAT OLD BLACK MAGIC

LABEL: VERSE BCP-53

TUNES: *THAT OLD BLACK MAGIC / EV'RY TIME WE SAY GOODBYE / TRAV'LIN' LIGHT / EV'RY TIME / IT NEVER ENTERED MY MIND / WHY SHOULDN'T I / GENTLEMEN FRIEND / WHAT IS THERE TO SAY / HE WAS TOO GOOD TO ME / I GOT PLENTY O' NUTTIN' / FOOLS RUSH IN / ALONE TOGETHER. 35:39.*

PERSONNEL: Connelly, vcl; Russ Garcia, ldr; Russ Cheever, ss; Charlie Mariano, as; Bill Holman, ts; Jimmy Giuffre, bari s; Pete Candoli, Stu Williamson, tpt; Al Hendrickson, g; Max Bennett, b; Stan Levey, d. 1/16-18/56, Hollywood, CA.

Who was Peggy Connelly? you may ask. I may ask. We may ask.

What's interesting about Peggy Connelly's career is the nature of singers' staying power, or the lack thereof, due to the promotion of agents, fortuitous circumstances, word-of-mouth interest among musicians, or sheer undeniable talent that affects listeners powerfully. Connelly did maintain a musical career in film and records, as well as recording with The New Christy Minstrels. As for connections, she married Dick Rowan of *Laugh-In* and reportedly was a companion of Frank Sinatra's. But still, Connelly never received broad public recognition, let alone acclaim, like an Ella Fitzgerald, a Billie Holiday or even a Keely Smith. Connelly never broke through that barrier of personal celebrity, as innumerable entertainers strive to accomplish. No one knew what the future held when Bethlehem Records recorded Connelly's only personal record under her own name. Besides the opportunity to uncover Connelly's talent with the typically brief tracks produced for radio play, *That Old Black Magic* offers some excellent work, both as a group and individually, by the members of Russ Garcia's Wigville Band, including Charlie Mariano, Bill Holman, Jimmy Giuffre and Pete Candoli. Backed by Garcia's arrangements, some witty and some conventional with background fills, Connelly covers her selection of standards with versatility, a sweetness of presentation and a feel for dynamics that could fill a theater. On the title track, the first in the album, Connelly trades wordless vamps with Mariano before the saxophonist himself improvises a solo with bright exuberance. Or we get to hear guitarist Al Hendrickson improvise, backed by the band, on "Trav'lin' Light," not to mention providing accompaniment for Connelly on "It Never Entered My Mind." At a typical 1950's album length of just over 35 minutes, *That Old Black Magic* documents the ambitions of a talented singer who may have been unrecorded if Bethlehem Records hadn't released the album as part of its series of recordings associated with its regular roster of musicians.

Bill Donaldson

CD review from Volume 41, No. 3, 2015

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CD REVIEW: REISSUE

ARTIST: VARIOUS ARTISTS

TITLE: FOUR HORNS AND A LUSH LIFE

LABEL: VERSE BCP-46

TUNES: I'LL NEVER FORGET WHAT'S HER NAME / BUT BEAUTIFUL / DANCING ON THE CEILING / THE BOY NEXT DOOR / JUST ONE OF THOSE THINGS / ZIGEUNER / LIMEHOUSE BLUES / LUSH LIFE/ LOVER, COME BACK TO ME / RAMONA / SOMEONE TO WATCH OVER ME / WHAT IS THIS THING CALLED LOVE. 37:10.

PERSONNEL: Russ Garcia,ldr; Frank Rosolino, Herbie Harper, Tommy Pederson, Maynard Ferguson, tbn; Dick Houlgate, bari s; Marty Paich, p; Red Mitchell, b; Stan Levey, d. No place or date given.

The four horns consist of trombones. That is, the four major horns do, although Dick Houlgate enriches the sound of the trombone arrangements with some lower reed work too. *Four Horns and a Lush Life* is a meeting of talents that were entirely appropriate for the recording. It consists of a combination of engaging arrangements and the unspoken instant communication between musicians that occurs when perfect circumstances coincide. From the album's start with Garcia's own snappy composition, "I'll Never Forget What's Her Name," it's evident that this album deserves rediscovery and full appreciation. The trombonists, consummate professionals that they are, perform with spirited vigor that no doubt provided precisely the sound that Garcia sought when he arranged the tunes. In addition, the album includes pianist Marty Paich, bassist Red Mitchell and drummer Stan Levey early in their careers when they were a part of the West Coast jazz scene. Paich in particular stands out with extended solos that alternate with the trombonists' as they share their own exuberant improvisations. The versatility of the trombonists ranges the lush version of "Someone to Watch over Me"—which recalls big band trombone solos—to the hard-charging "What Is This Thing Called Love?"—which for a change allows Houlgate to lead with the melody supported by the hard accents of four-part trombone chords. The "Getting Sentimental over You" feel of "Someone to Watch over Me" serves as a reminder that this album was recorded after the big band era, though Maynard Ferguson did form his own explorative big band with excellent musicians like Jaki Byard. Indeed, Ferguson played baritone horn on "Jazz Baries" on the *Newport Suite* album, similar to his crisp valve trombone work on *Four Horns and a Lush Life*. Ferguson's concentration, not on high notes, but on swelling trombone dynamics, harmony and ad-libbing gives insight into the quality of his early performances. The other three trombonists are equally energized throughout the project, the album containing not even one disappointing track. As a trombone choir on "The Boy Next Door," the sound blossoms with equal balance among the four as they execute Garcia's gorgeous voicings. Trading solos on "Dancing on the Ceiling," after a Les Brown-like first chorus of long expanding tones and unison staccato notes, one can appreciate the differences in the trombonists' musical personalities and techniques while enjoying the fact that they're matched in professionalism and sonic imagination during each 16-bar solo. Garcia's ending, brief as is the track itself, captures the ever-pleasing element of surprise that "Wild" Bill Davis incorporated in "April in Paris" for the Count Basie Orchestra. Rather than being an album of staid performances, *Four Horns and a Lush Life* contains one delight after another throughout its too-short duration.

Bill Donaldson

CD review from Volume 41, No. 3, 2015

www.cadencemagazine.com

CD REVIEW: NEW RELEASE

ARTIST: ROGER DAVIDSON

TITLE: TEMPLE OF THE SOUL

LABEL: SOUNDBRUSH SR1031

TUNES: TEMPLE OF THE SOUL / ETHEREAL OCEAN / FOREST PRAYER / FOUNTAINS OF LIFE / BLESSING / FROM THE RISING SUN / IN THE EYE OF THE STORM / DESERT LIGHT / BLUE VOYAGE / FREEDOM FOR ALL / JOURNEY OF WISDOM / WAVES OF REFLECTION. 77:38.

PERSONNEL: Davidson, p. 8/2013, No Place Given.

In the is-it-jazz-or-is-it-not? category, we have Roger Davidson's *Temple of the Soul*.

The first minute of the title track serves as a mid-register introduction with its quiet, modal theme of Middle Eastern awakening over the bass-clef ostinato. And then the repetition, the histrionic chords, the scale fragments, the Impressionistic sweeps, the Davidsonian improvisations begin. The pianist seemingly being fascinated with the many ways a phrase within apparently the Lydian dominant mode can be presented, swells and contractions of volume substitute for harmonic progression or for tension and release. Over and over and over and over. And over. And over again. The album's subtitle of "Rhapsodies & Meditations for Solo Piano" is accurately descriptive. For it does involve from beginning to end Davidson's improvisatory compositions that appear to proceed along the irregular paths that his feelings of the moment dictate. Indeed, Davidson indicates that he named the tracks after these musical meditations upon various themes were recorded.

After his introductory "Temple of the Soul," the album moves into the "Ethereal Ocean," which, strangely enough, sounds similar to the first composition—that is, the repetition of the same treble-clef musical phrase over minimal bass, and no percussiveness, interrupted by the occasional dramatic chords or grand flourishes. A "Forest Prayer" and "Waves of Reflection" continue the program of similarly modal peaceful offerings with musically soundscape-ish lulling evocations of nature. At times *Temple of the Soul* evokes the experience of walking past a practice room in a music school as someone prepares for a performance by playing the same or similar passages again.

So what do we get when a piece is said to be gospel-inspired? "Freedom for All" begins with a three-within-four feel that, of course, as is Davidson's wont, repeats and repeats within the track's five minutes, as the melody becomes more florid and the bass notes more staggered. The performance continues the confirmation that *Temple of the Soul* contains endless variations upon a theme instead of memorable improvisations. As would be expected, "Blue Voyage" is no "Maiden Voyage," with that composition's influential originality that continues to delight a half century later. Instead, "Blue Voyage" provides a bluesy solo derived from the early jazz pianists like James P. Johnson, or even from George Gershwin, though again the emphasis is on internalized meditative meandering rather than on an extroverted musical journey that invites active listening. It gives me no pleasure to write that the intellectualism of *Temple of the Soul*, its scalar repetitions, its stylistic mixtures and its forced drama lack soulfulness. Is that jazz?

Bill Donaldson

CD review from Volume 41, No. 3, 2015

www.cadencemagazine.com

CD REVIEW: NEW RELEASE

ARTIST: TUESDAY NIGHT

TITLE: GORDON LEE WITH THE MEL BROWN SEPTET

LABEL: OA2 22111

TUNES: *FULL MOON / LOW PROFILE / SUNSET ON THE BEACH / MACHANGULO / ISTANBUL / BLUE & BLUER / HOY VEO / CHANGE YOUR DREAMS / URGENT MESSAGE. 58:11.*

PERSONNEL: Lee, p, wooden frogs; Brown, d, ldr; Derek Sims, tpt; John Nastos, as; Renato Caranto, ts; Stan Bock, tbn; Andre St. James, b. 4/9/14 & 4/16/14, Corbett, OR.

The fact that Mel Brown's septet has gone unrecorded, but for an album in the eighties, raises the question of how many other not only worthy, but individually remarkable, groups remain undiscovered. Their members may be satisfied with performing as the occasions arise at local venues before going back to make a living at their day jobs. In Brown's case, the album's name refers to its weekly gig at Jimmy Mak's in Portland, Oregon for the past 14 years. Both Brown, a former Motown drummer, and Lee, previously a New York jazz pianist, were drawn to the social and academic potential of Portland and chose to stay. Good thing for Portland. That city benefits from outstanding jazz performances weekly, if *Tuesday Night* is any indication. Brown fashions his group after Art Blakey's *Jazz Messengers*, which similarly included a drummer as its leader and which featured the same instrumentation (at the time when Blakey included a trombone). In fact, alto saxophonist John Nastos's sound, with its brightness and wails and fades, bears at times an energetic resemblance to that of Bobby Watson's. Yet, Lee's original compositions and arrangements provide a distinctive identity for Brown's septet, while numerous composers provided material for the *Jazz Messengers*. The septet is totally engaged in performing those arrangements with the flair and cohesion that Lee must have imagined when he wrote them. No wonder this group has become a fixture in the Portland jazz scene. As is his right as composer/performer, Lee does introduce with florid piano solos several of the tracks—namely “Full Moon” and “Urgent Message”—while “Sunset on the Beach” emerges from a music-box-like piano pattern disconnected from the back beat-driven main theme. We get the connection between the theme from Rachmaninoff's piano concerto and its popularized version of “Full Moon and Empty Arms” (not to mention “All by Myself”). In any case, the decision about starting an arrangement is an important one, and Lee's decisions seem to allow a soloist to lead off, with Brown on “Low Profile” and “Machangulo,” bassist Andre St. James on “Istanbul,” tenor saxophonist Renato Caranto on “Blue & Bluer” and Nastos on “Change Your Dreams.” In fact, like Blakey, Lee allows plenty of space within his arrangements for extended soloing. The fast-paced arrangement for “Low Profile,” though, is reminiscent of another arranger: Gerald Wilson. For it provides a minor-key framework for successive solos, rather than a melody, and the group's full-spectrum sound, from trombonist Stan Bock's low notes to trumpeter Derek Sims's high ones, make the septet's sound larger than it is. Furthermore, the “Low Profile” arrangement calls attention to Lee's ability to establish rich harmonic colors from but four horns. “Blue & Bluer” obviously is based on the changes of “Blue in Green,” stated initially as a choral arrangement for horns without percussion before settling into, as is one of Lee's apparent trademarks, solos, expressively developed by Caranto and Nastos.

All we need to know about the changes of Lee's “Change Your Dreams” appears in the first five-four chorus. However, Lee creates interwoven call-and-response, and then harmonic descent, with Nastos and Bock before Nastos goes pleasantly Desmondesque in his solo. Lee's arrangement of “Machangulo” deserves full appreciation for, not only its harmonic palette, but also its percussive subtleties and the dynamic surprises the group accomplishes. Combining forces, Lee's excellent arrangements and Brown's septet are perfectly matched. This is no surprise due to the years that they have been working together, most regularly on Tuesday nights in a club owned and staffed by a supportive group of jazz enthusiasts.

Bill Donaldson

CD review from Volume 41, No. 3, 2015
www.cadencemagazine.com

CD REVIEW: NEW RELEASE

ARTIST: DAN BECKER

TITLE: FADE

LABEL: INNOVA 855

TUNES: GRIDLOCK / REINVENTION 1A / FADE / REINVENTION 3F / REINVENTION 4F/ KEEPING TIME, MVT. I / KEEPING TIME, MVT. II / REINVENTION 5D / REINVENTION 2C / A DREAM OF WAKING. 52:46.

PERSONNEL: Becker, composer; Bradley Lubman ldr; Patti Monson, Tara Helen O'Connor, flt; Libby Van Cleve, ob; Michael Lowenstern, cl; Alan Kay, b cl; Neil Mueller, tpt; Julie Josephson, tbn; Dave Spies, tba; Sara Laimon, Margaret Kampmeier, p; Gregor Kitzis, Sunghae Anna Lim, vln; Gregory Hesselink, cel; Robert Black, b; John Ferrari, vib; Danny Tunick, perc. 1/14/96; 5/27-28/09; 9/26/11. Purchase, NY; San Francisco, CA; New York.

Though Dan Becker has been active in composing works for various groups for the past 20 years, *Fade* is his first album. It documents some of his works from 1996, when he worked with The Common Ensemble at Yale, to 2011, when he recorded a series of "Reinventions" for Disklavier. Becker reflects the post-minimalist fascination with process, and employs such emphasis while avoiding traditional harmony and rhythm. However, his scope of compositions is broader than that of minimalists. Furthermore, Becker's works evoke a more emotional listener response on pieces like "Fade" than do the works of some minimalists, who often compose intellectual pieces demanding concentrated listening. "Fade," on the other hand, is dedicated to Becker's at-the-time unborn daughter. As such, the composition moves with tenderness and wonder as but four musicians set up flowing richness. Vibraphonist John Ferrari and pianist Margaret Kampmeier continue the calm percolating undercurrent that supports the long tones of the flute and the cello. As if relishing the opportunities for creating startling contrasts, Becker's "Reinventions" involve five of Johann Sebastian Bach's Two-part Inventions: "Bach-Werke-Verzeichnis 773 No. 2 in C Minor," "BMV 775 No. 4 in D Minor," "BMV 784 No. 13 in A Minor," "BMW 780 No. 9 in F Minor," and "BMV 779 No. 8 in F Major." The Disklavier performs some of those works, originally written for harpsichord, at frantically prestissimo tempos. The "Reinventions" become products of sound processing for alternative perspectives of several of Bach's immortal works, but as soullessly as a player piano. In contrast, the ten-piece Common Sense Ensemble's performance of "Gridlock," conducted by Bradley Lubman, contains effervescent, rippling energy traded between musicians as they perform melodic passages accented by unexpected bursts from a sonic spectrum as wide as the tuba's and the flute's pitches. All the while, percussionist Danny Tunick adds even more character to the performance with his infectious array of alternating instruments, including cowbell, bass drum, and block. It goes without saying that the musicians on *Fade* are supremely accomplished and immersed in the performances, as would be expected from such expressive musicians, but there's no harm in complimenting such a high degree of musicianship. Rather than composing for large orchestras, Becker concentrated on smaller ensembles through the years, as on "Keeping Time." As a single note is repeated in various octaves as if a bud were about to open, the composition unfolds organically while The New Millennium Ensemble remains in the same scalar mode. "Keeping Time's" second movement restates the theme, albeit with a higher degree of agitation established by piano, violin and vibraphone. A duo performance by Sunghae Anna Lim on violin and Kampmeier on piano, "A Dream of Waking" is propelled by repeating sixteenth notes receiving irregular accents as they suggest images without the use of conventional melodies. Though Becker has been involved in numerous capacities for the advancement of music...and musicians...the release of *Fade* should broaden awareness of his works and his talent.

Bill Donaldson

CD review from Volume 41, No. 3, 2015

CD REVIEW: NEW RELEASE

ARTIST: **THE AWAKENING ORCHESTRA**

TITLE: **VOLUME I: THIS IS NOT THE ANSWER**

LABEL: **INNOVA 889**

TUNES: **DISK 1: PRELUDE & FANFARE: THE PROPHET / MYXOMATOSIS / THE WORDS, THEY FAIL TO COME / ALONE TOGETHER / PROTEST / YOU STILL BELIEVE IN ME. DISK 2: INTERMEZZO OP. 118, NO. 2 / THIS IS NOT THE ANSWER SUITE: OVERTURE & EVOLUTION/EMPTY PROMISES/THIS IS NOT THE ANSWER/THE HYPOCRITE & THE HOPE / MURDERER / HI-LILI, HI-LO. 1:46:05**

PERSONNEL: Kyle Saulnier, ldr; Nathan Hetherington, Seth Fruiterman, vcl; Rob Mosher, ss; David DeJesus, as; Samuel Ryder, ts; Felipe Salles, ts, bari s; Andrew Gutauskas, bari s; Daniel Urness, Seneca Black, Philip Dizack, tpt; Nadjé Noordhuis, tpt, flgh; Michael Boscarino, Matthew Musselman, Benjamin Griffin, Max Geigel, tbn; Aaron Kotler, kybd; Michael MacAllister, g; James Shipp, vib, perc; Joshua Paris, b; Will Clark, d. 11/10-11/12, New Haven, CT.

Kyle Saulnier's ambitious work for The Awakening Orchestra, *Volume I: This Is Not the Answer*, originated from his bitter disillusionment in American society. This disaffection inspired his passionate tour de force, which musically unifies related themes into a comprehensive assertion. Saulnier certainly chose an appropriate title for his piece, for he complains (in words) about "despair being the defining emotion of my generation" and about "the failure of the American democratic experiment." Weighty subjects those are—and not subjects that may be described by a single motive. Their importance lies in the fact that they led to a unique and masterful work that borrows from many of Saulnier's earlier influences. Those influences catalyze into a superbly performed and unremittingly emotionally charged statement.

This isn't the first time that jazz has expressed cries for social justice, from *We Insist! Max Roach's Freedom Now Suite* to Charlie Haden's *Liberation Music Orchestra*. The frequency of such albums has accelerated within recent years as moral indignation has risen. Like similar recordings, *Volume 1: This Is Not the Answer* literally does not attempt to suggest answers to pressing social issues. Instead, as Saulnier states, it "is *simply* [my italics emphasizing the irony of the word] an expression of the truest and deepest outrage." That outrage attains strength throughout this noteworthy album. At the same time, listeners can appreciate *Volume 1* for the richness of its musical value. Saulnier is a composer and arranger certainly deserving of considerable attention.

The members of the 20-piece Awakening Orchestra are fully committed to the project and possess a thorough understanding of Saulnier's vision. No doubt he chose the orchestra's musicians with care. Not only do they provide searing solos, full of their own evocative talent and personal passions, but also they engage in the memorable unity of sound that distinctive orchestras project.

The baritone sax emerges on the album as a frequently heard solo instrument, including as the one introducing the first track, "Prelude & Fanfare: The Prophet"—and thus the entire extended musical treatise. The bari's at-first tentative and understated call, as if an awakening, rouses the muted trumpet into full unrestrained sound. Then James Shipp's sustained vibraphonic glow gives way to drummer Will Clark's rhythm and force. The orchestra's initially amorphous musical conversation swells into a loud accented, unified statement, not to be denied, and thus "Fanfare" occurs.

And so it goes through much of the album. Astounding movements release the potential power of the orchestra to claim the listener's attention through dynamic contrasts, engaging themes and superlative individual contributions. Andrew Gutauskas's baritone sax commences (beautifully and delicately, I might add, with his

devoted attention to tone) the theme of “The Words, They Fail to Come,” accompanied only by Aaron Kotler’s repetitive piano pattern, as the piece moves from thoughtfulness to unthrottled anger. The orchestra, with a sudden blast, suggests, through cinematic visualization via music, the occurrence of rage. The track evolves into a memorable extended performance for Gutauskas, as his solo moves through emotional colors as unpredictably as a mind’s moods shift in agitation.

Each composition within the album could receive similar appreciation in even more detail. After all, each of them is the successful result of Saulnier’s painstaking attention, passionate commitment and talent deserving of much more attention. Today’s jazz listeners certainly benefit from the growth, probably unrecognized amid the accumulation of sporadically released recordings, of superb jazz orchestras whose leaders catalyze the decades of music they studied into exceptional personalized works. This is one of those, organized by an overriding, animating theme.

The palette that Saulnier uses is a vibrant one. His versatility and wide-ranging interests are reflected in the album’s stylistic breadth. “Myxomatosis” receives explication and mysterious suggestion from vocalist Nathan Hetherington’s lyrical interpretation, combining, as do the instrumentalists, individuality with community. As would be expected, initial judgments about a Saulnier piece prove to be misleading as the orchestra elaborates upon the motive with beauty and strength.

Disk 2 contrasts, through classical fullness of sound and relative peacefulness, with all that preceded it on Disk 1 by performing an adaptation of Johannes Brahms’s “6 Pieces for Piano, Op. 118, No. 2, Intermezzo in A minor,” as if it were the opening composition of a play’s second act. Instead of including on the Orchestra’s first album, as is often the temptation, all of Saulnier’s interests, the “Intermezzo” serves as a connecting piece between the two halves. And it connects to the album’s most complex, most fervent and most thematically relevant piece, its centerpiece, the four-part suite, “This Is Not the Answer.” The suite transports the listener from the “Overture’s” pulsing and ominous soundscapes and the third movement’s growing cacophony of fury to the gorgeous shifting colors of “The Hypocrite and the Hope.” Again, Saulnier knows exactly what he wants from his Orchestra as he conducts his masterpiece, and it delivers. While it’s tempting to compare Saulnier’s style of flowing long lines and broad sonic spectrums to Gil Evans’s—certainly *not* a four-beats-to-the-measure percussive big band feel—Saulnier has developed his own orchestral approach. And certainly Saulnier’s works are more message-driven than Evans’s.

Two standards not only help to advance Saulnier’s message, but provide further evidence of his skills at arranging music with the mixture of individuality and a blossoming, rich orchestra sound. The title of “Alone Together” doesn’t just support his assertion of social protest, but its secondary title of “Flying Colors” has double meaning, appropriate too. Saulnier’s arrangement uses the song’s melody as a departure point for full-fledged beauty that features each of the orchestra’s sections—a showpiece eventually going modal in a Coltrane quartet kind of way, especially with Tyner-like chords underneath. Until it’s something else entirely again. The mood shifts, anchored by bass trombone and lightened by flute.

Saulnier’s choice of the final song for his recording, “Hi-Lili, Hi-Lo,” sung by Seth Fruiterman over minimal, straightforward accompaniment, is a strange one. We would expect a final enraged shout. Instead, we get the lyrics’ wry observations over sonic suggestions of a circus atmosphere, akin to “Is That All There Is?” After The Awakening Orchestra takes us through a broad range of supercharged emotions throughout the album, courtesy of Saulnier’s ambition and arrangements, “Hi-Lili, Hi-Lo” concludes the musical journey with quirkiness and placidity, as if in resignation. One would expect the ardent resentment powering *This Is Not the Answer* to remain undiminished at its finish.

Bill Donaldson

CD review from Volume 41, No. 3, 2015
www.cadencemagazine.com

CD REVIEW: NEW RELEASE

ARTIST: ANDY BEY

TITLE: PAGES FROM AN IMAGINARY LIFE

LABEL: HIGHNOTE HCD 7266

TUNES: MY FOOLISH HEART / HOW LONG HAS THIS BEEN GOING ON? / JEALOUSY / I'VE GOT A RIGHT TO SING THE BLUES / LOVE FOR SALE / WORRIED LIFE BLUES / BAD LUCK MAY BE GOOD LUCK / LOVER COME BACK TO ME / GOOD MORNING HEARTACHE / DOG EAT DOG / HUMOR KEEPS US ALIVE / TAKE THE "A" TRAIN / EVERYTHING I HAVE IS YOURS / ALL THAT GLITTER'S NOT GOLD / ALL ROADS LEAD BACK TO YOU. 66:42.

PERSONNEL: Bey, vcl, p. 5/21/14, Astoria, NY.

Andy Bey has created a "four-page" document of songs, "published" on compact disk and online, that continues to solidify his reputation as a singular jazz voice. A combination of older songs and his original compositions, *Pages from an Imaginary Life* consists of Bey's voice accompanied by Bey's own hands on the piano at the Samurai Hotel Recording Studio in Astoria, New York—one that Joe Fields favors for the production of some HighNote recordings. Sound engineer Katsuhiko Naito deserves credit for capturing the nuances of Bey's voice and the tonal colors of the rebuilt Steinway D piano. Bey often plays in the instrument's middle to lower range, an extension of his baritone voice. For example, when he starts singing "Everything I Have Is Yours," the final chord of his piano introduction matches the notes on which his singing enters. After almost sixty years as a professional jazz singer, at first with his sisters Salome and Geraldine, Andy Bey projects confidence and casual thoughtfulness in his singing that remains unmistakable and influential. That individuality has attracted the admiration of jazz people as distinctive in their own ways as Gary Bartz, Stanley Clarke and Fred Hersch. With due appreciation for Bey's talent, Fields appears to have given the singer the freedom to develop his own song list and to sing the music as his spontaneous feelings for it arose. Given his four-octave range, Bey breaks in with his occasional, unexpected high-noted exclamations, as on "Good Morning Heartache," which he otherwise sings with a subdued interpretation of the material. Bey lays out "Lover Come Back to Me" with his implicit vocal swing, allowing the listener to imagine the rhythm between the notes during his improvisation. No doubt relaxed in his recording environment, Bey takes his time in developing the stories that his songs tell, delivering each word or phrase with meaning. On "Everything I Have Is Yours," he takes a minute and a half to deliver the first eight bars, slowing even further to emphasize the thought that "I'm Part of You." Comprehensive in his knowledge of song lyrics, Bey includes Billy Strayhorn's "Lotus Blossom" as the final song on the album, but disguises it with the title derived from Allan Roy's lyrics: "All Roads Lead Back to You." Mixed in with the standards are Bey's own compositions, lyrically witty and sagaciously observant and universally humane. A few of them cover themes about the dark side of human nature. In a haunting minor key, "Jealousy" describes "paranoia at its worst" and being "sick with fear." "Dog Eat Dog," more upbeat with its scampering accompaniment, nonetheless describes "the race for survival" and "the fight to the death" as "the strong take the money from the weak." However, Bey can't help but see the silver lining, for he concludes "Jealousy" by acknowledging that "we should all be grateful for the many blessings bestowed upon us." And he understands that "Bad Luck My Be Good Luck" as he sings that "we never know how lucky we are." His answer to adversity? "Humor Keeps Us Alive" and "we must keep our imagination intact" because "it controls our destiny." Which brings us to the title of the album. The pages of Bey's imaginary life, divided into four parts, appear to follow the stages of an imaginary relationship or even the seasons of life. From jealousy to discovery to loss to yearning to cynicism to wisdom to generosity to regeneration, Bey obviously put much thought into the songs he chose for his album. Not only do they follow a theme. They also support Bey's affinity for various composers and singers, including Duke Ellington, Billy Eckstine and Billie Holiday. All of their unique imaginations helped shape Andy Bey's life of the imagination.

Bill Donaldson

CD review from Volume 41, No. 3, 2015
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CD REVIEW: NEW RELEASE

ARTIST: **PHIL MARKOWITZ / ZACH BROCK**

TITLE: **PERPETUITY**

LABEL: **DOT TIME 9031**

TUNES: Perpetuity / Triple Dutch / Fractures / Six Pack / Nebulae / Notorious "Z" / Burning Lake / Rongtone / Mirrors / Ankle Biter. 68:30

PERSONNEL: Markowitz, p, kybd; Brock, vln; Jay Anderson, ac b; Lincoln Goines, el b; Obed Calvaire, d; Edson "Café" Da Silva, perc, vcl. 9/14-15/12, Union City, NJ

This CD here features a combination of violin and piano that comes out as a hybrid between classical music and progressive jazz-rock. Overall there's a charged, quasi-classical air as Zack Brock's violin often takes a furious, biting lead. The title track is a seesawing, delirious rumble between the t lead instruments shadowed by vocal mumbles from percussionist Edson Da Silva. "Triple Dutch" has Brock soling wildly while Markowitz's piano fills in the cracks before going off on its own mad tangents.

"Notorious 'Z'" mines the jazz-rock groove of Weather Report's "Boogie Woogie Waltz" with Lincoln Goines on electric bass, "Six Pack" has the group working deftly on a Cuban rhythm and "Ankle Biter" brings in some funk. "Nebulae" is a spacey, dramatic piece with Brock soloing slowly as a synthesizer breathes ominously in the background while "Mirrors" pairs the two leads in a graceful unison duet. There's an appreciation for both freedom and rhythm in this music that gives it a bright, polished beauty.

Jerome Wilson

CD review from Volume 41, No. 3, 2015
www.cadencemagazine.com

CD REVIEW: NEW RELEASE

ARTIST: **FEDERICO BRITOS**

TITLE: **HOT CLUB OF THE AMERICAS**

LABEL: **3 KNOCKS ENTERTAINMENT (No #)**

TUNES: The Sheik Of Araby / J'attendrai / I'm Confessin' that I Love You / Djangology / La Vie en Rose (English version) / Dark Eyes / Melodie au Crepuscule / Exactly Like You / Nuages / Honeysuckle Rose / Tears / La Vie en Rose (French version). 62:26

PERSONNEL: Collective Personnel: Britos, vln; Jorge Garcia, Claudio Speiwak, g; Felix Gomez, Gonzalo Rubacala, Antonio Adolfo, Jaul Schneider, p; Renyel Rivero, Jamie Ousley, b; Carlomagno Araya, d; Giovanni Hidalgo, cga; Cecile McLorin Salvant, vcl; Hendrik Meurkens, hca. String section: Britos, Elias Gamic, Jose Montoto, Gerardo Aguillon, Jorge Clavero, vln; Viera Borisova, Nelson Armitano, vla; Constantin Litvinenco, clo; Rivero, b. Miami, FL.

Cuban-born musicians taking on the repertoire of Django Reinhardt's and Stephane Grappelli's Hot Club Of France quintet! The old gypsy-flavored Hot Club swing gets an update with hot, swirling percussion underlining the swarming sound of Britos' violin. The core band brings a new energy to old chestnuts like "Honeysuckle Rose" and "The Sheik Of Araby" with Felix Gomez's piano and Jorge Garcia's guitar sounding as wild and playful as Britos. "Djangology" dances wildly with a heavily amplified guitar solo and "Dark Eyes" bounces its heavy bass into a rocking piano montuno rhythm by Gomez.

There are quite a few guests at this party as well. Harmonica player Hendrik Meurkens is lively on "J'Attendrai", Gonzalo Rubalcaba's romantic piano is featured alongside a string section on a slow, lush "I'm Confessin' That I Love You" and vocalist Cecile McLorin Salvant sings two darkly, intimate versions of "La Vie En Rose", one in English with the string section and one in French with just Britos' group. This pairing of romantic and exotic approaches is a lot of fun.

Jerome Wilson

CD review from Volume 41, No. 3, 2015
www.cadencemagazine.com

CD REVIEW: NEW RELEASE

ARTIST: CHAD MCCULLOUGH AND BRAM WEIJTERS

TITLE: ABSTRACT QUANTITIES

LABEL: ORIGIN 82683

TUNES: Billions / Still More / Mr Rubato / Glorious Traffic Jam / Hesitation / The Same Prelude / The Same But Different / Little Song (for Mirthe) / Winter's Lament / Before Acceptance / Acceptance Of Denial. 58:03.

PERSONNEL: McCullough, tpt; Weijters, p, kybd; Piet Verbist, b; John Bishop, d. 5/10-11/14, Brussels, Belgium.

A lot of classical and progressive rock motifs run through this CD in a set that creates quiet beauty out of simple figures in a way that suggests the music of Kenny Wheeler. Chad McCullough plays sweeping, melodic trumpet over stomping rock rhythms on "Billions" while "Mr Rubato" has the ethereal sweep of "In A Silent Way" as Bram Weijters' piano spills out under McCullough's gorgeous sound and Jon Bishop's drums storm in the back.

Weijters runs through a Bach prelude relentlessly on electric piano on "Same Prelude" with trumpet gliding along the top while "Same But Different" has the entire quartet going over the rhythm more slowly with Weijters on regular piano. The band opens up out of a light classical theme on "Hesitation", creates a lovely waltzing groove on "Little Song" and raises its controlled forward motion into a brisk trot on "Acceptance Or Denial". If you like the more thoughtful side of The Bad Plus or Radiohead you might take to this music's gentle beauty.

Jerome Wilson

CD review from Volume 41, No. 3, 2015
www.cadencemagazine.com

CD REVIEW: NEW RELEASE

ARTIST: **JIM SNIDERO**

TITLE: **MAIN STREET**

LABEL: **SAVANT 2142**

TUNES: Duluth At Noon / Post Time Saratoga / Las Vegas Tango / Oxford Square / Autumn In New York / Born In Redwood City / Walla Walla / The Streets Of Laredo. 51:12

PERSONNEL: Snidero, as; Fabian Almazan, p; Linda Oh, b; Rudy Royston, d. 7/25/14, Brooklyn, NY.

On Jim Snidero's effort all the tunes, whether originals or covers, are inspired by cities. Snidero's alto playing is full, bluesy and energetic throughout and he's got a band of hot young names with him in Fabian Almazan, Linda Oh and Rudy Royston.

Snidero glides and snakes expertly through the hustling energy of "Duluth at Noon" and "Saratoga" is a relaxed blues with Snidero striking a broad Trane-ish tone, Oh tugging at her bass like Charles Mingus and Royston dancing in the background. "Redwood City" is smart, relaxed funk, "Autumn In New York" is done in classic ballad fashion with a creamy alto tone and Gil Evans' "Las Vegas Tango" has Almazan playing dark, rumbling piano and Oh doing resonant plucking before Snidero picks up the surging, circular theme and really goes out with it.

The entire band stretches out on the old cowboy song "Streets Of Laredo", Oh going deep, Snidero bleating hot and heavy, Royston hitting hard and free and Almazan speeding dizzily along his keyboard. This entire group is outstanding and they sound great together on this CD.

Jerome Wilson

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CD REVIEW: NEW RELEASE

ARTIST: CAROL SABOYA - ANTONIO ADOLFO - HENDRIK MEURKENS

TITLE: COPA VILLAGE

LABEL: AAM 0707

TUNES: The Girl From Ipanema - Garota De Ipanema / Copa Village / Show De Bola / O Boto / Como Se Fosse / Agua De Beber / Pois E / Pretty World / Two Kites / Nosso Mundo / Visao. 50:38.

PERSONNEL: Saboya, vcl; Adolfo, p; Meurkens, hca, vib; Claudio Speiwak, ac and el g; Itaiguara Brandao, b; Adriano Santos, d; Andre Siquiera, perc. Brooklyn, NY

An intimate set of Brazilian jazz featuring Carol Saboya's voice floating over a mesh of harmonica, guitar and piano. Saboya's sound is light and sensual and the musicians carry forth just the right amount of understated propulsion. Antonio Adolfo, Saboya's father, puts out gentle passion on piano and Hendrik Meurkens' harmonica adds more tropical flavoring. "Copa Village" and "Visao" are instrumental sambas with Saboya lending wordless vocals and Adolfo taking off on breezy jazz samba rhythms. The songs are mostly Jobim standards, though there's also a nice version of an old Sergio Mendes hit, "Pretty World", which Adolfo actually co-wrote. The entire CD has the light, effortless groove of classic bossa nova.

Jerome Wilson

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CD REVIEW: NEW RELEASE

ARTIST: BENJAMIN LAPIDUS & KARI-B3

TITLE: OCHOSI BLUES

LABEL: TRESERO PRODUCTIONS 1107

TUNES: Ochosí Blues / I'll See You On Monday, Wendell / But Beautiful / Bilongo / The Sweeter The Lovin', The Darker The Roux / Tu, Mi Delirio - Here's That Rainy Day / The Latin Side Of Your Mama / Guajira Organica / Habla Candido / El Manisero / Have You Met Miss Jones? / Como Fue / The Five Year Plan / Stella By Starlight / Yemaya's Changes. 75:43

PERSONNEL: Collective Personnel: Lapidus, g, tres; Frank Anderson, Jared Gold, org; Candido Camero, cga; Paul Carlton, ts, bari s; Greg Glassman, tpt; Bobby Harden, Enid Lowe, vcl; Gene Jefferson, as, fl; Pedrito Martinez, vcl, bata d; Hiram Remon, vcl, guiro; Bobby Sanabria, d; Charlie Sepulveda, tpt; Elizabeth Frascoia, tb; Aaron Wesitrop, g. 3/11 - 3/14, 8/20/09

Powered mostly by guitar and organ, this CD is a stew of jazz, blues and Latin musics with something new in every track. On the title track leader Benjamin Lapidus trades blues licks with organist Jared Gold over a simmering Cuban percussive beat and chanted vocals. "I'll See You On Monday" is straight hard bop organ jazz with horns, "The Latin Side Of Your Mama" is a funky boogaloo and the standard "Have You Met Miss Jones" is done to a hot mambo rhythm with solo spots for Frank Anderson on organ, Gene Jefferson on alto and Lapidus on the guitar cousin, the tres.

"Bilongo" is Spanish-flavored bluesy swinging with soulful solos by Lapidus, Anderson and Jefferson all leading to an extended spot for the legendary conga master, Candido Camero. Panamanian vocalist Enid Lowe adds a mature, full-bodied grace to "But Beautiful", "Stella By Starlight" and a "Here's That Rainy Day" that is mixed with a Spanish language ballad sung by Hiram Renon over Anderson's swelling organ. Somewhere in all this, there is also a horn-heavy, soul-blues number, "The Sweeter The Lovin'" that seems to have walked in from a different recording session though it sounds good on its own terms. Altogether, this is an amazingly energetic and wide-ranging effort.

Jerome Wilson

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CD REVIEW: NEW RELEASE

ARTIST: **LUCAS PINO**

TITLE: **NO NET NONET**

LABEL: **ORIGIN 82688**

TUNES: The Fox / On The Road / Orange / Strange Breakfast / Intro To Bankenstein / Bankenstein / Sunday Play / Where You Need To Be / Homage A'Mitch / A Morning Walk / Three Old Men From The Land Of Aran. 68:58

PERSONNEL: Pino, ts; Alex Love, as; Andrew Gutauskas, bari s; Mat Jodrell, tpt, flgh; Nick Finzer, tb; Rafal Sarnecki, g; Glenn Zaleski, p; Desmond White, b; Colin Stranahan, d. 8/28/13, Brooklyn, NY

The album is by a sharp, sax-heavy nine piece group very much in the mainstream jazz line. The faster pieces are prickly and kinetic but the slower ones, like "Sunday Play" which features a gorgeous tenor solo by leader Pino and thoughtful bass by Desmond White, tend to have the most personality. Pino's deep-souled soloing is consistently smart and spirited while guitarist Rafal Sarnecki gets a nice turn on the placid "Homage A 'Mitch" and Mat Jodrell scores a bright trumpet solo on the swirling "A Morning Walk". This effort is enthusiastic, high-spirited work.

Jerome Wilson

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CD REVIEW: NEW RELEASE

ARTIST: JON ARMSTRONG JAZZ ORCHESTRA

TITLE: FAREWELL

LABEL: ORENDA 0008

TUNES: Ardnave / Fool Of Me / Dream Has No Friend / Quardboard Flavored Fiber / Farewell. 54:42

PERSONNEL: Armstrong, ts; Gavin Templeton, as; Phil O'Connor, Brian Walsh, Andrew Conrad, Erin Armstrong, rds; Michael Stever, Daniel Rosenboom, Barbara Laronga, Josh Agular, Clinton Patterson, tpt; George McMullen, tb; Stefan Kac, tba; Joey Sellers, Ryan Dragon, Paul Rivera, low brass; Trevor Anderies, Andrew Lessman, David Tranchina, Alexander Noice, rhythm; Randy Gloss, Chris Payne, perc; Gary Fukushima, p. 11/22/14, North Hollywood, CA

A sweeping orchestral sound that showcases the writing abilities of leader Jon Armstrong, a composer in the warm lineage of Gil Evans and his descendants.

“Ardnave” is a Scottish-influenced folk dance featuring a long percussion duet and beautifully seeping clarinet by Phil O'Connor against blaring brass. On “Fool Of Me” leader Armstrong plays rich, slow and sensual tenor sax against a sinister, off-center ensemble backing. “Dream Has No Friend” twirls about like a drunken carousel with George McMullen moaning shakily on trombone as the rest of the band lurches along at increasing speeds.

“Quardboard” has bubbling tuba and sour, funky alto and trombone rising out of a restless, punchy, stop-start groove that eventually resolves into a massive, soaring shout. The closing “Farewell” starts in melancholy with guitar and voice drifting into a somber dirge led by the brass section. That turns into a beautiful, warm group melody redolent of peace and hope with a gospel undertone and nice spots for trombone, trumpet and clarinet. Armstrong writes emotional and uplifting music especially on a par with Maria Schneider’s work. On this showing, he’s one of the finest large group jazz composers out there today.

Jerome Wilson

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CD REVIEW: NEW RELEASE

ARTIST: JIM NORTON COLLECTIVE

TITLE: TIME REMEMBERED: COMPOSTIONS OF BILL EVANS

LABEL: ORIGIN 82678

TUNES: Fudgesickle Built For Four / Time Remembered / Journey to Recife / Five / NYC's No Lark / Interplay / Walkin' Up / Very Early / Bill's Hit Tune / Peri's Scope / Twelve Tone Tune / Laurie / Comrade Conrad / Fudgesickle Built For Four (reprise) / 34 Skidoo. 62:16

PERSONNEL: Norton, bari s, b fl, cl, bsn; Tim Devine, ss, as, pic, fl; Kristen Strom, ts, fl, a fl; Charlie McCarthy, ts, fl, cl, b cl; Louis Fasman, John L. Worley Jr., tpt, flgh; Cathleen Torres, fr hn; Joel Behrman, tb; Jeff Cressman, tb, btb; Scott Sorkin, g; John Shiflett, b; Jason Lewis, d. 4/15-16/13, San Jose, CA

It's always intriguing when a musician's compositions are played by a group where the composer's instrument is nowhere to be heard. So it is here with a CD of Bill Evans works, both obscure and familiar, played by a large band with nary a piano around. This treatment helps you realize how strong Evans' writing was in the first place.

Jim Norton's approach comes close to the old Third Stream discipline. Classical voicings are combined with classic jazz-style swinging in a manner that recalls Evans' time with his early employer, George Russell. "Fudgesickle" swirls with baroque voicings against lively guitar and horn solos. "NYC's No Lark", written for pianist Sonny Clark, is ominous and dark. "Interplay" has flute lighting the way for Joel Behrman's trombone and Scott Sorkin's guitar in a walking blues setting, and "Very Early" retains its usual dancing, graceful character with John Worley sweeping along on flugelhorn.

"Bill's Hit Tune", featuring Sorkin on acoustic guitar, has the warmth of a movie romance theme, "Twelve Tone Tune" builds out of its harsh melody into a galloping collage of brisk horn voicings and deeply swinging solos while the punchy, uptempo "Five" is played with a color, depth and fire only hinted at in Evans' own recording. This CD enhances and expands on an already impressive body of work in ways that even a great musician like Bill Evans couldn't do with just a piano trio. It's a fantastic effort.

Jerome Wilson

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CD REVIEW: NEW RELEASE

ARTIST: RUSSELL MALONE

TITLE: LOVE LOOKS GOOD ON YOU

LABEL: HIGH NOTE HCD 7268

TUNES: *SOUL LEO / LOVE LOOKS GOOD ON YOU / THE ELDER / ELLIE'S LOVE THEME / YOUR ZOWIE FACE / MIRRORS / AMSTERDAM AFTER DARK / LIFT EV'RY VOICE AND SING / SUITE SIOUX. 51:08.*

PERSONNEL: Malone, g; Rick Germanson, p; Gerald Cannon, b; Willie Jones III, d. October 9, 2014, Brooklyn, NY.

Russell Malone presents a varied program of excellent music. Malone, the consummate professional, shows his ability to build and develop a solo from the outset on Mulgrew Miller's "Soul Leo," a fine medium Latin vehicle for Malone and his quartet. Also in the jazz vein are Thad Jones's "The Elder," a medium swinger previously done by the Basie band, George Coleman's "Amsterdam after Dark," and Freddie Hubbard's "Suite Sioux," an extroverted piece from Freddie's "Red Clay" album. The Bricusse/Goldsmith show tune and enticing waltz "Your Zowie Face" includes another well-developed Malone solo and a strong performance by the entire group. Malone can be quite lyrical, as displayed on his own composition "Love Looks Good on You," a very pretty ballad in the light latin mode, on "Mirrors," a pensive ballad, and finally on Malone's beautiful and inspiring solo guitar version of "Lift Ev'ry Voice and Sing."

Don Lerman

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CD REVIEW: NEW RELEASE

ARTIST: ISAAC DANCHE

TITLE: TEAM & VARIATIONS

LABEL: CHALLENGE RECORDS CR73395

TUNES: A 'WINKEL IN TIME / SLOPED PERSECTIVE / DON'T RUN OUT OF MONEY / ANA MARIA / ARTS OF A BACHELOR / NOBODY ELSE BUT ME / YOU STEPPED OUT OF A DREAM / NERDS. 45:44.

PERSONNEL: Darche, g; Chad Lefkowitz-Brown, ts; Glen Zaleski, p; Desmond White, b; E. J. Strickland, d.
No location or date.

Guitarist Isaac Darche and his quintet are innovative and leading players on the New York jazz scene, and presents original and other music. On the program are five Darche compositions of substantial rhythmic and harmonic complexity as well as three selections in the standard/jazz standard category. Tenor saxophonist Chad Lefkowitz-Brown joins the group on five of the eight selections, with the remaining three cuts done by Darche and the others as a quartet. In either alignment the group performs impressively, displaying strong cohesiveness as an ensemble and top-notch soloing as individuals. It is also noteworthy that the more traditional tunes on the program are addressed at the same high level and with the same seriousness of purpose as was done for the Darche cutting-edge style pieces.

Don Lerman

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CD REVIEW: NEW RELEASE

ARTIST: TED HOWE JAZZ ORCHESTRA

TITLE: PINNACLE

LABEL: HOT SHOE RECORDS HSW 102

TUNES: *PRESTO FOR TWO TROMBONES / IMPROMPTU FOR TRUMPET / SUITE #1 FOR JAZZ ORCHESTRA: MOVEMENT 1 / MOVEMENT 2 / MOVEMENT 3 / ADAGIO FOR PIANO / JAZZ ETUDE FOR THREE CLARINETS. 52:23.*

PERSONNEL: Howe, p (2, 6), comp; Steve Dancz, cond; Geoff Haydon, p, el p (1, 3, 4, 5, 7); John Patitucci, b, el b; Marlon Patton, d; Jose "Bam Bam" Ramirez, perc; Dan Baraszu, g, el g; Sam Skelton, flt, clar, ss, as; Don Erdman, clar, ts; Seth Kuehn, b sax, b clar; Mike Barry, Lester Walker, Melvin Jones, tpt, flgh; Wes Funderburk, Tom Gibson, tbn; Andy Martin, Francisco Torres, tbn (1). August 12-15, 2013, Kennesaw, GA.

Pianist/composer Ted Howe leads his Atlanta-based big band in outstanding performances of his compositions. The cornerstone of this recording is his "Suite #1 For Jazz Orchestra, a three movement work of approximately 18 minutes in length which was written in 1981, shortly after Howe had completed arranging studies with his Berklee College of Music colleague Herb Pomeroy. In addition to what he had learned from Pomeroy, Howe cites the compositions and suites of classical composers as well as those of Duke Ellington as important influences on his work. Throughout this piece Howe employs different time signatures and rhythmic feels, creating interest, with drummer Marlon Patton, percussionist Jose "Bam Bam" Ramirez and bassist John Patitucci effectively navigating the course through the various rhythmic grooves. The rich harmonic character of the work is evident, with instrumental doubles in the reeds and several styles of mutes in the brass adding color. Howe deftly weaves in and develops appealing melodies, giving an underlying sunny disposition to the suite. Also on the CD are four more original works by Howe of high quality which were written in 2011-2012, and which also showcase several outstanding soloists in the group. These include trombonists Andy Martin and Francisco Torres on "Presto for Two Trombones," trumpeter Lester Walker on the beautiful "Impromptu for Trumpet," and Howe himself, quite reflective on piano on "Adagio for Piano."

Don Lerman

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CD REVIEW: NEW RELEASE

ARTIST: THE SPIN QUARTET

TITLE: IN CIRCLES

LABEL: ORIGIN 82676

TUNES: *LITTLE MARIONETTE / ORANGES ARE SUPPOSED TO BE ORANGE / CROCODILE MEMOIR (SIX NUNS) / YOU WILL LOOK FOR YOURS ON EARTH / SIMPLE SONG (FOR ESME) / BAIAO ATEMPORAL / MELTDOWN / PLACE TO BE / CAMPING LANTERN / COWBOY SONG / HABERDASHER. 62:21.*

PERSONNEL: Chad McCullough, tpt, flgh; Geof Bradfield, ts; Clark Sommers, b; Kobie Watkins, d. July 28-29, 2013, Seattle, WA.

The Spin Quartet consists of top-notch musicians who carve out an interesting group identity. The absence of a piano or guitar from the instrumentation of two horns, bass, and drums gives clarity and an open quality to the music, aided by the fine writing from mostly band members. Trumpeter/flugelhornist Chad McCullough wrote five of the pieces, with the subdued "Oranges Are Supposed to be Orange" and bright-eyed "Haberdasher" among his wide-ranging creative inventions. Bassist Clark Sommers's two compositions, "Little Marionette" and "Meltdown," are Lee Morgan-like in their appealing melodies and horn voicings. "You Will Look for Yours on Earth," one of two from tenor saxophonist Geof Bradfield, is a memorable jaunt done with a backbeat and some twists of time flavored in. Another McCullough tune, "Camping Latern," perhaps influenced by music from Keith Jarrett's "Belonging" album, contains crisp and infectious lines from the horns skillfully connected by drummer Kobie Watkins, with Bradfield's ensuing solo evocative of Jan Garbarek's playing from the Jarrett group. McCullough's improvisations have subtlety and an interpretive quality that helps shape the direction of the music.

Don Lerman

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Obituaries

Archie Alleyne (1933 - June 8, 2015) was a Canadian jazz drummer. Best known as a drummer for influential jazz musicians such as Billie Holiday, Lester Young, Stan Getz, Coleman Hawkins and Ben Webster, he was also prominent as a recording artist on his own and with Canadian jazz musicians such as Oliver Jones, Cy McLean and Brian Browne.

Ben Aronov [p] died about May 4, 2015 of lung disease.

Bob Belden, a jazz saxophonist, composer, arranger, bandleader and record producer died on May 20, 2015 in Manhattan. He was 58.

Marcus Belgrave (June 12, 1936 – May 24, 2015) was a jazz trumpet player from Detroit, born in Chester, Pennsylvania. He recorded with numerous musicians from the 1950s onwards.

Miriam Bienstock (née Kahan, later Abramson, January 4, 1923 – March 21, 2015) was an American record company executive who was influential in the early days of Atlantic Records, becoming the company's vice-president in 1958. She later became a theatrical producer.

John Landry "Buddy" Boudreaux (December 27, 1917 – June 13, 2015) was a big band and jazz musician in Baton Rouge. He was 97.

Allan Browne (28 July 1944 – 13 June 2015) was an Australia jazz drummer and composer first known for his work in the The Red Onion Jazz Band in the 1960s. He was 70.

Rick Chamberlain, jazz artist, COTA co-founder died in 2015. He was 63.

Randolph Denard Ornette Coleman (March 9, 1930 – June 11, 2015) was an American jazz saxophonist, violinist, trumpeter and composer. He was one of the major innovators of the free jazz movement of the 1960s, a term he invented with the name of an album. He was 85.

Jerome Cooper (December 14, 1946 – May 6, 2015) was an American free jazz musician. Known as a multi-dimensional drummer, Cooper played balafon, chirimia and electronic tonal activator in addition to trap drums. He was born in Chicago, Illinois and died in Brooklyn, New York.

Stan Cornyn, an offbeat recording industry executive known both for his unusual promotions and for his album notes, two of which won Grammy Awards, died on May 11, 2015 at his home in Carpinteria, Calif. He was 81.

Ron Crotty [b] died in California around March 25. He was 85.

Milton DeLugg (December 2, 1918 – April 6, 2015), born in Los Angeles, California, was an American musician, composer and arranger. He was 96.

Robert Drasnin (November 17, 1927 – May 13, 2015) was an American composer and clarinet player.

Eugene Louis Faccuito, Creator of Jazz Dance Style died in 2015. He was 90.

John Paul Gimble (May 30, 1926 – May 9, 2015), better known as Johnny Gimble, was an American country musician associated with Western swing. Gimble was considered one of the most important fiddlers in the genre. He was 88.

Obituaries

Paul Jeffrey (April 8, 1933 – March 20, 2015) was an American jazz tenor saxophonist, arranger, and educator. Perhaps best known for performing with Thelonious Monk (1970–1975), Jeffrey also worked with musicians including Charles Mingus, Dizzy Gillespie, Clark Terry, Lionel Hampton and B.B. King, amongst many others. He was 81.

James Orville Johnson, who had cancer, died Feb. 15 in Omaha. He was 84.

John Keating [tbn/arranger] died on May 28, 2015. He was 87.

Ray Kennedy, renowned jazz pianist from St. Louis died on June 3, 2015. He was 58.

Benjamin Earl King (September 28, 1938 – April 30, 2015), known as Ben E. King, was an American soul and R&B singer. He was 76.

Riley B. King (September 16, 1925 – May 14, 2015), known by his stage name B.B. King, was an American blues singer, songwriter, and guitarist. He was 89.

James Last (also known as "Hansi", born Hans Last; 17 April 1929 – 9 June 2015) was a Bremen composer and big band leader. He was 86.

Corky McClerkin, Chicago jazz pianist, and his wife, Winnie Mae Cole-McClerkin, 72, died June 7, 2015. He was 73.

Marty Napoleon (June 2, 1921 – April 27, 2015) was an American jazz pianist born in Brooklyn, New York, perhaps best known for having replaced Earl Hines in Louis Armstrong's All Stars in 1952. He was 93.

Margo Reed (voc) died on April 15, 2015. She was 73.

David Michael (Slim) Richey (February 11, 1938 – May 31, 2015), better known as Slim Richey, was an American jazz guitarist, fiddle player, bandleader, and publisher who was known for his long white beard and eclectic guitar style that crossed genres from jazz to swing to country.

Wolfgang Sauer [p/voc] died April 26, 2015 in Colonge Germany. He was 87.

Gunther Schuller (composer/musician) died on June 21, 2015 at 7:55am. He was 89.

Ralph Simon Sharon (September 17, 1923 – March 31, 2015) was an Anglo-American jazz pianist and arranger. He was 91.

Percy Tyrone Sledge (November 25, 1941 – April 14, 2015) was an African American R&B, soul, gospel, and traditional pop singer. He is best known for the song "When a Man Loves a Woman", a No. 1 hit on both the Billboard Hot 100 and R&B singles charts in 1966. It was awarded a million-selling, Gold-certified disc from the RIAA. He was 73.

Bernard Stollman [founder of esp records] of colon cancer in New York on April 19, 2015. He was 85.

Julie Wilson [voc] died on April 5, 2015 in New York, from stroke effects. She was 90.