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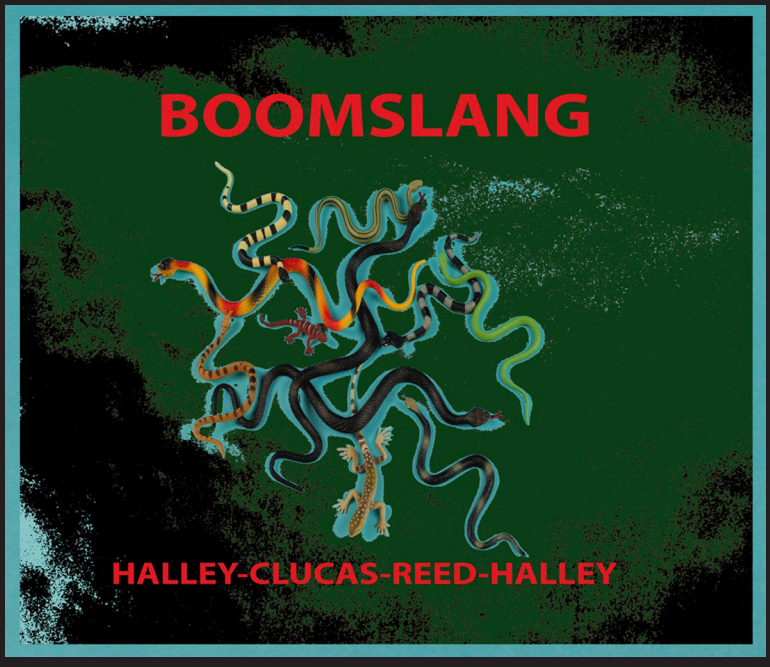
Volume 48 Number 2 APRIL MAY JUNE 2022

Boomslang is the new recording by Rich Halley , featuring a quartet with Los Angeles cornetist Dan Clucas , Canadian bassist Clyde Reed and long time drummer Carson Halley . R ecorded in Portland in December 2019, Boomslang features a mix of Halley compositions and spontaneous improvisations that showcase the depth and inventiveness of the group's playing.



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"Halley has a big, full-throated sound that may recall prime Sonny Rollins."
Kevin Whitehead, Fresh Air, National Public Radio

David Haney
Circadian World Clock

David Haney *piano with EBows & mallets*
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HOMAGE TO BERNARD HERRMANN

This album is my heartfelt homage to one of the greatest geniuses of film score, the composer and conductor Bernard Herrmann, whose music has dazzled me since I was a child. It has been very interesting to arrange, revise and adapt, for a jazz quartet, some of the best known themes from outstanding soundtracks Herrmann wrote for equally outstanding films - all psychological thrillers (hence the title Psychosis) - by brilliant directors, including Marnie, Psycho and Vertigo by Alfred Hitchcock, Taxi Driver by Martin Scorsese and Twisted Nerve by Roy Boulting. Bearing a classic feel and originally conceived for orchestras, the tracks in this album were arranged in full respect of the originals, leaving intact, for example, the beauty of the melodies, while at the same time creating new improvisational spaces that would allow our quartet to maintain its own identity.

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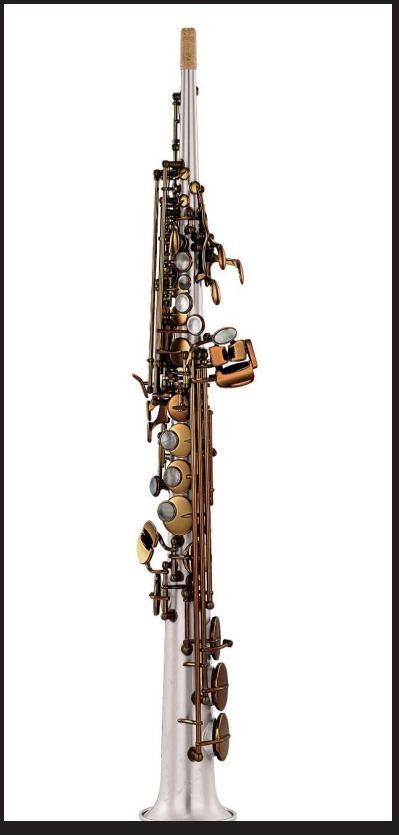

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sonic twist "UNITY"


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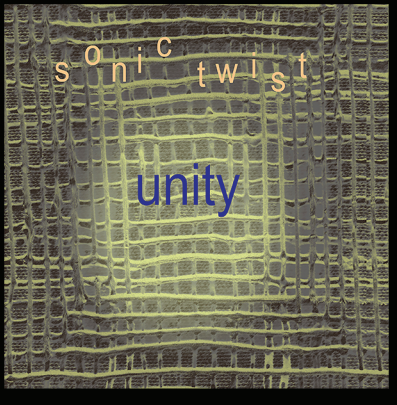


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#1244 JCA Orchestra *Stories* w/H.Honshuku, J.Hobbs, R.Stone, P. Scarff, N.Zocher, M.Cho
#1245 Mack Goldsbury's Quintet Feat. Maciej Fortuna *Live At CoCo's* w/S.Mahoney
#1246 Ehran Elisha Ensemble *Continue* w/H.Elisha, S.Bardfeld, D.Bindman, K.Filiano
#1247 Marilyn Lerner-Ken Filiano-Lou Grassi *Live in Madrid*
#1248-1252 Sal Mosca *Too Marvelous for Words*
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#1257 Doninic Duval-Vincent Loccisano-Chris Covais *The Project*
#1258 David Haney *Angel Foot Shuffle* w/J. Priester, A. St.James, B. Purdie
#1259 Eric Plaks New Trio *Sun and Shadow* w/John Murchison, Leonid Galaganov
#1260 Ted Brown Quartet *Live at Trumpets* w/J.Easton, D.Messina, B.Chattin
#1261 Don Messina *Dedicated to…* (double bass) solo
#1262 Buffalo Jazz Octet *Live at Pausa Art House* w/Bucheger,Rivera,Baczkowski
#1263 The Infinitessimal Flash Quartet *Live* w/J.Tchicai,M.Marucci,A.Lane,F.Wong
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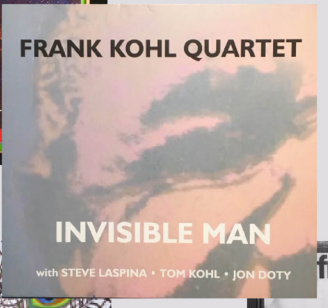

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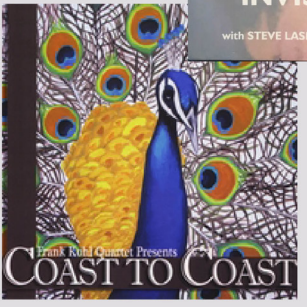

BRILLIANT NEW WORK..

from Milton Marsh an artist you might remember from his classic Monism album for the Strata East label in the 70s; still sounding every bit as brilliant, all these many years later! The set has Milton still working in the larger, more ambitious ideas we love from his other records; a blending of spiritual jazz and additional string players, in a way that might be the closest approximation to the "black classical music" promised by Rahsaan Roland Kirk and others in the 70s! Yet Marsh is definitely his own visionary here, too carving out a sound that's as powerful as it is individual, with a unique sound that has us sitting up and taking notice all over again. Musicians on the recordings include David Eure on Violin, Stanton Davis on trumpet, Kevin Harris on piano, Carlos Averhoff on tenor, and Keala Kaumehi-wa on bass, with Marsh himself handling the Arrangements and Conducting his original compositions. Titles include: "Not Far From Home", "Great Expectations", "Dialogue", "Loving You", "By Design", "I Wonder Why I Care", and "Subtle Anomaly".

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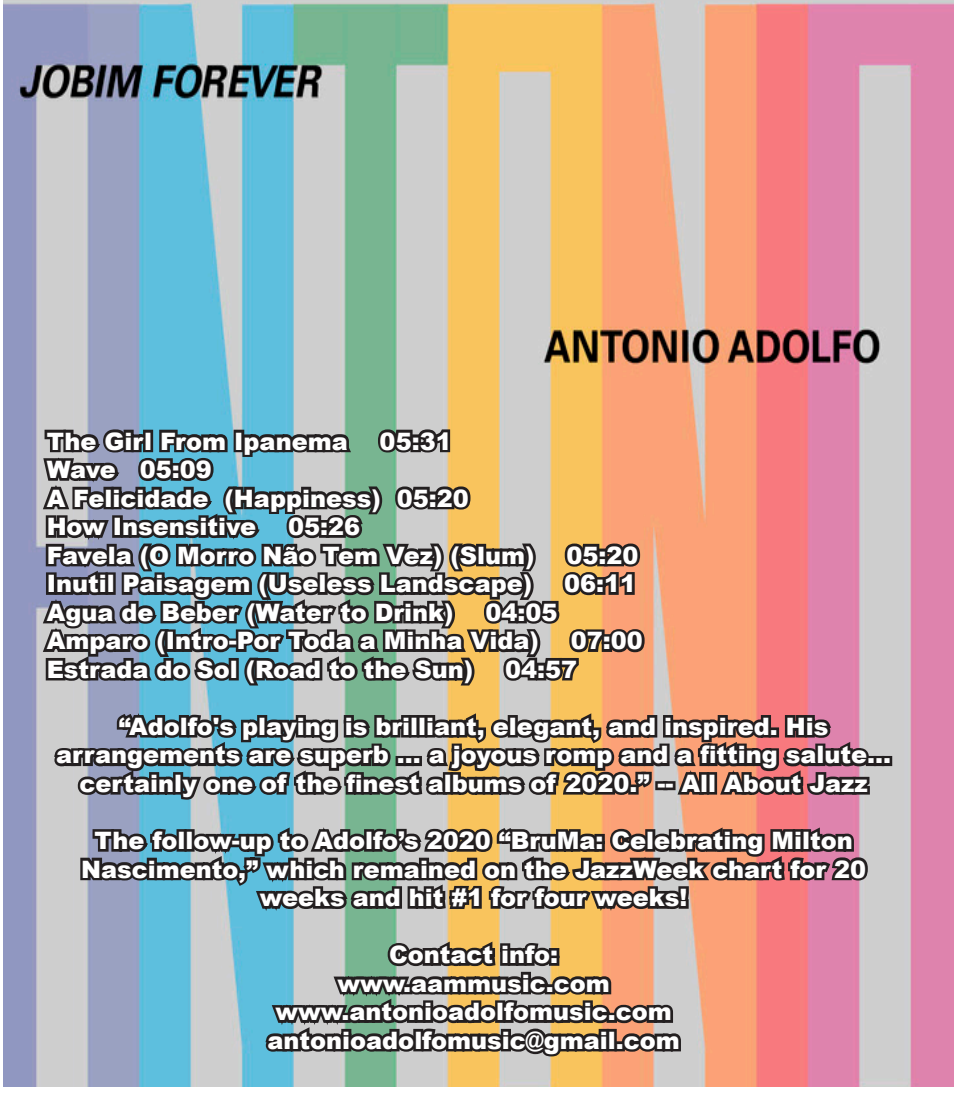

The Girl From Ipanema 05:31
Wave 05:09
A Felicidade (Happiness) 05:20
How Insensitive 05:26
Favela (O Morro Não Tem Vez) (Slum) 05:20
Inutil Paisagem (Useless Landscape) 06:11
Agua de Beber (Water to Drink) 04:05
Amparo (Intro-Por Toda a Minha Vida) 07:00
Estrada do Sol (Road to the Sun) 04:57

"Adolfo's playing is brilliant, elegant, and inspired. His arrangements are superb ... a joyous romp and a fitting salute... certainly one of the finest albums of 2020." -- All About Jazz

The follow-up to Adolfo's 2020 "BruMa: Celebrating Milton Nascimento," which remained on the JazzWeek chart for 20 weeks and hit #1 for four weeks!

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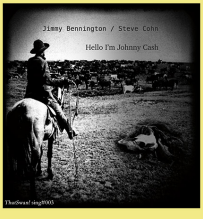

*Hello, I'm Johnny Cash

- Jimmy Bennington / Steve Cohn

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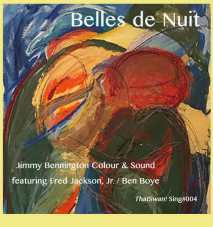

*Belles de Nuit

- Jimmy Bennington Colour & Sound
  feat. Fred Jackson Jr. (AACM) and Ben Boye

*ThatSwan!*Sing#004

*One for Peace

- Jimmy Bennington / Samuel Hasting

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152 Ahmed Abdullah's Diaspora
153 Elliott Levin 4tet
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157 Mark Whitecage's Other 4tet
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Trio-X - Live at Craig Kessler & Janet Lessner's
Joe McPhee (trumpet) - Dominic Duval (bass) - Jay Rosen (drums)

CIMPoL 5040:
Trio-X - Live in Green Bay and Buffalo
Joe McPhee (trumpet) - Dominic Duval (bass) - Jay Rosen (drums)

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
5020-5024	CIMPFest 2009: Live in Villach, Austria	Live in Villach, Austria
5025	Seth Meicht and the Big Sound Ensemble	Live in Philadelphia
5026	Eric Plaks Quintet	Live at Bronx Community College
5027-5030	Trio-X: Joe McPhee - Dominic Duval - Jay Rosen	Trio-X - Live on Tour 2010
5041	Mat Marruci Trio	Live at Jazz Central
5042	Teresa Carroll Quintet	Live at Dazzle

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JazzHausMusik
NEW RELEASES

JHM 279
Georg Ruby
VILLAGE ZONE
Saluti a Peppino

Georg Ruby – p
Stephan Goldbach – b
Daniel Weber – dr
Sascha Ley – voc

Georg Ruby's "VILLAGE ZONE" is a new interpretation of the classical piano jazz trio turning it into one unique body of sound. Sascha Ley, female vocalist from Luxemburg, joins this spiritually communicative alliance on four songs. The chuzpe of the trio's musicians pays tribute to Italian pop folk grandmaster Peppino di Capri's originals and shows how much excessive fun, how much materialised endorphin can be produced by an extraordinary band.

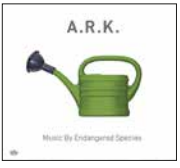
www.georgruby.de | www.stephangoldbach.de | www.dflatful.com | www.saschaley.com

JHM 280
Stephan Goldbach
Transit

Stephan Goldbach – b
Kostia Rapoport – electronics (#3, 12, 13)
Laura Saumweber – dblb (#11)

Double bass player Stephan Goldbach from Nuremberg (D) purely amazes his audience on his first solo release with his musical ingenuity and radical confrontations: acoustic sounds versus electronic sound generation, belcanto versus industrial sound. A musical encounter of the third kind, a piece of unpredictable and vivid avantgarde.

www.stephangoldbach.de



JHM 281
A.R.K. – *Music By Endangered Species*

Andreas Kaling – bass-sax, bcl, ss | Reinhold Westerheide – acoustic g | Karl Godejohann – dr, perc

Andreas Kaling, specialist for original, saxophone-oriented projects, presents something completely new: a bass saxophone as deep base within a trio. A.R.K. is meant as English translation of the German word "Arche" ('Ark of special instruments') or rather the initial letters of the band members' names. In the rehearsing process the trio develops Kaling's compositions further, using the creative circle's input to let the arrangements shine in different lights, questioning and changing old structures over and over again - thus, creating its own typical A.R.K. sound.

www.andreas-kaling.de

JHM 282
Duo Doyna *Driftin'*

Annette Maye – cl
Martin Schulte – g

Annette Maye and Martin Schulte are an excellent example of how klezmer music can be interpreted in a new, open and extremely entertaining way. The versatile education of the two musicians as well as their networking within the jazz field, improvised and contemporary music, are the tools of transformation here. Themes are treated improvisationally free, partly deconstructed or reharmonized. In the miniature instrumentation without rhythm section, the duo likes to experiment with diverse variations of rhythmic strategies.

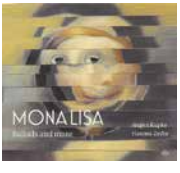
www.doyna.de

JHM 283
Landeck | Grau | Bonica
Guerilla Jazz

Detlef Landeck – tb
Sven Grau – ts
Joe Bonica – dr

This small quick-witted formation presents an expressive, energetic, groovy jazz working with riffs, and resorts to the entertaining style of a kind of mini-show of brass sound and drum grooves, thus "mugging" both the jazz-savvy audience as well as the audience coming from other areas. Cheerful exploding, fun and imaginative, original acting are in the foreground with this trio.

www.detleflandeck.de



JHM 284
Jürgen Kupke / Hannes Zerbe
Mona Lisa – Ballads and more

Jürgen Kupke – cl
Hannes Zerbe – p

The duo's second CD continues the improvisational discourse, the varied interplay of the two musicians - both of whom, incidentally, love the music of Hanns Eisler - from the past years in a convincing manner. Without wasting many words, the interactions between Jürgen Kupke and Hannes Zerbe reveal a mutual, intuitive understanding, an intimacy in the interplay that is hardly possible in larger formations. The feeling for time, for arcs and for pauses can hardly be developed in such a way as the two demonstrate it here in duo playing.

www.juergenkupke.de | www.hanneszerbe.de

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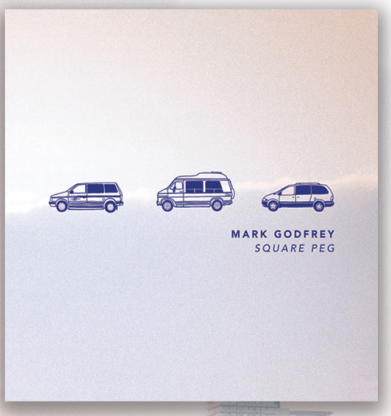

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Eva Kess: Sternschnuppen: Falling Stars

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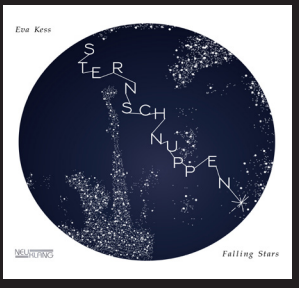

The bassist, composer, and bandleader Eva Kess has created an arrestingly beautiful body of music that sounds unlike any other in the jazz-string canon. Kess's fourth album, Sternschnuppen: Falling Stars, is an ambitious departure from her previous projects...
Falling Stars marks her ascension as a composer/arranger with a strikingly integrated vision that treats all of her collaborators as equals within a single septet.

Encompassing the post-bop continuum, chamber music, and jazz's kindred South American traditions, the music showcases her big sound and commanding presence as a player, but Falling Stars is most impressive as a statement by a composer who has found a voice as distinctive and personal as her compositional mentors, British pianist/composer Django Bates and Argentine pianist/composer Guillermo Klein.

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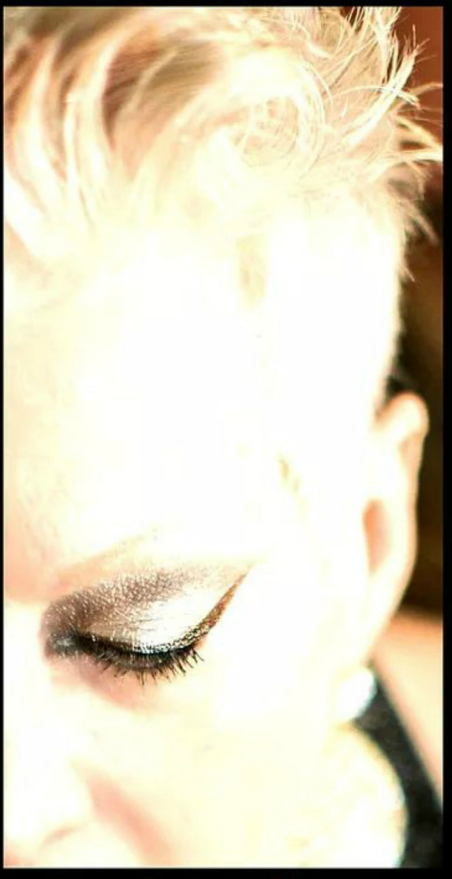

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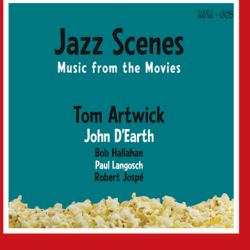

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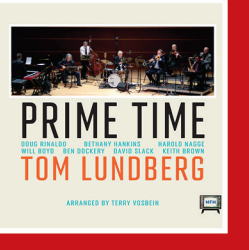

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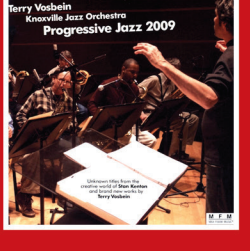

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This page is a symbolic break, what precedes is advertising, (free of editorial influence), what follows is editorial (free of advertising influence).

ABBREVIATIONS USED IN CADENCE

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

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FRONT COVER
Barry Altschul
with photographer
Ken Weiss

Inside This Issue

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 Media, 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."

Contributors

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FRANK KOHL (Album and Concert Reviews) *was born and raised in NY and is a professional guitarist living in Seattle. He is a graduate of Berklee College Of Music and has six CDs as a leader. Some of his recordings include Bassists Steve LaSpina, Michael Moore and guitarist John Stowell. Frank has performed at many notable jazz clubs and festivals from NY to Seattle.*

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Short Takes: Philadelphia

PHILADELPHIA, PA - It's with great pleasure and relief to have the opportunity to once again document Philadelphia's vibrant creative music scene after COVID-19 decimated live music around the world. My last column was exactly two years ago – the 2020 April edition of Cadence. Despite the pandemic, there's been a steady outpouring of live musical content across the city over the past year – mostly by way of Chris' Jazz Café's innovative and high tech streaming setup, although Chris' was closed to the public for a good portion of that time. Now venues are up and running all over town… Hometown hero and new media darling, 23-year-old saxophonist/ Blue Note recording artist, Immanuel Wilkins, had his longstanding and terrifically perceptive band — Micah Thomas on piano, Daryl Johns on bass, and Kweku Sumbry on drums —at PhilaMOCA [a repurposed mausoleum] on 2/10 with a packed like sardines, mask wearing audience of believers. Wilkins was well aware of his status – he started the night off saying, "We're the hottest act in the biz." Right he was, and he proved it with a powerful set of music featuring tunes from his second release…Orrin Evans, another local great, continued supporting the local scene. It was his healing summer "Club Patio" offerings, broadcast from his Mt. Airy home, that fostered a sense of normalcy to the small number of fortunate invited attendees who gathered together out of isolation and safely hung out on his lawn to enjoy a fantastic variety of visiting guest artists each Sunday for a time last year. His latest achievement was arranging a special happening at Chris' Jazz Café – a tribute festival to trumpeter Lee Morgan from 2/17-19. The 2/18 sets featured music from Morgan's album, The Procrastinator, with Robin Eubanks (tbn), Tim Warfield (ts), Sean Jones (tpt) Madison Rast (b), Nasheet Waits (d) and Evans on piano. The second set was no cuttin' contest - order was maintained - and the music, originally recorded in 1967, sounded fresh in the hands of the stellar cast…AACM heavy, Thurman Barker, made his third visit to Penn's The Rotunda on 3/17, this time with Philadelphia musicians Julius Masri (d), Dan Blacksberg (tbn), Tessa Ellis (tpt), Salina Kuo (marimba, perc), and Matt Engle (b). Barker wore a Chicago Cubs' hat on stage prior to starting the set and said he hoped not to rouse any hostility – no chance of that unless he'd worn a Dallas Cowboys' hat! He spent the majority of his night behind the drum set, which he admitted to never settling into, teaming up with his ex-student Masri, but the night's highlight came on a song composed for Barker's wife which found him pairing his vibraphone with Kuo's marimba for a haunting effect. Another memorable section came when he conducted the ensemble through his recently composed "Pandemic Fever" which ran through a gamut of emotions. Barker reports he's been busy - he still has his record label Uptee Productions, with which he's recorded 6 CDs. He has composed 2 pieces for Chamber Orchestra- "South Side Suite" and "Pandemic Fever". He is continuing to write for the Chamber Orchestra and continues to lead the Jazz program at Bard College since 1993 where he is Professor of Jazz Studies. He's

also been holding down a frequent playing gig with a trio – a wonderful thing these days – on certain Fridays at a club near his home in Sullivan County, New York called Rafter's in the village of Callicoon…TREFOIL means a thing having three parts - a set of three - (I looked it up) but in the Jazz world it means the trio of Ambrose Akinmusire (tpt), Kris Davis (p) and Gerald Cleaver (d). The three artists share careers that cover impressive work in a wide variety of musical forms. Their 3/18 appearance at the American Philosophical Society, Benjamin Franklin Hall featured tight improvisation without solos until topping off the night with an encore piece that seemed to come out of Akinmusire's catalogue. Maybe it was the thrill of experiencing live music again or the magic of the music that inspired one listener seated in the front row to exclaim frequent moans, laughs and yelps during the performance and then rush the stage at the end of the set, voicing his pleasure…Thollem (digital multi-timbral keyboard) returned to town on 3/19 at The Rotunda (Fire Museum Presents) with his wife Angela, a photographer, videographer and visual artist who appeared under her stage name of ACVilla, to present Thollem's Obstacle Illusion with projections accompanying his solo electric work. The nearly 50-minute piece of generated electronic sounds offered a sense of urgency while varying colorful images moved across the large posterior screen. A second feature brought Ravish Momin (electronic drums, percussion, production) to team up with Thollem. Momin, who now lives part-time in Philadelphia, started out as an acoustic drummer and percussionist a couple of decades ago, but he's been working under the 'Sunken Cages' moniker since 2019, in order to showcase his unique electroacoustic hybrid approach which splits the difference between live performance and production. He plays drums, triggers textures and clips, and layers live-loops while manipulating them in real-time to blur the lines between composition and improvisation.

Immanuel Wilkins Micah Thomas Daryl Johns at PhilaMOCA 2/10/22
Photo Credit: Ken Weiss

Robin Eubanks Sean Jones Tim Warfield at Chris' Jazz Cafe 2/18
Photo Credit: Ken Weiss

Thurman Barker (vibs) Julius Masri (d), Dan Blacksberg (tbn), Tessa Ellis (tpt), Salina Kuo (marimba, perc), and Matt Engle (b).
Photo Credit: Ken Weiss

Thollem and Sunken Cages (Ravish Momin) at The Rotunda 3/19
Photo Credit: Ken Weiss

Kris Davis Ambrose Akinmusire Gerald Cleaver at the American Philosophical Society, Benjamin Franklin Hall 3/18
Photo Credit: Ken Weiss

Thurman Barker at The Rotunda 3/17
Photo Credit: Ken Weiss

Thollem at The Rotunda 3/19
Photo Credit: Ken Weiss

Ambrose Akinmusire Photo Credit: Ken Weiss

Concert Review

Joey DeFrancesco at Jazz Alley with special guest Stanley Jordan 4/18/22

I always enjoy seeing Joey DeFrancesco. He's a phenomenal organist, pianist, trumpeter, vocalist and now he's playing tenor sax. How he can do all this is beyond me but he does! The man can swing and deliver the goods as good or better then anyone. In addition to all that I enjoy the way he collaborates with so many great musicians at his shows and on his recordings, elevating and diversifying the whole experience. This performance was no exception.

First we enjoy a half hour opener with renowned guitarist Stanley Jordan playing solo. Watching and listening to Stanley was mind boggling and so enlightening as to what can be done with the guitar. Stanley said he had injured his index finger and that it would somewhat hinder his performance. I never noticed anything amiss and was mesmerized by every note he played and the way he played them.

Joey's set was comprised of all originals, opening with "Free", a freewheeling up tempo delight that immediately got my attention. He started on trumpet and transitioned to organ as his bandmate Lucas Brown accompanied him, also on organ. This too got my attention and brings me to one of my points about why I enjoy his shows so much. He finds these great players and then gives them the stage. Lucas Brown is not only an incredible guitarist, he can also hold his own and then some on keyboards. I've even seen you tube videos of him playing the vibes. This all reminds me of Joey's cd "Legacy" where he shares the keyboard spot with the legendary Jimmy Smith. The point here being that Joey likes to experiment with many different musical combinations and personalities and all of us listeners get to go along for the ride. I try to see him whenever he's around and almost every time he has someone new onboard. Whether it be an iconic jazz figure like Pharoah Sanders, David Sanborn, Pat Martino or maybe someone not as well known like Lucas Brown or Dan Wilson, spotlighting his musical comrades is a big part of his music. In fact the list of world renowned musicians Joey has shared the stage with is long and diverse.

The show goes on with "Roll With It" a bebop marvel that is based on combining "Confirmation" with "Giant Steps". The melody is classic bop and it all swings hard with jaw dropping solos by all players. Then there's drummer Anwar Marshall who is another example of the kind of musicians Joey chooses to work with. I could listen to Anwar all day long as his drive and split second reactions to what he hears from his bandmates influences his playing. "More Music" shows the funky soulful side of this group. With outstanding solos by Joey and guitarist Lucas Brown and more of the driving force of Anwar Marshall, this piece brings it all home. Joey demonstrates his clear tone and lush phrasing on tenor with his beautifully written ballad "Lady G". Let's not forget Joey's trumpet playing which really shows his ability to be a virtuoso of different instruments and puts him in a class all his own. I was never disappointed with any part of this performance and Joey as always took it all the way to the top. I look forward to the next time he's in town so I can get more of the spirit and soul this man brings to the stage and the jazz world.

Frank Kohl

My Last Gig with Miles Davis by John McLaughlin

We are rewinding back to around October -November, 1970. Now I had a gig with Miles just outside of Boston and that was the band with Gary Bartz, Keith Jarrett, Michael Henderson, oh who was on drums, it wasn't Jack., Anyway, well, you know, that night I really had a bad night, I mean I just could not get it together. Whatever I did it was just all messed up: I just couldn't get it together. So we're in the band room, I'm with Miles and everybody else is gone, you know, and I'm like you know, I said "oh Miles, I am so sorry, I mean I just didn't have it together" - and Miles says like "yeah I heard"- Just to make you feel better so you know. I didn't know what to say I said "I don't know what I was...I'm sorry." He said "you got to go with the flow John" and I said "yeah all right." We were sitting there at least 2 to 3 minutes went by just silence but that was him: he was like a Zen master, Miles, sometimes, and then all of a sudden he turns around and looks at me and said "it's time you formed your own band."

Shock... for me, that was... to hear Miles say that. He was the most candid honest man I've ever met before and to this day. just phenomenal; sometimes brutally honest, but you always knew exactly where you stood with him. So you know, it was like what? he said "You gotta do it."

That was orders for me. So I went home and you know, I took him very seriously because it was Miles. Miles was like my teacher, my guru, my godfather you know whatever; I revered him and everything he said to me. So I started and we had done the JACK JOHNSON album just shortly before that, before the gig, and that's where I met Billy Cobham - on that gig, it was the first time I ever met him and I love the way he played, and the way he plays on that JACK JOHNSON - you know we set up that jam actually, right off the opening of that thing, we just set it up in the studio. Anyway so I called Billy right away and I said "I gotta form a band, you know, do you want to be in it?" and he says "yeah I'm in, I'm in." And I said "Great" so, we started. I had already a lot of music actually, because of Tony - TONY WILLIAMS AND LIFETIME. God bless him, he encouraged me to write music during LIFETIME and I would say 75% of the Mahavishnu music- the preparation was done with TONY WILLIAMS LIFETIME. Really, that amount. So anyway I'm working on the music you know and I'm looking for a piano player and I get a call from Miraslov Vitous Remember Miraslov? We became friends already in London in '67, when he came over with Stan Getz; and he said "John, how you doing?" I said "I'm doing great, I'm doing great" he said "listen I'm forming a band with Wayne Shorter and Joe Zawinal called WEATHER REPORT- we want you to be in the band." I said "what? What a beautiful thought; but I am under orders. I'm under orders from Miles I gotta form my own band," and he said "then you gotta do it right away" so before he hung up, he said "do you have a keyboard player?" I said "no I don't, I'm looking for one." He said "there's a friend of mine from Czechoslovakia, it was at that time" he said "you should hire him" I said "You know, well, I've never heard how he plays" and he said "well he's out in California right now accompanying Sarah Vaughan," and I said "he's accompanying Sarah Vaughan? If he's accompanying Sarah Vaughan , I want him in the band." If you accompanying Sarah Vaughan, you're a real player because you know how great she was And that was it, I got the piano player right off the bat.

So this combination and the opportunity of WEATHER REPORT, coming in just at the time I was under orders from Miles, wow, the rest is history, isn't it.

Barry Altschul Interview Subways and Steam Pipes

By Ken Weiss

Barry Altschul [b. January 6, 1943, NYC] is a renowned drummer who was following the Hard Bop path in the late '50s and '60s until pianist Paul Bley unexpectedly hired him for a gig and thrust him into the burgeoning Free Jazz scene as a pioneering Free Jazz drummer. Proud of his South Bronx ghetto beginnings, which exposed him to a wide musical varieties, the primarily self-taught Altschul continues to embrace a love for Jazz's entire swath of genres and styles. His strong grounding in Bebop molds a solid base on which he assembles his Free playing. He prominently played with Bley and Chick Corea for years and in 1969, joined Corea, bassist Dave Holland and saxophonist Anthony Braxton to form the influential but short-lived group Circle. He went on to work extensively with Braxton and Sam Rivers throughout the '70s. Altschul has performed with many luminary artists of the avant-garde, straight-ahead Jazz and Blues categories including Andrew Hill, Dave Liebman, Julius Hemphill, Muhal Richard Abrams, Roswell Rudd, Ray Anderson, Mark Helias, Annette Peacock, Lee Konitz, Art Pepper, Sonny Criss, Hampton Hawes, Johnny Griffin, Buddy Guy and Junior Wells. Some of the important recordings he's participated in includes Paul Bley's Closer, Chick Corea's The Song of Singing, Annette Peacock's I'm the One, Dave Holland's Conference of the Birds, Sam Rivers' Hues, Roswell Rudd's Flexible Flyer, Julius Hemphill's Coon Bid'ness and Andrew Hill's Spiral. Moving to Europe in the mid-'80s for a decade did not further his career in the States but he found work and the satisfaction of artistic freedom. Upon his return to New York City in the '90s, he struggled to find gigs – eventually working with Adam Lane, Steve Swell and Jon Irabagon, and forming the FAB Trio with Joe Fonda and Billy Bang, the OGJB Quartet with Oliver Lake, Graham Haynes and Joe Fonda, and his own explosive trio The 3DOM Factor with Irabagon and Fonda. Altschul has released a small number of strong recordings under his own name, often used to explore his original compositions. This interview took place at his longtime Central Park apartment on July 27, 2021. Altschul sat at his most comfortable spot, behind his drum set, and openly spoke of his lengthy career, including his time on the early avant-garde scene, the trials of life as a musician, as well as his struggle with drug addiction.

Cadence: How have you been utilizing your time during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Barry Altschul: I've mainly been staying up in this little house we have in the woods in Orange County [New York]. I've been practicing drums and also messing around with the alto saxophone and the chromatic harmonica and doing a little composing. I'm fooling with the piano, that's the instrument I

compose on. I've been taking walks in the woods, going down by the Delaware River. Just looking around, taking a breath. It's frustrating not being on the road and not playing. Financially, it's been something to think about. It's been okay, i've been safe.

Cadence: Why are you picking up these other instruments? Are you planning to perform on them?

Altschul: No, the benefit is my own pleasure and outlet. They're something else to learn about and to be made fun of by certain people [Laughs] - other musician friends.

Cadence: We're doing this interview in your New York City Central Park apartment which has a bit of drum history to its location.

Altschul: Yes, this has been called "Drummer's Row" because from 102nd Street through 107th Street, on Central Park West, it housed a few generations of drummers. Starting with Art Blakey, and then Max Roach and Elvin Jones, they all lived in 415 Central Park West. Eddie Moore and myself lived here at 448. Paul Motian lived in the nearby building, and we all used to hang out, meet at the cleaners and other places and get little tidbits of information and history.

Cadence: You've often summarized your approach to music with the "From Ragtime to No Time" concept coined by the late drummer Beaver Harris. What does that notion mean to you?

Altschul: It goes with what my definition of what Free music is. For me, in order to be free, you have to have a very large vocabulary, so you have choices. It's like being a poet who has a hundred words versus twenty words to write a poem with. He's freer with those hundred words. So, for me, to be free is to be able to take the whole history of the music and use it when you feel like it.

Cadence: In your 2005 Cadence interview with Bob Rusch, you said, "I am a frustrated Bebopper. I wish I could really play that way at the time it was happening, but I just naturally hear this other (Post-Bop) stuff." Would you expound on that?

Altschul: It's true. I came up listening to Bebop and then Hard Bop and then Post-Bop. And when I started to play with my own groups, the phrase was coined Free Bop. So, I'm a Bopster, what can I say? [Laughs] I believe the way I conceived of what I'm doing is an extension of Jazz drumming. In other words, it's not from another culture. I hear myself as a Jazz drummer.

Cadence: As a fan of Bebop, as well as Free Jazz, in what way does your approach differ from other percussionists?

Altschul: I don't know. [Laughs] I was always made to feel by the masters that I was fortunate enough to have some relationship with throughout my life, to play yourself, to be yourself, to have your own sound. And so that's what I was always aware of - getting to that place. My influences have been the same influences as Billy Hart or Jack DeJohnette – people like Papa Jo [Jones] to Kenny Clarke to Art Blakey to Philly Joe [Jones] to Elvin [Jones]

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to Tony [Williams] and all the others playing Bebop and Hardbop – Charli Persip, Louis Hayes, Roy Brooks, Frankie Dunlap, Frankie Butler, everybody is who I listened to and tried to absorb, and I'm saying this because I did not listen to anybody playing Free music or even contemporary Classical music. But growing up here in New York City, I was also influenced by some other things – by the subway train rhythms, by the steam pipe rhythms, by being in the ghetto, hearing crashes of cars. All that became sounds to me and I was able to hear some kind of rhythmic pattern in whatever that was. Whether I made it up myself or it actually was, I put those things into a rhythmic pattern. My sister is a Classical pianist and that was an influence on me. I used to, with my drum pad, play to what she was practicing, and it wasn't keeping time, it was keeping a dialogue. She didn't really realize that, it was just in my head, but I was having a dialogue with Beethoven or Bach or whoever she was practicing.

Cadence: You're one of the few First-Generation Free Jazz drummers, along with Sunny Murray, Milford Graves, Rashied Ali and Andrew Cyrille. You sort of fell into that style out of necessity when performing with Paul Bley. What was the extent of your experience playing without keeping time when you took the stage with Bley?

Altschul: Zero, [Laughs] I had no experience except for playing with my sister on a drum pad. I was involved with a bunch of musicians from the [New York City] boroughs - people like George Cables and Frank Mitchell, who turned out to be wonderful artists in the Bop idiom. That's where I was heading. I was a janitor in a recording studio and Bley came in to do a couple of sessions, and we talked. He called me up to do this gig. I had heard him play with a group in the Village. At times, I was playing in a place called Take Three on Bleecker Street, a spot Bley also played a number of times with Gary Peacock and Paul Motian. That was one of the clubs I could get in for free at the time, and I heard them. I actually was quite impressed with what they were doing. I felt Paul Motian's stuff was a step away different than where Elvin had taken things. I sat in with Gary and Paul once and they played a very, very fast "Oleo," where time wouldn't have made it, but that's all I could do – to try to play fast time with it. It didn't really work out that well, so I don't really understand why he called on me, but he did. He asked me, "Do you want to play some standards or do you want to just play what I play?" I was from the South Bronx, man, I said, 'Do what you want.' [Laughs] I just responded [to what he played], it was very natural. I didn't listen to Contemporary Classical music. I wasn't into Robert Ashley, or whoever. I didn't know who they were until [Anthony] Braxton introduced me to them. It was a very natural way for me to come to this music. I didn't study it. I didn't listen to it. I just responded to what was happening around me. And due to my, I don't know, my listening backgrounds, as well as what I was practicing at the time, I was able to at least start, and then understand what was necessary, and then expand on what I was doing.

Cadence: Who besides Paul Motian had you seen play Free on drums prior to you doing so?

Altschul: The first gig I played with Paul Bley was an afternoon at Slugs' [Saloon], which was the opening of Slugs' on a Sunday afternoon. Now, somehow during that same week, I think I was able to hear Sunny Murray, maybe with Albert [Ayler]. Albert actually came in and sat in with Bley when I was playing with him once. No, I did not hear other Free drummers until I was already playing with Paul, and I made sure that once I heard them, that I followed Philly Joe Jones' advice – "Make sure you know what they're playing so you can stay away from it and find your own thing."

Cadence: What do you feel is the key to playing Free?

Altschul: It depends on what culture you're coming from. I think the key thing for a European Free drummer is different from someone who came up like me. And even newer generation Free drummers who do not have the influence of the history of Jazz. I mean a lot of the younger Free drummers start with people like Sunny Murray or myself or Andrew, if they start that far back, because there's now more generations. So, it really depends. The only thing I can think of for myself is a wide vocabulary to be able to really be able to listen to who you're playing with so you can develop a sense of what they're doing. Getting inside them, not from the outside, and have enough vocabulary to go wherever they want to go or lead them to places that they've never been or places that they're familiar with and to hang around a bit. I love that in my trio. We play totally out, totally spontaneous improvisation, or we'll hit on a tune, or somebody will hit on a phrase that reminds somebody of an actual tune, and we'll jump on the tune. But everybody has to have that vocabulary, and the feeling for that music as well, because if you're going to play 4/4 [time], make it swing, man

Cadence: Would you compare the feeling you experience playing straight time versus Free?

Altschul: Yes, if you're playing that type of a role [playing straight time], then there is a role that the drummer has playing tunes. First, that is to make the band feel good by swinging and keeping the time and accompanying. That's what that is about. So, you can become as Free within that as you can, until it starts to annoy [Laughs] the other people that you're playing with, I suppose, or they can't hear what to play if you start to stretch out more. In that situation, it's your job to make the band sound as good as possible. Now when you're playing Free, you're having a conversation, and whoever has the most creative energy at the moment is the bandleader, you're going in that direction. You also have the freedom to initiate a new place. So, if your energy is strong enough, you'll bring the band with you. If you're not, they'll bring you back.

Cadence: Is there a difference, as far as a spiritual or a physical release for you playing in one idiom versus the other?

Altschul: Spiritually, yes. It's not the same thing physically. It's not the same

thing conceptually or mentally, but spiritually, yes. It's all about digging into your feelings.

Cadence: How does one get to the point where their spirit comes through and they are able to play what they feel?

Altschul: You have to develop a technique to allow that, and that takes a lot of work. I believe also that after a certain level of practicing, performing, playing, getting your body attuned to a certain level of technique, and so on, you no longer are in charge. You become a vehicle for the music to pass through you from someplace else and you have to develop your body to be able to accept that and take that.

Cadence: You've had out of body experiences while playing?

Altschul: Yes, I have, twice. Once with Paul Bley and once with Sam Rivers. I remember watching myself and the band from the audience while I was playing. Twice, yes.

Cadence: What was the feeling when that happened? Did that confuse you?

Altschul: Well, if I reflected on it, it would have gone away, you know, because I'm thinking, and it wasn't about that. It was about being taken. Once you start thinking, it's gone. If I start thinking while I'm playing, I'm late, in this kind of music. When you're playing times and changes, it's different, but with this, it's right there. It's split-second stuff.

Cadence: Have you had much of a relationship with the other First-Generation Free Jazz drummers through the years?

Altschul: I have a pretty good relationship with Andrew Cyrille, and we've done a few things together. I had a nice friendship with Rashied Ali. Steve McCall and I were pretty tight at certain points. Oliver Johnson, do you know that name? He was with Steve Lacy for a number of years, living in Europe, but he's from California. I've played in Sam Rivers' bands with two drummers - Warren Smith and Bobby Battle. And one of the great experiences of my time with Sam Rivers was one of the drummers we went on the road with was Charlie Persip, who was my teacher, and so all of a sudden, we were both there. That was great.

Cadence: You've repeatedly expressed regret that you got pegged as a Free Jazz drummer and didn't get called for other gigs. People assumed you couldn't or didn't want to play time. Does that issue still hold true today?

Altschul: Yes it does. I'm an old guy, I'm gonna be eighty-years old. It still exists, but less. For example, for the past couple years, I've been in a group with Ricky Ford, Jerome Harris and Mark Soskin. We just did a recording, and that's all straight-ahead stuff. I've done a few other gigs here and there, but over the past year there's not been any gigs [because of the pandemic]. I've been playing [straight-ahead] a little more with people like Ricky Ford, Peter Brainin, Luis Perdomo and a number of others.

Cadence: Something you've consistently done throughout your career that differs from most other musicians is that you continually revisit and record

your original compositions. Most others cover their songs once or at most twice, but you record your songs over and over.

Altschul: [Laughs] I like doing it, especially with the different groups I've been with. I especially like doing it with this [current] particular group because each time, it's so different with Jon Irabagon interpreting the melodic stuff. The real factor is that I don't compose that much anymore. There was a period I wrote a whole bunch of compositions, and that was that. I consider myself a player, not a composer. I compose for the need of doing the record date. I remember being encouraged to compose by Sam Rivers and Chick [Corea] so I could contribute my compositions to their bands. When I started to form my first band is when I started composing, but it's not a driving need in me.

Cadence: You grew up in a poor South Bronx neighborhood in a home filled with music. Your father was an amateur mandolin player in the New York Philharmonic Mandolin Orchestra and your mother was a choral singer. Talk briefly about your early family life and the music you grew up with.

Altschul: The music I grew up with was on the radio – Yiddish, Russian and Classical music was all going on in the house. My first language pretty much was Yiddish. We were in the ghetto which was actually a very musical place. When you went out of the house, you heard Latin music down the street and around the corner was the Blues. What the radio was playing at the time was before Elvis Presley, so there was Rhythm and Blues and the crooners, Jazz, and the big bands. I grew up in the '40s. That was my first musical experiences. The first drummer that impressed me was Gene Krupa. My grandfather was very hip. My grandfather came from Poland, and he was a master craftsman jeweler. He was called to St. Petersburg to help put the clocks in the Fabergé eggs. When the Fabergé eggs were here in New York at the museum, me and my sister went, and we saw his name on display, so it wasn't bullshit. We thought it was bullshit, but it wasn't! [Laughs] He didn't mind me wanting to be a musician, but Gene Krupa got busted for marijuana, so my grandfather didn't want me to be a drummer because he thought I was gonna go that way. "All drummers…" [Laughs] But he was very supportive afterwards. But anyway, the neighborhood was full of music. The superintendent of my building was a Blues singer who was friends with John Lee Hooker and sometimes Hooker used to come. The superintendent had about seven children of his own and he was also part of the city system where if you adopted children, the city gave you money, so all in all, there were about sixteen, seventeen kids living there. It was fabulous. They were my babysitters. That was all part of it. I heard a lot of the Blues growing up.

Cadence: You were somewhat of a child prodigy. At two years of age, after your sister finished practicing the piano, you'd go and play what she'd played, however piano never resonated with you.

Altschul: It did resonate with me except I was psychologically forced out, I suppose I could say. When my parents realized that I had this talent, my sister

is six-and-a-half years older than me, and she was studying to go to Julliard. So, she was practicing eight hours a day and doing a lot of training with this particular teacher, Mrs. Willby. And when I was two years old, my parents told Mrs. Wilby to teach me the piano. That was a big mistake. I shouldn't have been forced into lessons at that age. I had a very good ear, I suppose, and instead of really learning to read the music, I used to ask the teacher, 'Could you play it so I know what it's supposed to sound like?' And she'd play it once or twice and I had it. I made her believe that I was reading the music, and I got away with that until I was five years old, when I quit. I just stopped and I didn't touch the piano again until I was sixteen. That, along with a couple of other things in my life, has slowed me down from learning how to read, as I should by now.

Cadence: You're not a good reader?

Altschul: I'm not a great reader at this point. I'm not where I should be.

Cadence: You played some clarinet at age nine, but it wasn't until age eleven, after a schoolmate showed you how to do a drum roll, that you found your calling. What was so enticing about drums?

Altschul: I believe that you don't really find your instrument, your instrument finds you. I don't know, drums got me and that was it. I started to seriously study. First there was this place called Bronx House, where for fifty cents you could get music lessons. So, I learned basic reading and the basic rudiments. From that point on, I studied on my own. The lessons gave me a way to go, and I studied on my own until I couldn't go anymore, and then I started to study with Charli Persip. We became close, it was more than just music learning, he was a mentor. That lasted for about two and a half years and then again I started studying on my own after Charli showed me things to study. When I joined Chick in the beginning, I studied with Sam Ulano, whose approach was very technical, and I felt I needed more of a technique than I had to go to the next level of music. That was my last time studying formally. I've done most of my learning on my own.

Cadence: What made you decide to study with Charli Persip?

Altschul: I heard he was teaching and I knew his playing from Dizzy Gillespie's large and small groups. I heard he was open for students. I went down to his studio, we talked, he gave me a little audition, and he took me on.

Cadence: Why didn't you have a full drum set until you were seventeen?

Altschul: Money. [Laughs] As a bar mitzvah present, I received a snare drum and a hi-hat. And there was a guy in the next building to me who had a bass drum and a snare drum that eventually I used as a tom-tom. He was looking to sell but I really didn't have the money, and my family didn't have any money, I didn't want to ask them for it, so I started to carry packages for people at the A & P supermarket. I got quarter and fifty cent tips. I did that for awhile and saved up some money to get his drums. That was the first set of drums I went to Europe with with Paul Bley. I left it there because I got an endorsement deal

after that.

Cadence: It wasn't all about drumming for you in high school. You were on the swim team. What was your specialty and how good were you?

Altschul: I did diving. I wasn't good, [Laughs] but I tried all the required dives – swan dive, back dive, flips, gainers, twists, all that kind of stuff. Oh, man, you know the saying if you get hurt, you get back on the horse right away? Well, I got hurt and I didn't get back on the horse. [Laughs] I said, 'Fuck this shit.'

Cadence: You were also a member of a Doo-Wop group at the time [called the Students, who later became called the Diplomats] which had a minor East Coast hit and played opposite top acts such as Frankie Lymon, The Platters and Little Anthony. Talk about that experience and why you've not sung in a Jazz setting?

Altschul: I don't think I have a good voice but I'm actually a very good scat singer and I sing very much in key. I criticize myself too much. I don't have that pleasing of a voice. I was in the background of the group, I wasn't a lead singer. I was doing doo-wop, shabaam, and all that stuff. It was a neighborhood group when we were in high school. One of the teachers wanted to be a producer, and he had some sort of ins in the music business. He liked the sound of our group, so he brought us into the studio and we did a record. They wanted us to sign a seven-year contract for all musical talents. I had been playing drums then for about three years and I asked if this includes my drumming. They said yes so I didn't sign the contract. I left the group and they eventually broke up. Some of the group are still alive and they still blame me. [Laughs] They could have found someone if they really wanted to, I was just a baritone singer in the background.

Cadence: A lot of your learning came from attending the nightly area Hard Bop jam sessions at clubs and bowling alleys. Talk about those sessions and who you played with.

Altschul: It was great. Each borough had a jam session, and they were hooked up so that each night it was somewhere else. The Bronx was Wednesday nights. People were there like Jimmy Owens and Jerry Jemmott, who was a great Bebop bass player who one day discovered the Fender bass and went on to play with Aretha Franklin and Roberta Flack and became an influence in the Funk field. Other people included George Cables, Lenny White, Al Foster, Leo Mitchell, Frank Mitchell, Steve Grossman, Larry and Harry Hall, Bobby Capers, Bob Ford, Dave Liebman, and Richie Beirach. There used to be a regular jam session on 124th Street led by Lee Young, Lester's brother, before he went out to California and became one of the head producers for Motown and movies. My first gig, coming out of the bowling alley jam sessions, was a New Year's Eve gig and I hired from the neighborhood – Larry Willis and Walter Booker. That was my first trio that I got paid for. [Laughs] I think it was five dollars. But those jam sessions were very helpful because each week everybody shared what they practiced the week before. "Oh, look what I learned!" And you shared it with

everybody, and they showed you something. It was great competition but there was nothing negative about it. [Saxophonist] Steve Potts told me that when he first came to New York, he heard about this young white kid that was sounding like Philly Joe Jones up in the Bronx. He told me this. He said, "And that was you." Okay, two or three years later, if I would have still sounded like Philly Joe Jones in that neighborhood, I would have been put down. It's okay if you're imitating somebody, you're learning for a couple of years, that's great. Now, where's your shit? I'll tell you a story about Circle. We were playing Slugs', that's a six-night-a-week gig. Philly Joe, who was kind of a personal friend and another teacher, came down to the gig, four or five nights in a row. I said, 'Philly, you're here every night. You're coming to steal my shit?' And he said to me, and it sounded so profound, it still rings in my ears, man. He said, "No, I'm coming to hear what you do in this situation, so when I'm in that situation, I'll keep away from it. Wow, but that was the philosophy – find your own shit and your own sound. You're defined by your sound – the sound of your soul.

Cadence: Elmo Hope lived nearby, and you hung out at his home at times. What was going on at his home and what did you learn from him?

Altschul: I just sat down, kept quiet, and listened to people who dropped by his house on Lyman Place. Jimmy Lyons, Monk, Philly Joe, Frankie Butler, Sonny Clark, Junior Cook, Arthur Sterling. I was never there when Bud came around. Donald Byrd lived up the street on Teasdale Place. These were the big guys of the South Bronx neighborhood. There was nothing Free in the generation I grew up with. The next generation in the Bronx had people like Billy Bang and William Parker.

Cadence: What was it like to hang with Elmo Hope?

Altschul: I quote from Jimmy Heath – "At the feet of the masters." I listened to Elmo talk about the stories, the intensity, about the commitment to the music, how they listened and learned from each other. They all learned from Monk, he was like the teacher, in a sense. I saw what Jazz is. Jazz isn't just a musical style, it's a lifestyle. That's what I started to understand. It's a way of life – opening yourself up to what Jazz puts in you, spiritually, is a way of life. To me, it's another spiritual path. It gives all the same things you get when you meditate or what one gets from practicing yoga, in a certain sense, or Buddhism. It's the same kind of concentrations and mindlessness, because when you're playing, when you've reached a level of playing, you don't think. Thinking gets in the way, it slows you down. If you think, you're not on the same speed as the other guys in the band.

Cadence: You got pointers from Philly Joe Jones and Art Blakey who took you under their wings.

Altschul: Well, Philly Joe was also teaching Rashied and Andrew Cyrille. He was the type of guy who'd be playing his solo and then he'd start to call out [Laughs] what he was doing rudimentally. He'd go, "Triple ratamacue!"

I just loved his feeling and his personal attitude when he played, the sound that came out of his drumming. Art Blakey was like a father-type teacher who had all these kinds of expressions that meant things. He actually, when I was playing Free with certain people, I'm not gonna mention names, he told my wife at the time, [Laughs] "Why do you let him do that?" And my wife, who was French, said, "Bu, what do you mean?" He said, "He's one of the only white cats who can swing, and you let him do this shit?" That was his attitude towards me. Free was okay if it swung. Its gotta swing for him.

Cadence: You brought up the issue of race. You're a white, Jewish Jazz guy…

Altschul: In the words of Charli Persip – "Exploit your own shit!" [Laughs] Yea, there was, I wouldn't say problems that really affected me face on, but there were problems. I can tell you one experience. I was very close with Sam Rivers and his family – Bea and all the kids. Sam went through a lot of flak having me and Dave Holland in his band. I told Sam, 'Look, any time you feel there's someone else that's doing it better than me, or for any reason, we're cool.' There were a few gigs he couldn't take us on because they were very into the political, cultural aspect of the times, but in general we were his trio. Bea used to call me up and say, "Someone else wants your gig. Come on down, let's listen to him.' And I used to sit in the back of Studio Rivbea. Sam knew I was there, but whoever it was who was trying to get my gig didn't know I was there. I'd listen and they would ask me, "What do you think?" Let me just put it this way – I had that gig until I left him – let me just put it that way.

Cadence: Why do you think it was so easy for you to be accepted?

Altschul: I've been thinking about that. At my age, I've been looking back at my life, especially since this pandemic. In the past few years, knock wood [knocks on wood], I beat, I am now cancer-free. I had a heart valve operation and I had a blood clot. All is gone and it makes you think about some shit, you know? First of all, from my era, 1940s to the 1950s, I'm one of the few white people, I suppose, who understands, as much as possible, Blackness. I grew up in the ghetto, and it was the real ghetto. It was the South Bronx, so it was a few white families and everything else mixed in at that time. I also had [a sort of] foster family. I had my family and then I had families of a group of friends that became family. There were eight of us - five Black guys, two Jews and a Filipino. And we became "it takes a village." All our families got to know each other. All our families said we'd rather you all be together than out on the streets. So we were able to go to anybody's house. If I had a fight with my parents, I could go to Sidney's house on 127th Street, behind the Apollo Theater, and stay with his mother. The same with Sidney, he could go to my mother's house. I've been to weddings where they were jumping the broom. White cats didn't know what jumping the broom was until the television show came on. I know a lot about Black history, not studying it, just by hearing the grandfathers of my Black friends talk. I knew what they went through. I

knew about racism and American apartheid, which is called segregation. I was accepted. I don't know why, it must have been a vibe.

Cadence: Were there racial related problems you encountered due to inhabiting a mixed crowd?

Altschul: When I started playing, knowing what I knew being a white cat, I felt a little inadequate from the get-go. But Okay, here's a little story from high school. We were getting flak for me hanging out with Black people. The teachers were this and that, and so on. So, we decided to mess with the teachers in the hallways in school and have a fight, an argument, and each of us using racial epithets to each other. That led to the teachers calling our parents to school. Our parents came to school and sat in the principal's office while the teachers explained, "He's calling him the N word. He's calling him kike." One of my friend's fathers looks at everybody and says, "They do that at the dinner table," and he got up and left. So, it was like that. It must have just been a vibe. I didn't try in anyway, I was just where I was. And I also knew from a musical Jazz point of view where it really came from. So, for me to be able to be involved in a more Black experience than a lot of white cats was good for the music and good for me as a human being.

Cadence: Did you have relationships with prominent players such as Monk, Mingus, Miles, Coltrane or Dizzy?

Altschul: No, not that generation. I did have a relationship with Hampton Haws and Sonny Criss. In Europe, I was in a band with Leo Wright and Carmell Jones. It was their band, and also with Babs Gonzalez. We had personal relationships.

Cadence: Earlier you touched on the fact that your first high profile performance came with Paul Bley, who you met in 1964 at Mira Sound Studio while you were working there as a janitor/assistant engineer. Bley called you for a gig a few weeks later. You were an established Hard Bop player, and he was playing Free Jazz. You mentioned you weren't sure how he came to use you. It seems odd that he hired you.

Altschul: I asked him once, and Sam Rivers said the same thing to me. Bley said, "I like the way you listen while we're playing." He also said, "I like the way you play Latin." That's because Latin is one of the musics I'd heard since birth, so I was able to stretch Latin out in my head to fit the way he was stretching out his playing.

Cadence: Would you talk about playing in Bley's trio with bassist David Izenson? How did it feel?

Altschul: I don't know how it felt 60, 70 years ago. I was excited. I was thinking I was playing with bigtime guys. At the time I did it, I used to take a little phonograph around so I could listen to Elvin. At one point, Bley did say, "You should start to listen to yourself." And there were certain ways he did that on the bandstand as well, which were interesting. One time we were

playing at the Berlin Jazz Festival, and it came time for my drum solo, so I played my drum solo. I finished and I turned around and I see Paul standing in the wings. I said, 'I'm finished,' and he yelled out, "Don't look at me for help, motherfucker!" [Laughs] So, it was dig deeper and play some other shit. Lessons like that I've had from all kinds of other people.

Cadence: How was it to play Free for the first time? How anxious were you?

Altschul: I wasn't anxious, not about the music. It was, 'Wow, I'm in Europe!' Wow, look at the audience!' That first time I played at Slugs', I didn't feel down, I didn't feel like I didn't make it. I felt like, 'Oh, this is far out.' And I was able to see where Paul was coming from, more than Izenson. I was able to see Paul's Bebop background, or feel it more, because I could space rhythms instead of putting them together in time. I could space things that were elongated Bebop things. Like some of Paul's lines, I could hear it if I would put it in time. And once I found out who Paul Bley really was, I mean playing from Charlie Parker through Ornette to him, with Mingus and Sonny Rollins in-between. There's another thing that I just reminded myself of - my Free playing has been with people who came out of the Bop scene. All, except for Braxton, and don't underestimate Braxton because, first of all, there's a tape from the Creative Music School with Chick, Braxton, DeJohnette and Lee Konitz from a benefit that they did, and Braxton is singing Konitz his own solo. He says, "What solo is this Lee?" And he's singing him one of his own solos. They played "Impressions," or something, where Braxton isn't playing jerky, it's more or less like Eric Dolphy. And I know, because I roomed with Braxton, that he practices Charlie Parker solos. He knows them by heart. Don't underestimate him because he came from there too, he just didn't want to present it that way. He had something else in mind. So, all the cats – Sam, Chick, Bley - all these cats come from the tradition and went out. I saw that and [connected with that] because I'm coming from the tradition, just not from the same working conditions that they had. Before I joined Bley, I was going up to Canada out of high school, playing with people like Linton Garner, Erroll Garner's brother, Freddy Coles, and the whole Canadian scene. I was eighteen, taking the bus up to Montreal on Fridays to play on the weekends and coming back. That was all in time, standard tunes playing.

Cadence: You started frequenting Slugs' Saloon, which had a well-deserved reputation as a great place to get knifed, shot or mugged. Did you have any negative encounters there?

Altschul: [Laughs] I didn't think it had that kind of a reputation at all. It was the Lower East Side, Alphabet City, and the Hell's Angels were right across the street. You don't mess around on that block, that's one of the safest blocks in the city. The most violent thing I know about that area at the time was Lee [Morgan] being shot, but the neighborhood? We walked around there at two, three in the morning. I was still living in the Bronx for part of that time and at

two, three in the morning, I took the train up to the Bronx.

Cadence: What are your memories of participating in the 1964 four-day festival famously known as the October Revolution in Jazz?

Altschul: It was a lot of fun and interesting. It was a great statement that here was some other music. Bill Dixon and those guys got a lot of venues together, little coffee shops, churches, little places that said yes, and all these people who were into another thing had a chance to perform and be seen. They could be reviewed and get on the map a bit. I was asked to play with three different bands - [Sam Rivers/Jimmie Stevenson and Valdo Williams/ Paul Bley and Reggie Johnson].

Cadence: You had the opportunity to play with legendary pianist Lennie Tristano near the end of his life when he was no longer performing.

Altschul: That was great. David Izenson brought me over. We just did some jam sessions. Lennie had a great sense of humor, with me, anyway. He didn't really like drums and drummers, which is ironic because his daughter is a drummer. He accepted them, he knew they were necessary, but most of them played too much for him. I knew people that knew him, so I knew how to approach him a little bit. The first time we got together, Phil Schaap drove me there. When we played it was like Bebop off to the side. [Laughs] He was really into Charlie Parker. He was really into these tunes, these heads - "Learn these heads," and he filled up a lot of the space so I could understand not to be too busy a drummer. It was great. It was another level of conception for me at the time. [Laughs] I used to move around his ashtrays. He was blind, and he'd scream, "Altschul!" [Laughs] Roland Kirk used to live down the street here too. He was another one that you couldn't get past, man. I tired to sneak by him a couple of times, you know, on purpose, and he'd say, "Altschul?" I said, 'How do you know, man.' He had like a computer of smells, and he knew your smell.

Cadence: You tried to sneak past him on the street?

Altschul: Yea, he lived like three, four blocks down from here, and we would always talk and hang out. He had a sense of humor as well, you can tell by his music. Sometimes I'd see him outside and I'd try to get past him. If I was to make it, then I would come back and say, 'I got ya!' [Laughs]

Cadence: How was it to play with Albert Ayler?

Altschul: At first, I wasn't sure about Albert Ayler. His sound was incredible, but I couldn't get where he was coming from. He wasn't coming from where I knew to come from, like from a particularly Jazz place. He was coming from someplace else. But once I got to really listen, it was really fun to play with. There once was a concert at a theater for four saxophone players – Coltrane, Pharoah, Albert and Shepp – and sitting in the audience, hearing them all tuning up and just playing, Albert's sound just cut through everybody. "Raaaghh!" But when you ask what did it feel like to play with those people? I don't know how to answer that. First of all, it felt great that I was asked to play with those people or that I was able to play with those people, but as far as the

actual experience? I don't know how to answer that. I can't go back to relate how it felt.

Cadence: What do you recall from being in a band with Hampton Hawes and Sonny Criss for nine months?

Altschul: Reggie Johnson was the bass player. For me, that was great, I always wanted to play Bebop. It was wonderful. We were out on the West Coast playing [all the major clubs]. We played the Keystone, The Lighthouse, no recordings, no tape. I've been looking for years and can't find anything. It was great. Also, on and off for thirty years, I was a junkie, so a lot of experiences I've had with some of the famous musician junkies of the world, [Laughs] were just that – junkie experiences. There were certain hookups, knowing what, oh yeah, I know what you're going through, you know what I'm going through. So, that was another kind of "togetherness."

Cadence: You found some jobs with other users because you used?

Altschul: Oh, no, jobs had nothing to do with that. We were hanging out. Whoever found a job, found a job, the problem was what happened with the money. And most of it, if you got it, it went up your arm, anyway.

Cadence: You started using heroin in your late teens. Would you talk about how and why that happened?

Altschul: First of all, the neighborhood was drug ridden. Secondly, I liked drugs. When we were in junior high school, some guy was sniffing Carbona cleaning fluid in a handkerchief. I said, 'What are you doing?' He said, "Try this," and I did, and I loved it. I didn't get into sniffing, but I loved the change of what happened. Okay, when I got into high school with a bunch of people, we were experimenting with all kinds of things, and we were drinking wine at the time. I was going to high school smashed [Laughs] on wine. We would meet in the morning, have a couple of drinks, and go to school. During that high school period I got introduced to speed and marijuana, and I liked it all. It wasn't interfering with my life at the time, it was on the weekends. We'd take some Benzedrine and have long discussions about Subud [Susila Budhi Dharma -an international, interfaith spiritual movement] or esoteric religions. Part of this group of people was a guy named Fred Stern. The Atomic Energy Commission wanted him because of his brains. He became a full professor at the University of Rhode Island at 22-years-old and he was one of the guys. When I went home to practice, he went home to study. We all hung out in the streets. A year out of high school, a friend of mine's parents got divorced and they told him if he could keep it up, he could have the apartment. He told them he would. There were a few of us who really wanted to get away from our homes and we got the apartment and we kept it up. I was a stock boy at a department store for six or seven months, got fired, and was able to collect unemployment. That's when I was able to practice and study. We were smoking pot at fourteen, fifteen, and when I got the apartment, I sniffed

heroin for the first time. I liked that too, but it was nothing, it was nothing crazy. There were no needles are anything. It was every now and then. Then when I started to go up to Canada, this guitar player I was playing with was a junkie. He played so good. I saw him shooting up a couple times and I said, 'What are you doing? Let me try that.' He said, "No, no, I don't want you to try that." Finally, I tried it, and again, I liked it. Also, when I looked around, everybody that I idolized, at one time or another, took heroin. At the time, some of them were still taking it. They couldn't stop because they really didn't know if you could stop or not in those days. But you could, especially today there are things that make it fairly easy, if your mind is set to do it. And so, on and off for thirty years… I remember I was in one of the first bands, aside from Paul Bley, I played in, which I don't know if anybody knows about either, the Tony Scott band. The clarinet player? The rhythm section was Richard Davis, Jacki Byard and me. That was in between gigs with Bley, around 1965 or '66. Years later, I'm playing in Paris, and I'm sober, and Tony comes to the club, and after the gig he says, "That's how you should play!" Yeah, I thought, like a lot of guys thought, that because so-and-so-and-so-and-so, uses drugs, you're gonna play great, or you'll at least have the potential to.' Which I'll tell you something, with all the negative shit that they say about drugs, there's also positives. There's positive shit about heroin, if you don't take too much where you're nodding out. And if you're not in the need, your concentration is a mother fucker. You hear great, your technique is fluid. I remember Ray Charles telling me, as far as he was concerned, he sounded best when he was using. But Charlie Parker said it don't make you play better, so it's all individual, but there's a certain point you go past, then you have no more choice. You're fucked because heroin has its own soul, and if you let it, it takes yours over.

Cadence: Did it ever get really bad for you? We hear the stories about Chet Baker …

Altschul: Yea, it did. I also knew Chet, I played with him quite a bit living in Europe. I've seen him nodding out in gas stations and all that kind of shit. Yea, it got bad, of course it got bad. Like what do you do for money when you need a hundred dollars a day just to be numb for it? Anything you can. And that means ANYTHING you can. There was a point in time where one could say that there was a very dark side because I would do things to get the money. You didn't really have a choice. It was either that or be really sick, and that's a different kind of sickness, one you really don't want to go through. Now there's some medicine where you don't have to go through the sickness and that's how I stopped. It wasn't legal in America yet, but it was in France where I was living, and I went on a program. It's been 28 years now.

Cadence: By the end of the '60s, you were working with Chick Corea and appeared on his Song of Singing album [1971]. How did you become associated with Corea?

Altschul: Chick and Dave were leaving Miles and they wanted to play more open music in trio format, and as far as they were concerned, they liked my approach with Paul Bley. Paul influenced all those cats in one way or another. They asked me to play, and I really loved playing with that trio. I would have loved that trio to last one more year before it became a quartet because what we were doing as a trio was, I felt, really nice and could still be developed. But then Braxton came in and we went to a whole other thing, and that was great too.

Cadence: That quartet with Braxton was known as Circle. Talk about that group's music.

Altschul: That was a great period for everybody at that time. Everybody was composing for that band, except me. And everyone was very serious about the whole thing. I remember me and Chick, you know Chick's a very good drummer, and I remember me and Chick getting together in his loft, and we must have spent hours and hours, finding the right pitch, the right tonality for my bass drum. And from there we went on to all the drums, so I could play as busy as I wanted to play without the sound of the drums interfering with the clarity of the other instruments. We worked on that and we found it. And now I read about myself [Laughs] sometimes where it says, "He played a very high pitched Gretsch set at the time." Well, the way to get that sound was to tune the drums up real high. It wasn't like I was hearing that at the beginning, but that was what was necessary for the music. Then improvising became like, it was similar to Bley in a certain way, where you could say this is a ballad, play it Free. This is a Latin tune, play it Free. It was taking regular standard music and opening it up, and then also taking contemporary Classic music, World music and throwing it all in there but still leaving space for it to breathe. We used to rehearse after the gigs, and at that time, gigs ended at two, three o'clock in the morning. You'd play two, three sets in the club, and after each set, we used to get together in whatever dressing room there was, immediately after we came off the bandstand, and talk about what happened. We talked about if anybody was upset about what happened. We rehearsed between sets. "Oh, we didn't play this one right," or work on new tunes. There were always new tunes coming into the book. After gigs, we would rehearse until at least four in the morning.

Cadence: Circle wasn't just a cooperative band, it was a communal association. You traveled around the world with your families, lived together and cooked macrobiotic food.

Altschul: That's right, we were like a commune that lasted a couple of years. We would carry fresh foods, especially when we went to Belgium, where they had a big macrobiotic place that sent food all over the world. We'd go there and stock up on rice and noodles, and every day, whatever town we were in, we'd get fresh vegetables and we cooked.

Cadence: Have you continued on living like that?
Altschul: No, [Laughs] absolutely not.
Cadence: It was during the time of Circle that Chick Corea joined Scientology, along with all the members of that group. Corea went deep into Scientology, whereas you, Dave Holland and Anthony Braxton only went to Grade Four. What was your experience with L. Ron Hubbard's religious movement?
Altschul: First let's say, Chick joined, and he wanted other people to join with him. They had a celebrity center type of meeting, Chick at the head of it. The Brecker brothers were there, Lee Konitz, me, Dave, Braxton, [Dave] Liebman, Richie Beirach, all kinds of friends of Chick's were at this meeting, and they were talking about Scientology. Now, Chick, at the time, was just coming off of Miles, and he and Dave had some money. I was coming off of playing with Paul Bley, I didn't have shit. [Laughs] That was the first thing. The way they talked about it, and from the books I read, it sounded interesting. I was willing to give it a shot, but I didn't have the money, so I said to them, in front of all the celebrities, because I'm from the Bronx, you know, this is some natural shit. I said, 'Listen, I can't afford this, but you are telling me right now,' because they said this, 'that you guarantee my success. Are you saying that I will be successful if I go into Scientology?' They said, "Yes, absolutely." I said, 'I'll pay you when I'm successful,' and they had to say yes because it was in front of all these people. I still owe them the money! [Laughs] Okay, so we entered this thing, and the course itself was called Communications, which was wonderful, I've got to say. It was a great course. Part of the course is you've got to sit in front of somebody, and first it was me and Chick, and Dave with Braxton. Each one of us had to sit there, with no attitude, looking into the other's eyes without blinking for two hours. And each time you blink, or you tear, you've got to start the time all over again. Then there's another exercise where you're doing the same thing and someone [he makes a sudden screaming noise] and if you flinch, you start time all over again. It was so nothing could bother you and that you're really there with someone. And I'll tell you something, when you're like that with someone for fifteen minutes and you blink, you realize how much attention is taken away from the moment for blinking. It's far out! It's really far out, so that was really appealing to me. Then, all of a sudden, Chick goes to the next level, and the next level, and we were watching his personality change. Chick, later in life got it all together. He became a very loving, beautiful human being, but at that time, man, we quit Scientology because of how he was changing. We said, "If that's what it's doing to him? We don't want any part of that." That's the story. Chick continued and became successful. [Laughs]
Cadence: So, you had concerns for Corea's wellbeing as he went deep into the program? Did you mention anything to him?
Altschul: There wasn't a chance to mention anything. Scientology dictated certain things, and he went for it [Snaps fingers] right away. Some of it

was don't hang out with anyone who's not a Scientologist. That was at the beginnings, and he did some very cold things that affected a couple people in the band, I'm not gonna talk about it, that to this day, affects them.

Cadence: Braxton talks about how Corea broke up the band and stranded him in L.A. at the time.

Altschul: That's right.

Cadence: So that's how Circle ended?

Altschul: Basically, Chick broke up the band and we were all stranded out there. Dave Holland and his wife, Claire, who was seven months pregnant, and who had already had five miscarriages, was stranded, along with Braxton and his lady, and me with my lady. All of a sudden, there's tax slips under the door with a note saying, "Please sign this and return it. I'm gone." He went with Stan Getz or Elvin or somebody. He had his gig and he left us stranded. We were about to do a tour of Spain for nice money and he left. So, we had to work, me, anyway. Dave didn't have certain papers so he couldn't work in certain places where the union was involved, but I could. Shelly Manne, a great cat, gave me a gig in his band as a percussionist. Then he hooked me up with an old friend of mine – Jimmy Cleveland, the old trombone player - who was looking for a drummer. David Frishberg was playing piano with eight trombones, including Kai Winding, a rhythm section and drums. I took that project for the couple of gigs they had and then me and Dave Holland went off with this lounge singer/piano player and played the Holiday Inns up in Seattle, Washington and Oregon, until I made enough money to buy a car, go back to L.A., pick up Braxton and his lady, and we drove back to the East Coast. Dave couldn't leave yet because he needed to get money together for his wife's pregnancy. He stayed in Seattle or Portland for a number of months until he got back to the East Coast. And when he got back to the East Coast, there was another problem we won't talk about because that's Dave's business. Yea, we bought this car and we jumped in it, and I dropped Braxton off in Chicago, and then went on to New York.

Cadence: Dave Holland's 1973 Conference of the Birds album featured the former members of Circle except Sam Rivers replaced Corea. Talk about making that classic album and why it's held up so well?

Altschul: It was Dave's first album as a leader and he wrote all that music. We had a couple of gigs. We went to the Antibes Jazz Festival, we did a couple of things at Studio Rivbea, we got the music together before we went into the studio. And to all of us, because I've spoken to the others, it was just another record date. It was a nice mixture of concepts for that particular thing. Why is it holding up? I have no idea. You'll have to ask the critics and the public that, I mean I don't really know.

Cadence: Holland was influenced by listening to birds when he composed that work. Did you tailor your drumming with that in mind?

Altschul: He never told us about that concept. We read about it on the back of the album like everybody else. [Laughs] No, there was no preconceived notion or idea, like what Wayne Shorter might put out some scenario. It was here's the music, 1-2-3-4-boom!

Cadence: The same year you recorded Holland's album [1972], you recorded on Buddy Guy & Junior Wells Play the Blues.

Altschul: Yea, that was great. Like I said, I've been listening to the Blues since I was a kid. The superintendent of my building would play guitar and sing the Blues. I could hear him singing when he was sweeping up the hallway. Michael Cuscuna [producer] put me on that gig. He knew my love for it and it was great. I had a great time. Nice cats – Buddy and Junior.

Cadence: You really brighten up when you talk about playing Blues and traditional Jazz music. If you could restart your career, how would you have liked to have spent it? What percentage of Free Jazz versus Blues versus traditional Jazz would you have liked to have done?

Altschul: I'm very fortunate, and I love my career, but I would have liked to have been called for more things that I can do and not just the specific areas that I'm known for. There is no specific percentage I can name. I try to do that all in my band – I'll play some Blues, I'll play some straight-ahead, I'll play some Free, because I can. [Laughs]

Cadence: During the '70s, you participated in some of the decades most important modern Jazz recordings including multiple albums with Anthony Braxton, who's in a league by himself as a creative genius. Talk about working with him and what makes him unique.

Altschul: People do say that about the recordings I've done. When I first met Braxton, he was talking about wanting to write for four orchestras at the same time, hooked up by videos in different countries. He was thinking like that back in the '60s and '70s. He was nurtured by the AACM and that whole scene over there in Chicago. He's just another kind of a cat. He's a true intellectual, a chess master, and he really knows the music – all the music. Santi Debriano told me that he was studying at Wesleyan for his masters or whatever, and he took a course from Braxton on the Blues. He said it was the greatest course on the Blues he'd ever heard of or imagined. Braxton knows that stuff, and what he plays and what he does, he does because he wants to and because he can. That's what he hears. So, playing with him was like, for the most part, I just had to play what I can play. There were times that I was playing straight-ahead time, and there were times that I was playing Free. But after a while, he didn't want too much straight-ahead time or swinging. There was a particular period of his where he didn't want swing to come into the music, and I don't know really how not to, for a white guy. [Laughs] So it was time for me to leave.

Cadence: What do you recall about recording Spiral [1975] with Andrew Hill?

Altschul: I loved Andrew, we hung out. We took acid together a couple times. [Laughs] He was a unique player, a great guy. That was the one record date, then afterwards we did some things where we played on the same festivals and we were able to hang out and talk. I wish I could have played with guys later on where I knew more of what to do in the situations instead of just feeling my way around. There're a few guys like that, Andrew is one of them, where I wish I knew more of what they wanted than what I gave them.

Cadence: When do you feel you really blossomed and could handle anything?

Altschul: Next year. [Laughs]

Cadence: You played on Annette Peacock's premier 1972 recording I'm the One, which featured really unusual music. I spoke with Peacock about that and she said, "Our musical involvement was mutually significant. His litany of punctuations defined the language of my compositions, which developed his style as well." How did you prepare to play her music?

Altschul: It's interesting because I was used to playing Carla Bley's music with Paul, and I could really relate to that. I knew where Carla was coming from, I even knew the tunes she based her tunes from. So, it was a big difference for me. I didn't know what to play when I heard Annette's music, and she kind of knew it. She knew I was a little frustrated and that I was more into Carla's music, but that's the music we were playing. I really didn't know how to approach her music until, [Laughs] I'm in Rhode Island on the beach and I took an acid trip. I'm sitting on the beach, just spacing out, and all of a sudden I start to hear the waves coming in from the ocean and the drops of water sprinkling off the rocks or whatever the fuck that was. And I started to get into the rhythm of the waves coming in, and all of a sudden I heard Annette's tune. I said, 'That's it, it's waves. I've got to play waves,' and that's when wave music was introduced, I guess. Yea, that's what happened. It made perfect sense for me to play wavey [Laughs] for her music.

Cadence: Did that experience affect your future playing style?

Altschul: It affected it not entirely, but it put another piece to my vocabulary. Free music to me has categories. It's not just [makes a blaring noise], there's ballads. There's the same styles of music as there always has been – Latin music, ballads, up-tempo, slow tempo, medium –I can relate to all of that and bring it into Free music. Also, space, filling space instead of leaving space. Starting out with the space and dropping things into it instead of a lot of stuff and leaving the space. But that all becomes part of what I consider vocabulary.

Cadence: You continued to work with Paul Bley who was a real character. Would you share some anecdotes about Bley?

Altschul: Oh, wow, none too great. [Laughs] He was a great musician. He was a great person to talk to, very entertaining, but, like a lot of those kind of cats, he was a prick. I'll tell you two stories where I had to grab him and hold him up against the wall, although he was much larger than me. I'm a small,

little guy, but I was from the streets, and I didn't care. We were in Spain, we played six weeks at this club called the Whiskey Jazz. At that time there were those kind of gigs. Annette was with him, pregnant, and she was due in a month or so. Next stop from Spain was Rome. I had set up with my personal friend, an apartment in Rome. Right? And Bley wrote about this in his book, but he turned it all around. We get into town, and we come to this apartment. I had the keys. I said, 'Here are the keys. I'm gonna bring my drums to the train station.' At the time, you traveled with your own drums but you could check them in at the train station and leave them there instead of filling the apartment with them. Anyway, I go to the station and come back, and I'm locked out of the apartment. I knock on the door, he opens it and says, "Sorry, you can't stay here. Annette feels uncomfortable," and he closes the door. I'm thinking, 'What the fuck? What is going on?' It was like one o'clock in the morning and he wouldn't let me. This wasn't my first time in Rome, so I thought, 'Okay, there's only one place to go – the Spanish Steps.' I went to the Spanish Steps and I decide to sleep there until the morning and then I would see what was happening. There was nothing else I could do. I found a little spot at the Spanish Steps and I fell asleep. People had to cross over me to get down the steps if they came a certain way, and all of a sudden I hear someone with a thick South African accent say, "Hey Johnny, look! Is that Barry? Is that Barry?" And I get kicked. "Is that you Barry?" Louis Moholo and Johnny Dyani, who were the rhythm section at the time for Steve Lacy, living in Rome, were walking down the Spanish Steps. Now, Louis and I have gone through like ceremonial brotherhood. I lived with these South African cats. Louis says, "What's happening?" I told him and he says, "Oh, you come. Come, come." He brought me to Lacy. Steve Lacy was fantastic. He set me up, and this was all within twenty-four-hours. He set me up with a restaurant that gave me one free meal a day. He set me up with the apartment of Bob Thompson, the painter who's work would be used for Lacy's The Forest and the Zoo album cover, although the door was locked and we couldn't get in. He was supposed to have been out of town, but it turned out that he had died inside the apartment, which we didn't know. Lacy also introduced me to a women known as the "Smoke Lady," she was selling smoke. I immediately hit it off with her and we started living together. She had a car, and she was the "Smoke Lady." Before all that, I was stranded, and that was fucked up to me. Luckily, in twenty-four-hours' time, I was able to do all that. Either because of who I am or the goodness of them or whatever. Paul Bley wrote in his Stopping Time book - "And I give my guys a test. I bring them out and I throw them out in the middle of some city, and I see what happens within twenty-four-hours." It's total bullshit. That was fucked up, and he could be that way. That's one anecdote about Paul Bley. Another thing is he used to be macrobiotic, and he used to take care of himself also. And I've seen him eat a complete steak dinner and order a second one.

Annette hadn't seen him for a number of years, and he had blown up, he got really big. So, Annette said to him, "Paul, how can you let yourself get like that?" And his answer was, "With great pleasure." Fantastic. [Laughs]

Cadence: Being that at one point you lived with Stu Martin on a houseboat in Amsterdam and were friends with Han Bennink, it's fair to ask who was funnier, who had a better sense of humor – Bley or Bennink?

Altschul: As a matter of fact, I used Han's set of Gretsch drums on Paul Bley's Blood album. Bennink is funnier. He's cool, he's nice, he's talented. I love Han. He's also a very interesting artist, and at that time, he had his laboratory. He had like a barn full of instruments and paintings that he was working on. They were both pretty funny. There's also cultural funny with both of them too. You could hear their sense of humor in their playing.

Cadence: How did Muhal Richard Abrams come to live with you for over a year when he first came to New York from Chicago in 1976?

Altschul: I don't really know. I think because of Braxton and George Lewis, they were telling me that Muhal is coming to the city and he's gonna need a place to stay, and I had a very large house at the time, in the middle of what's now Soho in New York. I had plenty of room and I said, 'Let him stay here,' and he did. I had a piano, and it was wonderful listening to what he practiced. It was great. He stayed about a year and a half. He was always interested in photography, and my lady at the time, showed him how to make a dark room under the kitchen table, which he really got into.

Cadence: Who else stayed with you?

Altschul: Nobody really lived with me except Muhal, but people stayed over for a while. People like Jean Paul Bourelly and Steve Coleman came to my house directly from the airport, moving from Chicago for the first time. George Lewis and Bobo Shaw were there for a while, and Philip Wilson hung out there.

Cadence: You finally started recording under your own name commencing with You Can't Name Your Own Tune [1973, Muse] with the impressive supporting cast of Abrams, Holland, George Lewis and Rivers. They all played Avant-Garde Jazz but were firmly rooted in the music's tradition. Was that an important factor when you decided on who to pick for your first recording?

Altschul: Yes. I wanted them to, whether we put it on record or not, to be able to play the history of the music, and not just deal with one small aspect of the avant-garde, or whatever.

Cadence: What's the meaning behind the title of the album?

Altschul: [Laughs] I don't know. There's no real meaning. I was trying to figure out what to name, not just the album, but the composition, and my friend Peter Warren, the bass player, said, "Hey, do you know you can't name your own tunes?" I said, 'That's it!' [Laughs]

Cadence: Well, the title sounds very deep.

Altschul: It can be construed as such. Actually, it's true, your destiny is your destiny.

Cadence: What was your connection with Chris McGregor and the Brotherhood of Breath?

Altschul: Around 1970, this was a few years before Louis Moholo found me on the Spanish Steps, I went to London with Circle. We all went to hang out and be based there for a while and I ended up living in London with Chris McGregor and Mongezi Feza, Johnny Dyani, Louis Moholo, Chris McGregor's wife, Maxine, and his daughter, Andromeda. We were all living in Chris' flat. I did quite a number of gigs with two drummers with the Brotherhood of Breath. One of the gigs was at Royal Albert Hall as a memorial for Mongezi Feza who died. At the time, Mandela was still in prison and I was very involved with the ANC, the African National Congress, while I lived in London, which was nine months. After I played there, Mandela sent back word to the ANC thanking me for participating and saying that I could play their music – the white guy that could play their music – because I studied quite a bit of their music and I was able to sit in with the cats.

Cadence: Why did you move to Paris in 1984? What was life like for you in New York at the time you left?

Altschul: I left at the height of my career here. [Laughs] I left before the Downtown scene started. I could have stayed and maybe been in a different position than I am now. Family made me move to France. But, on the other hand, the experience was fantastic. I spent ten years there. I did things there I could never do here, and I was able to not get pigeonholed. I was considered a drummer, so I was able to do gigs with people like Leo Wright, Carmell Jones, and Johnny Griffin. My one regret about being in Europe for ten years was that I didn't take advantage of studying with Kenny Clarke. That's my only regret. He was great at putting the finishing touches on you if you could already play. Art Taylor told me, "Go to Klook."

Cadence: Why didn't you study with Clarke?

Altschul: I just didn't. I got to see him play many times. I talked to him, I knew his son, his wife.

Cadence: Were you planning to stay away that long?

Altschul: No, I wasn't planning anything at that time. Actually, I didn't give up this apartment. I was always coming back and forth, but I didn't tell anybody. I was perfectly content being there. I was working a lot, but I wasn't getting the reputation over here. When I finally moved back to New York, one day I was walking on Bleecker Street, man, and all of a sudden, I'm grabbed. 'Aggggh!' I look up and hear – "Barry, Barry, I thought you were dead!" It was Jaco Pastorius, and he was serious. He was serious, man. It was a weird feeling. He really thought I was dead. Holy smokes!

Cadence: You found success in Europe. You were chosen to be the first foreign Artistic Director of the French regional big band in Nancy and recorded with standouts such as Kenny Drew and Niels-Henning Ørsted Pedersen. Talk about

living and working in Paris.

Altschul: My ten years there were great. I liked the travel, and the respect you get over there was great. There's a great fan base. The big band was fantastic, they gave me that. I was able to take some of my compositions, and with the help of a friend of mine, do the orchestrations for big band. His name was Coleridge-Taylor Perkinson. We were on the telephone, and the French government was paying for this. I'm on telephone in Paris, with my little electric piano, he's in New York with his grand piano, and we're writing all the arrangements together. He did all the orchestrations. I didn't know anything about putting the harmonies together, but we worked on the ideas of the arrangements together. It must have been five hundred dollars a phone call, [Laughs] but it worked out pretty well. As far as Kenny Drew and Niels, I became the house drummer for Black Saint/Soul Note Records, which was based in Italy. [Record producer] Giovanni Bonandrini and I were good friends, and he knew that I didn't only want to play Free music, and he put me on all these other record dates.

Cadence: While in Europe, you had the opportunity to tour Africa, the Middle East and Eastern Europe as a Cultural Ambassador for the USIS. Talk about that experience and what you were able to learn as a percussionist from that experience?

Altschul: I was able to make six tours in that role. As a percussionist, I learned technically some African rhythms that are very old. I also learned about an attitude that these people had that was inspiring. There was one incident [that came later in my life]. I went to Mali in 2004 with Roswell [Rudd] to play at the Festival in the Desert. It's sixty miles, which takes you about eight hours to get to over the desert, into the Sahara from Timbuktu. I spent a week there in a tent with the Tuareg people, who were migrating. The festival brings in food and water because you're in the middle of the desert, and the Tuaregs put on shows – archery shows from standing on a camel. It was fantastic shit. There was something that happened to me there that really touched me. I started crying. Sometimes I cry when I talk about it. I'm sitting in the musician's spot, under the stage, in the desert, and I'm with three guys who are teaching me this difficult rhythm. They're teaching and teaching it to me, and finally I get it, and someone took a picture of us, and I'm beaming because I got it. Then all of a sudden, a woman comes over, stands in front of me, and starts singing to me. She's a griot. The griot's thing is to talk about the history, the news, society, whatever it is that's happening at the moment. She's the newspaper reporter, in general. She starts singing in front of me, and she's crying. She's singing in African, not English or French, which I speak. So, after she finished, I asked what she was singing about and they said she was singing about how the White man comes to Africa, in the name of religion, tries to steal and change everything around, and here's this old white guy, who came to learn

something. [His voice cracks]

Cadence: Did you end up using the rhythm they taught you?

Altschul: Actually, I tried to incorporate it into a composition, but it was difficult for the other cats to really keep it up.

Cadence: You've had the opportunity to spend significant time in Africa.

Altschul: I've traveled there five or six times. In 1974, right before Muhammad Ali fought George Foreman in the Rumble in the Jungle in Kinshasa, Zaire, and during the time of Vietnam and Civil Rights and all that, I was able to get a blank plane ticket. At the time, some people were trying to upset society in a certain way so they were handing out credit card numbers of movie stars and this and that. I was able to meet someone who worked in the printing office for the airline's tickets. At the time there were no computers so I got a blank airline ticket and the guy said I could fill it out to go anywhere in the world and he gave me instructions on what to do. Eventually I went on a nine month trip, kind of on a drum sabbatical. As a student I was studying African drumming and I went to Africa, Haiti and Brazil on this plane ticket. It didn't cost me a penny. [Laughs] I was away for nine months, I left with five hundred dollars in my pocket and I came back with two hundred dollars nine months later. It was one of the greatest learning experiences that I had. I was living in Zaire, which is now the Republic of the Congo, in Kinshasa, and eventually I went overland by hiking or hitchhiking with a friend of mine who spoke five African dialects. Have you heard of Ray Lema? He studied Classical music and wrote an opera and became quite well known. His father was a master drummer living in the bush and I went to see him and hang out. So, during the trip I was able to learn drum rhythms in Africa, Haiti and Brazil and they're inside of me now. I've changed them to fit me and the music I play, they're in my vocabulary.

Cadence: Who actually ended up paying for your plane ticket in 1974. Was it billed to someone else?

Altschul: It was a free plane ticket. Do you remember the American terrorist group called the Weathermen? Well, one of the ladies associated with them was a friend of a friend and she worked for the printing office that printed up the airline tickets. There was one ticket for all the airlines and then you filled in the blanks for the particular airline and each airline received their batch. What she did was to take three to five tickets off each batch of each airline and she would give them away. With the blank ticket you had to do two things. You had to fill them out to where you didn't want to go but the destination had to have the same air miles of where you did want to go. I didn't know about that but I had a friend who did, so she filled out the plane ticket to say I wanted to go to Japan and China but what I really wanted to do was to go to Africa. For the first flight, you take the cheapest flight you can, and that was to London. London cost one hundred forty dollars at that time. You took the cheapest flight because if you got busted, you had to pay restitution for the plane. After your

first stop, you then had to go into any airline to change your next flight. I knew that Iberia Airlines was slow from my experience as a musician. So, I went to Iberia Airlines in London and changed my itinerary. They changed it and that's a completely legal ticket. That's what I did. [Laughs] They told me what to do and I was outlawish enough to do it. I'll tell you, another friend of mine did it and he had more of an air of joie de vivre than I did. When he did it, he went first class. [Laughs] I didn't have the balls!

Cadence: What was the most unusual thing that you experienced while living in Europe?

Altschul: Nothing while I lived there during that ten-year time, but that wasn't the first time I'd come to Europe. I lived in Europe about two-and-a-half years, all in all, before that, and there were times when I was there, living in Berlin, when the wall was still up, that some strange shit was happening. There was another time that I was traveling in Italy with Sam Rivers, and we were stopped with machine guns by the Italian police, for some reason, I don't know why. I'll tell you a story. I had a gig in Berlin in '65 or '66, and at the time, there was East and West Germany. I was living in Amsterdam, so we had to drive through East Germany in an old Volkswagen bus. A friend of mine told me, "If you break down, if you have some wine with you, if you have some smoke with you, whatever it is, drink it, smoke it, and just sit there and wait. The police will come." So, that's exactly what happened. We broke down. We had some grass, we smoked it. We had some wine, we drank it. We just spaced out waiting, because the car wouldn't start. All of sudden the police come and say, "You can't stay here," in their German, but I speak Yiddish, so I was able to deal. I said, "But we need a mechanic." They said, "You can't stay here. There's no mechanics around for you." I said, 'We're due in West Berlin at the Jazz Gallery,' -which is the club Eric Dolphy died in – 'How do we get out of here?' One of them said, "I'll get you out of here." Now remember, this is East Germany in the '60s. The guy goes and stands in the road with a submachine gun, waiting for the next car to come. He stops the car and says, "Tow them to the Jazz Gallery in West Berlin. Here's a pass so that you can get through and come back." And they did, they hooked the car up. If they hadn't helped us, they would have been fucked-up. We used to drive all over. [Laughs] We used to get in a [Peugeot] Deux Chevaux, which was a two-horsepower car. It went everywhere, it was fantastic. We used to drive to the Brandenburg Gate. We'd drive fast, fast, fast, until the flashlights went on, and then we turned around, because if we continued, they'd shoot us. We'd used to get drunk and do that. [Laughs] Those were the games in those days. There was another time I lived in Liege, Belgium with Jacques Pelzer, the saxophone player, for a couple of months. He had a house and all kinds of people came through to stay for a few days and we would all jam. People like Chet Baker, Stan Getz, Bill Evans, and Hank Mobley. As a matter of fact, I played a couple of concerts with Hank Mobley while living in Belgium. There's a whole bunch of stuff I did while

living in Europe. I lived there altogether about fifteen years spread over three separate times.

Cadence: You had plenty of work in Europe during your ten year hiatus there and you liked living there. Why did you move back to the States in 1993?

Altschul: For creative reasons. The cats that were available didn't want to rehearse, didn't want to jam, they just wanted to gig. I'm not talking about the Free guys, these were the younger guys. If you're playing with people with the same name and reputation as you, it's a different kind of a project. But if you're out with your band [and they don't want to rehearse…] One of the last bands I had there was with Glenn Ferris, Andy McKee and Sean Bergin, and these guys were ready to rehearse. They had an American attitude of let's play. The European attitude is how much is the gig and if we need to rehearse, okay. So, that finally got to me, and I came back. I came back to nothing.

Cadence: What was the nature of the music scene that you encountered in the New York after being away for so long?

Altschul: It was all about the Downtown scene and I had no part of it. There was a little club called the Internet Café in the East Village, I think it was [saxophonist] Hayes Greenfield setting up the programs, and I got some gigs there. I did that with various people – no rehearsals. I did it with Dave Douglas, Peter Yellin, a whole bunch of people who I knew. That was fun but there were no real gigs in New York for me for almost nine years. I was teaching as an adjunct at Sarah Lawrence College. That was the major thing I was doing.

Cadence: How had the music changed while you were gone?

Altschul: More Free became vocabulary for more people. Actually, I was talking about that with [drummer] William Hooker the other day. He asked, "What do you think the influence of your generation had on today?" I said, 'I hear more people using freer language in their music as their everyday language now.' The Downtown scene was a bunch of very good musicians trying to stretch the concepts. It was great. I found that to be different – people were stretching the concepts without being put down. Now there were a bunch of musicians doing that and getting play for it. Zorn, Joey Barron, Dave Douglas, and all those cats. I missed that whole thing.

Cadence: You took the teaching position at Sarah Lawrence College for ten years. Was that your plan or did you do it out of necessity?

Altschul: I was always teaching privately. I always had a bunch of private students coming. One of my private students was going to Sarah Lawrence and told me that they needed somebody in the music department. I said, 'Okay,' and it lasted ten years. It was great, I enjoy teaching.

Cadence: Have you taught any high-profile performers who's names we would recognize?

Altschul: Harris Eisenstadt, Jeff Siegel are a couple of students I had. I'm blanking on who it was, but one of the very good Bop drummers of today, Carl

Allen maybe, studied with me for two or three times. I asked him why and he said, "I wanted to check your shit out," which is beautiful.

Cadence: You were part of the Fab Trio, the collective with Billy Bang and Joe Fonda that formed in 2003, becoming your first regular performing band in two decades. How did that trio come to be?

Altschul: Joe Fonda called me up and asked me to do it. Billy and I had had a long relationship. He was from the Bronx, although I'm a couple of years older, we still were tight. When he first started playing violin again out of the service, he came and sat in with Sam Rivers when I was playing. He really couldn't keep up, but he said to me right afterwards, "Now I know what I have to do." And he was very appreciative of that time of him sitting in because he became "Billy Bang" after that. He was great, a lot of fun, and a great personality. Heavy shit happened to him in his life, more than Vietnam. First of all, Vietnam killed him, he died of cancer from Agent Orange, but there was more to it - his job in Vietnam, what he had to do as a soldier. Ever hear of a "tunnel rat?" Billy Bang's job, he was a sergeant, was to go into the tunnels that the Vietnamese built and kill anything that moved. Really – children, women, whoever it was. You couldn't see down there, it was dark. They gave him a .45 and a helmet. I was on the road with him for eight years and I never saw him sleep with both eyes closed. Heavy cat.

Cadence: One of the FAB Trio's five recordings is History of Jazz in Reverse [2005, TUM]. What is the meaning of that title?

Altschul: I have no idea. I don't know who came up with that title, but all of a sudden I saw that that was the title. I don't know if it was one of the producers or one of the guys in the band. It was not a concept for me, we were just playing. That was another open, Free trio based on a couple of tunes we had which were just a trigger for improvisation.

Cadence: The Sam Rivers Trio had a 25-year reunion performance at Columbia University in 2007. How was it to play with Sam Rivers and Dave Holland again after such a long time?

Altschul: It seemed like yesterday. We all talked about it. It was like nothing ever stopped. Sam had just gotten out of the hospital, a week before with pneumonia. Dave was already on another level of fame. He didn't like the sound we were getting after two notes of him playing so he brought his own soundman to do the sound in the hall, but he was the only one who did that. We did no soundcheck. We had no idea what to do. We came out and Sam went – BOOM – and we played. That was it – no discussion – there was nothing about the music at all – zero. It was, 'Hey, how you doing? You got anything to smoke? Blah, blah, blah.' That was all. [Laughs]

Cadence: Jon Irabagon's intense 2010 Foxy album includes a photo of you seated, surrounded by six, somewhat scantily clad young ladies. Any explanations on the photo? Was it your idea?

Altschul: [Laughs] That's right, the [Hugh] Hefner aspect. The photo was Jon's

idea. He has a very far out sense of humor. All these women were his friends, one of them was the wife of the bass player, and they just did it to have fun.

Cadence: You look like you were having fun too.

Altschul: Oh, yeah, well, how could you not? That was all Jon. That's the album where he's posing like Sonny Rollins on the cover.

Cadence: That whole album is filled with sustained, very intense music.

Altschul: At the end of the session, I asked him, 'Is this what you wanted? All intensity, no change, nothing else?' He said, "Exactly what I wanted." 'Okay, great.' It wasn't hard for me to be that intense for the whole record after playing with Sam Rivers for all those years, but I was surprised that's all he wanted. And that started a relationship that we've had that's really very nice.

Cadence: You celebrated your 70th year with your first recording as a leader in over a quarter of a century with the release of the first 3Dom Factor album The 3Dom Factor [2013, Tum]. How did you come to lead a band again after so many years?

Altschul: Joe Fonda asked me if we should find someone else to form a trio. I said, 'We can't replace Billy [Bang] but I know this saxophone player.' You see, Moppa [Elliott] was running a thing at the Stone, and one of the things he thought might be fun was for me and Jon to get together and play duo. I have found out since then that Jon always respected me for my ability to play inside and outside and wanting to do both. I didn't know that until later on, but he had this kind of affinity with me anyway. So, we get together at the Stone, no talking, no hellos or introductions. We just played as a duo, and we immediately knew that we had this chemistry together. At that time, I was gone, I was forgotten about. I was lost. Between FAB and until this, I wasn't doing much. I was down and depressed about not getting gigs, and Jon said to me, "I'm gonna get you back out there." That's the second time, the first time was when I was teaching. I wasn't gigging at all, and Adam Lane, who I'd never heard of, he called me up and said, "Do you want to do this record date with me?" I said, 'No, I don't really feel like it. Who's on the date?' He had John Tchicai and Paul Smoker and I agreed. I had played with John, and I wanted to play with Smoker. Adam got me out of my house, I have to say, and then we went on a tour. After that, nothing happened until I hooked up with Roswell and Dave Douglas. Steve Swell was in that project, and he hooked me up with Gebhard Ullmann, and I became part of that quartet for a while, but I was being lost somewhere until Jon got my name back out there. He was great. I did a duo tour with him and then came the trio, and then I had a record date for TUM records in Finland. I told Joe [Fonda}, 'If I do this date, it's my date, it's my project, it's my trio,' and he said okay. That's how me, Jon and Joe got together.

Cadence: What did you plan to focus on when you started 3Dom Factor? What were you seeking to do with your own trio?

Altschul: To play some music. All of the members of this trio are

knowledgeable of what I want them to be knowledgeable about – which is the whole history of the music. They're able to bring the art to their playing whenever the vibe comes around. It was not to do anything new, but to be fresh.

Cadence: Your fourth 3Dom Factor album is due out later this month – Long Tall Sunshine [Not Two]. The title track is a new composition of yours. What's the inspiration for the tune?

Altschul: A lady. [Laughs] She was tall, so there's a long, and she had this real sunny disposition with blond hair. I thought she was "Long Tall Sunshine," and I wrote this tune while we were together.

Cadence: What's been the main focus for your compositions? Has it been relationships?

Altschul: Actually, there's a ballad I wrote that I named after a relationship I had but it wasn't inspired by that. The tune made me think of it when the tune was finished, but no, I sit down at the piano, and I'll play some figures and find one I like. It depends on what I'm writing. If I want to write a tune that has chord changes in it, then I'll build the chord changes around the melody. I don't make the changes first and then the melody, I do it the opposite way, so a lot of the times it's not a standard sounding form, but when you hear it, it is. If you actually look at it, it's not. One of my tunes is called "That's Nice." It sounds like a regular straight ballad, but if you look at what it is, there's more bars in there then should be, but it works out in the end. That was all based off of melody and chords built to the melody.

Cadence: You also play with the OGJB Quartet [Oliver Lake, Graham Haynes and Joe Fonda], another pianoless band you frequent. Is there a reason you're not playing with pianists?

Altschul: At the beginning of my career, it was all about pianists – Hampton Hawes, Paul Bley, and others for years and years, but eventually, I felt a little freer without the piano. Also, finances had a lot to do with it. Bringing a quartet out on the road is much more difficult than bringing a trio, and I felt fulfilled with a trio. I didn't miss the piano. So, okay, why not?

Cadence: Creation Drum Company sells the Creation Barry Altschul Signature Drum Set. What was important to you in the design of that set and how is the set reflective of you?

Altschul: It was important to get the sound I heard in my head for the drum set. Being on the road so much, especially for the last thirty, forty years, you didn't have to bring drums. There were drums at the gigs, and you played on a different set every day. So, I got to know, not more of what I wanted, but more of what was missing from all these drum sets that I was playing. They were all name drums, they were great, but they didn't give me exactly what I wanted, even when I tuned them my way. So, I did some research about drum making, and my godson, who's a fusion drummer and the son of drummer Stu Martin, told me he found this company in New Jersey that made a set of drums for

him that he loved. I was playing a gig at Sweet Basil's, and I told my godson to bring the drum maker to the gig. He came to the club and we had a long talk. I agreed to have a line made but he had to agree to follow my instructions to make a drum set for me with my specifications. The sizes are a little off. It's made out of mahogany instead of maple. It's got five plys of wood, similar to the 1950's Round Badge Gretsch. The snare drum is a combination from the 1920's through 1970's technology. All the metal on it is airplane-type quality. And the most important part of it was the lacquer. I had it lacquered like a violin or a bass, instead of a drum set.

Cadence: Have they sold many sets?

Altschul: I don't really know. I don't think so because they would have contacted me if we had. I know we sold five or six snare drums to people in Europe, but I haven't really checked. It did get an incredible review in Modern Drummer Magazine. The reviewer was really complimentary. At the end, he said something like, "I advise any drummer to sit down behind this set of drums and start to play, and the music will automatically come out." It was something like that. It was really nice to hear what he thought about the drums.

Cadence: Inside information has it that you once had a dog named Jazz.

Altschul: I had a dog named Cymbal also. [Laughs] I had a dog named Bebop. Now I have a dog named Sassy after Sarah Vaughan. But yes, Jazz was an exceptional dog. He was a search and rescue trained animal and he was my granddaughter's babysitter, literally. He was taught how to grab you and drag you without breaking skin. And one day, my granddaughter, in France, crawled off into the woods during a family gathering. We didn't know where she was, so, we gave the dog a diaper to smell, he went off, and pulled her back. I have pictures of him nursing a bird for a week. The bird was sitting on his nose, it's on my phone.

Cadence: Would you share a memory or two from your long career?

Altschul: I learned about Indian and African music. I was able to spend time in Egypt and was able to sit in and play hand drums with some of the musicians there. One time when I was playing with Chet Baker, we were all eating in the former Yugoslavia, and these gypsies came by the table to play. They were going table to table. I know how to play the spoons, so I picked up a pair of spoons and I started to play with the gypsies. And somehow I got a lot of stuff right, because each time I did, they said, "Bravo!" Afterwards, they invited me to play with them at a gypsy wedding, which I did go to for two days. Incredible. They just told me what not to do.

Cadence: What were you not to do?

Altschul: They said the ladies will flirt with you but be careful because I could get killed. They said it was okay to flirt back but don't touch. I respected them and played spoons and it was great.

Cadence: Did they pay you for that gig?

Altschul: No, I don't know if they got paid, it was all family kind of stuff. I was just honored to be asked and then to have them show me part of their life.

Cadence: Prior to starting this interview, you mentioned you had a lot of recorded music from past performances. What do you plan to do with that treasure trove?

Altschul: Good question. I would like to get everything digitized and then see. There doesn't appear to be too many labels these days that want to put things out. There's a few in Eastern Europe that are a bit more progressive than any place else at this time. I don't know but something should be done with it because there's some great music there. I've got stuff in there with people you'd never think of. Ever hear or J. R. Monterose? I've got stuff with him, stuff with Atilla Zoller, with Nick Brignola, with Pepper Adams, all those kind of guys, as well a bunch of stuff with Muhal, George Lewis, and all of that. A lot of stuff with Sam. All kinds of stuff on cassettes. Any suggestions of what to do with them? I'm open.

Cadence: What are your interests outside of music?

Altschul: I like traveling. I like learning new instruments. I used to be a workout person, now I walk a few miles a day up in the country. I'm starting to like food. I always felt that you need to eat to live, not live to eat, but my lady lives to eat so I'm learning about food. [Laughs] I like art. I like reading, I read a lot. I like listening to music. I don't listen too much to new music, I listen mainly to either the Bach's or I like Flamenco or Classical guitar music. I like to watch certain sports and film noire movies or cinema verité. I'm seventy-nine-years old, how much can you still have the energy to do? [Laughs]

Cadence: How about guilty pleasures? What would we be surprised to hear that you like?

Altschul: Sex. [Laughs] On TV, I like to watch a lot of the forensic dramas and police shows.

Cadence: The final questions have been given to me to ask you by other musicians:

Jon Irabagon (saxophone) asked: ***"That's great you are interviewing Barry! He needs to be as famous as any of the living legends in Jazz these days. I've got some questions. What does LEGACY mean to you and how do you hope to be remembered and admired for?"***

Altschul: Legacy to me is the musical legacy that I'm leaving behind, which, to tell you the truth, I, for the first time, saw a whole bunch of stuff online about me and my body of work, and I said, 'Not too bad. That's okay.' My body of work, I hope, stands for me and shows my musical taste, my musical ability and my musical integrity. I hope to be remembered as a good musician who helped extend the progression of improvised drumming. I feel I am part of the Jazz drum continuum. That's how I'd like to be remembered.

Jon Irabagon also asked: ***"Who are some influential musicians that you feel people don't know about?"***

Altschul: Edgar Bateman, Bobby Moses, Don Byas, Lucky Thompson, Wilbur

Ware, Reggie Johnson, Oliver Johnson, Muhal Richard Abrams. I could keep coming up with names.

Jon Irabagon also asked: ***"What is some advice you would give to students and up and coming musicians that you hear as lacking in the new generations?"***

Altschul: First, don't be stylistically prejudice. Second, don't be afraid to try something, even if it's unorthodox or unpopular. Go for it, make it into something.

Oliver Lake (saxophone) asked: ***"What do you think about the two recording projects we did for TUM Records with our cooperative group OGJB?"***

Altschul: I think that there's a very natural ability that comes out in that band. There's a cooperative mentality that I don't really think has been even halfway developed because of lack of playing experiences. I think if we were really able to play a lot and be kind of like a working band, even if it's just for a few weeks each year, some very interesting and beautiful music could come out of that band.

Warren Smith (drums) said: ***"I have a vague memory of the two of us playing with Sam Rivers, probably a few decades ago. I also remember at that time that Cecil Taylor was in the audience. We had a long conversation afterwards. You and I were pretty good friends. You had a tympani in your apartment, that you eventually contributed to my studio. I still use that drum."***

Altschul: Oh, wow, beautiful. Yeah, Warren is a beautiful guy and one of the most underrated, great musicians on the planet. His ability as a true percussionist is fantastic. His knowledge of music is fantastic. His ability to play complicated charts, to me, it's incredible how easy he makes it look. And he's something else to be able to play solos on the tympani the way he does, man, he's unique. He's a beautiful person and he looks thirty years younger than he is. [Laughs] I remember playing with Sam Rivers in front of Cecil. I think Sam acknowledged Cecil at the concert too. Cecil loved that music, he loved that trio. He told me that one of his favorite trios of the '70s was my trio with Ray Anderson and Mark Helias – the Brahma Trio. He came to a lot of our gigs. You didn't ask me about the Brahma Trio. That was another wonderfully improvising band that had a very large book of written compositions that stimulated great places to improvise or stretching out arrangements of standard tunes. That band was together five years.

Joe Fonda (bass) asked: ***"Talk about the differences and similarities between all the amazing bass players you've played with."***

Altschul: The similarities being their knowledge of the musical language and repertoire. They all had a certain level of technique. They had different sounds, and all had different concepts. The similarities were not too many, really, because all of those musicians intentionally tried to play individually. So, if they had a similarity, at that level, they would try to change it. None of them had the same time feel and none of them had the same sound.

Nasheet Waits (drums) said: ***" I have a clear memory of you working with***

Sam Rivers and Santi Debriano. That concert still resonates with me. If you could reminisce on the time spent with Sam, that would be great."
Altschul: Oh, Nasheet, I think he's a great drummer. Sam was very knowledgeable and very schooled in music. He went to conservatory. He played a number of instruments that you don't know about like viola and bassoon. He was a wonderful pianist as well, and he believed in a flow of improvising. The secret to playing with Sam was to really listen and feel the vibe. For example, if Sam would play two or three notes, I would know if he wanted a rhythm behind the next part of improvising or if he would want something Free or if he wanted something spatial. And he insisted on that kind of communication without telling you so. There were times that we all lived in the same neighborhood – him, me and Dave Holland. At times we'd all get together at eleven o'clock in the morning and start playing. If you wanted to go to the bathroom or get a sandwich- go ahead - we'd be a duo or a solo, but we didn't stop playing music until five or six in the evening. What that meant was that we played for hours and hours and hours together improvising. Sometimes it was shit, sometimes it was great, sometimes it was dead space, but you learned what happened. So, when you played a concert for an hour-and-a-half, [Claps Hands] none of that shit is there. It's all intense, at the moment music. Beautiful. I don't just mean intense energy wise, because we also played soft and we played spatial, but it was all meaningful for that concert because all the bullshit was played away in rehearsals. I mean when you play for six hours and then you only have to play for one, essence is what you play.

Andrew Cyrille (drums) asked: ***"This might be a bit unfair to ask you, but do you remember the group that I played with or the Dizzy Gillespie tune we played at Charli Persip's tribute at the National Black Theater on July 20, 2019? You were in the audience."***
Altschul: Lovely. Yes, I remember him playing. First of all, Charli Persip was a mentor to me and to Andrew, and he and Andrew taught together at the New School, so they were pretty tight. Andrew played great. He was swinging and playing the music the way it should be played without trying to be something else of what he is. He has the concept to take things out, but he didn't, he just played the gig. It was nice. There was a saxophone player and a trumpet player, and it was beautiful for Charli. He was there and enjoyed it. It was a wonderful thing for Charli to feel all these people that were not only influenced by him but loved his stuff.

Annette Peacock (vocalist, pianist) asked: ***"What was your response to the deaths of Chick [Corea] and Paul [Bley]?"***
Altschul: My girl, Annette. Chick's [news] was a surprise. I didn't know he was sick. We had spoken, maybe a year before, and there was no sign for me. To me, he was still doing a million gigs and projects, so that was a big surprise. With Paul, I was saddened by Paul's death because for the last couple of years, I hadn't communicated with Paul because of something that I thought was his

fault that I found out afterwards wasn't. What I thought it was, hurt me, and I thought it was because of him so I didn't talk to him for the last couple of years of his life. I regret that. Once I found out the truth, I was very sorry that I wasn't able to [talk with him]. They were both great pianists and influences, and they're both gone.

Annette Peacock also asked: ***"Is there an intrinsic philosophy to which you've adhered?"***

Altschul: I'll tell you, whatever philosophy I have, that I really can't put into words, was brought about by all my experiences as an adult. The spiritual experiences, the musical experiences, the intellectual experiences, but there's an overall influence in my philosophy about street survival. I was brought up in the ghetto in the South Bronx on the streets. I saw my first person dead at eight-years-old, stuffed in the sewer. He was murdered because of some drug stuff. I was eight-years-old. Those kind of things have stayed with me all my life. I don't fear it, I'm not upset by it. It doesn't disgust me, it's just that I know it exists. I know what I have to be prepared for. I know how to walk through these streets, so that, in a certain way, is a philosophy.

Annette Peacock also asked: ***"Has your relationship with music been static or mutable?"***

Altschul: It's been mutable but there's a certain static mentality I have about what a musician should know. I feel there's a certain base root of things a musician should know to be part of the continuum. If I hear a musician who calls himself a Jazz musician and is trying to be advanced but doesn't have the foundation to do that… I don't feel Free music is a backwards step, I feel it's an advanced step, and for me, the musicians should be able to have that foundation to go to that advanced step. But I have to say that my musical tastes and values have gotten more open.

Cadence: Any final comments or memories?

Altschul: No, but I probably will when you leave. [Laughs] I'm glad that I'm able to be the focus of this kind of attention at times and to be interviewed.

Cadence: Well, you've had an incredible career.

Altschul: I guess so. To me, now that I'm looking at it, like I said, I saw a bunch of stuff online of my stuff and I said, 'That's not a bad body of work,' but to me, they were just gigs. What's more affecting to me is when I'm out of work and I'm not playing, because when I'm playing, that's the most safest, natural and best place for me on the planet. I feel so secure and safe when I'm playing drums – it's the rest of life that isn't. [Laughs] What's hard for me is when I'm not playing. In Jazz music, to complete artistic phenomena, you need an audience, and the past couple of years there's been no audience. And even when there were audiences and I wasn't working, there was no audience, and that's the stuff that gets to me. You can't do your artform because you need that energy from an audience that brings you to another level.

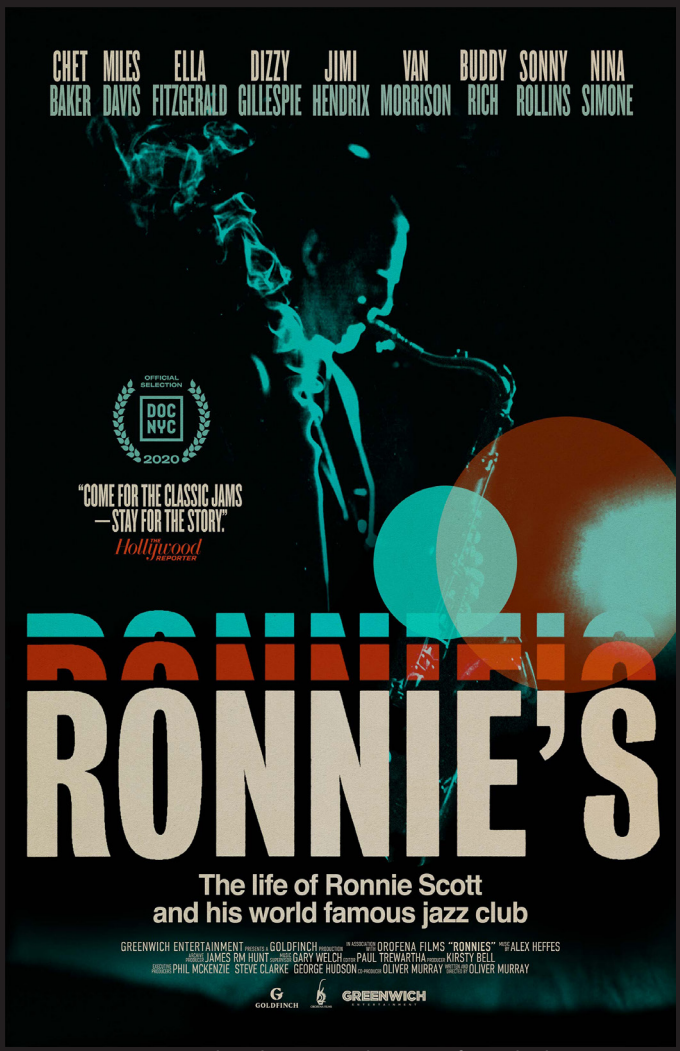
Film Review

RONNIE'S:THE LIFE OF RONNIE SCOTT AND HIS WORLD FAMOUS JAZZ CLUB

GREENWICH KINO LORBER
WRITER/DIRECTOR: OLIVER MURRAY
TOTAL TIME: 102 MINUTES

In the almost four decades that I have been associated with this publication this is, to my knowledge, the first film review I have ever penned, so please bear with me. As a lifelong film buff I have bemoaned the fact that very little of the music I love has been present on celluloid, especially of the American variety. My introduction to music documentaries came via Bert Stern's groundbreaking Jazz On A Summer's Day and has slowly grown with the output to today. Now some titles {I Called Him Morgan/The Case Of The Three Sided Dream/Time Remembered,etc.) are as cherished as beloved albums. The above-listed can now be added to that list. Founded in 1959, Ronnie Scott's Jazz Club has become as famous an institution as the Village Vanguard and is still open for business. The disc opens with Oscar Peterson pounding out some strong boogie-woogie before segueing into the early years of the British tenorist's life story which veteran readers of this mag will know was reiterated in the short interview in the May 1979 issue, Plenty of vintage black & white footage with numerous voice-overs from people like Georgie Fame, Quincy Jones, Kyle Eastwood and others. Co-founder/manager Pete King is heavily featured throughout. As the club gained exposure it moved from where the original location (a once late-night cafe) to more roomy digs in 1965. Some of the color shots are of Dizzy, Sonny Rollins, Mary Lou Williams,Johnny Dankworth with Cleo Laine, Sassy, Ella scatting with Keeter Betts' bass & Tommy Flanagan on piano bench, Buddy Rich kicking tubs, Nina S., Miles with Wayne, Chick (on electric keys), Dave Holland and Jack DeJohnette. My biggest kick was seeing an animated Pre-Rahsaan working his three axes before going to flute. There are also quick shots of Monk, George Benson, Max Roach, Barney Kessel, Stan Getz and others. Snippets of an interview from an obscure O.P. Television show interviewing Ronnie and a b&w clip of him locking horns with Ben Webster. His wife and daughter (Mary and Stella) speak of his manic-depressive bouts and Pete Kings sums it up with the statement "He was not easy to know". But he was an excellent musician and a funny mf. Only disappointment=No mention of Tubby Hayes or the Jazz Couriers he co-led. Recommended.

Larry Hollis



Sendesaal, Breman (photo, Josef Woodard)

New Issues

a) BILL EVANS - MORNING GLORY

RESONANCE 2061

DISC ONE: RE: PERSON I KNEW / EMILY / WHO CAN I TURN TO?/ THE TWO LONELY PEOPLE / WHAT ARE YOU DOING THE REST OF YOUR LIFE / MY ROMANCE.41:50.

DISC TWO: MORNIN' GLORY / UP WITH THE LARK / T.T.T. (TWELVE TONE TUNE) / ESTA TARDE VILLOVER / BEAUTIFUL LOVE / WALTZ FOR DEBBY / MY FOOLISH HEART.50:19.

Evans, p; Eddie Gomez, b; Marty Morell, d. 6/24/1973. Buenos Aires, Argentina.

b) BILL EVANS, - INNER SPIRIT

RESONANCE 2062

DISC ONE: STELLA / LAURA / THEME FROM M*A*S*H / TURN OUT THE STARS / I DO IT FOR YOUR LOVE / MY ROMANCE / LETTER TO EVAN. 45:23.

DISC TWO: I LOVES YOU, PORGY /UP WITH THE LARK / MINHA(ALL MINE)/ SOMEDAY MY PRINCE WILL COME / IF YOU COULD SEE ME NOW / NARDIS. 49:44.

Evans, p; Marc Johnson, b; Joe LaBarbera, d. 9/27/1979. Buenos Aires, Argentina.

And the Bill Evans beat goes on, with these two double packets of unreleased tapings at separate locations some six years apart. (a) is the earliest date with the duo of Gomez and Morell on board for a baker's dozen of selections. Subtitled The 1973 Concert at the Teatro Gran Rex it holds four originals from the leader (Re:Person I Knew/The Two Lonely People/T.T.T.(Twelve Tone Tune/ Waltz For Debby) filled with the homogeneity of variance that their respective instruments provide.

Thus the cascading waves of sound from the keyboard is occasionally tempered by the pulse of the upright bass more so than the few drum outbursts heard. In the thick (over 40 pages) booklet provided well-known blogger Marc Myers gives thumbnail sketches of all the tunes after producer Zac Feldman furnishes an introduction. Also included are essays from Claufio Parisi, engineer Carlos Melero and Tito Villalba a local photographer and drummer. Yet the most interesting comments come from Gomez and LaBarbera and especially fellow pianist Richie Bierach whose commentary is most entertaining.

(b) is from another Argentinian concert this time from Teatro General San Martin some six years later.

With much shorter hair and different rhythm mates that made up his final unit, Evans plays another 13 numbers with no repeats from (a) other than "My Romance" & "Up With The Lark". The slightly thicker accompanying booklet is filled with different photos, descriptive paragraphs from Marc Myers once again, fresh writings from Claudio Parisi, more comments from house sound recodist Carlos Melero, a repeat of the short Tito Villalba segment, a Marc Vasey I from interview of Evans from that same year, personal recollections from both band members and an appreciation from keyboardist Enrico Pieranunzi. Every song is a highlight but mention must be made of Miles' "Nardis" and "Letter To Evan" making its first appearance here. Both volumes sport handsome graphics in keeping with the Resonance label standards.

Larry Hollis

New Issues


BILL
EVANS
MORNING
GLORY
THE 1973 CONCERT
AT THE TEATRO
GRAN REX,
BUENOS AIRES
EDDIE GOMEZ | MARTY MORELL


BILL
EVANS
INNER
SPIRIT
THE 1979 CONCERT AT
THE TEATRO GENERAL
SAN MARTÍN,
BUENOS AIRES

P

New Issues

GEORGE NAZOS
SYMPOSIUM FOR PEACE

SELF RELEASE

A WARM WELCOME/ I SEE YOU/ SANTIE/ LONELY MOON/ BACK TO LIFE/ SI LALA/ PENT UP HOUSE/ ALMOST THERE/ WHOLESOME BLUES/ THE CHASE/ HOPE/ CALLING ME/ CLOSER TO HOME. 53:47.

Nazos, g; Harvie S.,bass; Joe Abba, d; Tamuz Nassim, vcl 2021 NY

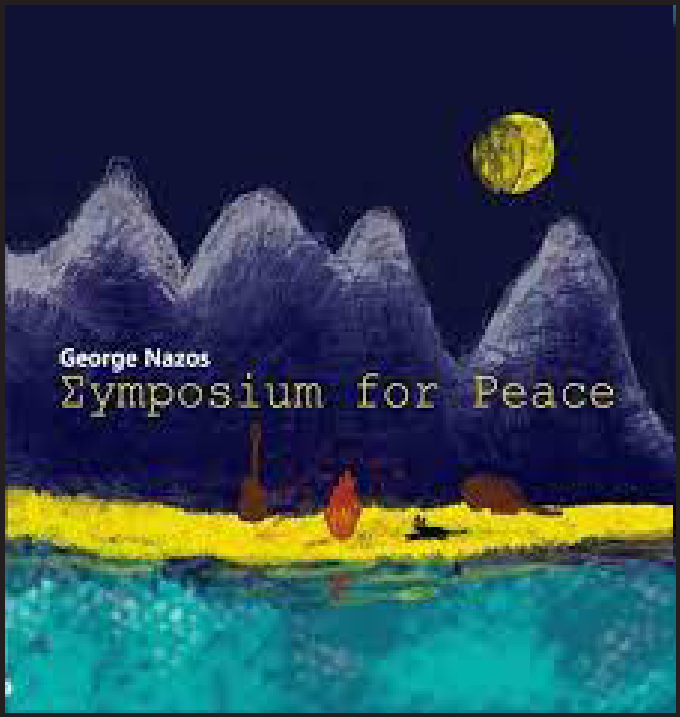
Guitarist George Nazos brings the guitar to its full potential and glory with his new cd "Symposium For Peace". As a true pioneer of guitar technique and a pursuer of innovative guitar voicings George gives life to his beautifully written original compositions. With the help of bandmates Harvie S., Joe Abba and Tamuz Nassim our senses can travel on a peaceful journey through time and space.

The cd opens with a nylon string solo guitar original that sets the tone for what's to come. As a right handed guitarist, George has some unique ways of stretching out his left hand and thumb that allows him to play some very difficult guitar voicings. The result can be guitar sounds that are very different and not what we typically hear. With his right hand he can produce flurries of notes that at times can sound like a harp. "Back To Life" has a strong and passionate melody that's shared with Harvie S. The phrasing and sustain of the bass is superb, with excellent solos by both players and some insightful support from drummer Joe Abba. "Almost There" is a dark and mysterious gem with electric guitar and lots of sensitive interplay between the trio. It has a deep and pensive quality and is full of harmonic exploration. Vocalist Tamuz Nissim joins in on "The Chase" and "Hope". " The Chase" is a guitar and vocal dance with bursts of magical sounds and color. Tamuz's voice soars with effortless clarity and precision, taking us away with her graceful tone.

George leaves us as he began, with solo guitar and another meditative composition that gives us a sense of peace and tranquillity. "Symposium For Peace" is a finely crafted cd with twelve originals and Sonny Rollin's "Pent Up House." The musicianship all around is superb.

Frank Kohl

New Issues



New Issues

NU BAND
IN MEMORY OF MARK WHITECAGE: LIVE AT THE BOP SHOP
NOT TWO 1019-2

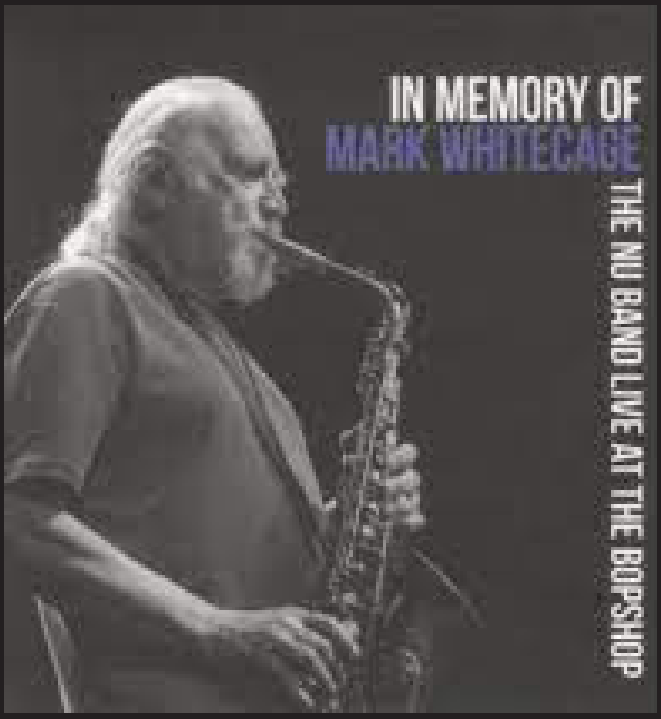
PRAYER FOR THE WATER PROTECTORS / FIVE O'CLOCK FOLLIES / ONE FOR ROY / THE CLOSER YOU ARE THE FURTHER IT GETS / CHRISTOPHE AND ORNETTE / MINOR MADNESS / DARK DAWN IN AURORA. 62:43. Mark Whitecage – as, clt, Dine flt; Thomas Heberer - quarter-tone tpt; Joe Fonda – b, flt; Lou Grassi – d, perc. 1/18/2018, Rochester, NY

The passing of reed player/composer/band leader Mark Whitecage in March of 2021 took away one of the more creative players of the past 50 years, Although, not particularly well-known, one look at his discography will attest to a life of creativity and the respect of his peers. His early recorded alliances (1969-71) with vibist Bobby Naughton and Annette Peacock segued to a lengthy stay in the groups of Gunter Hampel and Jeanne Lee. His quintet Liquid Time (ca. 1990) marked his first recording with bassist Joe Fonda and included an early appearance by trumpeter Dave Douglas. He led a trio with bassist Dominic Duval and drummer Jay Rosen. He also co-led several groups with his wife, clarinetist Rozanne Levine. But arguably his most fruitful collaboration was Nu Band, a quartet formed ca. 2000, by four musicians who basically wanted to play together in a band. Original members were trumpeter Roy Campbell, Whitecage, Fonda and drummer Lou Grassi., It has survived as an ensemble for over 20 years despite the passing of Campbell in 2014. In Memory of Mark Whitecage is their twelfth release and the final one with the saxophonist. It was recorded in 2018 at the Bop Shop where the band's first release was recorded.

The album starts with a few words and an incantation from Whitecage. "Prayer For the Water Protectors" is a meditative piece featuring his Dine flute (a wood flute of Navajo origin). Heberer's micro-tonal trumpet meshes subtly and beautifully with it. It's a wonderful way to start the disc and is a good representation of Whitecage's diverse artistry. This segues nicely into one of Whitecage's smartly bopping numbers, "Five O'Clock Follies". The tightness of the group on this piece demonstrates how masterfully these four players swing together. But that's not their only metier. With four "leaders" in the band, their scope is wide-ranging. Fonda's "Christophe And Ornette" is in two parts, the first being a free improvisation, the latter part an effectively contrasting grooving section. Perhaps the most complex track is Heberer's "train" piece. "The Closer You Are, The Further It Gets." It's full of starts/stops, tempo acceleration and deceleration. Yet it never comes off as clever or contrived. Once again, the interplay between Whitecage and Heberer is remarkable. Fonda and Grassi maneuver the tempo trickery with aplomb, keeping the horn players grounded. The closer is one of Grassi's most effective compositions, "Dark Dawn In Aurora". It's a somber piece but with a strong melody and is played with an intensity and passion that gives it a power and defiance that places it in its proper perspective.

This is a well-assembled package (by Fonda) with excellent sound and liner notes by the band members. I must confess to having attended this concert and the recording captures the spirit of the band that evening. It works as both a tribute to a departed friend and as a fine introduction to a band that has been out in the open but operating under the radar for the past 20 years. Robert Iannapollo

New Issues



New Issues

PETE MALINVERNI
ON THE TOWN

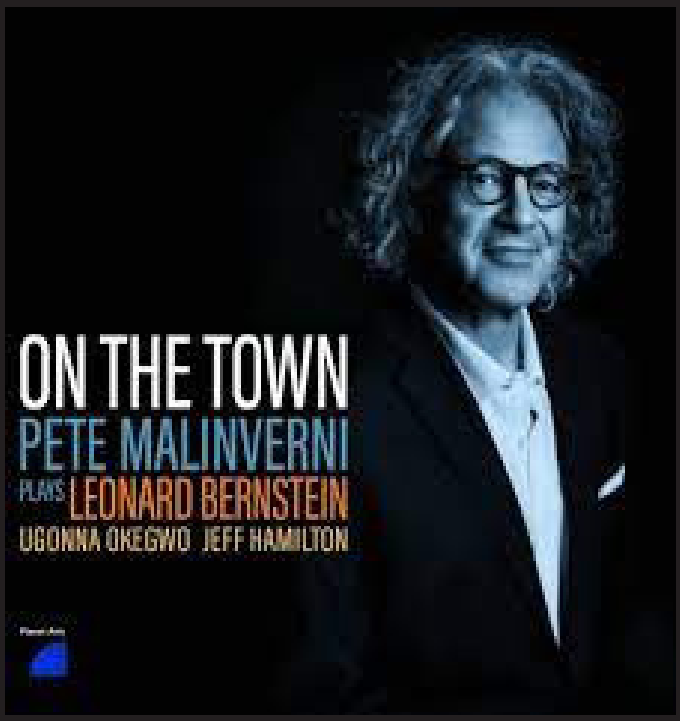
PLANET ARTS 302124

NEW YORK NEW YORK / LUCKY TO BE ME / SOMEWHERE / COOL / SIMPLE SONG / I FEEL PRETTY / LONELY TOWN / SOME OTHER TIME / IT'S LOVE / A NIGHT ON THE TOWN. 59:00. Malinverni, p; Ugonna Okegwa, b; Jeff Hamilton, d. 4/11/2021. Englewood Cliffs, NJ.

With material taken from three of Bernstein's Broadway musicals (save one-"Simple Song")
and subtitled "Plays Leonard Bernstein" this as much of a salute to the Big Apple as it is to the late music icon. Actually there's one number not from him with the inclusion of the final tune, an original from the pen of the leader. To be stereotype as only a classical cat Bernstein had highly eclectic tastes when it came to jazz digging all from Stan Kenton to Ornette Coleman. He just loved music period.
Malinverni couldn't have picked two other bandmates as sympathetic to his feel than upright pillar
Okegwa and busy session mate Hamilton. The latter has a holiday (save it for next year) album out with his long-standing trio that would have made this writer's Best Of list had it arrived in time. He sticks mostly to brushes for this program and the upright is spotlighted a few times throughout. The bulk of the material is what I term, "jaunty swing" which this threesome absorbs like a huge sponge. The pianistic debt to Bill Evans is most evident on the slow-walk ballad "Somewhere", the above-mentioned "Simple Song" and "Lonely Town" that heads into a slow drag with a jutting time feel.
Superb sound, as usual, from the RVG studio. Mention must be made of the booklet notes from the leader himself which are worth the price of the album alone. Highly commended.

Larry Hollis

New Issues


ON THE TOWN
PETE MALINVERNI
PLAYS LEONARD BERNSTEIN
UGONNA OKEGWO JEFF HAMILTON

New Issues

FLORIAN ARBENZ
CONVERSATION #4

HAMMER- RECORDING

BEMSHA SWING/ PANDEMIA/ FREEDOM JAZZ DANCE/ A SOOTHING THRILL/ HACKENSACK/ SCARLET WOMAN/ CLOSER/ WALTZ FOR DEBBY. 40:58

Arbenz, d; Maikel Vistel, ts,ss; Francois Moutin, bass. Basel, CH

The conversation continues with Florian Arbenz's explorations into the finer points of how individuals can come together to communicate in this language we call Jazz. Equality between all players is what's achieved here as our senses travel through the fourth installment of Florian's Conversation series.

Opening with a freewheeling, funk driven version of Monk's "Bemsha Swing" the trio sets the tone for what's to come. The time signature is changed, giving the whole piece an extra edge that allows the players to explore lots of interesting rhythmic possibilities. After some fine, uninhibited solos by Vistel and Moutin the two set up an ostinato type figure to accompany Florian's superb solo. Maikel Vistel's "Pandemia" is a perfect example of how the trio members all share in the statement of the melody and then work together as the piece takes on many different forms.

I find myself mesmerized as I'm drawn into the dialogue between the musicians. Francois Moutins ballad "A Soothing Thrill" takes us to a different place. The rich and pensive opening statement of the melody by the bass gently guides us to calm.

The saxophone's pure tone and phrasing contrasts the warmth of the bass and the sensitivity of the cymbals. The trio demonstrates the powerful effect of being able to play very slowly and choosing your notes carefully. Monk's "Hackensack" is given an exceptional run and it fits the group so well. I soon realize that Monk's music is the perfect vehicle for this trio. Individuality and the appreciation for unique composition and musical forms seems to be the fuel that drives Florian's approach. For those of you who recognize that exploration and appreciation for an artist's individual voice is what Jazz is all about, this cd is for you. Three outstanding originals by Vistel and Moutin along with two Monk tunes, Bill Evans "Waltz For Debby" a Joe Zawinul piece and Eddie Harris's "Freedom Jazz Dance" round this cd out nicely.

Florian Arbenz brings the drums to the forefront and demonstrates their power as a speaking voice on so many different levels. I realize more then ever the importance of percussion and it's ability to effect our musical landscape.

Frank Kohl

New Issues

CHRISTOPHER HOFFMAN
ASP NIMBUS

OUT OF YOUR HEAD 009

DISCRETIONARY/ DYLAN GEORGE/ ASP NIMBUS/ ANGLES OF INFLUENCE/ ORB/ NON-SUBMERSIBLE/ FOR YOU/ THE HEIGHTS OF SPECTACLE 31:30

Christopher Hoffman, cel; Bryan Carrott, vib; Rashaan Carter, bass/ Craig Weinrib, d; David Virelles, p, track 2 Fredricksburg, VA March 26 2021

A recording with vibes and cello, not only one of my favorite combinations, but one I have played with for a number of years. The opening tune is a nice recurring pattern with Hoffman and Carrott soloing. Hoffmann gets a big sound out of his cello, but perhaps that is because it sounds like it is coming through an amp. At the end, it sounds like the tune is going to fade but it ends with a nice, short drum solo.

During the cello solos, the vibes acts as part of the rhythm section playing chords, but the cello stays out during the vibe solos. It would have been interesting to hear a complex bass line with both bass and cello. Carrott is an interesting player. He uses quite hard mallets, which jar my ears a bit on the high notes. That is not so much a criticism as just an observation. He uses the pedal a lot, but to my ears he is not using the motor. Which is probably why those high notes jar.

Hoffmann is an interesting soloist, creating nice lines and using harmonics. On the last tune especially he uses a nice pizzicato technique. And the tempos vary nicely, preventing any monotony.

The interplay between all four members is really good. Carter and Weinrib primarily provide great support. It would have been nice to hear each on good extended solo. But not every rhythm player is interested in soloing. Weinrib is quite deft with brushes.

Bernie Koenig

New Issues

New Issues

DAVID LEON - AIRE DE AGUA

OUT OF YOUR HEAD 011

STRANGE AND CHARMED/ HORRIBLE, HORRIBLE SERVICE/ PINA/ AIRE DE AGUA/ FIRST YOU MUST LEARN THE GRIP/ A HUG A DAY/ EXPRESSIVE JARGON 11/ BLUEST BLUE 38:32

David Leon, as; Sonya Belaya, p; Florian Herzog, bass; Stephen Boegehold d, Bklyn NY Feb 9, '20

The recording starts with bang—short blips from the saxophone answered by all—and settles into a nice free piece. Horrible starts off free then settles into a nice groove with Herzog and Boegehold working beautifully together.

The title track, which I assume means air on the water, is quite interesting. Broken pieces of melody, a great bass solo, and some interplay. All I can say is that the water must have been anything but serene.

The recording over all is very interesting. Leon has a sharp tone, which I like, and all the players work really well together. I can only assume they have been playing together for a while.

Each player brings own talents to the group. We have four strong players each working well with the others. We get a couple of good bass solos, one very tasty drum solo, and beautiful piano piece on A Hug a Day. And the interplay between Belaya and Boegehold on Jargon, with Boegehold on mallets is really lovely. Leon comes in with short pieces of melody over the others, with Herzog joining in. No jargon here. Just great playing.

It is nice to hear original voices in this kind of setting. Great recording.

Bernie Koenig

JONATHON GOLDBERGER, MAT MANERI, SIMON JERMYN, GERALD CLEAVER - LIVE AT SCHOLES

OUT OF YOUR HEAD 005

LIVE AT SCHOLES/ PREVIEW EXCERPT 40:04

Jonathon Goldberger, g; Mat Maneri, vla; Simon Jermyn, elec bass; Gerald Cleaver, d Brooklyn NY Feb 24, 2021

This recording is basically one long track of free improvisation. The piece moves between tempos with everyone getting some solo space, along with ensemble playing. There are some really nice sections, but overall my main comment is that it lasted way too long. There are a number of places where they could have stopped and started up again as in another piece. I say this as a free player who all too often gets into the same position. One of the biggest problems with playing freely is that no one really knows when to stop. Thus comes with playing together for a long time and knowing how to read cues from the other players.

On the positive side all the players are competent. Many of the solo spots are quite good, especially those of Maneri and Goldberger. Jermyn and Cleaver stay mainly in rhythmic supportive roles and are felt throughout. I felt in spots Cleaver could have been much busier in his supportive role, but that is me as a free drummer talking. Different strokes for different folks.

Bernie Koenig

New Issues


David Leon
AIRE DE AGUA


Untamed...
LIVE AT SCHOLES
GOLDBERGER/JERMYN/MANERI/CLEAVER

MARIO PAVONE
BLUE VERTICAL
OUT OF YOUR HEAD

TWARDZIK/ OKWA/ BLUE POLES/ ISABELLA/ PHILOSOPHY SERIES/ BLUE VERTICAL/ GOOD TREBLE/ LEGACY STORIES/ FACE MUSIC 61:40

Mario Pavone, bass; Dave Ballou, tpt; Matt Mitchell p; Tyshawn Sorey, d Queens NY March 25, 26 2021

What we have here is a good solid, quartet, with four solid players. The compositions are all by Pavone and the arrangements by Ballou. The recording opens with a nice medium tempo tune with solos by Ballou, Mitchell and Sorey. I really liked Sorey's solo. He started on the cymbals and then moved on to the drums. Nice development.

The over all sound of the group is interesting. The format is, of course, nothing new. But what I hear is young voices outing their stamp on the tradition. They are all trying to sound original, but what really comes though is how the work together. Pavone is a strong bassist, and comes through everything, and Sorey is a very busy but tasteful accompanist. Ballou has an interesting tone and moves from nice lyricism to being very busy, and Mitchell also solos well. All this really comes through on Isabella.

The title track is interesting. Very moody with melody stated in unison by trumpet and piano. Strong bass line by Pavone and some nice mallet work by Sorey.

Over all this is a very enjoyable recording. I enjoyed all the players both individually and how the interacted with each other. I kept listening for influences, and I am sure I identified a number, but decided not to name them as all four of these players have their own voices.

As a final note, Pavone died of cancer months after this recording was made.

Bernie Koenig

New Issues

New Issues

MICHAEL FORMANEK, PETER FORMANEK
DYADS

OUT OF YOUR HEAD RECORDS

TWO, NOT ONE/ WANDERING, SEARCHING, DIGGING,UNCOVERING/ AFTER YOU/ THE WOODS/ PUSH COMES TO SHOVE/ HOW WAS THE DRIVE?/ THERE'S NO THERE THERE/ HOARSE SYRINX/ WAVY LINES/ HURRICANE/ BALLAD OF THE WEAK/ DNA/ THAT WAS THEN
68:14

Michael Formanek, bass; Peter Formanek, ts, clt Montclair NJ, Dec 30, 2019

Duos. I love them. Some of my favorite playing situations have been in duos. And I love the combination of bass with a horn.

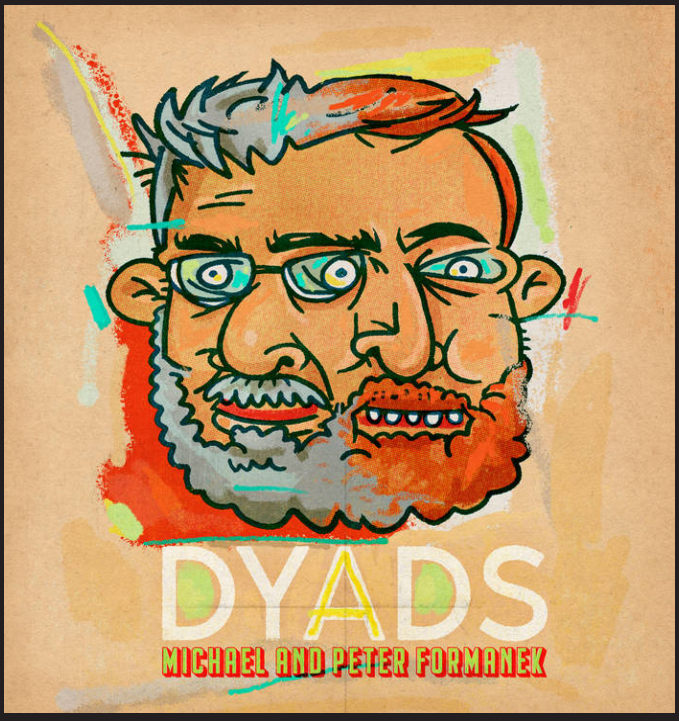
The recording starts off with a bass line, and Michael, who gets a good big sound, continues backing Peter's saxophone. The two of them really work well together. One never knows whether this is due to the fact they have been playing together for along time or they are on the same musical wavelength or both. This especially the case on Searching. It is not so much that one playing off the other but that both are playing together. There is some great musical conversation on The Woods.

Peter is a lyrical player who comes with nice melodies but who can also go off on nice improvisational tangents while Michael is a powerful player. Some of his patterns remind me of Mingus, but then I hear Mingus everywhere. His solo on Push Comes to Shove is interesting and fits in with what Peter plays both before and after the bass solo.

Peter's switching off from sax to clarinet keeps things interesting, but ultimately the duo combination started to sound too much alike. The recording could have been a couple of tracks shorter. But that is my only complaint. But having said that some of the most spirited playing can be found on the last couple of tracks. Over all some really interesting playing, especially interesting interplay.

Bernie Koenig

New Issues



New Issues

NICK DUNSTON
ATLANTIC EXTRACTION
OUT OF YOUR HEAD 004

COLLAGE NO. 2/ TATTLE SNAKE/ DUNSTERLUDE/ DELIRIOUS DELICACIES/ COLLAGE NO. 4/ S.S. NEMESIS/ VICUNA/ COLLAGE NO. 1/ GLOBULAR WEAVING/ STRING SOLO NO. 2/ ZOOCHOSIS/ STRING SOLO NO. 1/ COLLAGE NO. 5/ STRING SOLO NO. 3/ A ROLLING WAVE OF NOTHING/ CONTRABAND PEANUT BUTTER 62:50

Nick Dunston, bass, vcl; Louna dekker-Vargas, flt, alto flt, plc; Ledah Finck, vln, vla; Tal Yahalom, g; Stephen Boegehold, d Bklyn NY March 15, 2019

An interesting line up. Something new to look forward to. The ensemble with the winds and strings is interesting, almost eerie sounding. Tattle Snake begins with a very nice brush solo by Boegehold. He is another Out of Your Head recording, and I citing his brush-work there. Very tasty drumming throughout this piece. Dunsterlude, I suppose refers to composer and leader Dunston, is a lovely ballad with very interesting interplay between guitar, flute and strings.

Throughout, whether it is on the very short or longer pieces, the ensemble work is excellent. I love the over all sounds they get. I really like the use of the viola. And some of the melody lines are quite interesting. I really love S.S. Nemesis, with the strings playing what sounds like an old fashioned almost square dance melody with the piccolo over it all. Lots of fun.

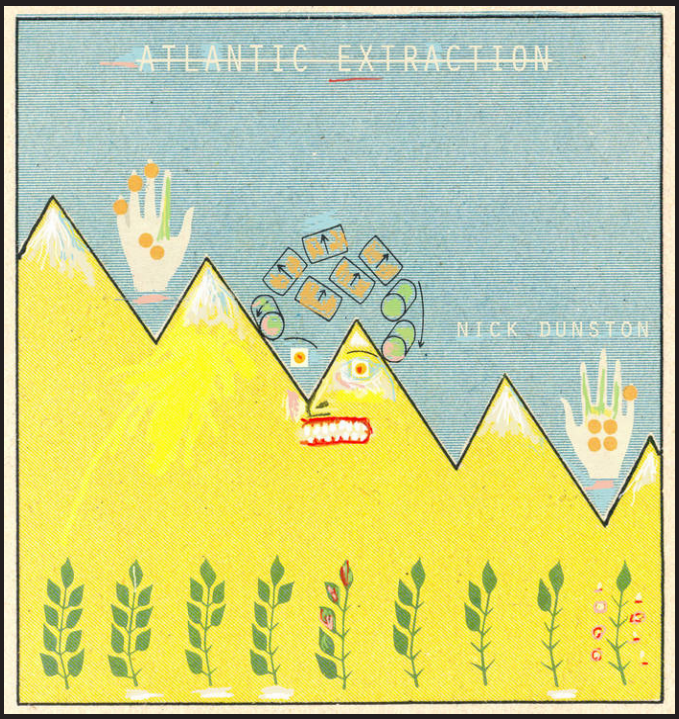
Globular Weaving gets into some loud dissonant passages. Don't know if that is to signify something about the world works, or doesn't work, but it makes for interesting listening.

String solo 3 is a bass solo by Dunston. Some really good playing. Indeed, there is excellent playing throughout this recording, whether ensemble or solo. The instrumentation is unique wand the instruments are used in original ways creating sounds that demand the listener actually listen.

A very interesting recording.

Bernie Koenig

New Issues



New Issues

NICK MAZZARELLA, QUIN KIRCHNER
UNTAMED

OUT OF YOUR HEAD RECORDS 006

ASTRAL PROJECTION/ SEE OR SEEN/ THE PERGRINE/ VIS-A-VI/ AXIOM/ SIMMONS' DREAM 30:36
Nick Mazzarella, as; Quin Kirchner, d Chicago, September 27, 2020

Another duet. And one of my favorite combinations as it is one I have played in a great deal.

Mazzarella has a nice tone and moves between a many note Coltrane style and a nice lyrical style. The combination works well. Kirchner accompanies effectively, more from a time keeping style than a free style. Time is always there, but he is busy enough to complement Mazzarella.

Tempos change nicely as well. Peregrine is slow with Kirchner using mallets effectively, with. Some nice work on cymbals. Vis-a-vis is up tempo and lyrical with Kirchner hard at work with brushes, but switches to sticks for his solo, which is quite melodic and Kirchner uses the whole kit effectively. The solo also builds nicely.

The last piece is a real barn-burner. I wonder who Simmons is. That is some dream.

A nice short recording. For once I could have listened to another track.

This is a live recording and the audience was quite appreciative as well.

Bernie Koenig

SCOTT CLARK
THIS DARKNESS

OUT OF YOUR HEAD 007

QUIET FRIEND/ WHO/ HAS COME SO FAR/ LET THIS DARKNESS/ BE A BELL TOWER/ AND YOU THE BELL 49:28 Scott Clark. D, Perc, hca Richmond Va, May 13, 2019

One person, obviously overdubbing, on harmonica and drums. I am really looking forward to this.

Quiet Friend starts off quietly on harmonica. At first I thought I was hearing something electronic, but it was just along-held chord on the harmonica. The piece is largely made up of long tones with some very nice percussion accompaniment. As the piece nears its end, the percussion gets louder. It sounds like a couple of well-tuned tom toms.

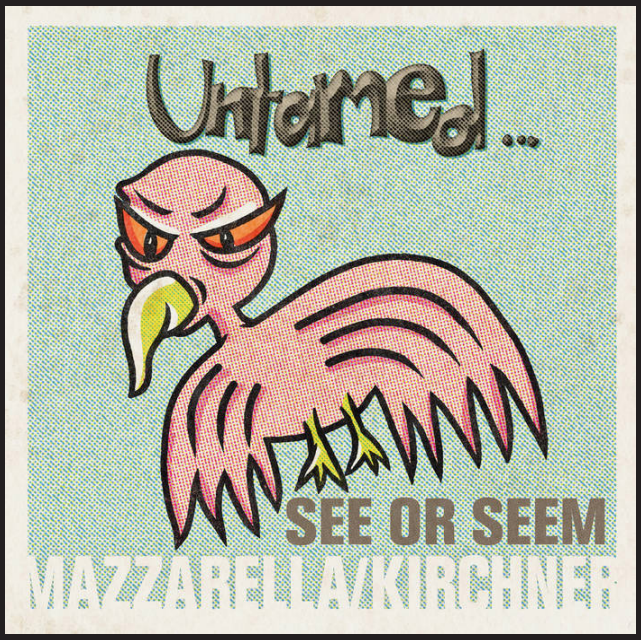
Who is very quiet using chimes and toms. Very subtle. Let this Darkness uses brushes in very creative ways, creating different textures on the drums. Be a Bell Tower uses chimes very interestingly, along with other sounds, which I think are distorted harmonica sounds.

Up to now I would have said that Clark is a classical percussionist experimenting with different sounds, but the last track, And You the bell sounds more like a jazz drummer playing a structured solo using an array of tom toms and cymbals.

I really enjoyed this recording. There is some very excellent but subtle percussion playing. I really like the use of the harmonica on the first track and would have liked to hear more of that. Some very interesting playing.

Bernie Koenig

New Issues



New Issues

WENDY EISENBERG
BLOODLETTING

OUT OF YOUR HEAD 012

BLOODLETTING/ OSTARA/ SCHERZO/ CODA/ BLOODLETTING/ OSTARA. SCHERZO/ CODA

84:30

Wendy Weisberg, g, banjo New Haven March 22 2019

This looks interesting. A tune with classical sections, first performed on guitar and then on banjo. The structure is that of a symphony in four movements. It is a double CD with one for guitar and one for banjo.

A very interesting composition using various techniques to create different sounds along with melodic sections on an acoustic guitar. The Ostara section is much more lively. The term refers to an Anglo-Saxon goddess named Eostre, who represents spring and new beginnings. The pieces uses some very interesting counterpoint, and features some virtuosic playing.

The Scherzo, which is usually the third movement of symphony, which replaced the Minuet movement in the late 18th century, is usually lighter in tone than the preceding movements. Here we get a bit more melody, with some interesting counterpoint.

A Coda usually recapitulates and develops the original theme. This Coda is very open and melodic.

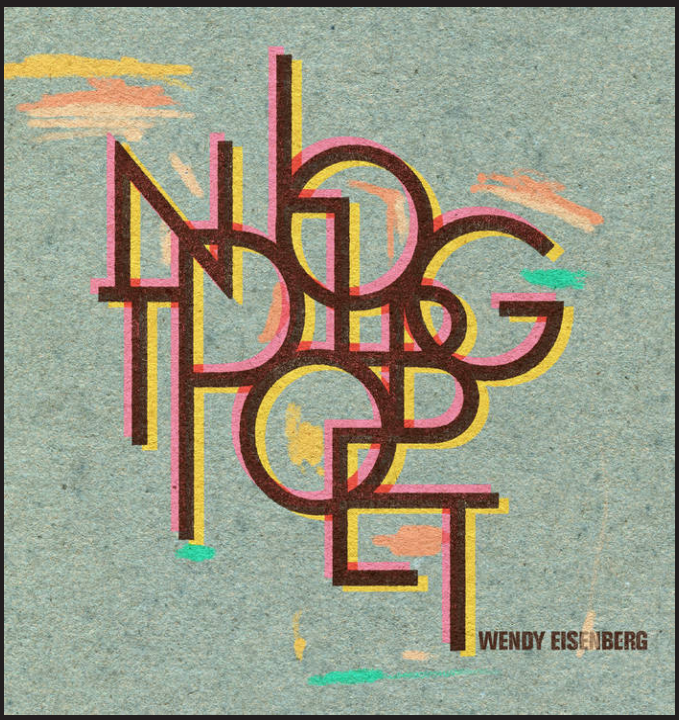
The second version for banjo is quite interesting if for nothing else that the different sound the banjo makes. It is pluckier, if that makes sense, and has a sharper sound than the guitar. And when Weisberg does some of those percussive patterns on the instruments, the ones on the banjo stand out a bit more than the ones on guitar. And the slurs on the banjo seem more interesting as well.

As I listened I kept wondering if this piece is completely composed or partially improvised. On one level this question is irrelevant, as I have often argued, both improvisers and composers today are using the same musical language. But since the timings on the different versions are different I assume those sections are improvised.

In any case, what we have here is a very talented guitar and banjo player, as well as a composer.

Bernie Koenig

New Issues



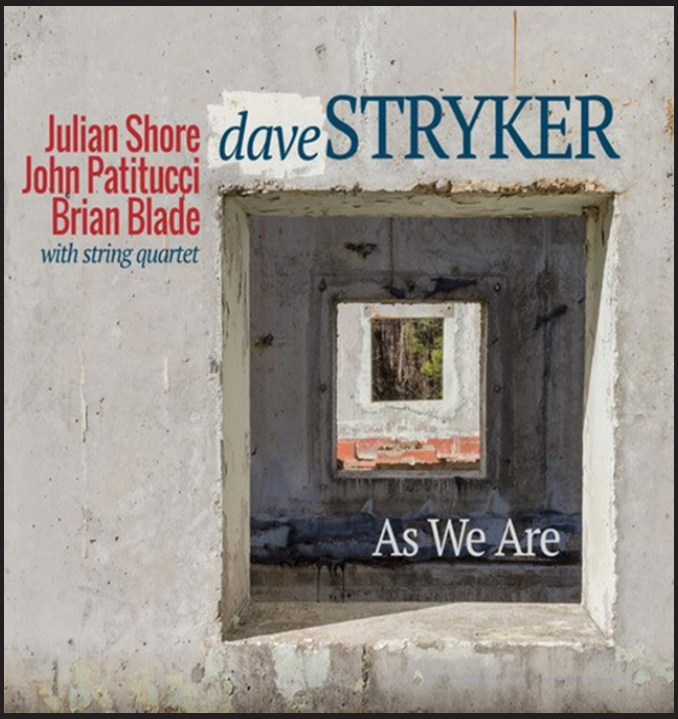
AS WE WERE
DAVE STRYKER
STRIKEZONE RECORDS 8822
OVERTURE/ LANES/ RIVERMAN/ HOPE/ SAUDADE/ ONE THING AT A TIME/ AS WE WERE/ DREAMS ARE REAL/ SOULFUL FRIEND 54:54
Stryker, g; Julian Shore, p; John Patitucci, bass; Brian Blade, d; Sara Caswell, vln; Monica K. Davis, vln; Benni Von Gutzeit, vla; Marika Hughes, cel
June 2021 Paramus, NJ

I've been hearing a lot about Dave Stryker lately and he's certainly gotten my attention in a big way. Fortunately I took the time to check out "As We Were" and it really hit the spot for me. My first impression is that I'm hearing some Wes with strings or maybe a throwback to a CTI recording. But No! I'm happy to report that this recording stands alone and presents itself so nicely that I can't stop listening to it. First you have some awesome original material, mostly by Stryker and two pieces by Pianist Julian Shore plus a really nice cover by Nick Drake. Secondly there's the incredible rhythm section of John Patitucci, Brian Blade and Julian Shore. As if that's not enough our ears are treated to a real live string quartet with amazing arrangements by Julian Shore.

The CD opens with a short and beautiful string quartet composition that makes me wonder if I'm even listening to Dave Stryker. I quickly realize that the strings are setting the tone for what's to come as they soon become an integral part of this recording. Next up is "Lanes", an up tempo Stryker original that hits all the right notes and then some. Stryker's solo soars with lots of incredible support from the rhythm section. A nicely composed backup figure helps showcase the exquisite drumming of Brian Blade and then does the save for Shores excellent piano solo. My head is spinning over "River Man"; cosmic string arrangements create the opening landscape for this tune and I can feel the pulse of the river and imagine what might have inspired this song. This perfectly constructed melody is stated by Dave with the accompaniment of John Patitucci and the string quartet. The full ensemble then joins in and my imagination is transformed to another time and place. The space and pacing the group creates within this 5/4 meter is absolutely hypnotic. Incredible solos by Stryker and violinist Sara Caswell make this river journey complete. "As We Were" is a sweet and lovely ballad that opens with the string quartet. Stryker's exquisite tone and phrasing treats this beautifully written melody with lots of love and then he brings that love to his solo. "Saudade" is a stunning bossa that would put a smile on A.C. Jobim's face. "Dreams Are Real" is another example of Stryker's compositional skills and keen sense of the importance of melody and lyricism. "As We Were" closes with "Soulful Friend". I don't know why this is the last track on the CD because it's an absolute masterpiece. Even though Dave's musical voice is clearly his own this track takes me back to some of Kenny Burrell's finest recordings. The guitar and violin play this strong and soulful melody in unison. Outstanding solo's by Dave and violinist Sara Caswell just really takes this piece over the top. Finally a blistering solo by John Patitucci leaves me with a big smile on my face! All the elements that make this such a fine CD come together on this track.

I'm so glad I took the time to have a closer listen to this memorable recording and the superb musicianship of Dave Stryker. Frank Kohl

New Issues


Julian Shore
John Patitucci
Brian Blade
with string quartet
dave STRYKER
As We Are

New Issues

EVAN PARKER ELECTROACOUSTIC ENSEMBLE WITH SAINKHO NAMTCHYLAK
FIXING THE FLUCTUATING IDEAS
VICTO CD 133

FIXING / FLUCTUATING

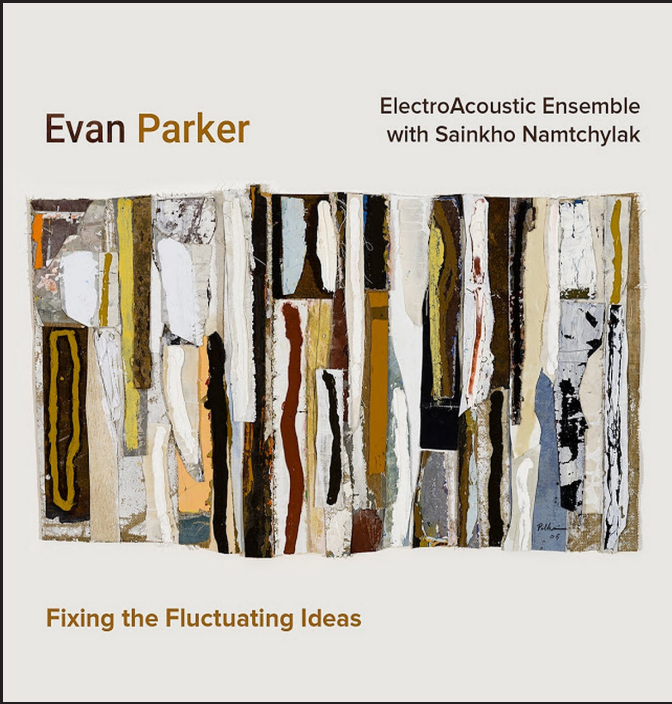
Sainkho Namtchylak, voice, Guy, b, Lytton, perc, electron, Wachsmann, vln, vla, electron, Vecchi diffusion sonore, live electronics, Prati, live electronics, Parker, ss, ts, May 19th, 1996, Victoriaville, Quebec, Canada.

Canadian label Victo has released an archive recording from the Musique Actuelle de Victoriaville International Festival. The ensemble featured Sainkho Namtchylak, an artist who has built her career on introducing distinctive features of Tuvan culture to the global avant-garde scene. Once again one has to see the unique command of her voice and its wide range, as well as make you think how important it is not to lose touch with your own roots. Namtchylak's voice is not even a synthesizer, as any synthesizer is somehow limited in its timbres, whereas Sainkho shows us the impossible, the ability to show us the story, a kind of sound documentary of hundreds of experiences, sufferings, joy and even landscapes of the homeland.

The creative potential of the other musicians, Barry Guy, Paul Lytton etc. was also really exposed, all because Fixing the Fluctuating Ideas is a concept album, and as a rule in any concept you need to gather a group of like-minded people who share your views. The team on this release didn't just do their job, but carefully framed the abstractions in the listener's mind, knowing that this is not another record for "passing grade".

Ilya Kudrin

New Issues


Evan Parker
ElectroAcoustic Ensemble
with Sainkho Namtchylak
Fixing the Fluctuating Ideas

EMIL MANGELSDORFF

April 11, 1925 – January 21, 2022

by Patrick Hinely

The saxophonist and flutist was a senior statesman of European and, particularly, German jazz. Enamored of swing music as a teen, he was punished for that by the nazis, who sent him to the Eastern front, where he was captured, and spent several years as a prisoner of war. When he finally returned to his native Frankfurt-am-Main, he became part of that original generation which created postwar jazz in Germany. Those folks not only made something from nothing - they made something good. He was a co-founder and long-time member of the Jazz Ensemble of the Hessian Radio Network. That was but one of the many ways he was at the hub of the jazz wheel in his home town for the rest of his life. While he was prominent among German musicians and known in Europe, he was not well-known in the USA, where the only mention of him in any edition of Leonard Feather's Encyclopedia of Jazz was as trombonist Albert's older brother. He did not make many records under his own name but was part of many recordings. The widest variety of his work on one album can be heard on 20 of the 31 pieces comprising the Hessian Radio Network's Atmospheric Conditions Permitting, a 2-CD set on ECM, featuring his work from 1967 to 1993. Jazz has had few more faithful friends than Emil.

Hinely wrote a longer feature about Emil Mangelsdorff for the July-August-September 2015 issue of Cadence.

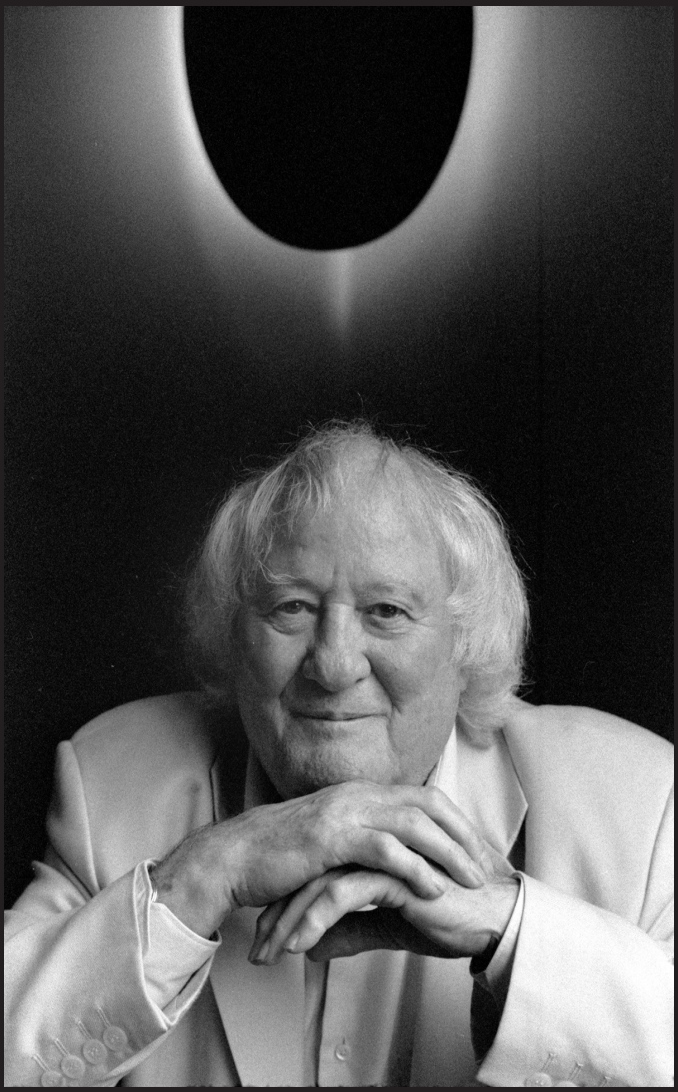


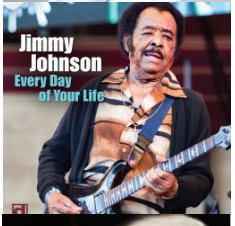
Photo Credit: Patrick Hinely

Obituaries

Barbara Morrison

Ernie Andrews

James Mtume



Jimmy Johnson

Jessica Williams

Ron Miles

Terry Teachout

BARBARA MORRISON, singer, *died on March 16, 2022. She was 72.*

BOBBE GORIN "BEEGIE" ADAIR, pianist, *died on January 23, 2022. She was 84.*

CHARLES BRACKEEN, saxophone, *died in November 2021. He was 82.*

ERNIE ANDREWS, singer*, died on February 21, 2022. He was 94.*

JAMES MTUME musician, producer, *died on January 9, 2022. He was 76.*

JESSICA WILLIAMS, pianist*, died on March 10, 2022. She was 73.*

JIMMY JOHNSON, guitarist, *died on Jan 31st 2022. He was 93.*

MARILYN KEITH BERGMAN, *died on January 8, 2022. She was 93.*

MARK LEVINE, pianist, trombonist, composer, arranger, and educator, *died on January 27, 2022. He was 83.*

PAUL WARBURTON, bass, *died on January 4, 2022. He was 79.*

PETER WELKER, composer, arranger, band leader and trumpet player, *died on January 12, 2022. He was 79.*

RON MILES, trumpet, *died on March 8, 2022. He was 58.*

SAMUEL JULIAN LAY, drums, *died on January 29, 2022. He was 86.*

TERRY TEACHOUT, drama critic for the Wall Street Journal *died. He was 65.*

WOODY MANN, guitar, *died on January 27, 2022. He was 69.*

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