

THE INDEPENDENT JOURNAL OF CREATIVE IMPROVISED MUSIC

# all about jazz

## TOP 10 CRITICS POLLS

### CONCERT REVIEWS

EMMETT COHEN

WILLIAM HOOKER

BILLY COBHAM

### FESTIVAL REVIEWS

VISION FESTIVAL

MONTREAL FESTIVAL OF JAZZ

NORTHWEST DJANGO FEST

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### INTERVIEWS

LOREN CONNORS

NELS CLINE

PHIL MINTON

MICKEY TUCKER

NICK FINZER

JOHN O'GALLAGHER

SKETY

YAGO VAZQUEZ

### JAZZ STORIES

ANTHONY BRAXTON

ARCHIE SHEPP

BURTON GREENE

DICK GRIFFEN

GUNTER HAMPEL

HAL GALPER

JAMES BENNINGTON

JASON MILES

KEIKO JONES

NIK BARTSCH

SCOTT ROBINSON

RANDY WESTON



## TONY KOFI AND THE ORGANISATION

The origins of The ORGANISATION go back over a decade and grew from Simon Fernsby's memorable Manhattan Project sessions, which were a staple of jazz in South London throughout the 2000s.

The quartet on these recordings first emerged in 2010 when Tony Kofi, fresh from recording with Ornette Coleman in New York, serendipitously joined them as a last-minute dep. His playing of both alto and baritone on the date created an instant affinity between the four of them.

Recorded by Paul Riley, the sounds you will hear on POINT BLANK are those of a band who have put the hours in and held an ace in their collective hand until the moment to enshrine it was just right in one magical session at Specific Sound in 2017.

\*\*\*\*\* ~ BBC Music Magazine

### TONY KOFI AND THE ORGANISATION



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- Pocket Aces emerged from the jazz trio tradition; where each voice balances the others through contrast, and surprise. Although freely improvised, the music of Pocket Aces is consciously compositional, given to bouts of form, groove, and crafty melodies. Distillation of ideas with a premium on space and tone provides a strong coherence as the trio navigates the familiar and unfamiliar.

**HOFBAUER/ROSENTHAL QUARTET, HUMAN RESOURCES (CNM033) - RELEASE DATE NOV. 9**

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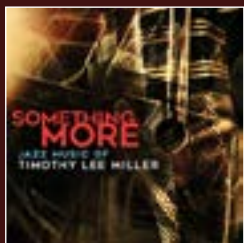


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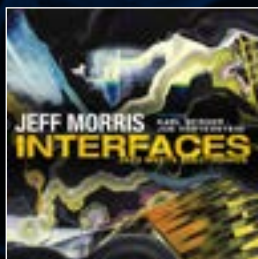
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Artist **Jeff Morris** creates experiences that pop audiences' minds out of the ordinary to notice new things about the sounds, technology, and culture around them. He has won awards for making art emerge from unusual situations: music tailored to architecture and cityscapes, performance art for the radio, and serious concert music for toy piano, slide whistle, robot, Sudoku puzzles, and paranormal electronic voice phenomena. His **Ravello Records** debut album, **INTERFACES**, is a cutting-edge collection of computer music meeting modern jazz.

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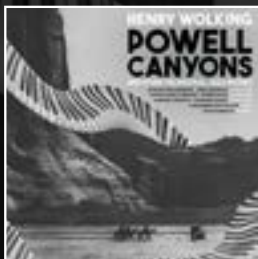
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# James Weidman Spiritual Impressions

**TOP 10 RECORDINGS FOR 2018  
CADENCE MAGAZINE**

## **James Weidman Spiritual Impressions**

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# Beyond the Neighborhood

## THE MUSIC OF FRED ROGERS

GRAMMY-nominated jazz pianist Kevin Bales and Chicago-based vocalist Kerl Johnsrud are reunited in *Beyond the Neighborhood*, a tribute to the music of Fred Rogers. The album commemorates the 50th anniversary of Mister Rogers' Neighborhood and what would have been Fred Rogers' 92th birthday. Children tuned into Mister Rogers' Neighborhood from 1968 to 2001.

The album is universal, not just for children, like "When Day Turns to Night, I Think About You," which capitalizes on Bales' uniquely innovative lines and voicings, Johnsrud's alluring tone and Rogers' unusual approach to melody. *Beyond the Neighborhood* does justice both to Rogers and the jazz art form. "It pays tribute to Fred Rogers' music and spirit in a fashion that glows with respect and carries over some of the powerful messages of the show itself. It's delicate and moving and one of the highlights of the year's music," noted C. Michael Bailey of *All About Jazz*.



KEVIN BALES, piano  
KÉRI JOHNSRUD, vocals  
BILLY THORNTON, bass  
MARLON PATTON, drums

Available on iTunes, Spotify, and Amazon.

All songs written and copyrighted by Fred Rogers,  
except "Find a Star", written by Fred Rogers and Josie Carey.

[beyondtheneighborhood.com](http://beyondtheneighborhood.com)

[kevinbales.com](http://kevinbales.com)

[kerijohnsrud.com](http://kerijohnsrud.com)

# NEW from Cadence Jazz Records

- #1236 Jimmy Bennington Trio *The Walk to Montreuil* w/J.L. Masson, B. Duboc
  - #1237 Ernie Krivda *At the Tri-C Jazz Fest* w/C. Black, M. Hayden, R. Gonsalves
  - #1238 Steve Swell's Nation of We: *The Business of Here...Live at Roulette*
  - #1242 Barry Wallenstein *Luck These Days* w/A. Birnbaum, V. Chauncey, N. Haiduck
  - #1243 Kazzrie Jaxen Quartet *Callicoon Sessions* w/C. Krachy, D. Messina, B. Chattin
  - #1244 JCA Orchestra *Stories* w/H. Honshuku, J. Hobbs, R. Stone, P. Scarff, N. Zocher, M. Cho
  - #1245 Mack Goldsbury's Quintet Feat. Maciej Fortuna *Live At CoCo's* w/S. Mahoney
  - #1246 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*
  - #1253 Lee Shaw Duo *Live* w/Rich Syracuse
  - #1254 Pucci Amanda Jhones *Love, Jhones* w/Williams, Lemon, Sanabria, Tranchina
  - #1255 Glenn Wilson *Timely* w/J. D'earth, J. Toomey, J. Masters, T. Martucci
  - #1256 Dominic Duval, Skip Scott, Tim Siciliano *Elements*
  - #1257 Donnic 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 Infinitesimal Flash Quartet *Live* w/J. Tchicai, M. Marucci, A. Lane, F. Wong
  - #1264 Ray Suhy-Lewis Porter *Longing* w/Rudy Royston, Joris Teepe
- www.cadencejazzrecords.com Cadence Building, Redwood, NY 13679 USA orders@cadencebuilding.com

# NEW from CIMP

- CIMP 406 David Haney Quartet *Siege of Misrata***  
with Andrew Cyrille(dr) Dominic Duval(b) Dominic Duval, Jr.(b)
- CIMP 408 Jimmy Halperin-Dominic Duval Trio *Strayhorn***  
with Jay Rosen(dr)
- CIMP 409 Ehran Elisha Trio *Heads***  
with Albert Beger(ts/ss) Dave Phillips(doublebass)
- CIMP 410 Mat Marucci Trio *Inversions***  
with Rick Olson© Adam Lane(b)
- CIMP 417 Jimmy Bennington Colour & Sound**  
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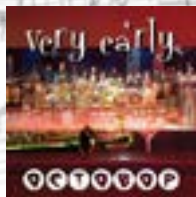
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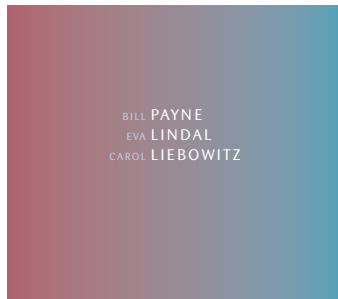
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"Delightful... She doesn't sing like a diva, but like a character living in the middle of the music... Recalls big band clubs in many a black-and-white film... Magically transporting to an era far gone..." - *Erin Thomas, Dallas Voice*

Get *Top Shelf* on LP, plus Laura's CDs, videos and more, at  
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**Cloudwalking** is the Vocalist Judi Silvano and Guitarist Bruce Arnold's second album of Improvised Electronic Music together. The highly processed sounds of Cloudwalking's Vocal and Guitar create evocative Soundscapes that are Lyrical and Atmospheric, yet still Deep Listening.

*"What a beautiful collaboration of voice, guitar and electronics. Thank you Judi and Bruce for the lovely journey!!*

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To listen and order: [www.Muse-Eek.com/Cloudwalking](http://www.Muse-Eek.com/Cloudwalking)



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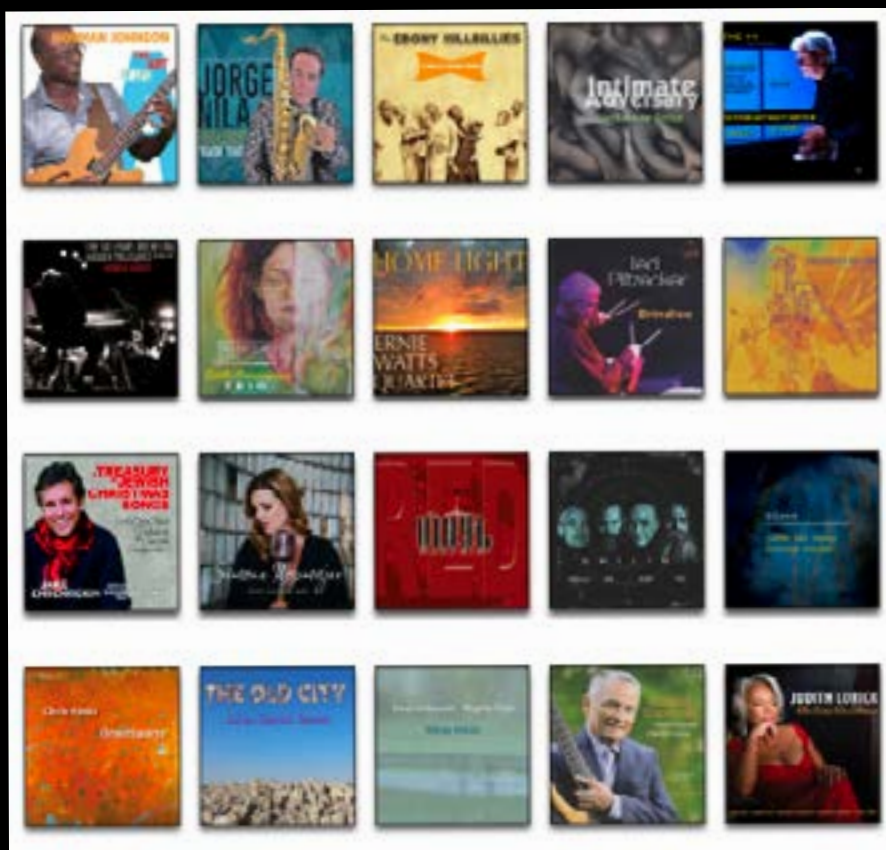
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ThatSwan!Sing#002



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- Jimmy Bennington / Steve Cohn

ThatSwan!Sing#003



### **\*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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- 102 Ernie Krivda Trio
- 103 Bobby Zankel Trio
- 104 Frank Lowe Trio
- 105 Gregg Bendian Project
- 106 Mark Whitecage Trio
- 107 Chris McCain - Billy Pierce Trio
- 108 Steve Swell & Chris Kelsey
- 109 Billy Bang 4tet
- 110 Herb Robertson/Dominic Duval/Jay Rosen
- 111 Vinny Golia & Ken Filiano
- 112 Luther Thomas 4tet
- 113 Sonny Simmons Trio
- 114 Paul Lytton 4tet
- 115 Joe McPhee 4tet
- 116 Steve Swell 4tet
- 117 David White 5tet
- 118 Sonny Simmons 4tet
- 119 Mark Whitecage 4tet
- 120 Joe McPhee & David Prentice
- 121 Kevin Norton Trio
- 122 Joseph Scianni - Dominic Duval - Jay Rosen
- 123 Lou Grassi Saxtet
- 124 Odean Pope Trio
- 125 Leo Shev Trio
- 126 Ivo Perelman Trio
- 127 Mike Bisio & Joe McPhee
- 128 Marc Edwards Trio
- 129 Paul Smoker - Vinny Golia 4tet
- 130 Joseph Scianni
- 131 Bobby Zankel 5
- 132 Joe McPhee 4tet
- 133 Roswell Rudd Trio
- 134 Ivo Perelman Trio & Rory Stuart
- 135 Brandon Evans 4tet
- 136 Thomas Bergstrom Trio
- 137 Dominic Duval & Jay Rosen
- 138 Frank Lowe Trio
- 139 Chris Kelsey Trio
- 140 Zusaan K. Fastau/Noah Howard/Bobby Few
- 141 Dominic Duval's String Ensemble
- 142 Jon Hazilla & Saxabone
- 143 Khan Jamal
- 144 Bruce Eisenbeil Trio
- 145 Luther Thomas Trio
- 146 Roswell Rudd Trio
- 147 Claude Lawrence Trio
- 148 Glenn Spearman - John Howard Group
- 149 Steve Swell 4tet
- 150 Kahil El'Zabar's Ritual Trio
- 151 David Bindman Trio
- 152 Ahmed Abdullah's Diaspora
- 153 Eliot Levin 4tet
- 154 Tyrone Hill 4tet feat. Marshall Allen
- 155 Joseph Scianni Trio/ Mark Whitecage 4tet
- 156 Lou Grassi's PoBand
- 157 Mark Whitecage's Other 4tet
- 158 Arthur Blythe & David Eaves
- 159 Frodo Giardinet 4tet
- 160 Thomas Bergstrom Trio plus Peter Britzmann
- 161 Rob Brown - Lou Grassi 4tet
- 162 Joseph Scianni duets
- 163 John Gunther's Axis Mundi
- 164 Chris Dahlgren/Briggan Krauss/Jay Rosen
- 165 Andrew Chesbire Trio
- 166 Ebran Elisha Ensemble
- 167 Ethnic Heritage Ensemble
- 168 David White 5tet
- 169 Bob Magnuson & Lou Grassi
- 170 Pucci Amanda Jhonas
- 171 Marshall Allen4tet feat. Mark Whitecage
- 172 Charlie Kohlhase 5tet
- 173 Kowald, Smoker, McPhee, Whitecage, etc.
- 174 Kalaparush Maurice McIntyre Trio
- 175 Yoko Fujiyama's String Ensemble
- 176 John Gunther 5tet
- 177 Hugh Le'Ann & Marc Sabatella
- 178 Kowald, McPhee, Smoker, Whitecage, etc.
- 179 Michael Bisio & Joe McPhee
- 180 Marshall Allen4tet feat. M. Whitecage
- 181 Glenn Spearman & Dominic Duval
- 182 Burton Greene - Wilber Morris - Lou Grassi
- 183 Joe McPhee - Dominic Duval - Jay Rosen
- 184 Steve Swell Trio
- 185 Joe Fiedler - Ben Koehn - Ed Ware
- 186 Paul Smoker 4tet
- 187 Patrick Brennan with Lisle Ellis
- 188 Th.Bergstrom/W.Morris/R.Nicholson
- 189 John Carlson/Eric Hipp/S.McClinton/S.Neumann
- 190 Ori Kaplan Trio Plus Geoff Mann, Tom Abbs
- 191 Odean Pope & Dave Burrell
- 192 Ahmed Abdullah/A Harding/W.Kamaguchi/Weinstein: NAM
- 193 Mark Whitecage's Other Other 4tet
- 194 Bruce Swett's Crossover Trio
- 195 Sam Bardfeild's Cabal Fatale
- 196 Dom Minasi Trio
- 197 Blaise Swula Trio
- 198 Joe Fonda 5tet
- 199 Joe McPhee's Bluette

- 200 Elliott Levin - Tyrone Hill 4tet
- 201 Lou Grassi - Tom Varner - Ron Horton - Tomas Ulrich
- 202 John Bickerton Trio
- 203 Steve Swell Trio
- 204 Bob Magnuson - Tom DeSteno 4tet
- 205 Kahil El'Zabar's TriFactor
- 206 Tyrone Hill - Elliott Levin 4tet
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- 213 Donald Robinson Trio
- 214 Luther Thomas 5tet
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- 216 Briggan Krauss - Chris Dahlgren - Jay Rosen
- 217 Ken Simon 4tet
- 218 Phil Haynes - Herb Robertson 5tet
- 219 Paul Smoker - Bob Magnuson - Ken Filiano - Lou Grassi
- 220 Kahil El'Zabar with David Murray One World Family
- 221 Konrad Bauer/Nils Wogram/Dominic Duval
- 222 Phil Haynes & Herb Robertson
- 223 Ori Kaplan's Trio Plus4etology
- 224 Roselle Washington with David Murray One World Family
- 225 Anthony Braxton
- 226 Paul Smoker - Bob Magnuson - Ken Filiano - Lou Grassi
- 227 Lou Grassi's PoBand
- 228 Wilber Morris & Reggie Nicholson
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- 265 John O'Gallagher's Axiom
- 266 Matt Lavelle 4tet
- 267 Khan Jamal 5tet
- 268 Bob Washington Trio
- 269 David Taylor Trio
- 270 Alex Harding - Dominic Duval - Jay Rosen
- 271 David Wertman-Charlie Kohlhase-Lou Grassi
- 272 Ursel Schlicht-Steve Swell 4tet
- 273 Carl Grubbs 4tet
- 274 Lucian Ban & Alex Harding
- 275 Frank Lowe 4tet
- 276 Elliott Levin-Marshall Allen-Tyrone Hill 5tet
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- 278 John Tchicai - Pierre Dorge - Lou Grassi
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- 321 Dave Taylor-Steve Swell 5tet
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- 371 David Haney Trio
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- 373 Ernie Krivda
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- 376 Bill Gagliardi/KenFiliano-LouGrassi: ESA Trio
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## Creative Improvised Music Projects

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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





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

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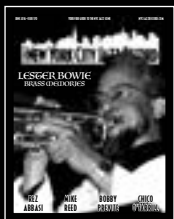
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#### **CIMPoL 5037:**

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#### **CIMPoL 5038:**

##### **Trio-X - Live at the Sugar Maple**

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#### **CIMPoL 5039:**

##### **Trio-X - Live at Craig Kessler & Janet Lessner's**

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#### **CIMPoL 5040:**

##### **Trio-X - Live in Green Bay and Buffalo**

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### 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
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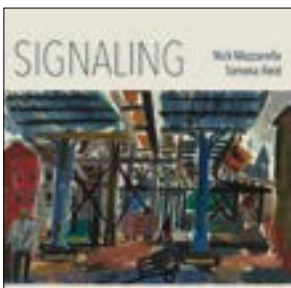
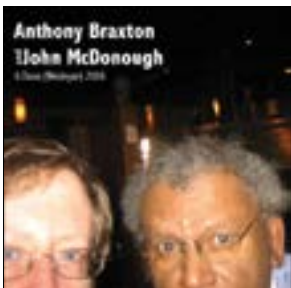
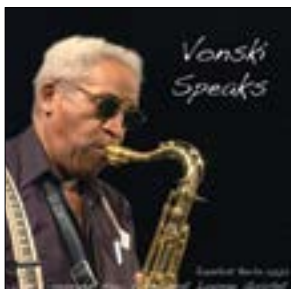
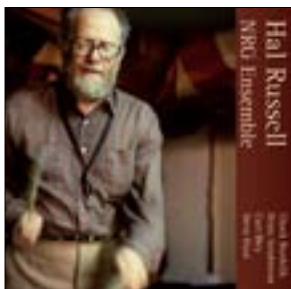
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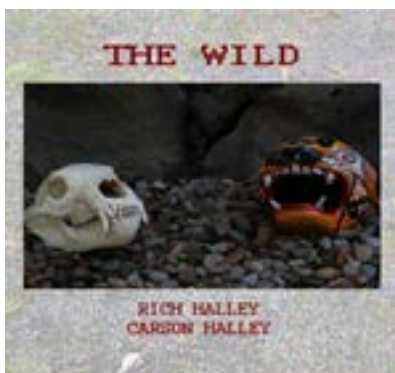
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acc: accordion  
 as: alto sax  
 bari s : baritone sax  
 b: bass  
 b cl: bass clarinet  
 bs: bass sax  
 bsn: bassoon  
 cel: cello  
 cl: clarinet  
 cga: conga  
 cnt: cornet  
 d: drums  
 el: electric  
 elec: electronics  
 Eng hn: English horn  
 euph: euphonium  
 fgh: 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



Annual Edition 2018  
 Vol. 44 No. 1A (430)

Cadence ISSN01626973  
 is published by  
 Cadence Media LLC,  
 P.O. Box 13071, Portland, OR 97213  
 PH 503-975-5176  
 Email: cadencemagazine@gmail.com  
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Subscriptions 1 year:  
 First Class USA : \$65  
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**Cover Photo:** Archie Shepp and William Parker,  
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# 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 Magazine, LLC, is proud to continue the policies that have distinguished Cadence as an important independent resource.

From its very first issue, Cadence has had a very open and inclusive editorial policy. This has allowed Cadence to publish extended feature interviews in which musicians, well known or otherwise, speak frankly about their experiences and perspectives on the music world; and to cover and review all genres of improvised music. We are reader supported.

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

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# Contributors

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# Top Ten Recordings 2018



## Top Ten Recordings 2018

Ken Weiss

- Steve Coleman and Five Elements** - *Live at the Village Vanguard. Vol 1 The Embedded Sets (Pi)*  
**Satoko Fujii** - *Solo (Libra)*  
**Sylvie Courvoisier** - *Trio D'Agala (Intakt)*  
**Henry Threadgill** - *14 or 15 Kestra AGG Dirt...And More Dirt (Pi)*  
**Thumbscrew** - *Theirs (Cuneiform)*  
**Jonathan Finlayson** - *3 Times Round (Pi)*  
**Ayn Inerto Jazz Orchestra** - *Down a Rabbit Hole (Summit)*  
**Stefan Aeby Trio** - *The London Concert (Intakt)*  
**Jemeel Moondoc Quartet** - *The Astral Revelations (Rogueart)*  
**Kaze Atody** - *Man Circum (Libra)*



## Top Ten Recordings 2018

Bernie Koenig

- Borderland Trio** - *Asteroidea (Intakt)*  
**Fred Frith and Hans Koch** - *You Are Here (Intakt)*  
**Jasp Blomk** - *Irrelevant Comment (Kontrans)*  
**Rohan Dasgupta, Luigi Di Chiappari, Riccardo Di Fiandra, Daniele Di Pentima** - *Anatma (Slam)*  
**Sylvie Courvoisier Trio** - *D'Agala (Intakt)*  
**Deniz Peters** - *Simon Rose Edith's Problem (Leo)*  
**Jorg Fischer & Ingo Deul** - *Vinkenslag (Sporeprint)*  
**Kukuruz Quartet, Julius Eastman** - *Piano Interpretations (Intakt)*  
**HBH Trio** - *Signals From the Mind (Slam)*



## Top Ten Recordings 2018

Larry Hollis

- Black Art Jazz Collective** - *Armor of Pride (Highnote)*  
**Eddie Henderson** - *Be Cool (Smoke Sessions)*  
**Kenny Barron Quintet** - *Concentric Circles (Blue Note)*  
**Brad Goode Quintet** - *That's Right (Origin)*  
**Jim Snidero/Jeremy Pelt** - *Jubilatation (Savant)*  
**John Bailey** - *In Real Time (Summit)*  
**Ted Nash Quintet** - *Live at Dizzy's (Plastic Sax)*  
**Wayne Escoffery** - *Vortex (Sunnyside)*  
**Lauren Sevian** - *Bliss (Positone)*  
**Cory Weeds Little Big Band** - *Explosion (Cellar Live)*



# Top Ten Recordings 2018



## Top Ten Reissues/Historical 2018

Larry Hollis

- Miles Davis/John Coltrane - Final Tour vol. 6** (*Legacy*)
- Thelonious Monk Quartet - Monk** (*Gearbox*)
- Woody Shaw - Tokyo 1981** (*Elemental*)
- Jackie McLean - Montreal 1988** (*Hi Hat*)
- Dexter Gordon Quartet - Tokyo 1975** (*Elemental*)
- Cannonball Adderley Quintet - At the Lighthouse** (*Jazz Images*)
- Grant Green - Funk in France** (*Resonance*)
- Tubby Hayes - A Little Workout** (*Acrobat*)
- Erroll Garner - Night Concert** (*Mack Avenue*)
- Jarrett/Peacock/DeJohnette - After the Fall** (*ECM*)

## Top Ten Recordings 2018

Nora McCarthy

- Steve Reich - Drumming** (*Kuniko*)
- James Weidman - Spiritual Impressions** (*Inner Circle Music*)
- Jason Kao Hwang/Burning Bridge - Blood** (*self-release*)
- Lansing Mcloskey - Zealot Canticles** (*self-release*)
- Warren Benbow - Harmolodic Adventure** (*Dengel Music Company*)
- Sonny Simmons, Plays the Music of Vidar Johansen** (*The Traveller*)
- Kenny Wheeler - Six For Six** (*Cam Cine TV Music, Inc.*)
- Jazzmob - Infernal Machine** (*Jazzaway Records*)
- Ra-Kalam Bob Moses - The Skies of Copenhagen** (*Ra-Kalam Records*)
- Cecil Taylor Unit - It's In the Brewing Luminous** (*hat Hut Records*)

## Top Ten Recordings 2018

Jerome Wilson

- Charles Lloyd and the Marvels + Lucinda Williams - Vanished Gardens** (*Blue Note*)
- Claudia Doffinger - Graz Composers Orchestra**, (*Monochrome*)
- Edward Simon - Sorrows and Triumph** (*Sunnyside*)
- Kate Reid - The Heart Already Knows** (*Self-released*)
- Andrew Rathbun Large Ensemble - Atwood Suites** (*Sunnyside*)
- Owen Broder - Heritage** (*ArtistShare*)

# Top Ten Recordings 2018



**Kate McGarry/Keith Ganz/Gary Versace** - *The Subject Tonight is Love* (Binxtown)

**Jim McNeely/The Frankfurt Radio Big Band** - *Barefoot Dances and Other Visions* (Planet Arts)

**Kevin Bales/Keri Johnsrud** - *Beyond The Neighborhood - The Music of Fred Rogers* (Self-released)

**Binker and Moses** - *Alive In The East?* (Gearbox)

## Top Ten Reissues/Historical 2018

Jerome Wilson

**Various Artists** - *Amarcord* Nino Rota, (Corbett v Dempsey)

**Mike Gibbs Band** - *Symphony Hall, Birmingham 1981* (Dusk Fire)

**Miles Davis & John Coltrane** - *The Final Tour*, (Columbia/Legacy)

**Steve Lacy** - *Stamps* (Corbett v Dempsey)



## Top Ten Recordings 2018

Zim Tarro

**Barre Phillips** - *End to End* (ECM)

**Matthias Tschopp** - *Untitled* (Wide Ears Records)

**Marty Elkins** - *Fat Daddy* (Nagel Heyer Records)

**Rats Live on No Evil Star** - *Darrell Katz* (JCA Recordings)

**Joani Taylor** - *In a Sentimental Mood* (Cellar Live)

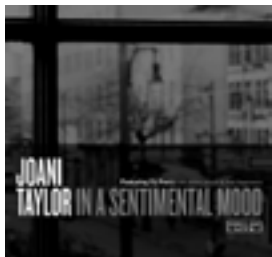
**Havard Wiik** - *This is Not a Waltz* (Self-released)

**Emmet Cohen** - *Masters Legacy Series* (Cellar Live)

**Rachel Caswell** - *We're All in the Dance* (Turtle Ridge Records)

**Idee Manu, Oktopus** - *The Music of Boris Blacher* (Challenge Records)

**Satoko Fujii** - *Bright Force* (Libra)



## Top Gigs 2018 Philadelphia A Bakers Dozen

By Ken Weiss

11/25/17 Kamasi Washington /Sun Ra Arkestra at Union Transfer (Ars Nova Workshop) – The venue was sold out (it fits 1200) with a young audience that was knowledgeable about Washington’s work but less so about the Arkestra’s, which opened for the young star. Washington’s set stretched close to two hours and proved that he knew how to work up a crowd. It was a nice touch to have his dad, a middling soprano saxist, standing next to him onstage.

1/19/18 Phil Minton and Audrey Chen at The Rotunda (Bowerbird) – The two notable extreme vocalists paired up for a tour of the States. Minton (England) has performed with Chen (Berlin) for over a decade and their sense of timing and collaborative creativity was disturbing and breathtaking at the same time.

3/3/18 Bobby Previte’s Rhapsody at Painted Bride Art Center – Previte shined behind his trap drums as well as on autoharp and in front, conducting a stellar ensemble – Nels Cline (g), John Medeski (p), Zeena Parkins (harp), Jen Shyu (vcl, erhu) and Fabian Rucker (as) – as the rarely heard second part of a three-part series was performed.

4/11/18 Bill Orcutt/Billy Martin at Johnny Brenda’s (Ars Nova Workshop) – A dazzling solo double feature that solidly held attention. Orcutt, of ‘90s underground noise-rock band Harry Pussy, sat and turned out jacked-up guitar improvisations that included decomposing favs “Lonely Woman” and “Over the Rainbow.” Martin opened with his dominating percussion demonstration.

4/15/18 Jamaaladeen Tacuma’s Jupiter 4 at South Jazz Parlor – This marked the first time that Tacuma performed with Nels Cline. Tacuma was as funky and solid on electric bass as expected while Cline met him more than halfway but still had plenty of raw, electronic guitar fiddling fun. Chad Taylor (d) and 23-year-old (as, EWI) Alfredo Colon filled out the quartet.

5/8/18 Nik Bärtsch’s Ronin at World Café Live – Bärtsch returned to town after a ten-year absence with his well prepped quartet. What started out as atmospheric, repetitive motifs eventually became intricate jams built on the back of Kasper Rast’s marauding drumming.



## Top Concerts - Philadelphia 2018

6/2/18 Nels Cline's Lovers (for Philadelphia) at Union Transfer (Ars Nova Workshop) – A Pew Center grant led to this massive one-off Cline project based on his Lovers recording. Cline explored numerous Philadelphia musical sites, artifacts and moments over the past year to formulate a special edition. An all-star 17-piece ensemble brought his vision of Philly love to life.

6/17/18 Paal Nilssen-Love's Large Unit at Boot & Saddle (Ars Nova Workshop) - The drummer's 12-piece ensemble of wooly Scandinavian hotshots lit up the dark venue for a set and then Marshall Allen sat-in for the second set and took them out further, especially when the Unit sorted out to just the double rhythm section. Their finale of Getatchew Mekuria's "Shellele" was divine.

8/19/18 Ran Blake at Exuberance – One day prior to his 83 rd birthday, the pianist/educator returned to town after a 30 year absence. His exquisite sense of space, touch and crafty drama was on full display at the private home of Matt Yaple. He did sets dedicated to film noir, Abbey Lincoln and others.

9/8/18 Bobby Broom Organ Trio at Chris' Jazz Café – Broom made his Philadelphia premier as leader and ran down classic popular goodies from his early influential days including works by Procol Harum, The Beatles and The Kinks.

10/4-7 October Revolution Festival (Ars Nova Workshop) – The second annual 4-day overabundance of sights and sounds was even more spectacular than last year. The variability from set to set was jaw-dropping and mind-expanding – Oliver Lake to Christian McBride to Annette Peacock to Peter Bernstein to Alice Coltrane's ashram music to Zorn. Hats off to Mark Christman and his crew.

10/24/18 Julian Priester & David Haney at The Rotunda – Playing together over parts of the past twenty years has afforded the duo a respectful kinship and a unique shared single-mindedness. It was a rare treat to hear the trombone legend. [Full disclosure: David Haney is Cadence's editor but his placement in this category was well earned]

10/25/18 Jin Hi Kim & Gerry Hemingway at International House Philadelphia (Won Institute) – Kim's komungo, the traditional Korean 4th century instrument as well as her invented, one-of-a-kind electrified model, spun unique and exotic sounds that were augmented by the simpatico colorations produced by the noted expat percussionist.

## Top Concerts - Philadelphia 2018



11/25/17 Kamasi Washington Photo Credit: Ken Weiss

## Top Concerts - Philadelphia 2018



1/19/18 Phil Minton and Audrey Chen Photo Credit: Ken Weiss

## Top Concerts - Philadelphia 2018



3/3/18 Bobby Previte's Rhapsody Photo Credit: Ken Weiss



4/11/18 Billy Martin Photo Credit: Ken Weiss

## Top Concerts - Philadelphia 2018



4/15/18 Jamaaladeen Tacuma's Jupiter 4r Photo Credit: Ken Weiss



5/8/18 Nik Bärtsch's Ronin Photo Credit: Ken Weiss



## Top Concerts - Philadelphia 2018



6/2/18 Nels Cline's Lovers Photo Credit: Ken Weiss



6/17/18 Paal Nilssen-Love's Large Unit Photo Credit: Ken Weiss

## Top Concerts - Philadelphia 2018



8/19/18 Ran Blake Photo Credit: Ken Weiss

## Top Concerts - Philadelphia 2018



9/8/18 Bobby Broom Photo Credit: Ken Weiss

## Top Concerts - Philadelphia 2018

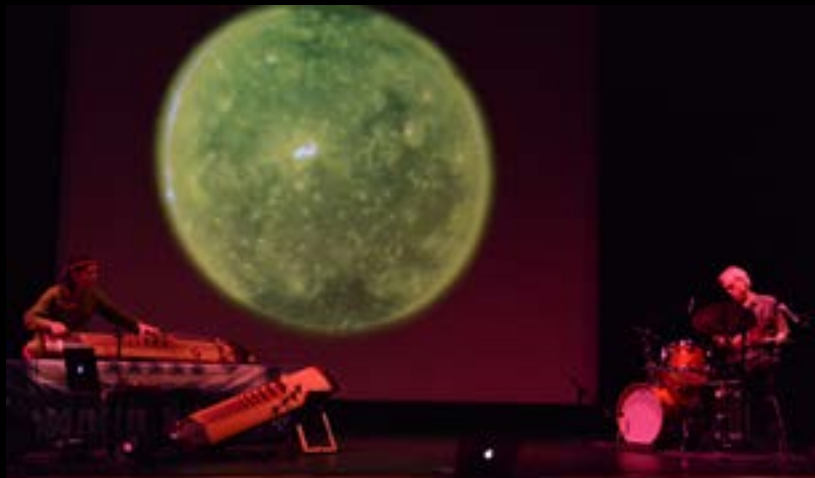


10/4-7 October Revolution Festival Photo Credit: Ken Weiss



10/24/18 Julian Priester & David Haney Photo Credit: Ken Weiss

## Top Concerts - Philadelphia 2018



10/25/18 Jin Hi Kim & Gerry Hemingway Photo Credit: Ken Weiss

**THE JAZZ  
SCENE  
SHORT  
TAKES FROM  
PHILADELPHIA  
TEXT AND  
PHOTOS BY  
KEN WEISS**

**P**HILADELPHIA, PA - The Paal Nilssen-Love's Large Unit made its first Philly appearance on 6/17 at Boot & Saddle (Ars Nova Workshop) and it was a once-in-a-lifetime event with Sun Ra Arkestra legend Marshall Allen (as, EVI) sitting in for the second set. The 12-piece large band of mostly younger Norwegian musicians, established in 2013, appeared courtesy of Norwegian government support. Nilssen-Love still needed to ask a number of American journalist a few months prior to the Unit's tour to write letters in support of the band in order to get them into America. Nilssen-Love led the powerhouse ensemble through a constantly changing scheme of mayhem and quieter, textural passages. Having two bassists and drummers in the mix allowed for substantial percussive push, and when the drummers worked in-tandem, pummeling their kits as hard as they could, it was an almost overwhelming event to experience in the small, shallow-roofed space. There was plenty of shiny brass along the front row as the band eschewed the stage and spread out on the floor to fill a quarter of the room. Marshall Allen joined in for the second set, continuing to amaze everyone at age 94 with his energy and positive attitude. Still admittedly jet lagged from the Arkestra's recent run thru Australia, he had been home a week and had already played with U2 a few days prior, Allen stood to the side of the band and, without a soundcheck, did what he does best - emit sinewy shards of hot alto sax. It was fun to watch the faces of the ensemble, they were obviously thrilled to have the opportunity to gig with the maestro. Allen did his best to try to engage some call-and-response from the other horn players but they had a script to stick to, although the three saxophonists each picked up their altos at one point and formed a alto quartet that was enjoyable. Their encore was a rocking version of The Ex's "Shellele." Nilssen-Love had a well-stocked merch table with numerous recordings and t-shirts but the best deal may have been the \$5 underwear with Large Unit printed across it. Don't know how many of them got sold but not a bad idea considering it was Father's Day...Roy Hargrove Quintet at South Jazz Parlor on 6/18 included surprise special quests that Hargrove summoned from the rear of the room at different times onto the stage - Orrin Evans (p), Lezlie Harrison (vcl) and also Sean Jones, who towered over Hargrove and highlighted the second set with a (almost) bell-to-bell trumpet hoedown. Hargrove's band included regulars Justin Robinson (sax) and Tadataka Unno (p), as well as Danton Boller (b) and Evan Sherman (d). His song choices



## Short Takes Philadelphia

were impressively wide, he went from John Hicks to Elmo Hope, and when he hit with Evans, he called for David "Fathead" Newman's "The Thirteenth Floor." When an audience member exclaimed that he knew the tune, the trumpeter said, "Oh, you know it? I hope I get it right." He did...Saxophonist Odean Pope enjoys a yearly late season gig at New York City's Blue Note club but he doesn't get much action at the two Philly Jazz clubs so it was nice to have him appear at Chris' Jazz Café with his quartet on 8/4. His original "Out for a Walk" led things off with heavy hints of classic Sonny Rollins and by the second piece he was off into his trademark impressive circular breathing. "Frames in a Picture," an inspired tribute to his late wife, was a highlight, elegant and sad, Lee Smith (b), Tom Lawlor (p) and Craig McIver (d) helped give the composition depth. A late take of Billy Eckstine's "I Want to Talk About You" rounded out the first set...Ran Blake finally made it back to town. It had only been 30 years since his gig at the Painted Bride. This time it was at @Exuberance, the private home of Jazz enthusiast Matt Yaple who converts his space into a luxurious club once or twice a month. Yaple demands undivided attention and even went so far as to have an audience member promise to not do the knitting she had brought with her during the music. He announced "The synergy of all of us listening creates an energy which the musician feeds off of and that's cool!" Right he is. Blake, who would turn 83 in one day and is moving slow these days. Two sets of music were promised and three sets were delivered to the rapt audience. The first set was a tribute to Blake's beloved film noir. Running through short segments of movie themes, he mixed in other film's songs that played on similar themes. The second set was a tribute to Abbey Lincoln, an inspirational musician for him and someone he fol-



Odean Pope Quartet at Chris' Jazz Café Photo credit: Ken Weiss

## Short Takes Philadelphia

lowed since 1958. Blake announced the surprise third set would come after a “5-minute arthritis break.” He then revealed the game plan for last set- he was to cover the great composers, including Strayhorn’s “Lush Life’ and Gershwin, but first he was to “bore” us [his words] with 2 of his own originals – “The Short Life of Barbara Monk” and “Memphis.” Blake was stunning with his exquisite sense of space, touch and time. Definitely a performance that will be long remembered...Surprisingly, Bobby Broom made his first Philadelphia appearance as a leader on 9/8 when he played Chris’ Jazz Café with his organ trio [Ben Patterson (org), Kobie Watkins (d)]. His second set included an early take on bassist Sam Jones’ “Unit 7. “You all here in Philly ought to know about bassists,” he announced. You’ve had so many great ones from here – Alphonso Johnson, Stanley Clarke, Paul Chambers, Christian McBride and my good friend Victor Bailey. It’s crazy, what, Percy Heath is from here too?” He later added numerous very successful covers of pop songs from his childhood such as Procol Harum’s “A Whiter Shade of Pale,” The Beatles “Come Together,” and The Kinks “Layla,” a major feat to do with invention while maintaining the melody without going cheesy on it. Great stuff although the electric organ could have been a bit filthier...Roy Hargrove at South Jazz Parlor Roy Hargrove at South Jazz Parlor

Ken Weiss



Roy Hargrove at South Jazz Parlor Photo Credit: Ken Weiss

# Short Takes Philadelphia



Odean Pope Quartet at Chris' Jazz Café, Photo Credit: Ken Weiss

## **THE JAZZ SCENE** **SHORT TAKES FROM VANCOUVER** **BY RON HEARN**

The 2018 Vancouver International Jazz Festival featured something for every jazz taste. I am still recovering from a knee injury, so I didn't hear as many groups as I would have liked. Interestingly three of the groups had an octogenarian player. The first group was led by 82-year old bass trumpeter Al Muirhead. Based in Edmonton, Al has been playing for years but only recently been recording as a leader. His group included Kelly Jefferson tenor sax, Reg Schwager, guitar, bassist Neil Swainson and local drummer Jesse Cahill. The group played standard and some tunes by Al including "Take It To The Bank", a medium blues written for musician and leader Tommy Banks. Other tunes included "Ghost Of A Chance", "Four Brothers", "Joy Spring", "Moose The Mooche", and "Scrapple From The Apple" on which Al switched to trumpet. The second octogenarian I heard was Houston Person playing with pianist Emmet Cohen's 3 along with bassist Russell Hall and drummer Evan Sherman. Cohen started each set with his trio and then brought on Person who sounded great. He played with tremendous authority blowing deep soulful tones on both ballads and uptempo swingers like "Lester Leaps In". The third 80-year old was Philly-based tenor player Larry McKenna who was paired with fellow tenorist Sam Taylor many decades his junior. McKenna has been a teacher and mentor to Taylor. They were supported by pianist Chris Gestrin, bassist Paul Rushka & drummer Jesse Cahill. The first set started off with a McKenna tune "You're It" followed with "Somethings Got To Give", "Wild Is Love", "More Than You Know" (with McKenna and Gestrin out) and closing with "Fat's Flats" by Fats Navarro. The second set started with an uptempo, swinging "People Will Say We're In Love". McKenna was featured on "Polka Dots and Moonbeams". Other tunes were "Rosetta", "I Wished On The Moon" on which Rushka soloed and "You Can Depend On Me". I also heard PJ Perry's group with trumpeter Kevin Elashuk, guitarist Bill Coon, Steve Holy bass & Joe Poole. PJ played both alto and tenor and was formidable on both saxes. The first set started with "Star Eyes" followed by Sam Jones' "Sam's Tunes" "Green Stuff" (based on "Green Dolphin Street"), "Soul Trane" and "Joy Spring". The second set started with PJ playing tenor on "Ceora", followed by a swinging "East Of The Sun", "My Ideal", "All The Things You Are", "Prince Albert" and "Bye Bye Blackbird". This was the first time in years that PJ play a Charlie Parker tune. The last group I heard was Nikki Carter's trio with Nikki on alto and tenor, long-time bassist Clyde Reed and drummer Kenton Loewen. This was Nikki's first festival gig in 5 years after recovering from a very serious car accident. The trio played sets of invigorating free improvised music, with no tune announcements. The music took various twists and tunes rhythmically and had a distinct early Ornette feel.

## Short Takes Vancouver

The local jazz community was rocked and deeply saddened by the passing of Ken Pickering on August 10th. Ken was the former artistic director of the Coastal Jazz & Blues Society and co-founder of the society and also the Vancouver Int. Jazz festival. For more than 30 years, Ken presented artists and groups from every facet of jazz, from top name groups to Euro free jazz players as well giving opportunities for local players to play with world-class musicians. Ken's vision for presenting music was bold and unique – his guiding hand will be missed.

The schedule at Frankie's Jazz Club includes Noah Preminger's 4tet 10/7, vocalist Hallie Loren 10/12, Toronto saxophonist Bob Brough 10/18 and Harry Allen 10/26&27. In November, pianist George Colligan is in 11/9 with bassist John Lee and drummer Jesse Cahill followed on 11/10 by pianist John Stetch and Vulneraville. NYC pianist Emmet Cohen returns with his trio 11/16&17. December has trumpeter Brad Turner with guest Seamus Blake 12/27-29. Cap U's jazz series presents Pat Metheny with Antonio Sanchez, Linda May Han & Gwilym Simcock 10/20 at the Vogue Theatre, Bria Skonberg appears with the "A" band 10/26 at the BlueShore theatre. Gord Grdina's NYC 4te also appears there 12/8.

For Vancouver jazz information, go to <http://www.coastaljazz.ca>.



Seamus Blake and Brad Turner

## THE JAZZ SCENE

### SHORT TAKES FROM CALGARY BY SHEILA THISTLETHWAITE

Calgary's jazz collaborative, JazzYYC, presented its fourth, and most ambitious, summer festival June 14 - 17. Nearly 4000 fans turned out to see and hear 158 musicians from across North America, from Cuba and from Europe, perform at 35 events around the city, in concerts, club shows, workshops and jam sessions.

"It was our biggest festival yet," says JazzYYC artistic producer Kodi Hutchinson.

"We added four more shows and we were able to do that on the strength of a good record of attendance over the past three years."

It was a festival of many firsts. It was the first time the festival staged concerts in the gorgeous performance space of Studio Bell at the National Music Centre, and the first time it was able to present top American artists (Eric Alexander and Harold Mabern).

"But most exciting for us," Hutchinson says, "is that we were able to book a gender parity festival, which is very rare."

Rare, indeed. Actually, there was one more female bandleader than male. It is certainly a first in Calgary, possibly in the nation. How did it happen? "Entirely by accident," Hutchinson says. "I was just looking for the best talent and those were the artists whose music hit me. I did not even notice we had booked so many women until it was pointed out to me."

"It's the jazz festival that got woke," said powerhouse vocalist Melody Diachun from Nelson, B.C., one of Canada's top women in jazz who performed the first Junction Live show -- another new series, in the Junction supper club, that offered a three-course dinner optional ticket.

She was in excellent company. The multi-faceted big band leader, composer and tenor saxophonist Chelsea McBride from Toronto presented her Socialist Night School project of original writing for a large ensemble with 18 top musicians from across the country. There were also shows with Juno-award winning saxophonist Allison Au, also from Toronto, Calgary's own Penny Sanborn, an accordionist whose concerts cover jazz, tango, classical and folk music, and Vancouver's teen phenomenon, the 16-year-old vocalist, musician and composer Maya Rae, who closed the festival with the Miles Black Trio.

The 2018 summer festival presented some of the most accomplished musicians it has been able to host in its first four years. American modern master of hard bop, the tenor saxophone star Eric Alexander, alongside legendary post-bop pianist Harold Mabern, played in quartet with John Webber (bass) and Joe Farnsworth (drums). At 82, with more than 60 years of rich hard bop grounding to depend on, Mabern is still playing his muscular style in top form, and still teaching at William Paterson University. Alexander is, in fact, one of Mabern's former students. The two have been recording and touring together for decades.

Afro-Cuban jazz was spectacularly represented by the three-time Juno award-winning pianist Hilario Duran (Canada) joined by Grammy-winning drummer Horacio 'El Negro' Hernández (Cuba).

Holland's best-selling artist, the two-time Edison (Dutch Grammy) winning



## Short Takes Calgary, Canada

saxophonist and composer Yuri Honing brought his acoustic quartet of Wolfert Brederode on piano, Gulli Gudmundsson on bass, and Joost Libaart on drums to the second night of the Junction Live series, as part of his worldwide tour promoting his 22nd album of contemporary, highly personal music, "Goldbrun."

This festival encompassed a good splash of high-energy music. Toronto's Heavyweights Brass Band has been riding a wave of popularity over the past few years, and is gathering speed with the release of their critically acclaimed new album of New Orleans-inspired music, "This City," that often ranges far and wide from the traditional brass band. From Quebec, the contemporary Parc X Trio of Gabriel Vinuela Pelletier on piano, Alex Lefavre on bass and Noam Guerrier-Freud on drums pushed the boundaries of improvisation and composition on the opening night of the late night series at Lolita's Lounge. Frisson, an eight-piece groove-based ensemble of musicians from across the U.S., the Caribbean and Europe, who formed at the famed Oberlin Conservatory, played their fearlessly lively mix of jazz, samba, hip-hop and electronic music for the late-night crowd at Ironwood Stage & Grill. Also for the first time, the festival added an artist-in-residence component with acclaimed Montreal pianist John Roney. On opening night, he recreated Keith Jarrett's iconic Köln Concert on the grand piano at the Taylor Centre for the Performing Arts at Mount Royal University, and led the first ever series of late-night jam sessions at Ironwood Stage each evening.

One of the aims of the festival has always been to make jazz accessible to more people. To that end, several events are free of charge. Roney was among the five performers who gave free public workshops geared to both those who play and those who listen. There were free concerts during the noon hour on outdoor stages downtown (except for the second day when rain forced Frisson to move into the central public library).

Sixty-six local musicians worked in the festival. Many performed on the final day in JazzYYC's signature JazzWalk that puts live jazz music in numerous spots around the city's oldest commercial district of Inglewood, from noon to 6 pm. The venues ranged from a knife and barber shop and an art gallery to restaurants, pubs and cafes. JazzYYC has been putting on this family-outing kind of event for both its fall and summer festivals, and during International Jazz Day celebrations, with no admission charge for any of the shows. Performances are staggered so that at any time, the audience has a choice of different shows to attend.

And on its final afternoon, the festival presented a free Women in Jazz Forum, with a discussion moderated by JazzYYC president Deb Rasmussen. It covered such challenging topics as gender parity, microaggressions, music education, and improving the jazz scene for women in the future. On the panel were Diachun, McBride and Raye, plus Calgary pianist Michelle Gregoire, and musician and co-founder of the Femme Wave Feminist Arts Festival Kaely Cormack. Hutchinson says he was very pleased to see so many young female players in the audience. "The panel had a great dialogue, and it is very important that young people see such strong women leaders in jazz. I think that in the next couple of years we are going to see an explosion of female talent. The women in jazz scenario at this festival wasn't planned. Music should have no barriers. It is a very competitive art form and excellence is what music is about."

## Short Takes Calgary, Canada

This fall will also see the fourth presentation of a Canadian jazz festival, produced in partnership with Edmonton's famed Yardbird Suite jazz association. It will have a focus on music coming from the drum, Hutchinson says. By that, he does not mean a drum-centric series of shows with lots of drum solos. He cites, as an example, Northern Ranger -- a sextet led by musician and composer Harry Vetro performing music inspired by his travels to six indigenous cultural areas of Canada where he interacted with musicians from different genres and engaged in indigenous culture. This sounds like another groundbreaking festival and I can't wait to hear the lineup reveal in August.

Again this year, several of the acts that performed in Calgary also appeared in the jazz festival at Medicine Hat, which is a three-hour drive east from Calgary on the Trans-Canada Highway. The Hat's festival ran June 17 - 24, beginning on the day that Calgary's ended. John Roney made a return visit to Medicine Hat, this time to play Jarrett's Köln Concert for a new set of ears. Allison Au brought her gift of layering voices and rhythms in both her playing and her compositions. Parc X Trio showed why and how it won the TD Grand Prize for Jazz at the Festival International de Jazz de Montréal in 2010.

In addition to concerts at the beautiful Esplanade arts centre, club shows, jazz films and workshops, there were dance parties complete with dance lessons. Top R&B vocalist Lynn Olagundoye performed with the lightning-energy Brothers of Okan for the festival's dance party that typically takes place in a hangar at the Medicine Hat Airport, and is always one of the hottest ticket items of the festival.

The jazzfest brought in students from 14 elementary schools for a daytime concert with the Heavyweights Brass Band. The music's impact was instantaneous. The kids immediately jumped up from their seats and started dancing, clapping and singing. Frisson's musical enthusiasm proved contagious when they performed for the students at a local high school cafeteria over the lunch hour. These events are among the things that give you the opportunity to see the transformative experience of jazz music, and how it inspires, says festival producer Lyle Rebbeck. Among the exceptions to performers who had also appeared at the Calgary summer festival were even more of some of Canada's best female jazz vocalists -- Montreal's Raneé Lee, Toronto's Alex Pangman and Edmonton's Mallory Chipman. Lee is one of the few female veterans of jazz in Canada. A multi-faceted artist who has won awards both for singing and acting, Lee also is a recipient of the Order of Canada for outstanding achievement. Her self-penned show highlighting the lives of six jazz divas who have influenced her career was a spellbinding performance, Rebbeck says. "Jazz can be so fun, and it also has the capacity to really touch people deep down inside. It is one of the reasons I am so passionate about this music," he says. "Keeping the festival authentic is sometimes challenging. Jazz is a bit of a niche market. There is always a temptation to broaden the music presented, but with that, you can lose the real essence of why you are doing it."

So, as the Medicine Hat Jazzfest looks forward to its 23d year, one thing is certain: it will be all about jazz.

Sheila Thistlethwaite

## THE JAZZ SCENE SHORT TAKES FROM TASMANIA BY ALWYN AND LAURIE LEWIS



At the southern end of Australia lies Tasmania, an island of some 500,000 people, the majority settled in the capital city of Hobart. Even with a small population Tasmania has its share of jazz and blues enthusiasts and kicked off 2018 with The Clarence Jazz Festival held on Hobart's eastern shore over the weekend of Feb 22, featuring organiser Wendy Mole, The Hobart Jazz Quartet of Matt Boden, Kelly Ottaway, Nick Heywood and Ted Vining impressing with a soulful rendition of Skating in Central Park. Also featured was the Matthew Ives Big Band – with tenor soloist Mitch Ellis's When I Fall in Love a standout, the festival concluding with a trio of Sandy Evans, Nick Heywood, Andrea Keller.....Over that same weekend solo pianist Daniel Sulzberger at Henry Jones Art Hotel, impressed with renditions of In a Sentimental Mood, Estate and Moanin'.....On March 3 at the northern end of the island in the historic village of Evandale bassist Peter Waddle's one man showing in the picturesque Evandale Gallery of his quirky and imaginative art work was further enhanced by accompaniment of his trio with Jacob Boote guitar and Bruce Innocent drums.....

March 17 Hobart's Spiegeltent presented singer Emma Pask with pianist Kevin Hunt. Emma was chosen by actress Nicole Kidman to sing at her wedding to singer/guitarist Keith Urban.....The island's north eastern corner of St Helens at Tidal Waters Resort Saturday March 17 feature the Matt Ives big band and vocalist Christine Bailey.....Salamanca's Founder's Room on April 20 mounted A Tribute to Stephane and Django with Charlie McCarthy violin, Harry Edwards guitar, Felicity Lovett rhythm guitar and Isaac Gee bass.....

On the northwest coast Viktor Zappner quartet featuring saxophonist Danny Healy, vocalist Sophie Leslie, Michael Armstrong bass and Bruce Innocent drums at The Wharf, Ulverstone. April 20.....May 13 at Hobart's IXL Long Bar featured pianist Matt Boden playing solo piano with a selection of jazz, blues and stride.

## Concert Review Emmett Cohen

For pianist Emmet Cohen jazz music is a living continuum of past, present and future, and in his performances and presentations he embraces all three. The twenty-seven-year-old New Yorker, by way of Florida, who was a child prodigy at three, is a modern day “edutainer,” an artist who teaches and demonstrates where the music came from, where it is, and where it is going. His homage to the masters is evidenced by his recent trio records with Jimmy Cobb and Ron Carter, and a forthcoming effort with Benny Golson. His own trio with Russell Hall on bass and either Kyle Poole or Evan Sherman on drums features daring, playful and mind-meld, spontaneous synchronicity that is breath taking to behold. On this occasion, Cohen revealed the full range of his talents and devotion in a solo concert from the Lied Center at the University of Kansas on September 19, 2017.

He started off with a single note in a repeating pattern and rhythm, setting a mood, the theme evolving slowly, but where was he going? Was it Monk, In Walked Bud? No, Benny Golson’s *Whisper Not* emerged out of the forest of ideas, and after much exploration and a stop-stomp change of direction, he brought it to a close. He sat on the piano bench with his head gently nodding, eyes closed, thankfully receiving the thunderous and ecstatic applause and love of the audience. He knows he has done well, but it is only the first song, and there is so much more sound and fury and delicacy to mine from the possibilities of the songbook. Next was *Tea for Two*, a joyful and dancing romp with flashing, blinding, clearly articulated runs of cascading notes, and finishing well with a short insertion of the chorus from *Shiny Stockings*. *Echoes of Spring* by the black Jew from New Jersey, Willie the Lion Smith, followed with its quietly thrilling and delicate propriety. The history lesson seamlessly proceeded with a hand-over-the-mouth genius performance of Monk’s *Trinkle Tinkle*, with Cohen displaying complete command of soul, body and spirit merging with the music in a lush and rhapsodic flow. Starting inside the piano with thumping and dampened tones, *Don’t Mean a Thing* showcased that Emmet Cohen can take any song anywhere he wants, breaking it down, deconstructing it, molding it and reassembling it until its cartoonish and splashing density reveals an amazing clarity at blazing tempos. *Lush life*, written by Billy Strayhorn when he was sixteen, featured an ornate approach with Cohen fully diving in, going deeper and deeper, attacking the song until it revealed many of its secrets. Cohen paused to speak of the deeper purpose and meaning of playing jazz. He spoke of the study and the sense of community that is inherent in dedication to the music. From the masters of the music you get a feeling of hope, and that is one of the great messages of jazz, Cohen averred, that jazz creates love and hope, which are infinite. The program continued with a rapturous *Over the Rainbow*, which led to Cohen’s flourishing stride skills on a *Fats Waller* medley that also included the story of Al Capone kidnapping Waller so he could play at the gangster’s birthday party in Chicago. Cohen walked off the stage briefly and returned to announce he was going to do an encore by *Stevland Hardaway Judkins* and did anyone in the audience know who that was? The name “*Stevie Wonder*” was shouted out, and Cohen left us with the passionate and romantic *Overjoyed*. And that is how we went into the night, convinced that Emmet Cohen is here to stay.

Mark Klafter



Group of Florida migrants on their way to Cranberry, New Jersey, to pick potatoes.  
Near Shawboro, North Carolina

Photo Credit, Jack, Delano, courtesy of Library of Congress

## **WILLIAM HOOKER: THE GREAT MIGRATION**

*Music, narrative, and dance, William Hooker tells the story of African-American migration from 1935 to 1950.*

On April 5, 2018, Roulette in Brooklyn, New York presented an important look at the past. Young and old got together under the direction of composer, drummer and curator, William Hooker. The line up was for this special night was:

William Hooker – Percussion  
Ras Moshe – Reeds, Flute  
Eriq Robinson – Electronics, Images  
Mark Hennen – Piano  
Goussy Celestin – Narrator, Dance  
William Parker – Bass  
David Soldier – Violin, Banjo  
Ava Mendoza – Guitar  
Alton Brooks & Nannie Lampkin – Primary Narratives

The above line up presented a powerful project that was dedicated to the William's parents and parents in general. From 1910 to 1920, over a million African Americans moved from the South to the North, West, and Midwest. This concert was a touching starting place and important jumping off place to explore the cultural effects of this rich diaspora.



### **PARTY TIME IN MONTREAL, IN THE FEET, HEAD AND STREETS BY JOSEF WOODARD**

Now in the onramp to next summer's milestone 40th anniversary year, the Montreal Jazz Festival has established its sturdy reputation as one of the world's handful of great mainstream jazz fests--artistically, organizationally and atmospherically. And its program is dense and diverse enough by now to make generalizing a dangerous endeavor. Even so, in my latest annual visit to the great event this year, for a four-day stretch over the first weekend of its ten-day duration, the thought kept stubbornly bubbling up: there's a party going on here this year.

There is always a strong contingent of more groove, fusion-y, world music-lubed or otherwise festive music to go around at the festival, but the tempo and the resistance to calmer, more cerebral enticements seemed more amped-up this time around. Two of the independently-operated and fueled artists on the jazz scene at the moment, indie heroes Snarky Puppy and Kamasi Washington, let their funky, Brazilian and otherwise rhythmically-charged sounds fly before packed, happy and bouncing audiences in the large nightclub space now called Mtellis (formerly Metropolis).

Terrence Blanchard, who has teetered on the divide between electro and acoustic for years, plugged in and grooved more boldly in his show at the Monument-National, with his group, The E-Collective. So, for that matter, did up-and-coming trumpeter-bandleader Keyon Harrold, evoking electric Miles in a gentler way (one of his claims to fame was playing Miles' horn parts in the abhorrently bad but musically enriched film *Miles*).

Even the first of the "Invitation" artist this year (a laudable series in which select artists are given three or more dates to explore different facets of their work) went to organist-keyboardist John Medeski, whose work with Medeski, Martin and Wood and countless other projects have established him as a "thinking person's jazz party king." On the first night, he was joined by rough-and-ready guitarist Marc Ribot, on a set list including Grant Green's "Suki, Suki" and Horace Silver's "Strollin,'" and with Ribot sounding best when he follows his instincts into the nattering, atonal landscapes vs. his attempts at mainstream soul-jazz turf.

Medeski, a master of B-3 sweeps and surging energy modulations, was more in his personal element the next night, with his aptly-named band Mad Skillet, a mash-up roadhouse jazz-jam outfit with winks of erudition in the party mix. Festive festivities come naturally to Montreal during the festival, especially on the several outdoor stages supplying a steady flow of more crowd-pleasing and not-necessarily-jazz offerings. This model festival that Andre Menard built nearly four decades ago promises the populace a good time, in a large downtown zone closed to through traffic for ten days. (Menard, incidentally, enacts a major change when he retires after next year's 40th B-day blowout).

Meanwhile, what happens in the paid indoor venues can be a more sensitive artistic expressive domain, generally speaking, which appeals to more serious jazz listeners. Not so much this year. But the Montreal experience is partly distinctive because of the forced and blithe interface of even the sternest jazz-seekers and what's happening on the streets between venues. Not everything runs according to plan. Controversy and protest—with results—greeted a new production of Montreal theatrical figure Robert LePage's *SLAV*, featuring African-American roles and songs but with a largely white cast, was roundly criticized and picketed in front of the Theatre Nouveau du Monde. The angered voices were heard: the production was shuttered after a few performances. The Montreal festival has largely steered away from the left end of the jazz spectrum and avant-garde inklings in recent years—leaving that stylistic region to the fringe festival at the Montreal's renowned Casa del Popolo, the nearby Victoriaville festival in rural Quebec each May, the more adventure-prone Vancouver Jazz Festival and other Canadian chance-taking outlets.

Even so, one of the thrilling and sometimes “outside”-venturing shows this year was by Quebec's own veteran maverick guitarist René Lussier and his potent new Quintette, settling into the official nightclub space L'Astral (on the ground floor of the Jazz Festival HQ building). The sixty-something guitarist (and sometime player of the odd, animal-esque, bowed Daxophone) has covered many genres in his time, including free improvisation and Quebecois folk music, bent to his own taste. The Quintette, including two drummers, accordion, tuba, cooks up a strange brew of a sound, alternately rustic, swampy, abstract, crackpot-ish, and identifiably Lussier-ian.

One of the most musical events I caught during my Montreal sojourn came courtesy of the great and still fledgling young vocalist Cécile McLorin Salvant, who continues her slow, steady upward trajectory in and around jazz circles. Her show at the Theatre Masonneuve was an unpretentious marvel, all the more impressive for her refusal to let her vocal gymnastics and natural theatricality get in the way of the musical agenda at hand. Her fresh takes on “I Got Rhythm,” “I Didn't Know What Time it Was” (with clever time-fragmented phrasing) and her signature channeling of Bessie Smith added up to another reason why she clings to the top of the jazz voice game of the day.

From another vocalizing angle or two, the advance buzz was warranted in the case of young singer-songwriter Emma Frank—who launched her musical life in Montreal but now based in Brooklyn. As heard at the Gesu (always the site of some of the festival's more rewarding and “discovery” status music in a given year), Frank's enticing blend of folk, jazz, soft-edged R&B and personal touches inevitably draws the Joni Mitchell comparison, but also places her in the current field of inventive new singer-songwriters with jazz in the recipe, as in the work of Becca Stevens. drummer Jim Black, who always seems to know the right thing to do, the right tack to take, added taste, percussive poetry and

## Festival Review Montreal Jazz Festival

jazz flavorings to Frank's impressive set.

A personal festival favorite, Marius Neset, serves as a prime new example of energized, electrified (though mostly acoustic) progressive jazz, a must-hear phenomenon. Neset's robust dynamism as a player is cause enough to warrant attention, but his compositional voice has developed into a fascinating blending of influences, from Coltrane and Michael Brecker to progressive rock, and his own Norwegian folk-tinged way with a tune. Neset's innate melodicism combines with a taste for quick-change metric shifts, unison flurries and other strategies for his flexible band, translating to a live show of uncommon real time excitement.

The virtuosic tenor saxophonist (who also has been dipping into soprano more of late) hails from Norway, but "came of age" while studying with—and gleaning aesthetics from—Django Bates at Copenhagen's Royal Music Conservatory. At the moment, Neset—whose skill has recently been tapped by uncanny talent-scout Chick Corea—is one of the most promising and thrilling sounds in contemporary jazz, a status which his rousing late night set at the Gesu venue, drawing heavily from the new album *Circle of Chimes*, more than validated. It was the set of the fest, in my experience this year.

Here was my idea of a jazz party, with the brain fully engaged alongside other senses and sensibilities. And if it goes down in an enlightened setting such as the Montreal Jazz Fest, all the better.



Marius Neset, Montreal Jazz Festival, 2018

## Festival Review Montreal Jazz Festival



Mark Ribot, Montreal Jazz Festival, 2018

## Festival Review 23rd Vision Festival

**23RD ANNUAL  
VISION FESTIVAL  
MAY 23-28, 2018 AT  
ROULETTE  
BROOKLYN, NEW  
YORK  
BY KEN WEISS**



5/23/18 Dave Burrell,  
Photo credit: Ken Weiss

After 23-years, one thing is certain, no one combines the creative arts – dance, poetry, art, film and thought with the spirit of free Jazz better than Arts for Art, presenter of the dauntless Vision Festival. The festival returned to Brooklyn’s Roulette after 3-years at the acoustically/steep, walkup steps challenged Judson Memorial Church in Manhattan’s West Village. This year’s event featured good variability with new group premiers, one-off projects, and a general infusion of fresh blood. Philly-based pianist and longtime Vision Fest favorite, Dave Burrell, got this year’s honors with the Lifetime Achievement award so the first night featured him with three unique groupings. Rather than reform previous working bands, Burrell utilized old and new friends with his presentations. Harlem Renaissance, a quartet with Harrison Bankhead (b), Darius Jones (as), Steve Swell (tbn) and Andrew Cyrille (d), celebrated Harlem’s late ‘10s transcendence. After which, Bankhead came off the stage to heavy applause and cunningly commented, “You know what they say – we fooled them again!” Burrell also worked with a searing quintet of James Brandon Lewis (ts), William Parker (b), Cyrille and 83-year-old New Orleans’ tenor sax giant Kidd Jordan. The most highly anticipated portion of the festival was the night’s second set with the illustrious saxophonist Archie Shepp joining Burrell in a quartet with Parker and Hamid Drake (d). Burrell and Shepp share a long history together, back to the loft days, but last played together in 1969 at Duke des Lombardes in Paris. It didn’t take long for them to jell and Shepp’s fiery singing on his “Revolution (Mama Rose)” stirred the audience with brimstone and rebellion. Their rendition of “Crucificado,” the Burrell original from Shepp’s Attica Blues album, brought back memories for many in the sold-out house. Extraordinarily, the old Shepp originals sounded more current and timely than ever. Shepp announced, “It’s good to see Dave Burrell. We used to play together but not for a while. It’s good to know that we are growing old together.”

The five nights that followed were equally strong, provocative, diverse, socially conscious and inspiring. Some of the standout performances included Mary Halvorson’s Code Girl; the Whit Dickey Trio, which

## Festival Review 23rd Vision Festival

included Karen Borca vaping when not on her bassoon, a first for me; Women with an Axe to Grind, a very timely band with four fierce women – Patricia Nicholson (dance), Nicole Mitchell (flt), Joelle Léandre (b) and Melanie Dyer (vla); SPACE, Roscoe Mitchell's trio with Thomas Buckner (vcl) and Scott Robinson which closed out the second night by exploring the timbral potentials of brass, flute and extended vocalizations, and allowed Robinson to truck out some of his bounty of unusual toys, including a slide saxophone and a humongous contra bass saxophone. The following nights brought Irreversible Entanglements with saxophonist Keir Neuringer; Nasheet Waits Equality Quartet with Aruan Ortiz; Matthew Shipp with Michael Bisio (b), Newman Taylor-Baker (d), Jason Kao Hwang (vln), Mat Walerian (cl) and Nate Wooley (tpt); Fay Victor's Mutations for Justice, a project of witty protest music that the vocalist plans to continue throughout the Trump administration, found her delivering lines such as, "I love Stormy Daniels;" Mixashawn (g, sax, flt, vcl) with his bassist brother Rick Rozie; AfroHORN Fellow led by Francisco Mora Catlett; Frode Gjerstad Trio with Steve Swell; Craig Harris' (tbn, didg) Brown Butterfly; Jemeel Moondoc's New World Pygmies and the finale with the Oliver Lake Big Band. Special mention must be made of the unforgettable sets by Seraphic Light, a trio of Daniel Carter (multi-inst), Parker and Shipp, dedicated to Carter's late wife, artist Marilyn Sontag; the trio of Ambrose Akinmusire (tpt), Kris Davis (p), Tyshawn Sorey (d); the quartet of Gerald Cleaver (d), Brandon Lopez (b), David Virelles (p) and Chris Potter, who dipped his tenor deep into the free music vein very effectively and said, "I don't get to play it a lot but probably more than people think." For me, the Vision's top two sets just happened to open the final night – Jamie Branch's Fly or Die and then Cooper-Moore on solo piano. Branch's motive with her quartet is to transport and transform, which she did, and her water-spurting act through her trumpet was a bonus treat. Cooper-Moore was especially ferocious, mixing stride/ragtime with gospel and pulverizing improvisation. So how many days to the 24th Vision Festival?



## Festival Review 23rd Vision Festival



Archie Shepp-William Parker Vision Fest 5/23, Photo Credit: Ken Weiss



5/24 Mary Halvorson's Code Girl, Amirtha Kidambi Adam O'Farrill Michael Formanek  
Tomas Fujiwara Photo Credit: Ken Weiss

## Festival Review 23rd Vision Festival



Women with an Axe to Grind 5/24

Nicole Mitchell Joelle Leandre Patricia Nicholson Melanie Dyer Photo Credit: Ken Weiss



SPACE 5/24 Roscoe Mitchell Thomas Buckner Scott Robinson, Photo Credit: Ken Weiss

## Festival Review 23rd Vision Festival



5/26 Kris Davis Ambrose Akinmusire Tyshawyn Sorey, Photo Credit: Ken Weiss



5/27 David Virelles Gerald Cleaver Brandon Lopez Chris Potter, Photo Credit: Ken Weiss

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5/27 Craig Harris, Photo Credit: Ken Weiss

## Festival Review 23rd Vision Festival



5/28 Jamie Branch Lester St. Louis, Photo Credit: Ken Weiss

## Festival Review 23rd Vision Festival



5/28 Jemeel Moondoc William Parker Hamid Drake, Photo Credit: Ken Weiss



## Festival Review 23rd Vision Festival



5/26 Karen Borca, Photo Credit: Ken Weiss

## Festival Review 23rd Vision Festival



5/28 Cooper-Moore, Photo Credit: Ken Weiss

**REVIEW OF  
JAZZAHEAD!,  
BREMEN,  
GERMANY, APRIL 6  
TO 22, 2018**

**JAZZAHEAD!  
REPORT: MEETING  
POINTS AND  
MUSICAL POINTS  
BY JOSEF  
WOODARD**

It can be both a challenge and a vibrant sign of life that the annual phenom known as jazzahead! (yes, lower case, but with the affirming smack of an exclamation point) resists easy description. At the heart of Bremen, Germany-based enterprise, it is a “trade show” of sorts mixed with conference and a compacted festival equipped with dozens of mostly half-hour musical showcases, an all-important piece of the puzzle. And it is a puzzle which, in its now 13-year history, has become Europe’s central convergence point for a myriad of jazz-involved person—agents, record labels, festivals, promoters, educators, and more. To date, the focus is largely on Europe, but with a slowly growing contingent of jazz people from elsewhere in the world and the U.S. in the mix.

Experiencing jazzahead!, on the ground—and on the busy vendor floor and in its various musical venues—is the best way to get a grasp on what it is all about. Founded by Peter Schulze and Uli Beckerhoff, jazzahead! is by now, for many, a valuable meeting point, a kind of “network-palooza” for those with interests in jazz projects and promotions. For others (myself included), its main virtue is as a concentrated exposure to emerging and established acts—mostly from the “other” side of the Atlantic and often from fresh stylistic perspectives. It is a dizzying three-night/two-day confabulation, with music performed in halls in the central Messe Bremen conference center and, for a dose of funkier and more relaxed ambience, Bremen’s nightclub-hang zone of the Kulturzentrum Schlachthof, a reformed slaughter house.

Each year, the event puts a spotlight on the music of a particular country (along with a traditional German Showcase section, an “Overseas Night,” and a “European Jazz Meeting” segment of showcases.

Last year, we heard a long and satisfying night of showcases from Finland, while this spring’s 13th annual, 2018 edition turned to the fertile musical soil of Poland, whose contributions to jazz run deep and continue to inspire. On the downside, the presiding, living emissary of Polish jazz—veteran trumpeter Tomas Stanko—had to cancel a planned show due to health issues. In the wake of that gap, two specific younger figures assumed



Marcin Wasileski Trio  
PolishNight (c)JensSchlenker MesseBremen



Sendesaal, Bremen (photo, Josef Woodard)

prominence in the Polish musical hierarchy of the weekend.

For one, we had the formidable and poetic pianist Marcin Wasilewski—the long-time pianist for Stanko—whose own solo career has reached new heights thanks to several ECM releases and his lived-in, empathetic trio. Wasilewski's trio (with bassist Sławomir Kukulski and drummer Michał Miskiewicz), fortified by a 25-year history of listening together, was heard, before an overflow crowd, as the prime time showcase set on the Polish night. On Saturday night (the designated “Club Night” with shows scattered around multiple Bremen venues), they returned in a fittingly intimate environment of the riverfront Weserburg Museum für Moderne Kunst. There, the lyrical subtleties and bursts of wily energy rang out in crystal clear fashion. But the newer voice on the Polish jazz block was the veritable star of 2018 Jazzahead!, the saxist marvel Maciej Obara—long brewing on that scene but just now spanning outward into a more global profile and dates in North America, again thanks to the reach of his ECM connection, with the release of his album *Unloved*. Whereas that album heeds and demonstrates the artist's masterful touch in a more ethereal, melancholic dimension we often encounter on ECM releases, his first moments in Bremen painted the picture of a more full-dimensional and versatile player.

The saxist showed up for a melodic cameo with the folk-jazz vocalist Monika Borzym's set, featuring effective Joni Mitchell rethinks, and then in more free and raucous mode at the end of the “Polish Night,” in the ranks of the potent group Piotr Damasiewicz/Power of the Horns.

But his strongest showcase came on Friday night's annual “Gala Concert” moment, in the historic ambience of the 1920s vintage Die Glocke in downtown Bremen (incidental note: this was the theater where Keith Jarrett recorded his Bremen Concert solo album in the 1970s). Here, Obara's stellar Polish-Norwegian ensemble—with the fertile and fiery pianist Dominik Wania (also heard and much appreciated at the Power of the Horns show the night before), nimble Nordic drummer Gard Nilssen and bassist Ole Morten Vågan—readily tapped into the meditative, considered lyricism as heard on the ECM album, but added ramped-up energy quotients and interactive thickets. Most impressively, the dynamically sensitive saxist at the center showed himself capable of bold, cleanly-articulated bursts and understated poise and reverie, to suit the varied turf of material.

Other fascinating sounds emerged from the eight-set Polish Night, starting at the beginning, with the opening set by Kamil Piotrowicz Sextet, an engaging, inventive and chamber-tinged body of work led by the pianist whose album half-ironically called *Popular Music* was nominated for the Grammy-like “Polish Phonographic Academy Fryderyk Award.” His is a name to remember, as is Joanna Duda, a young pianist/keyboardist whose mostly acoustic trio fired up the Schlachthof venue with a willfully diverse but somehow unified set in which jazz traditionalism blended with R&B, atonal detours, electronic textures, and other seemingly disparate elements. Here was a fresh variation on the currently well-populated realm of the jazz piano trio format, liberally reconfigured.



Joanna Duda  
PolishNight (c)JensSchlenker\_MesseBremen



Joanna Duda  
PolishNight (c)JensSchlenker\_MesseBremen



Saturday afternoon's eight-set "German Jazz Expo," a fixture in the jazzhead! showcase game plan, proved to be front-loaded with the most impressive acts in the opening positions. The acclaimed young Berlin-based band Max Andrzejewski's HÜTTE worked up a wily, tuneful stylistic chemistry experiment with elements of oblique pop and rubbery Bill Frisell-ish qualities, and virtues including the drummer-leader's compositions and saxist Johannes Schiermacher's free flights as an improviser. Freer and stronger still, the saxophonist Johannes Ludwig took an impressive stand as leader of the bass-less Fearless Trio, also with Simon Nabatov and drummer Fabian Arends, navigating adventurous material which also made liberal allowances for effective free play—even within the limiting 30-minute time limit.

Scandinavian acts of note figured into the mix, as well. Finnish saxist Paulli Lyytinen's Magnesia Orkestri—with the charismatic leader sporting a cowboy hat—won points of distinction, elasticity, humor and post-Ornette Coleman homage with a personal touch with his limber "chordless" quartet. The all-female acapella group IKI, of Danish/Norwegian/Finnish heritage, proved to be an enchanting entry in the recently-expanding world of female vocal groups—akin to Trondheim Voices and the Finnish Signe—who use their trained voices and restlessly creative impulses to combine experimentalism with ancient vocal traditions, with echoes of jazz and other idioms.

During Saturday night's "Club Night" sprawl of shows in the conference center and all around Bremen, one of the most substantial entries and ultimately one of the more lingering experiences for this jazzhead! visitor in 2018, was both off campus, and off-topic in terms of jazz, proper.

The pristine, historic and acoustical splendor of the Sendersaal (run during the year by jazzhead! co-founder Peter Schulze and site of memorable ECM nights in years past) provided an ideal locale for the unique ORLANDOviols. The group, consisting of six expert players of the viola da gamba, antique forefather of the cello, offered up a mesmerizing and deeply musical program, "Harmony of the Spheres," which was framed by 16th century Renaissance music of Palestrina, but wended through music of Steve Reich, J.S. Bach, and a German of a much more recent vintage, the late great 20th center maverick Karlheinz Stockhausen.

Coincidentally, one of the 31 showcases I happened to catch this year was by Stockhausen the Younger, trumpeter-flugelhornist Markus Stockhausen, whose band breezed through some agreeably romantic meditations, on the far side of his father's avant-garde extremism. That's just one of countless cross-references, familial lineages and studies in contrast to be ferreted from any given jazzhead! meeting. Convergence is the operative word in Bremen for these few spring days and nights.

## Festival Review DjangoFest Northwest

**M**usic can enrich you, comfort you and yes, even change you... DjangoFest is a celebration of Jean "Django" Reinhardt; he started a whole new genre of Jazz with just three fingers. If you've never heard of him, look 'im up... Greatest jazz composer of the 20th century and I'd go as far as to dub him a patron saint; life changing accident on his left hand became, instead of a handicap, the impetus for a new and brilliant style to playing jazz on guitar. I found myself at DjangoFest as an appreciator of his work and there to experience what I thought would be the usual frenetically charged festival, but what I discovered was so much more. Needless to say, I came back with some serious Django fever. Got in on the third day, saw some entertaining performances but the bug didn't really bite till I saw Samson Shmitt and his ensemble. He covered the standards, there was humor and there was plenty of amazing talent on stage but I was especially pulled in by his subtleness and interpretation of the music. The way he played guitar with fluidity and absolute precision, at the same time communication through the music never ceased; while he chunked and (seamlessly yet with the lightning speed that only the gypsies seem to bestow) picked away. I left the show with the music flowing through my veins and mind while I stepped out into the night.

For me some players really stuck out: Joscho (pronounced yoshow), practically a standup comedian; German born, amazing mastery and interpretation of the music. His personality really came through – and his deprecating humor was not lost on the audience, the guy should do stand-up once the tendinitis sets in.. Joking aside, his playing was brilliant - a guitar pyrotechnician driving sensationalist, dazzles the ears and the eyes and he can also play a ballad quite harmoniously... and then there was Christine Tassan et les Imposteures; an all girl, Django style band that chose the name due to the lack of female representation in said genre (guess they felt like impostors or something). Christine on lead guitar, Martine on violin and Blanche on bass, but sans their usual rhythm guitarist – unfortunately, they had to settle for a male – besides that they delighted the senses with Django/Eastern European fusions – angelic in their singing and definitely one of my favorite bassists at the festival; Trio Dinicu, a San Francisco based band was a treat as well. The classically trained violinist had such mastery and control over her instrument with remarkable tone. She came from jazz roots, went classical and then back to jazz retaining that definable classical sound. Adjectives fall short, it was impressive and breathtaking; my asthma? no longer dormant.

A few prodigy players worth mentioning: Samuelito and Antoine, two charismatic young masters who entertained us with synchronized solos in the flamenco style; Henry Acker (the youngest there, a ripe old age of 11) he performed complex solos way beyond his years -great precision and flair – definitely someone to watch out for..

The first show I saw was a matinee featuring Hot Club of Troy; they intended to roll the wheel, not necessarily reinvent it – Pure Django, no frills – it was a nice introduction to the festival... and if you don't know Troy Chapman, that's unfortunate, a real magnanimous personality and a great player as well. Who said such things as it's all a game, and just pick up the guitar, whether you play for 5 minutes or 5 hours, the point is to pick it up everyday. He gave me a pick and some great advice... I think I'll practice some guitar now... signing off.

## Jazz Stories: Anthony Braxton

ANTHONY BRAXTON,  
COMPOSER,  
INSTRUMENTALIST, BORN  
IN 1945, CHICAGO, IL, USA,  
TALKS ABOUT HIS HEROES  
AND ABOUT MEETING  
JOHN COLTRANE.  
TAKEN AND COMPILED BY  
KEN WEISS



Anthony Braxton in 1976

When Anthony Braxton took the stage for his solo set on October 6, 2017 at FringeArts in Philadelphia, as part of Ars Nova Workshop's blockbuster new annual festival – The October Revolution of Jazz & Contemporary Music – he was armed only with his alto sax. This was a rare event, not the fact that he had only brought a single horn, he had done the same at the 2017 FIMAV in Canada, it was that this took place on American soil. Braxton estimated that he currently plays in his home country only once a year. "Thankfully Europe has supported me," he said. "I'm able to play over there."

At age 72, Braxton remains a physical and creative musical force. The solo shows aren't easy for him – "I have to prepare for them like you would for a boxing match," as he thrusted his arms through the air, showing off his best boxing moves. He also remains one of the nicest human beings you're liable to meet. He's filled with effusive praise for others and feels that interacting with his fan base after shows is, "All part of it, it goes together [with the performance]." When told by a fan, who had brought a few records to be signed, that he had driven down from New York for the night's performance, and that he had also attended the FIMVAV concert, Braxton insisted that they meet for lunch sometime, leaving his admirer flustered – "I don't know what to say. I'm flabbergasted." Another fan invited Braxton to play a game of chess with him in the future but was informed there was to be no game. "I had to stop playing chess," Braxton revealed, "because everything fly's out the window and I start smoking cigarettes again." When a young music student introduced himself and noted that he had recently discovered Braxton's music, Braxton wished the best for him but spoke from personal experience – "Good luck because the harder you work, the better you get, the less people are interested."

## Jazz Stories: Anthony Braxton



Anthony Braxton in 2017, Photo Credit: Ken Weiss

## Jazz Stories: Anthony Braxton

THE FOLLOWING IS A MEMORY FROM ANTHONY BRAXTON OBTAINED AFTER HIS PERFORMANCE:

I remember a magical moment in my life when I had been pushed back at the Plugged Nickel club in Chicago because I was too young and I sat outside the club crying because I had been rejected that evening three times. My "brothers" painted a mustache on me, I changed clothes each time, and I would go to the Plugged Nickel and they would recognize me immediately and kick me out. Anyway, John Coltrane came outside of the club and he was so nice to me. I was crying because he's one of my "Daddies." He was such a nice man. I was able to get in to see another set at a different time, and I saw a lady come in from the street with an umbrella and she didn't like the music. And while he was playing a solo, she was pulling on him with the umbrella. I was ready to KILL her. When the set was over, she came up to John Coltrane to talk and do you know he was so nice to this lady? I couldn't believe it. I couldn't believe it. I've never met a man like this guy. And so when I think about John Coltrane and Warne Marsh, Paul Desmond or Albert Ayler, so many great men and women who have helped me to have my life. I could not have found my way through life without my heroes and heroines who have pointed the way for me and helped me to understand what I was trying to do. And so the experience with John Coltrane was like a magic, inspirational healing experience for me. And I remember, even then thinking that I want to be just like Mr. Coltrane when I grow up. Here's the greatest saxophone player on the planet and he's not like some super ego guy. He treated everyone with respect and it taught me something. I met Warren Marsh and he's the same way, nice to people. [His voice cracks] And Paul Desmond? He's different but he was a nice man. I was gonna play trumpet. I wanted to be like Miles Davis when I was a young guy, but after I put on "Jazz at the College of the Pacific" and heard Paul Desmond, everything turned upside down and I have yet to recover. I will never recover. Even now I buy the bootleg Brubeck records that have come out since everyone has passed. Something like twenty CDs have come out, I have them all, and the level of the music is the same. Even a bad night was a great night, that's how good they were. So I'm a lucky guy. Hooray for America, hooray for the masters of America, the men and women who have done so much positive work. May the cosmic forces of the universe help our country because we have a lot of good people in our country. That's what I would say. Hooray for America, hooray for music!

## Jazz Stories: Anthony Braxton



Anthony Braxton in 2017, Photo Credit: Ken Weiss



## Jazz Stories: Burton Greene

BURTON GREENE, PIANIST, BORN IN 1937, CHICAGO, IL, USA, REMEMBERS THE FIRST OCTOBER REVOLUTION FESTIVAL. TAKEN AND COMPILED BY KEN WEISS

This memory was taken after Greene played a solo set in Philadelphia on October 8, 2017 at the inaugural "The October Revolution of Jazz & Contemporary Music Festival" produced by Ars Nova Workshop.

This is "The October Revolution Festival," which is in a way a commemoration of the original [The October Revolution in Jazz] festival in 1964 that I played on with the Free Form Improvisation Ensemble with Alan Silva and it was the kickoff of the Jazz Composers Guild started by Bill Dixon and Cecil Taylor. That guild only lasted about six months. It was a communal organization of the nascent free Jazz movement in America that started in New York. Bill and Cecil had a beautiful vision about how musicians could band together and take all the important new freely improvised music since the beginning of the sixties, let's say, off the market and into the hands of the artists themselves. We talked of getting a building for rehearsals and rooms for recording and we'd make the concert conditions based on our own terms for which venues would be suitable for us to play our music under the prime conditions, etc. And Ornette Coleman was in the wings watching all this, getting information about what was happening at the Guild meetings. In the beginning, everyone was very motivated, but unfortunately after a little while, the threads started coming apart because some people were kind of desperate financially at the time. They talked about solidarity but if somebody offered them a fifty dollar gig at a cheap venue they'd go for it simply because they had to feed their family. They had to do what they had to do. The point is that the message of communal interest did not filter down enough, which is a pity. We'd start getting into discussions about what is the meaning of Jazz etc., or who took twenty-five dollars out of the treasury and didn't replace it. There was some bickering going on and the original motivation started getting obscured within a few months. At a certain point, I bumped into Ornette Coleman on the street and he said, "Burton, are you guys still screwing around with this nonsense of money and the meaning of Jazz?" He said he had talked with John Coltrane and both agreed if we stopped screwing around and got our real purpose together to address the original motivation of Bill and Cecil, that they would come in. And I had an immediate epiphany that we could have had practically all the important music since about 1960 under our own control because at "The October Revolution," everybody was there from Albert Ayler to Sun Ra and the Chicago guys, so we artists could have self-determination what to do with our music. It didn't go that way. It's a pity. When is America gonna grow up? They're supporting bombs in this coun-

## Jazz Stories: Burton Greene

try, not balms. For me, the whole purpose of the free movement was to express atomic energy in a healing way because when you are consciously repeating a certain idea, it gathers momentum like centrifugal energy that will explode eventually. A lot of us did explode (atomic balms), but so many of us didn't or couldn't put back the pieces, peacefully. Fortunately I met Swami Satchidananda a short time later and he helped me put back the pieces with yoga and meditation. A lot of my brothers, my compatriots, are not around today because they didn't put back the pieces. What really is sad for me is that I see all this gentrification money stuff, big cities becoming nothing but playboy components, and if you don't have a lot of money then get out, and the rents going up. Culture is out. Kids growing up on their cellphones, what do they know about free Jazz? I see it in Holland, where I live, and everywhere. "Fashionism" rules the day! Excuse me for being an old hippie but I'm sorry, it comes down to being generous and kind and loving, and that is THE common denominator which will bring us out of the muck and mire and into something real.



Burton Greene in 2017, Photo Credit: Ken Weiss

## Jazz Stories: Gunter Hampel

Most people don't understand, we musicians, we are characters who don't think so much in styles and categories. Our life is determining our music. I'm not playing jazz because I've learned it in a school. See that's the difference with the Gunter character. Let me tell you a little about my life in New York, I had children, so when I was going out in the streets - we used

to play in the streets in New York because we had no money. We would go to the Bronx, where Jean lived, and we didn't have money, so we went with the flute and the clarinet out onto the streets to play! We mostly improvised, or yeah, whatever. We had the most beautiful meetings with people on the streets. I could tell you hours of stories of how people took our improvised music and did something with it. They started to dance around us, or they just came by...that was in the beginning of the 70's. And one day, we played, and these kids came up, 15, 16, with a ghettoblaster, and wanted to use the spot where we were. So they looked at our music and we didn't stop, because we didn't have enough money yet and needed more cash, so we kept going. They wanted to take the place, but they were so shy, not pushing us away or anything, so they started to move to our improvised music! And there was one of the first break dancers, which are now very famous in the business. But they took our free music, just clarinet and flute, and just started to move to it, and this is why I know it can be done. So, when I saw them dance, and there wasn't just one trying to make money out there, but also a whole gang of little kids who couldn't do this at home, because their parents didn't want it done or schools thought it was garbage. You know how people invent stuff. So they came out on the streets, and did this thing, and I saw in them the old afro- American attitude we have when we have jam sessions. Remember in those old jam sessions playing the blues or something, when we'd end a phrase like "din...da doodily dun-un dee doo-da..ba," so the next one was taking it over, saying "din...da doodily dun-un dee doo-da." and then spins his own line, so he's taking over the phrase you were doing. And those break dancers the very same thing. No one taught them this. Then I looked into the whole history of it. I met some older, black people who remembered the times before Charlie Parker: Duke Ellington up in Harlem, they had those hoofers, they called them. They were doing all this crazy stuff in the music. You sometimes see it as very eccentric in old movies, but they just were doing this. But the real thing was that they were taking the music, and formed with their body a dance structures. You know, like tap dancing and all this stuff, was all pre- paring what later those break dancers were doing. Only these people didn't know anything about it, it was in their blood. The only place in New York you could still see this kind of stuff, but it's all gone now. When you go to the Hudson river, it didn't matter, from uptown to downtown, the black people would always meet at the river. By the river, at night, it was the only evidence of what was really happening in New York: not in the jazz clubs or the dance clubs or the discotheques. There was just an ordinary life going on. See, we jazz people, we sit in our jazz clubs and we don't know that this is happening. But I have children. When I went out in the 70's on my bike on the streets... my

## Jazz Stories: Gunter Hampel

kids had all those punks coming into our house, because they were that age. My kids didn't color their hair blue, but we had all these weird characters in our house. Your life is more connected when you have children. And these kids, they just wanted to do their own thing. And they did what every generation does, they started to dance. They started to sing, and did the hip-hop and all the stuff.

I discovered that all hip-hop is related to the only jazz instrument we have. We have most European instruments, but the only jazz instrument we have is the drum set. The drum set has been put together by the first jazz drummers. Louis Armstrong has a record, St. James Infirmary or whatever, where they go to a funeral, marching on the streets, and then they came home from the funeral, and started to play dixieland to forget the dead people and start to do their own lives. So they went to bars, they went to clubs, and then they put the drumset down on the floor. See that's when we had the invention of the drum set, when they put it down. When people were no longer playing it on the street but setting it down. (Laughter) Maybe the first person was hitting the drum with his foot, but someone built a foot drum machine, and then someone said "hey, I don't need you to play the cymbal anymore, I built my own cymbal," so the hi-hat was born. And then they assembled...this is how the jazz got together, because in classical music you have five, four, six people in and orchestra to play all these different things. And all this music from hip-hop, even done in a studio electronically when you don't have a real drum playing anymore, you've still got the "shhh--ch- wichiwhichiwhitchi-," you've still got the sound of it. They've taken the sound of our jazz drum to do hip-hop and everything. So there's many more times that jazz has looked for other venues. Jazz is developing into a lot of other things. And us old hats have to realize what we have started when we started playing jazz.

So my kids were loving hip-hop. They liked our music too, but this was the thing the kids were doing. When I was going out on the streets at night at 2 o'clock in New York, to go to the river, because when I am at home, my head is full, and I've been working all day, like in an office in my house. I'd go take a bike ride, because the fresh air was coming from the sea, and all the people were dancing and working and everything. They were doing more jazz life than you could hear from the jazz musicians playing in the clubs. So that that the hip-hop going on there was action. It was really very good. Sometimes I came to cross over one of the avenues, and on a little island in the middle, there were a couple of guys rap- ping. This was the very first rap scene in New York. I was with my bike, and was sometimes the only white person standing there, because there were all the kids from Harlem or from New Jersey and Queens, and what would they do? Dance.

Mikole Kaar

I recently have been playing a jazz date with my quartet in Palm Springs Diane Schuur came to sit in with the band. We just finished playing "Giant Steps" when she came up to the band stand and wanted to join us. I said "ok lets give em' hell". She replied "lets give them Heaven.

Regards Mikole Kaar

## Jazz Stories: James Bennington



James Bennington talks about Dizzy Gillespie



Going on 26 years in the music field now.... notice I didn't say business. I became a bandleader in the early 1990's. Work as a sideman was scarce and unreliable. I wanted to play and develop, so I started my own groups and found my own work. As with everyone, I have had my highs and lows. As I approach fifty, the highs are fewer and the lows longer and more protracted. Sometimes, in the morning, I'll wake up and speak the most vile vitriol aloud; almost like a purging reflex my soul uses to keep itself clean. Most of the bile and venom is directed at the gatekeepers and other assorted powers that be who decide just who gets to have a career and who does not. Those, many of whom you will never meet, who stop you from playing in the right places for the music... they stop you from getting to the people who love it. It seems the more accomplishments I rack up, the further away I get from the places that would allow me a decent life and living. It's funny. It's funny in a good and bad way sometimes, but weird and frustrating just the same; especially to sensitive artists.

When the protracted lows come on me, and the spirit weakens, I sit myself down. Always, my body, my wallet, my stress, asks "Why? Why do you do this? Why do you keep doing it? Are you a fool?" And I sit and try to be calm, to let the thoughts and cares fall away. It takes awhile. And then I think back to my earliest days in music and in Jazz.

It was in Texas that I was fortunate to see some great artists live that came through and made a big impression on me: Sonny Rollins, Randy Weston, Buddy Guy, McCoy Tyner, Clark Terry, George Coleman, Alvin Queen, Jack Bruce and Ginger Baker, Sunny Murray and Sonny Simmons, Tony Martucci, and Tony Williams are some that stand out... and Dizzy Gillespie.

It was a little place now closed, called the Pilot Cafe. I had been there only once to see the McCoy Tyner Trio. A great show, and when I left, I took a club flyer about upcoming shows. The next day, a friend who had attended the show asked, "So, you gonna go see Diz?" I checked the advertisement, and sure enough, it said Dizzy Gillespie would be there the following month. 'Of course.' I told my friend. 'See you there...' he said.

## Jazz Stories: James Bennington

Wow! Dizzy Gillespie! Dizzy Gillespie from 52nd St.... Dizzy Gillespie and Charlie Parker... Salt Peanuts... In the flesh. Old yes, but with a twinkle in his eye. There was a quintet of alto saxophone, trumpet, piano, bass, and drums. I remember on saxophone was little known Jazz legend Jimmy Ford...on drums was the great G.T. Hogan. I learned a lot about these cats later, like G.T. playing with Herbie Nichols, but on this night I was a young kid just old enough to order a beer. I had a pretty, petite blond with me and I tried to impart to her how special what we were going to witness was....I'm not sure if she got it, but she definitely reveled right along with me and my great enthusiasm and anticipation.

There was a rather crude and dated comic who opened the show. His humor did not sit well with the sophisticated Jazz crowd, and even those who liked it, admitted that it was somehow out of place. I think it was because we were in the presence of royalty. And then the group appeared, but without Dizzy. They played two or three pieces, and even though they were great, I tried to conceal my growing disappointment....the young girl took my arm and asked, "Do you think he'll come out soon?" "Oh yes," I told her, "look at all these people waiting." We ate our steaks and enjoyed our newfound freedom to have a cold beer. I watched G.T.. as close as I was going to get to hear and see what Philly Joe Jones was like...and then, there he was! He had an open shirt with a nice plaid sport jacket, and a big cigar in his mouth. The thick goatee was there along with a sly grin on his face like he had played a good trick on everyone. He played maybe three tunes with the group. It was fun watching him interact with old pals like Jimmy Ford and G.T. Hogan. My girlfriend was horrified whenever Dizzy emptied his spit valve. I remember coming away with a feeling of disappointment though...I felt he didn't play much, with very short solos, and gave too much space to the other group members. As I said, I was young.

About a year later, he came through town again, only this time he played at a bigger venue than the small, intimate Pilot Cafe. An old stage theater, also now closed, Rockefeller's, that put on many great shows throughout the year. It was there that I saw Tony Williams' last group. Still with the same girl, a Marsha Brady-type, we took our seats in the front row of the balcony. We could see everything. I remember that this group, was more along the line of what Dizzy was doing at that time...much more focused on 'Afro-Cuban' and World music, with Jazz underneath it all. They played 'A Night in Tunisia', which Dizzy introduced thusly, "And now ladies and gentlemen, we will perform a composition that has been associated with me for many years now...(long pause)...because I wrote it. It has withstood the vicissitudes of the contingent world, and moved into an odyssey....(pause)...no shit." The crowd roared, and Dizzy roared back, with an unforgettable and dramatic coda that reminded everyone why they were there. And why he was the greatest. Ed Cherry was on electric guitar and, at one point, Dizzy took out a long stick with bell and chime type things all over it. He called it his 'African walking stick', and he really knew how to play it and make it come alive. He danced a jig with it and pounded it into the floor and caressed it at the same time. It made you realize how great his sense of rhythm and time was...



## Jazz Stories: James Bennington

When the band was into a swinging number...cooking...the music seemed to take on a gigantic shape; all enveloping. The music had not only 'lifted the bandstand' as Monk would say, but lifted the whole theater...maybe the world and beyond... everyone in that moment was having an absolute and undeniable Ball! And it was in that moment that Dizzy, not playing but listening to Ed Cherry wail away, began to look earnestly into the audience. He shaded his eyes with his hand. He looked into the very front rows and scanned the whole of the first floor and then his eyes came up to the balcony. He continued to look like he was searching for something, and then his eyes rested on me. He held my gaze. His face was earnest and questioning. My girlfriend grabbed my arm and said, "He's looking at you! He's looking right at you!" People around us began to look at us too. It seemed like several minutes, instead of one long moment. I had to look away, but when I did and looked back, Dizzy was smiling a big smile at me. Then his eyes gently drifted off, back to the group. He picked up his trumpet, and the tune, and the show ended with another trumpet burst. He was to pass away only months later.

I felt funny after I left the theater that night. It was deep and it took me years to verbalize it, but I had it in my soul. Dizzy had imparted something to me, gave something to me to keep and cherish. It made me not want to let him down somehow, in all my endeavors in music. I think of that stare, that searching look that I now know was challenging me, asking me, "Are you up to this? If you are, it's yours...but you have to stick with it, because, it's a gift." It's been a long, hard road these years later, and so far, I have stuck with it. Thank you Dizzy Gillespie.

September 6, 2017

### **STEVE COHN MANHATTAN VIA CHICAGO AND HACKENSACK BY JAMES BENNINGTON**

Oh, New York. You want New York? Steve Cohn. New Jersey New York. Great and modern pianist, composer, shakuhachi master, writer, painter, proud father, seeker, liver of life, and veteran improviser, sure, but also a complete madman behind the wheel! It was a few years ago now when I had come to New York to perform at the Cadence Jazz Festival. With me were Mr. Cohn and legendary clarinetist Perry Robinson...

I had gotten in to New Jersey the day before with Steve meeting me at the airport. I didn't notice anything too unusual during the drive to his place other than maybe trying to remind myself, 'hey you're in the East now and they drive a little more aggressively here'. A take-out Mandarin lunch carried home in the old fashioned white boxes with wire handles. Many cartons left empty and much music played as day turned to evening and we awaited the great Ed Schuller's arrival for even more music...it was all fine and good, a wonderful memory now...even when Ed called out to Steve and I "...and you're gonna pay my tolls!". The next day I woke up in Steve's well known Hackensack home/studio. So many great artists have passed through, to record, to jam, to hang. Steve had gotten up like a jack rabbit early in the morning, done his exercises, and had already accomplished a few errands when I emerged from my room well before noon (my friend, the late Chuck Carter from Stan Kenton would say, "He's got that little boy shit happening.")

I discreetly mentioned to Steve that I had seen a tiny mouse run along the wall into a small crevice across the room and he immediately said, his finger in the air, "That is Andrew, the landlord, and if you see him again please tell him that the rent check is in the mail by Thursday!"

It's a great old time warehouse you don't see too much of anymore, situated right at the train tracks, with a drumset upstairs that Steve puts in a lot of time on, and a piano downstairs which is kept fastidiously in tune; the sound of the trains rumbling past, their whistles blowing, have augmented the music we made there tremendously.

(\*see Jimmy Bennington/ Steve Cohn 'No Lunch in Hackensack', Unseen Rain Records)

After a shower and some time and care in getting ready for the day, I felt much better than I had a right to, considering the night before, not to mention the traveling in from Chicago. A sunny exploration of Hackensack, the shops and restaurants, the people...one of the great aspects of being a musician I think... to observe new places and be inspired and rewarded for doing so...usually the money isn't so hot, the accommodations not five star, the very effort is often tremendous. I remember well that this trip I am writing about broke me for two or three months; it was a clawing thing to get caught up.

But that sunny Hackensack day, feeling good, experiencing the new air and new people, feeling my appetite deliciously growing... a fine stroll and a fine discourse between Steve and I; many ideas passed back and forth. As always, few

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will be realized, but some will and that's what's important...and don't forget there's the gig tonight in Manhattan...the Shapeshifter! We had a leisurely lunch at a Mexican place Steve knew of; we haggled over the check and had a thoughtful walk back to the studio. At some point, both of us became very quiet. Steve put some music on, that fit the mood, and we stayed like that for some time with few words exchanged. Then we both retired to our respective rooms to be still and to rest.

The movements of the inexorable jack rabbit that is Steve Cohn woke me, but I lay there awhile, just listening and breathing. And then I too was up, and, like Steve, trying on the clothes I was to wear for the night's performance. They were running live stream video and we wanted to make sure to look good... Perry, I think, wore a tank top and sandals when we picked him up.

I finished off the Mandarin leftovers and washed it down with a last beer. Musicians can be very detail oriented; they have to be lest something is left behind. After double checking we had everything we needed, we made our way to Steve's van.

As we passed the first toll road, Steve mentioned that the traffic was worse than usual. We had left early to avoid it, but...from that moment on Steve picked up the pace and became more and more brazen. Even though I didn't care for it, I had to admit it was masterful...he was in charge. Whether asking someone for directions or being the first to Go when the moment arose, he was the lord and master. We picked Perry Robinson up in Hoboken. From Hoboken, with Perry's love and freedoms from 1969 in the back seat, it was a race! A death race that gave no quarter! Questions were barked and rubber was burned. Impossible turns and narrow escapes enveloped us and I rebuked the merciless driver who turned a deaf ear. That, or reminded me of our dire mission...it was a bitter race against time. The word 'Beautiful', exclaimed simply and often, came from Perry in the backseat. I cursed aloud, I apologized to people who never had a chance to hear my words on the air, and I prayed. I went from sitting to cringing.

Then Perry had to 'take a leak'...another detour. I was numb when the engine started again. And then, we were there! Steve parked the large van with ease and took the keys from the ignition like putting ink back in a bottle. With a sly smile and feigning chagrin, he said "Hey! I got us here didn't I?" I had to admit that, what with the traffic and all, the craziness of downtown Manhattan, we most likely, No (!) we would have missed our slot. I said the only thing I could say, "Yes, you did." My wit failed me and what I wanted to say is unprintable...I met his intent gaze, now a mock challenging pirates brow, with a smile and arched brow of my own...as I said the words, the fear drained from my body and turned into a weariness that would soon turn to victory, for all of us...we would make beautiful music that night.

We emerged from our ship. We stood and stretched our legs and backs. We clasped hands and even laughed! I know Steve did...and then I walked over to the Shapeshifter and warmly shook Mathew Garrison's hand.

### **KEIKO JONES; CENTRAL PARK AND THE WORLD'S FASTEST TEA BY JAMES BENNINGTON**

I had a strange dream the other night. I dreamed that my old boss Kieko Jones came into a club I was playing and sat down right in front. She was older and so was I as a middle aged man. As soon as our set was finished, I stood up and said, "I'd like to acknowledge a great presence here tonight...without a doubt one of the grand ladies of this music. Ladies and gentlemen, Mrs. Keiko Jones!" The room roared. I came down from the stage and hugged her. We then sat down and had a wonderful heartfelt reunion and spent the rest of the evening catching up and reminiscing. And then I woke up!

This seemingly hard Japanese woman married jazz legend Elvin Jones in 1968 and stayed with him until his death in 2004. A savvy and aggressive business-woman, Elvin's career soared; some have speculated that he wouldn't have survived without her. As Elvin liked to say "We have sort of a mom and pop operation. She runs the store and I drive the truck!" Indomitable would be a good word to describe Kieko Jones.

Why am I dreaming about this woman? Because for two years I worked for her and her husband as their assistant and had been hanging around them some years prior to that. Trying to learn something. Tough stuff man!

I have many memories of that time and of her. The first time I saw Elvin Jones in person, Keiko was nimbly and efficiently flitting back and forth before, during, and after the concert. She ended up crouching low, Asian style, and watching the concert near where I sat. I remember Elvin's bass drum came unloosed from the riser and he finished the tune with his arms and leg splayed full out. After the piece, someone yelled from the audience "Kill the tech!" and Elvin shyly said into the microphone, "I can't. I love her." Indelible is another word. Keiko and I once sat cramped in the back of a van, speeding our way along New York side streets to or from the Blue Note, and we were having a nice quiet conversation on the way to a Jazz Machine gig. When I asked how she and Elvin met she became very angry and said "No James!" She wouldn't speak to me the rest of the way.

Her legendary energy and shrewdness were ever present on all our jobs...one had to keep up. Her sense about the music and how it should be presented was absolute, from whether or not the band wore tuxes or jazz machine t shirts, to the money being right, to very sound of the music (she was one of a privileged few allowed to sit in the control room with Rudy Van Gelder). She came to know exactly what what needed for Elvin to get his sound across live

## Jazz Stories: James Bennington

and on record. She once told a young engineer at The Knitting Factory in L.A., who wanted to mike everything up, that he didn't know the music he was serving; they went on mostly acoustic during that engagement.

When she did the soundcheck for the drums sometimes, the soundman had only a minute at most to do what was needed. She would play a jazz ride cymbal rhythm, a strange shuffle on the snare drum, keeping a unique two and four on the hi hat...then it was an uneven cadence from the smallest drum to the largest with the bass drum loudly going in a Sunny Murray four four... and ending with a crash of cymbals. If the soundman protested, Keiko would inform him that she had been doing this for thirty years, what had he been doing for thirty years she wanted to know, as she turned and motioned for me to follow her on to the next task...

In an airport on the West Coast, between flights, Keiko announced that she was going to get sandwiches for the group...I sat down with Elvin to rest a minute...and I swear we saw her coming back to us from the large airport corridor that she had hurriedly disappeared into! Elvin watched her approaching, gave a small sigh and sly smile and intoned, "She doesn't waste any time, does she?" No she doesn't. Sandwiches for all the group, all the different kinds: Turkey, Ham, Vegetarian, roast beef, 'no mayo please', 'no mustard please', 'onions on mine'...hell, she wasn't gone a minute and a half! She did mysterious things like that all the time.

Speaking of sandwiches, I once escorted Keiko, at Elvin's request, to a nearby grocery store near the hotel they were staying at in Seattle. She said she had to get some supplies; what she got was a bunch of cans of tuna and a loaf of bread and I walked her to the five star hotel. And at a Ronnie Scott's engagement, the head guy who had booked the show and I were chatting when we saw a waiter give Keiko a stack of about a dozen meat sandwiches all neatly wrapped in cellophane...he said with real English chagrin, "I don't understand, we have them staying at the finest hotel with everything gratis, the finest food, why does she do this?"

There would be a lincoln continental or a limousine waiting to take them home, but they would be seen climbing into a fan's old truck or jeep. Many was the time, that I rode back to the hotel in the back of one of those fine cars. The drivers always so kind, telling me, 'Hey everything's paid for, you might as well have some of that good whiskey!'

At a fine hotel in Carmel, California, I came across Elvin and Keiko on their way to the restaurant I had just left. They acted like pleased parents when I told them I had ordered a steak dinner with all the trimmings washed down with a good cold beer. Elvin asked what the rest of the group was doing and I told him that they had mentioned something about a complimentary buf-

## Jazz Stories: James Bennington

fet. Elvin immediately started rolling his eyes and shaking his head, saying “Complimentary! Complimentary!”...meanwhile Keiko was holding up her hands and her voice had gone up a notch as she said, “James! I don’t understand! We pay them! We pay them! They don’t know how to live James!” Then Elvin finished with, “I’ll tell ya what ‘complimentary’ really means...the flies everywhere...been sittin’ out for hours...augh!...that’s what you call a bunch of cheap cocksuckers!!!” and he unleashed his great laugh... “Teach them James.” Keiko said.

She could be hard, and told me all the time, “People say I’m Hard...but... I... am... Honest!” She told people at concerts that I should “pay tuition to attend the Academy of Elvin Jones.” She called me into the dressing room while Elvin was playing at Ronnie Scott’s for a week in London, and asked me to sit down with her, which was torture for me, any other time a rare privilege, but not while Elvin was playing! She was having her ritualistic hot tea and she took her time before speaking to me. I’m sure she could feel my anxiousness to get back to the show, but she became thoughtful and asked me how things were, was I getting along ok, how was my hotel, etc. To all of which I gave a fast reply in the affirmative. Suddenly, she asked me “How you play the drum?” “How do I play the drums? Oh, you know, like Elvin.” was my reply. Her face dropped to a shocked look and she exclaimed, her fist on the table, “Nobody play like Evan (Elvin)!!!” I had to reassure her that I meant only that I played in the style, the feeling, the approach of Elvin. She calmed down, and after waiting a beat or two, told me to go back out and “Watch James! Watch Evan!”

A favorite memory is when I was told to come to their home at 415 Central Park West one afternoon. I was working for them at the Blue Note for the week. My days were free once the drums had been set up that first night. I hailed a cab to the legendary apartment building that had once housed Art Blakey, Max Roach, and Elvin at the same time!

From the moment Keiko answered the door wearing a shower cap, house wrapper, and slippers, everything was rushed. It was the downstairs apartment they used for an office and storage. I saw several drumsets boxed up...a wall of audio tapes, and a wall of video tapes. In the small neat office she kept in back, there over the desk hung the only picture in the room, a very large panoramic photograph of Dizzy Gillespie, Jimmy Heath, James Moody, and several other big name Jazz veterans lined up on stage with Elvin at one end in full action...I found out later it was taken from Dizzy’s 70th Birthday celebrations at the Blue Note.

I found myself trying to look around the home of my hero with everything a blur! She cleared me out of the office and past all the Jazz Machine t shirts pressed and hanging on a rack...



## Jazz Stories: James Bennington

We took a small elevator to the apartment directly above which was their home. She swept me into the dining room and seated me there. She disappeared into the kitchen and came back with hot tea almost boiling in the cup. She kept saying, "Come on James! Drink! Drink! This is New York now! You have to pay attention! Be yourself! You're in New York City now! Anything thing goes!" and "You have to listen!"

To my disappointment, Elvin was asleep in his room. The days when he would hang out were coming to an end when I came into the picture. I had heard many great stories from others, but when I went to work for them, the main thing was work and rest. Elvin would sleep most of the day to have the energy for that nights performance, travel, etc.

Keiko turned down a lucrative clinic offer for Elvin on a west coast tour, and since I would have loved to have attended, I asked her why she said no? Probably would have netted \$5,000..."Because that is when Evan (Elvin) takes his nap. We cannot disturb his routine." was the simple answer. As soon as Elvin finished a set, she was right there with a large terry cloth robe, covering him quickly...she once told me that she wanted to play the bass. Why bass? I asked. "Because I want to help him!"

I managed to finish the scorching tea and was ushered quickly to the door. "See you tonight at the club James and remember, this is New York!"

Before closing the door, she pointed across the hall and said quietly, severely, "Max Roach."

I stared at that door a few moments after we parted. I stared at the number and the wood and decided not to knock. Then I left there, at my own pace, as if I lived there...said 'Hey' to Elvin and Keiko's (and Max's and Art Blakey's) long time doorman, got outside, and did something I'd always wanted to do; took a walk through Central Park.

\*The Author was mentored by Elvin Jones during the last decade of his life. He officially served as Drum Tech and Band Manager from 2000-2002 (see Modern Drummer Magazine).

## **SCOTT ROBINSON MEMORY - MY NIGHT IN THE MUCK TAKEN BY KEN WEISS**

**This memory was taken on May 24, 2018 after Robinson performed with Roscoe Mitchell and Thomas Buckner at Brooklyn's Roulette as part of the 23rd Vision Festival.**

It's great to be asked for a memory because, wow, I have so many incredible memories, so many adventures I've had. This music just opens so many doors – she takes me all over the world. I hardly know where I am sometimes. I've ridden on a camel, playing a tenor saxophone in Ghana, I've been on a lake in the middle of the night with a flaming torch in a paddleboat with twenty other tárogató players in Hungary, floating around, playing Sun Ra tunes and Hungarian melodies. And of course, all the people I've had the chance to work with – Milt Hinton, Frank Wess, Horace Parlan, Ella Fitzgerald. I could literally keep you up all night with stories about all these people. That's why I keep a journal now. I started that in the late '90s, but I missed out on so many great memories in the early days when I was on the road with Lionel Hampton and Illinois Jacquet. Now I write down all the crazy things that happen so I don't forget them. I'll pick one that may not be the best but it's what springs to mind as a crazy story that I don't think I've told in print. It just kind of speaks to where this music takes us and who we meet. I could talk about driving through the jungle in Africa and here comes a bunch of musicians walking twenty miles from the nearest village with their instruments on their heads, going to a wedding. We stop the car and I start playing cornet out of the window, and they got all excited and they start playing, so I jump out of the car and we're all jamming in the dirt in the middle of the jungle, in the middle of absolutely nowhere in Africa. Anyway, the story I will tell you [Laughs] is from a stop in Holland during one of my earlier trips to Europe. It was at the time that I got my own gig at the North Sea Jazz Festival, which was a big deal for me. They put me with a local rhythm section. I had a friend in Amsterdam named Rick Hollander and I was staying with him. I did the festival, which at that time was held in The Hague, and checked into the hotel. I got into the shower and I could hear Miles Davis playing in a building down the street. I heard him, in my hotel, in my room, in my shower! I could hear him. That's how loud he was. Anyway, I got back to Amsterdam to my friend and I spent a couple days hanging around. It was a little chilly so he let me borrow his sweatshirt. So I had his sweatshirt on and these new white pants that I had just bought and was wearing for the first time. I went walking and I found some little, old fashion bar somewhere and I got a beer. I started chatting with the couple next to me and they were very friendly – “Oh, you play Jazz! We love Jazz.” And we're just hitting it off. There were pictures of old cars on the wall of the bar and they saw that I liked that so they said, “Oh, you like old cars. You'd love our old converted fire truck.” I said, “You have an old converted fire truck?” And they said, “Yes, from 1922. We drive it around and go camping.” I said, “Really?” “They said, “Yes, would you like to see it? It's parked outside. As a matter of fact, if you like, we'll give you a ride in it and you

## Jazz Stories: Scott Robinson



Scott Robinson in 2018, Photo Credit: Ken Weiss

## Jazz Stories: Scott Robinson

can come out to our country house where we live and stay the night and we'll bring you back the next morning." Now this is 1985 and I was young and foolish, and those were slightly more innocent times. The whole situation was just really nonthreatening. So I went outside and here's this amazing antique fire truck. They also had a big, old friendly dog that was sitting in it, waiting patiently for them. So I climbed in and they drove me through the city and out into the country. My hair's flapping in the wind and there's this big shaggy dog. It was just a crazy adventure. We drove to the middle of nowhere and stopped at this old farmhouse and all piled out. They said, "Well, here's our home," and I said, "Wow, this looks fantastic." I took about three steps towards the house and then I heard someone yell, "Don't!" And then I went down and I hit, and there was this giant splash, and I was in a canal. And you know Holland is riddled with canals but it just never occurred to me that these people would have a canal between their driveway and the front door of their house, but in fact they did. There was a little bridge somewhere to go over but it was dark and the canal was covered with green scum, and the grass was freshly cut, so there wasn't that much difference in the dark between the short grass and this green scum. It became invisible and I splashed into this canal. It was just horrible reeking, green muck on the top, and on the bottom was this endless black muck that I sunk into. I struggled up out of it, it sucked my shoes off. It was a horrible, horrible mess. They pulled me out of it and I stood there completely filthy and wet. So my new friends were horrified. My brand new white pants, [Laughs] first time wearing them, were completely caked with muck. This black and green muck was in my pockets, my wallet, it was everywhere. They brought me around to the back of the house and she said, "I'm gonna wash all of your clothes. We're so sorry," and I had to strip naked on the front step of these total stranger's farmhouse in the middle of nowhere in Holland. I just said, "Wow, okay." They brought me a bathrobe and slippers and I was horribly embarrassed. We sat inside and drank and had a good laugh about it. My white pants were only partially ruined and she managed to get that sweatshirt clean. I stayed the night and next morning I could see the canal in front of the house and I could clearly see the big brown hole where I went through it. They drove me back to my friend's house the next morning and I returned that sweatshirt. I never told him what happened. That's my story. I mean it's a ridiculous story but it's my dad's favorite story of all my ridiculous stories, and I ended up giving him the white pants as a present.

**RANDY WESTON,  
PIANIST, BORN IN  
1926, BROOKLYN,  
NY, USA, ON HIS  
EARLY DAYS IN  
BROOKLYN.**



Randy Weston in 2007  
Photo Credit: Bob Travis



Randy Weston African  
Rhythms  
Photo Credit: George  
Braunschweig GM-Press

**M**y name is Randy Weston, I'm from Brooklyn, NY, I am a pianist, composer, activist in African culture and civilization.

To be a musician there are so many directions where you wanna go. Do you want to make a lot of money, do you want to do pop, play a piano bar, do you wanna play Burlesque or what? There are so many directions in music which way you wanna go. Like Jabo Williams, he made one recording for Savoy and we were very close. Now at that time I was in restaurant business with my father. I wasn't a professional musician. I was in the restaurant business, that being in the late '40s. This was a restaurant right here (his home). From there I took that restaurant over, I ran it for three years. My father had opened up another restaurant. But I was so in love the music; there were a lot of professional musicians, so I had a piano in the back of the restaurant, and articles on Monk, and articles on Eubie Blake, Willie the Lion, whatever. And we stayed open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. We had the greatest jukebox in the world. On that jukebox you could hear everything: Louis Armstrong; Sarah Vaughan; Duke Ellington; but also Shostakovich; Darius Milhaud; Stravinsky. So the musicians would come, sometimes two or three in the morning in the restaurant and we were like "who's better, Coleman Hawkins or Lester Young?" So Herbie Nichols was part of that group who would come to the restaurant. It was very spiritual. During that period I heard some great musicians that never made a recording. Never made one record, it was incredible. That period, 40s, 50s, 60s.

When you go the Mother Land - Africa, the first language is music. I don't care whether you go to Morocco or South Africa. So that tradition carried on with us. So when we grew up, it was just a natural law; everybody knew musicians, and we heard all kinds of music: calypso; black church on Sunday; the blues; our parents might bring in some kind of opera, so we had all kinds of music. So that's why I say it was incredible. People like Herbie; people like Elmo Hope; people like Walter Bishop; oh man! Sonny Clark; so many wonderful pianists in their 20s who already were professional. Sometimes we'd hang out two to

## Jazz Stories: Randy Weston

three days without goin' to bed. A friend of mine knew every after hour club in Harlem. So he'd make his gig and then we'd go to an after hours place and four o'clock in the morning everybody starts, and you'd get through and come up, the sun would hit you right in the eyes. So that period was just incredible.

And also, the most important part: it was the parents that took us to hear everything. It was our parent that took us to the black church. It was our parents that would bring the best music into our houses; and different music, they might come up with an opera; they might come in with like calypso. So even our mothers and fathers, they were the ones who taught us about music. We had to take piano lessons, or dance lessons or violin and it was a period of serious segregation but culturally rich, Harlem, Brooklyn, Kansas City, all the cities, Chicago, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh. And everybody had to be original. You couldn't sound like somebody else. Get out of the way. You better have your own thing.



Randy Weston African Rhythms  
Photo credit Carol Friedman



### **JAMES BENNINGTON TALKS ABOUT ELVIN JONES**

### **COLD GLASS OF LEMONADE: A BRUSH LESSON**

*Ed. Note: James Bennington served as Elvin Jones Band Manager/ Drum Tech from 2000-2002 touring the U.S. Europe, and England (see Modern Drummer Magazine). His mentorship with Elvin lasted the final decade of the late drummer's life.*

I always remember Roy Haynes' story about being a small boy and getting a brush lesson from an old man one afternoon on a hot porch. There was cold lemonade and the man showed him some things about brushes. That was the start, and who is to say just how much of an influence that played in his development? That said, my first "lessons" with brushes really started with a local jazz drummer, Joe Ferriera, who I would go and see at a nearby restaurant and bar. In time, we came to exchange records, or "sides" as he called them. I just sat very close by and watched. He played brushes a lot; it was a piano trio with an occasional light saxophonist added. Joe would joke with me and say, "Now, don't go and steal all of my licks now!"

We would laugh and I would go right back to watching his hands and the brushes intently. But, the only official brush lesson I ever got came from Elvin Jones. It was September of 1994, and Elvin was playing for a week at a club in L.A. with his group, the Jazz Machine. The late Willie Pickens was on piano, Reginald Veal on bass, Greg Tardy on saxophone, and Delfeayo Marsalis on trombone. I had seen Elvin only once before on a one-nighter in Virginia with Ravi Coltrane, and had seen him for the last five nights there in L.A. when, waiting for a date to pick me up at the hotel, I felt a firm hand on my shoulder. I turned around and there was Elvin Jones! At the Holiday Inn! He said in his deep voice, "You've been at the club this week." He asked me what I was doing then, to which I immediately replied, "Nothing." and he invited me to join him on his daily walk.

## Jazz Stories: James Bennington

We walked down Hollywood Boulevard. A few times, Elvin caught me off-guard, with some unexpected leaps and sprints in and out of traffic. There was also a tempo to his pace one had to keep up with. It was really great. I was respectful of trying not to disturb his walk. As we went along, I couldn't help but think of the wonderful piece on Elvin 'A Walk to the Park' by Whitney Balliet. We talked a little and I told him about the recordings I had been listening to with him that had just come at at that time; his brother Hank's tribute to the music of Thad Jones and guitarist

Sonny Sharrock's "Ask the Ages". Of the late guitarist Elvin said, "Playing with Sonny used to be very frustrating, but on that recording, Sonny brought it all together."

We then reached a point where Elvin thought we should turn back. Halfway back to the hotel, my date pulled up to the curb and asked me, "Who's that man you're walking with?" I'd pay good money to see that face again when I told her. She offered us a ride back to the hotel and Elvin accepted. I think he liked the company.

So, there we were in this pick-up truck, the three of us up front. I was in the middle and we all sat there smiling. She told him how great the show had been the night before, and Elvin said, "Well I hope we'll be able to do it again tonight!" and laughed his big laugh. I knew the ride was going to be short and just before pulling into the entrance, I picked up my dates brushes up off the floorboard (Yes, she was a drummer too!) and said, "Hey Elvin, aren't these the ones you use?" and that started it.

They were the classic Regal Tip with black gum-rubber handles with the telescoping feature. With the meat of his hand, he rammed the wire handle hard into the brush's base. "This is a joke." he said, meaning the option on the handle to have a slimmer or fuller brush. After he did that, I handed him a magazine and asked him to play his medium tempo swing pattern for us. He handed me the brushes back though and said, "Play yours first." I played with the left hand going clockwise and accenting the sweep on two and four. My right hand played a no-frills Jazz ride beat. I was nervous as Hell, and with Elvin sitting there watching me, I took no chances.

When I finished, he complimented me on a good sound and said he liked my pattern; the hands don't get in each other's way. Then he played. On the dashboard, his left hand seemed to go in an up and down, back and forth motion. Seeing him many times after that, I found there to be a slight oval to the edges. Like a very slim figure eight pattern on its side. The right hand more implied the Jazz ride pattern I knew with plenty of powerful accents, often falling around the 'one' and 'three'. It sounded funky and almost military at the same time, while never leaving the Jazz feeling. He did what I thought were four and five stroke rolls (single and double), and more when he brought his feet into it. For one beautiful moment we were transfixed by 'Classic' Elvin, really coming to life in that truck. He seemed to lose himself in

## Jazz Stories: James Bennington

that moment too. He became very excited and powerful and then, just as suddenly, he played a soft, half-hearted bar or two of swing, fluffed the last notes, stopped and mumbled something self-deprecating to shake off the intimate intensity of what had just happened...

He almost shyly asked what we were up to and would we be at the show that night. We said we would, and I got out and walked Elvin into the lobby of our hotel. Just outside, I thanked him for the great week of music, for the lesson, and for taking the time to hang out. "What are friends for?" he said, and gave me one of his great hugs. A gravelly whisper said in my ear, "You'll get a pair of sticks tonight."

I got the sticks on that final night during a standing ovation and the management came to my table and ushered me into the dressing room. Elvin and Keiko both thanked me for coming every night and invited me to hang out for a bit. I remember Keiko lighting her cigarette from a long cigarette holder...she saw me looking and said, "What!? We have to live too James!" She took a picture of Elvin and I together, me holding the sticks. That night, with Elvin's sticks clutched tightly in my hand, I went home on cloud nine. It had been a wonderful week, but that afternoon, with the walking and talking down Hollywood Boulevard... and the brushes...the way he laid it down, his intonation, the power and sincerity that he put into the act itself...that was my cold glass of lemonade.



Elvin Jones and Jimmy Bennington at Jazz Alley, Seattle, WA circa 2000

## Jazz Stories: Archie Shepp

### ARCHIE SHEPP MEMORIES OF DON BYAS

TAKEN AND  
TRANSCRIBED BY  
KEN WEISS



Archie Shepp in 2018,  
Photo Credit: Ken Weiss



Archie Shepp in 2018,  
Photo Credit: Ken Weiss

*This memory was taken on May 23, 2018, just prior to Shepp taking the stage with Dave Burrell, William Parker and Hamid Drake on opening night of the 23rd Vision Festival at Brooklyn's Roulette.*

Archie Shepp: There have been a lot of incidents along the way but one interesting event that sticks out was when I met the great saxophonist Don Byas in Paris in the 1970's, over forty years ago. I had gone to a club called The Living Room, which is closed now. There was a very fine pianist playing there named Art Simmons from Virginia, and there I met Don. We [eventually] went across the street to a bar. Duke Ellington was in town at the same time and all of Duke's men were in the bar and I remember Don saying, rather lamentedly, "I had a gig here tonight but they cancelled it and I don't have any place to stay." And he knew all these guys in Duke's band very well but they were all drinking and when he said that, I think I was the only one who heard him. [Laughs] I said, "Don, I have a place that I'm subletting and it's rather large, and I have an extra room you can stay there." In fact, he stayed in my place about two months. I had a tour, I had been invited by Eldridge Cleaver, who was then the Black Panther Minister of Affairs in Algeria. He invited me there and I took along with me, Don Byas and Calvin Massey. We had no Western instruments, such as a bass or piano, but it was a very exciting time for me because Don was really a hero to me and I think one of the great saxophonists of that era and of our time. We had been invited to play with the Tuaregs, from Central Algeria, for a film that was being made. They had [an area of land] that we went to and we all played – Don, Cal and I – and later they filmed me on a camel with the scarf and the djellaba. Finally they filmed this dance scene. The idea of the film was that I was the American in search of my roots and I had found an Algerian woman who I actually never saw in the film. We married and had to do this ritual dance. The dance is a line dance

## Jazz Stories: Archie Shepp



Archie Shepp in 2018, Photo Credit: Ken Weiss

## Jazz Stories: Archie Shepp

Archie Shepp in 2018, Photo Credit: Ken Weiss



which involves two long lines of sabers. During the dance, the sabers are clacking – clack, clack, clack. They’re big, sharp swords. And the idea was that I was to play my saxophone, and this is the ritual – you have to dance through the line. So I was playing my horn and dancing, and if you made a mistake you could end up getting ... [Laughs] And I was conscious of that, although I wasn’t afraid of the situation. I remember dancing through this line of sabers by candlelight, and I was playing my horn. The end of the line was theoretically supposed to be my wife but I was just very happy to make it to the end of the line in one piece, even though she wasn’t there [in the film].

Cadence: Was Don Byas there for the dance scene?

Shepp: Don was there but he didn’t play for that performance. He was there in costume though.

Cadence: What did you get out of that time spent with Byas? Did he inspire or change you?

Shepp: Oh, profoundly. The thing about Mr. Byas was that he practiced somewhat like Coltrane – incessantly. Although Don had some problems at that point with alcohol. Every night, I remember, he would go out with his horn on his shoulder, strapped to it. He would go out looking for a jam session. He’d go out maybe about twelve and come back to the house early in the morning. He’d always find a session. I remember he came back one morning and I was in bed with a girl. He stayed in another part of the house and as I was trying to sleep, he started playing one of his favorite songs – I think it was “Stella by Starlight.” He played that and he often played “I Remember Clifford,” but he wouldn’t play the melody, just the changes, and this morning, I was trying to sleep, and he played very softly and very beautifully. He got to a point and I woke and I said, “Man, what are you playing?” Because he had gotten so far into the changes that I actually forgot the name of the song that he was playing. Don Byas was a tremendous man and a big influence on me. And Cal Massey, too, yeah.



## Jazz Stories: Hal Galper

**HAL GALPER, BORN IN 1938, SALEM, MASSACHUSETTS, USA, PIANIST, TALKS ABOUT THROWING HIS ELECTRIC PIANO AWAY.**

This is Hal Galper, I'm originally from Salem, Massachusetts. I'm a pianist; an author; composer; and publisher.

*Interviewer: At a certain point, you got rid of your Fender Rhodes and you wanted to get back to playing the acoustic piano. Can you tell us how you got rid of the electric piano?*

Well, I was living about two blocks away from the Hudson at the time; and I just wheeled the son of a bitch down to one of the piers and tossed it in. Kinda tried to make a statement. I haven't played an electric piano since. I had to get back to the acoustic piano. That was where everything I wanted was - in the piano. It was the best move. At the time, I wasn't feeling that comfortable on acoustic piano also, so the electric piano was a little easier to play but all the sounds that I could get out of the electric piano - I realized a lot of them I could get out of the acoustic piano. I just had to work harder. It was bigger challenge. So I made a commitment to the acoustic instrument. She's a cold hearted bitch that doesn't give you anything. (laughs) You have to get it out. The acoustic piano, she hides her shit from you. You have to get all the tricks she puts in your way to hide the instrument. She gives you nothing. You have to get it out.



Hal Galper

**JASON MILES, JAZZ COMPOSER, PRODUCER, ARRANGER, BORN IN 1951, BROOKLYN, NY, USA, TALKS ABOUT HIS FIRST MEETING WITH MILES DAVIS.**

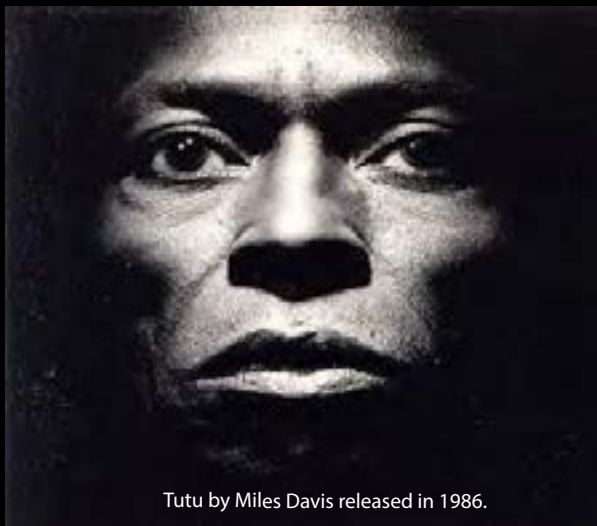
I was home one Friday night in January, 1986, when I got a phone call from Marcus Miller. We had been working together for over a year now as I was doing synthesizer programming for him on the different albums he was producing. He asked me if I was busy on Saturday. I said "no what's up?" He said that he had heard from Tommy LiPuma who told him he signed Miles Davis to Warner Brothers and was looking for material for his new album. He said he was working on some songs and asked if I could bring a few synthesizers to his home and work on some new music for Miles. Of course I was like "I'm down!" What an opportunity: something I had dreamed about, working on a Miles Davis album!

I brought a couple of synths over, one being my Emulator 2 which was new sampling technology. This would put the music squarely in the future with new technology. Marcus had the song and music together but we were looking to create a new sound and vibe for Miles. Upon hearing the songs I immediately had some ideas. They worked from the get go and the demos came out great and Marcus got the gig. One of the songs we demoed ended up being the title track TuTu. The sessions were in Los Angeles however and I didn't go out with Marcus. I set him up with the sounds we used and sat by the phone as he called a few times to make sure everything was happening the way it should. The sessions went great and he was coming back to New York to cut more tracks and finish the album. For the next 4 songs I would be in the studio with them. I heard the first tracks and they were amazing and fresh sounding: a success, as what we were doing was definitely cutting edge for the time and especially to jazz.

So there we were at Clinton Studios. My synth rig is there and I had all the tools I needed to do the sessions. Tommy LiPuma walked in and I introduced myself to him: a legend in this business for sure. He was cool and friendly. I saw a smallish figure in the main studio room and it was Miles. He was messing with his horn. Marcus came over to me and says "Yeah that's Miles, you might as well go in and meet him because you're going to be here for either 5 weeks or 5 minutes! It's up to you!" I took a deep breath walked into the room and introduced myself to him. "Hi Miles, I'm Jason Miles and those keyboards in the control room are mine. I work with Marcus and anything you need from me just ask. I know how to use all of them and make great sounds as well. That's what you heard on the first songs." He gave me a long stare. He looked at me and said in his raspy voice "I like your name!" I said "Thank You." He said something like "OK see you later..." and I left the room. I looked at Marcus and said "I'm still here." That was my first encounter. That moment built into a 5 year personal friendship and working relationship that encompassed 3 albums.



Miles Davis and Jason Miles, circa 1985.



Tutu by Miles Davis released in 1986.

## **NIK BÄRTSCH MEMORY. TAKEN AND TRANSCRIBED BY KEN WEISS**

*The Swiss pianist was touring with his Ronin project in support of his new ECM recording when this was taken at World Café Live in Philadelphia on May 8, 2018*

When I was a child I had a strong affinity to rhythms. I was drumming on all sorts of things like tables and even ashtrays. I wanted to play drums but at that time I was early into music education and the teacher felt that drums were not an instrument for a kid so I had to go out of the school and teach myself. My mother took me serious and I looked for a teacher so that I could play drums. That was for me a really important [learning] experience that when you really love something, and when someone supports you, you can go your way. The same thing happened with the piano. I saw a guy playing boogie-woogie and I went home and told my mother I would like to play that music, play piano but not Classical. I wanted to play groove music, and again, in school there was no teacher for that style. My mother found a private teacher and he supported me in playing that music and inspired me so much that I went into Jazz, Brazilian music, and into funk, and learned the music of Gershwin and Bartok and the other great composers. That's how I came to my music.

Cadence: And what kind of Jazz experience did you have in Switzerland? I heard this kid play the piano and then I discovered through this teacher the standards and got all these records. At that time, I was in record stores and listening to the tradition – first stride piano and the boogie-woogie and all the traditional stuff. He took me through the whole history until I discovered special things, for example, Lennie Tristano and his interesting piece “Turkish Mambo.” That was the first polymetric piece in Jazz history, it came long before “Take Five.” I was very interested in listening and finding out all of these concepts. I also loved Chick Corea and the rhythmic way he was playing, and also Latin American music. So that interest was just growing and I found records and records, and I tried to play everything until I was about 22, when I noticed that this was all too much. I couldn't always be good in every style. I needed to find my own one, and that's why I stopped playing in all the groups I had been working with that had few rehearsals, then a few gigs, and then you went on to the next. I became really serious about discovering my own interests and the reduction of my focus was really important for me. That's how my whole music developed finally to that pattern-oriented, groove music with cycles of meters, overlapping/interlocking, and also playing with [drummer] Kasper Rast. We met when we were kids. I was 10, playing drums, and he was 9 when we met. He was already an amazing drummer then as a kid, and we still play together, and that's kind of special.



Nik Bärtsch in 2018, Photo Credit: Ken Weiss

**DICK GRIFFIN  
REMEMBERS  
THELONIOUS  
MONK.  
TAKEN AND  
TRANSCRIBED  
BY KEN WEISS.**



Underground, Thelonious  
Monk, 1968

*THIS MEMORY WAS TAKEN ON MAY 23, 2018, AFTER THE FIRST NIGHT OF THE 23RD VISION FESTIVAL AT BROOKLYN'S ROULETTE. GRIFFIN APPEARED IN THE AUDIENCE EACH NIGHT OF THE FESTIVAL AND SNAPPED PHOTOS OF THE MUSICIANS BETWEEN SETS.*

When I first met Thelonious Monk in '67, I was playing opposite him at the Village Vanguard. I didn't drink or smoke or do anything so I spent most of my time in the kitchen with him. He was prancing around and I played some multiphonics on my horn, and he stopped and said, "Play that again." And then every time someone came into the room we had a routine. He'd throw his hand up and I would play the multiphonics, and he would grit his teeth and say, "Check that out." So we became very good friends, and Nica, the baroness, was around and she knew that Thelonious liked me, so every time I came to any club, and they were sitting there, she would always make me come to his table and sit down with him. I felt like I was his adopted son. And a lot of times, I'd walk into his dressing room and we'd just be there. We wouldn't say a word to each other, but we'd always be on the same plane. And I was there while he was recording his *Underground* record. He'd come into the room I was in and say things about the recording. One of the things he said to me was very insightful, he said, "Making a record is like writing a book. Every song on the record is like a chapter in the book, and the record is gonna' be here longer than you are so you want to make sure that you make a very good record." That's what he actually said to me. I felt in awe of him because coming from Jackson, Mississippi, everybody that came into the room [to visit him] was my hero. All these great guys that I had never seen in person. But at the same time, I was playing with one of the greatest saxophone players – Rahsaan Roland Kirk. I was playing with him and I was playing Monday nights with Sun Ra at Slugs so I was around a lot of prolific, influential musicians who mentored me.





Dick Griffin in 2018, Photo Credit: Ken Weiss

## FEELING MUSIC IN LIGHT INTERVIEW AND PHOTOS BY KEN WEISS

*Phil Minton, the wonderful experimental vocalist, was on a rare American tour with Berlin-based fellow extreme vocalist Audrey Chen when Cadence caught up with him at the tour's starting point in Philadelphia on January 19, 2018 at The Rotunda [presented by Bowerbird]. They've performed in duet together off and on since meeting up at the 2006 High Zero Festival in Baltimore. This impromptu interview came about after Minton's duet with Chen, as he sat resting with a few avid fans. I have included my questions along with the other listeners' questions. I will list your Philadelphia performance in Cadence as one of the top ten this yr :)*

**Cadence:** *How has your investigation of the trumpet advanced your vocalization skills?*

Phil Minton: It's the reverse. I'm relearning the trumpet and trying to forget it is a brass tube with valves that open and shut different lengths of tubing so that you can play different pitches in a certain order. I'm using a lot more half-valving, which is less measured and more like singing.

**Cadence:** *When did you first realize that you could perform and be accepted as an experimental vocalist?*

Minton: It was gradual. Since the late '50s, I had the idea of playing my voice as an instrument for abstract expression. Jackson Pollock was an inspiration, but playing about with "your voice" was not a respectable thing to do. You were perceived as dishonest – like, "Oh, dear, you sound like a different person!" I suppose I thought playing the trumpet was perceived as respectable. I was in my late twenties before I recorded anything that could be called voice improvising [Phil Minton Quartet with Lars Göran Ulander - Up Umeå, Blue Tower, recorded 1969]. And what I do now is accepted all over the world but only by very small audiences, as is improvised music.

**Cadence:** *How often are you able to find new voice sounds?*

Minton: All the time, but I forget most. I did have a little recorder that I carried, but the business of finding it and switching it on wipes the idea.

**Cadence:** *How do you keep from damaging your voice?*

Minton: You have to be careful how you force the air out. I think a lot of it's to do with the fact that I'm using different placings of the voice all the time and it's not like I'm rubbing one bit in the same place. [Demonstrates his ability to continuously vocalize using different areas of voice]

**Cadence:** *You can get repetitive stress injury from a conversation that you wouldn't get on the stage.*

Minton: Yes, on stage I'm moving around the pitch and voice placings, whereas conversations usually stay in one place and I can hear the blisters forming.

## Interview: Phil Minton

**Cadence:** *It's really remarkable to hear the range of techniques you have in your bag of tricks.*

Minton: [Laughs] Bag of tricks! I like that!

**Cadence:** *Is there ever any kind of a snippet of story going on in your head when you're improvising?*

Minton: Yes, sometimes I'm remembering [what made me angry] and sometimes I'm thinking of very beautiful things as well. Lots of stuff, but I try to be objective and not put too much emotional weight on the sounds. The voice has such a mass of emotional baggage attached. I did say to some young composers just a few weeks ago at a talk I gave at the RCMusic [The Royal Conservatory of Music in London], that I'm interested in counterpoint - an idea that is followed by an opposite, or at the same time if I'm able.

**Cadence:** *How do you practice together with Audrey Chen for your performances?*

Minton: We don't, it's completely improvised. The only thing we'll discuss, the only preconceived idea, or whatever, is how long should we play? We're improvising all the time.

**Cadence:** *When you're at home, how do you keep your voice in shape? How much do you have to practice?*

Minton: I'm doing it every day. I do it when I wake up in the morning [Demonstrates vocal exercises] while I'm going about my day. Usually, when I'm at home and nobody else is in. I do a performance while I'm in the kitchen, yeah, and try stuff out before the family gets in.

**Cadence:** *When I first heard you on things like the Solid Gold Cadillac stuff with the Mike Westbrook band, you were still a relatively conventional musician. When did the change happen?*

Minton: I was "playing my voice" on those recordings, check out "Technology" and then "Cadillac" I've always been involved in free improvisation, there just wasn't much of a scene for it in the early days.

**Cadence:** *Was it really seamless or was there a lightbulb moment when you decided to stand on stage and make experimental vocalizations?*

Minton: Seeing Jackson Pollock's paintings and hearing John Coltrane in the '50s was when I knew what I wanted to do. But then I didn't do my first solo improvisation concert until I was 40. I was using a lot of sound and noise, a similar repertoire that I would be using now, as I've gotten into less pitches. And I'm hearing music in quite random sounds. I can feel music in light. [Vocalizes a sound of wind rushing from his throat] And I think an aesthetic like that was never used or thought of as music in the West. White noise, almost, you could call it. But as a physicist friend said, "There's no such thing as white noise," everything's got pitches and all sorts of stuff is going on. Like now with electronic music, people are listening to sound and noise, that isn't in the temperate scale and they are hearing it as music. But as we know, long before Michael Faraday, music was bending and sliding all over the place, except in the concert halls of Christian Europe.

Interview:

Phil Minton



Phil Minton in 2018, Photo Credit: Ken Weiss

**Cadence:** *Are there sounds that irritate you when you hear them?*

Minton: People being angry, I don't like the sound of anger. The great sound is babies laughing, that's it for me.

**Cadence:** *How often do you come to perform in America and how well are you known here?*

Minton: I have no idea how well known. I don't come very often, I know that. I played in Philadelphia first in 1981 with Fred Frith, and with David Moss another time in the mid-'80s, it was a squat sort of loft-type situation above a sex shop in the middle of town. You had to walk up the steps past the shop.

**Cadence:** *It's good to know you're moving up in the world.*

Minton: [Laughs] I still play places like that all the time. It's still basically a very small group of people that come out to listen to us.

**Cadence:** *Where do you perform the most?*

Minton: In mainland Europe, but I do get all over the world.

**Cadence:** *Are you still doing the Feral Choir projects? [A series of vocal workshops with non-professionals that leads to a performance involving experimental vocalizations]*

Minton: Yes.

**Cadence:** *How does that project work? How do people come to it?*

Minton: It's usually an organization that presents it and they advertise for people to participate in the choir. They come for three days of workshops and then a performance. The workshops last for three hours.

**Cadence:** *Are you teaching people how to let go of their inhibitions?*

Minton: I don't teach anything. [Laughs]

**Cadence:** *There's no teaching, there's just doing?*

Minton: It's just doing, yeah, yeah. I do a few exercises as warmups first so people don't fuck their voices up because some people get very excited. [Makes guttural vocalization]

**Cadence:** *The people who participate in the choir, what do they get out of it? What do they tell you?*

Minton: They seem to love it. It's some sort of release to a lot of people, and we know that all together we make interesting and exciting music like "nothing else."

**Cadence:** *Are there traditional jazz vocalists that you enjoy listening to?*

Minton: Yes many - Louis Armstrong, Ella, Sarah Vaughan, Dizzy, loads.

**Cadence:** *What listening music entertains you?*

Minton: I listen to hard bop from the '50s.

**Cadence:** *What are your non-musical interests?*

Minton: Birds.

**Cadence:** *What instrument do you like to duet with the most besides voice?*

Minton: I'm happy with most instruments, it's the person playing that matters.

Interview:

Phil Minton



Phil Minton in 2018, Photo Credit: Ken Weiss

**Cadence:** *What strikes you as most unusual about American culture?*

Minton: I was going to say a lack of historical knowledge about Jazz - the music that has now influenced most of the so-called Christian world's popular music - but that ignorance is everywhere. So it's got to be guns and the object Trump.

**Cadence:** *What is your fascination with doughnuts? You have four recordings out featuring doughnuts in the title - A Doughnut in Both Hands [Emanem, 1982] and A Doughnut in One Hand [FMP, 1998], No Doughnuts In Hand [Emanem, 2007] and A Doughnut's End, [Fataka, 2015].*

Minton: That's best answered by the liner notes from A Doughnut's

**Cadence:** *Would you share a memorable moment?*

Minton: I was standing in my garden in North London a few years ago, it was late springtime. Earlier that day I'd been talking over the telephone with my friend, the composer Mike Westbrook, about the song of the European male robin bird. I'd said to him that I found it hard to hear the melody lines that the robin made because they were so fast and high. Mike, a birder for many years, said, "Think European blackbird speeded up and an octave higher." I do sometimes have short whistling jams with blackbirds. I never do it for long periods, and I stop defeated after about a half minute because I don't want to upset the little fellows. Anyhow, on this springtime day, a robin perched on a fence pole about five feet from me and started to sing. I pursed my lips very tight, took a deep breath and produced a note around double high C, up in Cat Anderson territory, and I flicked my tongue to get Bill Dixon-like free Jazz flourishes. The robin almost immediately stopped, took off and flew directly towards me at the level of my genitals, stopping in midair only inches away, and then disappeared into some bushes. I was really shocked and a little shaken and thought to myself, 'Don't mess with this man when he's blowing!'



Interview:

Phil Minton



Phil Minton in 2018, Photo Credit: Ken Weiss

Interview:

Phil Minton



Phil Minton in 2018, Photo Credit: Ken Weiss

**LOREN  
CONNORS  
INTERVIEW  
UNBELIEVABLY,  
GIGANTIC  
MYSTERY**

INTERVIEW AND  
PHOTOS BY KEN  
WEISS



*Loren Connors (b. 10/22/1949, New Haven, Connecticut) plays spontaneous guitar like no one else. He reaches listeners with total honesty and original music that seemingly radiates deep from his soul with a fractured fragility and aching beauty. Deeply inspired by the Delta Blues, it's not possible to adequately put a label on the music he creates, except to say that it incorporates Blues, Jazz, Rock, Irish airs, Gospel and experimental music. He's been very active for the past forty years, twenty-six of them since being diagnosed with Parkinson's disease. Strongly influenced by abstract expressionist painters and Classical music composers, Connors has often performed solo as well as with prominent partners including Thurston Moore, Jim O'Rourke, Alan Licht, John Fahey, Keiji Haino, Kim Gordon, Jandek, Chris Forsyth, Tom Carter, Bill Orcutt, Darin Gray, Margarida Garcia, Ken Vandermark, and poet Steve Dalachinsky, as well as with his Blues-Rock group Haunted House (Suzanne Langille, Andrew Burnes, Neel Murgai). This interview took place in his Brooklyn Heights apartment on May 30, 2017. As an aside, I'd like to note that I've been ending my interviews with special questions from other artists for years now, which can be a daunting task at times, and in all the time that I've been doing that, getting questions for Connors from his peers was the easiest of all such quests I've had. He is loved and revered by his peers. His music should be explored if you're not familiar with it.*

*Cadence: Your music has challenged reviewers through the years. An example of a few critics' attempts to define your work includes – "It's a soundtrack to a scorched earth landscape, decades after it has been scorched. We feel the wind blowing across cracked deserted streets, and dark raindrops bouncing off broken glass windows." Another spoke of, "a number of tortured, bent notes like a series slowly creeping bubbles through a jar of molasses," and then there was, "gentle mists hover above the unkempt gravestone of the disenfranchised souls of love lost." What strikes you when you read how your music is interpreted?*

Loren Connors: It always strikes me that people write so poetically about my stuff. Their choice of words is very romantic and Shelly-esque. It reminds me of Shakespeare sometimes.

**Cadence:** *Are the reviewers getting it right?*

Connors: They're getting it right these days, yeah. They didn't get it right thirty years ago when I first started but now they get it.

**Cadence:** *Do you recall a favorite description of your work?*

Connors: Some say it makes them have an out-of-body experience. But that's not what I try for. I don't try for anything, really. I don't try to impress people on a spiritual level, I just do my thing and hope it physically works. I'm very much into the physical and not the spiritual in my songs.

**Cadence:** *Wikipedia defines you as "an American experimental musician." Is that accurate?*

Connors: I don't think of myself as an experimental musician. I'm not experimenting with anything, I know what I'm about these days.

**Cadence:** *Suzanne Langille, your wife and collaborator, told Pitchfork Magazine, in regards to the work you two have done together, that, "The music that we do is for the people who need it." Would you elaborate on who the people are that especially need your work?*

Connors: Well, I imagine some people who don't have an ideal life might be attracted to my sounds but it's all sound and you can take it or leave it.

**Cadence:** *What's your relationship to sound?*

Connors: I love sound, I'm in love with sounds. I read that a lot of musicians, including Eric Clapton, are going deaf these days. All the Rock musicians who were my heroes, they're all deaf now.

**Cadence:** *How do you approach the creation of music?*

Connors: With an open mind. I don't try to force anything, I just let it all happen. I don't want to get in the way of it.

**Cadence:** *Is there a certain way that you're thinking when you are playing?*

Connors: No, I don't think about anything when I'm creating it. I just think about what note facilitates the next note.

**Cadence:** *Do you feel that on some level the music just comes through you?*

Connors: Yes, it has to come through me. I don't care what else happens beyond that. As long as something real is coming through me, it's fine with me.

**Cadence:** *So what is happening when you begin a new piece during a performance?*

Connors: I don't have any idea what I'm going to play. It may all sound similar but there are differences in the length of notes. I don't plan anything out like the length of a note. I don't plan a set, I just get up there and start doing something. I don't care what it sounds like as long as it sounds real and true

**Cadence:** *There's no one who sounds like you on guitar. You generate sounds that seem to be produced by a slide but you're doing it with only your fingers. How did you develop that technique?*

Connors: If you listen to it closely, it really doesn't sound like a slide, really. Slide guitar has a certain sound to it. I used to hang out with this guy who was a master at that. His name was Robert Crotty. He was from New Haven

and a master at slide playing. I think my sound sounds more like a string guitar than a slide guitar.

**Cadence:** Your use and understanding of space and timing may be the *most moving aspect of your work. Would you talk about your use of space?*

Connors: Space is an important thing, it's as important as the sounds you make

**Cadence:** *You also have a unique way of shaping notes. You're able to make a single note suggest a story by altering and controlling string volume.*

Connors: Yes, I don't want to be one dimensional. I don't want it to be all loud or all quiet. I want to let it all go, let all the sound disappear so that I can start with something new.

**Cadence:** *What are your thoughts on the preponderance of dexterity and speed that's prevalent in much of the current music scene?*

Connors: That's young people stuff. I think that once you get older, you have to drop the boy stuff and play a man's music.

**Cadence:** *What is it that you feel makes music profound?*

Connors: It has to have a quality of truth in it. It's nothing if it doesn't have truth in it, and that's something found in all the arts. If you don't have that in there, you're not doing much.

**Cadence:** *Everybody most likely thinks they're playing truthfully, how do you know what's the truth?*

Connors: A lot of times, it's [out of] narcissism. You can think that you're doing the truth but really there isn't truth in it. It's something you want to happen but you can't make it happen just because you want it. It's something that just happens.

**Cadence:** *So do you think that comes more with experience?*

Connors: A young person could have that but usually that comes with age.

**Cadence:** *You've performed under numerous names through the years including Guitar Roberts, Loren Mattei, Loren Mazzacane, Loren MazzaCane Connors, and now Loren Connors. Why so many name changes? Is it your way of shedding your skin or changing paths?*

Connors: I wanted to start new. I was Loren Mazzacane in the '70s but I didn't get anywhere with it. I couldn't get anywhere with the music. Japanese artists have done that a lot, changed their names, for centuries. They've changed them every ten years as a way to start new.

**Cadence:** *When you changed your name did your music change with it?*

Connors: No, the music changed first and then I changed my name.

They're all real names of mine, they're all family names. My music took an Irish turn for a while so I figured an Irish name would work kind of good.

**Cadence:** *You weren't concerned that you might throw off your fan base by changing names?*

Connors: No, it didn't happen although you'd think it might. It didn't throw them off at all. In fact, it was a point of interest and it boosted interest as a matter of fact.

**Cadence:** *So do you have another name change planned?*

Connors: No, I've had this name for 23 years now and I haven't changed



it since then so I'll let it ride out now. The only thing I might do is to drop the s off the Connors and just make it Connor. I like my name, it's suited me well for over the last 20 years.

**Cadence:** *Supposedly you first recorded as Guitar Roberts because you were uncomfortable with your surname of Mazzacane. There was a scandal 200 years ago in Venice involving your ancestors killing dogs and Mazzacane has since come to mean "Kills dogs with a club and collects money for it."*

Connors: Yeah, that's true, dogs don't like me. I've been bitten by dogs a lot and I bet you that a dog kills me one day. Also, I'm a vegetarian and I didn't like that name too much.

**Cadence:** *Following up with that topic, in the liner notes to "Night Through" you note, "Dogs seem to know what was going on with my ancestors. They don't like me. I've been bitten by dogs all my life." Is that still true?*

Connors: That's true, I have dog bites all over me.

**Cadence:** *So you've never owned a dog?*

Connors: No, I've never had a dog, I've never had a pet.

**Cadence:** *I have to say that it seems hard to believe that dogs would know this about your past.*

Connors: Dogs sense a lot of things, they're smart. They sense that I get nervous around them. They always growl at me in elevators. They're down at my ankles growling at me. A big gas station dog got me once around the neck onetime, he could have killed me. He was a big German Shepard. He jumped at me, he jumped in the air just to get me. He was like a lion or something, it was terrible.

**Cadence:** *That's pretty frightening. Do other animals also attack you?*

Connors: No, just dogs. I must sound like I'm some kind of flake or something but this is what's happened to me.

**Cadence:** *Mary Mazzacane, your mother, was a classical singer who performed opera and religious music. You included a track of her singing on Night Through. How did she influence your career?*

Connors: I've done a whole record of her. I've listened to the way that she bends notes and sings in a modern style and not the old-fashioned style that opera singers still use today. She was a modern opera singer, which I don't know even really exists outside of her stuff.

**Cadence:** *I've never seen anything written about your father. Did he not play a significant role in your career?*

Connors: He kept to himself, he was very shy. He'd go to his room and paint, he was a visual artist. His influence on me was subtle. He was an inventor, he actually had several patents for machinery he invented. He could fix his own cars. He had a very original way of thinking about things, his own life philosophy. He wasn't like anybody else. I liked that. He died in 2006 after falling down a stairway.

**Cadence:** *The Mississippi Delta Blues musicians have strongly inspired you. Would you talk about that influence and what you heard in their music?*

Connors: I heard something special, especially in Son House, Robert Johnson and Skip James. I just liked the sound of the guitar and the singing.



They would stop singing for a moment and the guitar would fill in the note, and that would go back and forth like that. The guitar and the singing was like one thing.

**Cadence:** *Growing up in New Haven, Connecticut, how did you discover these Blues musicians?*

Connors: There were 4 or 5 of us kids who played guitar and were really into the Delta Blues. We lived in a little town just north of New Haven and there was a joke going around for a while that that area was called the "Hamden Delta." Michael Gregory Jackson and Jimi Durso were also part of it. But the guy most steeped in the Blues there was Robert Crotty, and he was a huge influence on me. He was never really known outside the local area, and that's a tragedy. He passed away just a few years ago.

**Cadence:** *Your music is entrenched in the Blues. That's especially evident in your early playing, which is saturated with aching sadness and tragedy. You're playing authentic Blues in a way that's rising out of the Deep South. You play in a way that's typically made by long-suffering black musicians. You're of Irish-Italian descent, born in Connecticut, what are you drawing on for your inspiration?*

Connors: The same sort of thing. If you've got breath, you've got Blues in you. Everyone's got the Blues.

**Cadence:** *The Blues music that you played, even early on, was a unique and highly abstract interpretation of the Delta Blues. What was your intent when you began your career? Was it your goal not to play the music in the traditional way?*

Connors: I figured the world didn't need more music like that and I wasn't the best traditional Blues player around. I couldn't compare to them but I figured we could use something new that only I could come up with. The same old traditional thing wasn't needed from me.

**Cadence:** *There's an interesting concept you've incorporated from your Irish roots, the notion of "keening," which involves the crying spirits that come and take away the deceased. How has that translated into your playing?*

Connors: I own a record of that [keening] and it's really intense. They sound like Native Americans with their chants. It's a freaky thing like the scream of the banshee. My grandmother used to tell me stories about banshees, spirits and leprechauns, and things like that, and it sunk into me. On Hell's Kitchen Park [Black Label, 1993] there's a piece, "Sorrow in the House," that's not actual keening but it was meant to capture the feeling of it.

**Cadence:** *You told guitarist Chris Forsyth in an interview that, "I always wanted to be a Rock N' Roller." Would you talk about that?*

Connors: I grew up in the '60s and Rock & Roll is where it was at. In '67 I was 17, so that means I would have to have been into Rock & Roll. That all ended around '71 or '72 when Rock got kind of cheap and crummy. I recently had a Rock band for a while called Haunted House that kind of swung.

**Cadence:** *You also told Forsyth, "I can't really play guitar that good."*

Connors: Well, I don't know about that. I can still do it, I can still hang in

there.

**Cadence:** *So you're retracting that statement?*

Connors: Yeah, maybe I should.

**Cadence:** *You learned to play bass, trombone and violin as a youth.*

**How did having that knowledge influence your future guitar playing and musical concept?**

Connors: I was in the marching band and I really couldn't read music too good so I'd just improvise around sounds while I was marching with the trombone in the front of the group. That experience alone got me into improvising. I couldn't read music so I had to improvise sounds. The violin had an influence on my ability to do finger vibrato.

**Cadence:** *Sadly, you were diagnosed with Parkinson's disease in 1992.*

**You were 42 at the time. What problems were you experiencing when the diagnosis was made?**

Connors: My right arm wouldn't move fast and I couldn't shave. It slowed me down. Over the years, my whole body got effected by it but it started out just in my right arm for 5 or 10 years. It didn't bother me up until 10 years ago at all, really. I take pills that cover it all over. Parkinson's is not the big disease that it used to be. A lot of people get diagnosed with it when they get into their sixties or seventies. One out of every 100 people get it.

**Cadence:** *How has that diagnosis effected your career? It seems a bit miraculous that you've been able to continue performing at such a high level for 25 years.*

Connors: I can't really travel anywhere. I can't travel in Europe, which I would like to do. Yeah, my traveling is kind of squelched but I play around New York City all the time. The last time I could travel to Europe was 5 or 6 years ago. I'm going over to England later this year just for one night. I can't tour anymore but I never liked that anyway.

**Cadence:** *What physical accommodations have you had to make over the years in order to keep performing with Parkinson's?*

Connors: Nothing except the biggest impact is that Parkinson's makes you prone to falls and also makes your bones not strong. Over the years I've broken a lot of bones -- my left wrist, my right hip, my right shoulder, and even my neck. These required long recovery times. After the wrist thing, it took months for the feeling in my fingertips to come back. Jim O'Rourke helped me come back from that one. And [poet] Steve Dalachinsky helped me another time."

**Cadence:** *How did they help you?*

Connors: When you get a bad injury that affects your ability to hold a guitar, it's a scary thing, not knowing if you've really "come back" enough yet to be able to perform again. The wrist thing was probably the worst because it was my left wrist, which works the neck of the guitar, and for months I had lost feeling in my fingers. Jim just waited for the right time and nudged me to get back in the game, and in that first performance after the injury he played with me. He was very aware of where I was at and made it easy for me. After that, I was ready to do anything. Later on, when I broke my hip. I was in the hospital for 11 days. It took a long time to

recover. Steve Dalachinsky that time did the same kind of thing for me. It's good to have real friends.

**Cadence:** *I noticed that you use one finger on top of another to add force on the strings.*

Connors: That's just to get the solid chord in there without any squeaks or buzzes. I use a lot of bar chords and I usually make them with two fingers, one on top of the other. One of my fingers doesn't do it right, it gets a buzz sound.

**Cadence:** *How taxing on your body is it to perform these days?*

Connors: It's not taxing at all. I take these pills and I can do anything anyone else can do except walk. It's effected my walking and my speech is kind of slurry.

**Cadence:** *You presented your first piano solo in 2016. Why did you wait until the age of 66 to do that?*

Connors: Because I don't really play piano. I have one record with piano [The Red Painting] that came out pretty nice and I have a CD coming out soon that will have a little bit of piano on it. As far as a reason goes, there's no reason. I don't really play piano that much. I don't have a piano. I love piano music- I grew up with it -- and whenever there's a piano in the room I do tend to gravitate toward it, but I can't do everything.

**Cadence:** *There are significant Jazz influences in your past but that doesn't get discussed nearly as much as your Blues background. What's your earliest Jazz memory?*

Connors: Miles Davis, definitely Miles Davis. Especially his early '70s group with Keith Jarrett and Michael Henderson. Miles is playing his trumpet through a wah-wah pedal. I really like that sound. And I really liked that record [Get Up With It] with "He Loved Him Madly," that really got to me

**Cadence:** *You've dedicated a number of pieces to Miles including your Departing of a Dream series. What struck you about his work?*

Connors: Yeah, a lot of people say my guitar sounds like a trumpet, like either Miles or Chet Baker. I'm influenced by his long notes. I kind of stumbled into it, it wasn't a conscious effort to sound like Miles.

**Cadence:** *You've mentioned Lester Young and Billie Holliday in the past. What have you taken from them?*

Connors: Lester Young's aura, he was a cool guy and swung like mad. They were both great musicians with great sense of timing.

**Cadence:** *How much of an influence did the singing and trumpet playing of Chet Baker have on you? He was a tortured soul who drew from the Blues.*

Connors: He was a direct influence on me. He could not read music so he had to improvise, which is the same for me. I can't read music either. Sounds just came out of him, man, and most of the time they kind of slurred down to the lower area of the trumpet. He played the lower notes and just hung out there for a while, jump up for a while, and then slip back down again.

**Cadence:** *Another very significant inspirational stimulus for you has been art, most specifically the work of Mark Rothko. You've released a recording based on his dark paintings and even performed in front of his*

*work at the Whitney Museum. What is it about his paintings that triggers your imagination?*

Connors: It's the simplicity of them. They aren't fussy, they're big monumental things. The big ones are just phenomenal, they just knock you over.

*Cadence: Is there a relationship between his art and what you do?*

Connors: Yeah, I kind of want to get the same simple, monumental feeling. He does it with two or three colors, five colors at the most, and I do the same thing. I just use a few notes and they have to say everything.

*Cadence: And what's the benefit to using fewer notes?*

Connors: The fewer notes you play, the more it's alive. If I play too many notes, I'll squash it all and it will sound like caca.

*Cadence: When you played in front of Rothko's painting at the Whitney, how did you approach transforming visual art into aural art?*

Connors: I wasn't interpreting his work, I was just doing my thing in front of his thing and having it be a similar experience. I don't play based off of paintings.

*Cadence: What other visual artists stimulate you?*

Connors: Franz Kline, Jackson Pollack and [Willem] de Kooning. All the New York '50s and '60s guys, they're my main influence.

*Cadence: Something you don't often speak about is your own visual art. Art came before music for you, you studied it for seven years in school. What mediums do you work in?*

Connors: I make computer-generated color prints these days. I put them on vinyl so it's very strong, it doesn't rip that way. There's a seascape behind you on the wall.

*Cadence: A number of your pencil drawings grace the covers of your recordings. They capture the haunting and fragile quality that's in your playing. Would you talk about your album covers?*

Connors: I'm tending towards putting pencil drawings on my album covers now. My album covers usually come from the art that I am doing at that time, so there's a similarity in the vibe between the art and the music. There's a new recording coming out called Angels That Fall and it has a nice cover of a woman's face on it.

*Cadence: The images on your cover art, excluding photos of yourself, feature women. Is there a reason for that?*

Connors: I guess I like women.

*Cadence: But these are sad and frail women.*

Connors: Yeah, it's a kind of Chopin thing I've got going on inside me.

*Cadence: Would you elaborate on that?*

Connors: I think of myself as a modern day Chopin-type figure, sort of, if I may say so myself. I don't want to brag or anything. Chopin's music was fragile in the same way that my drawings of women's faces are fragile. I don't know. Apparently, these fragile faces are the only ones I can make.

*Cadence: You've said in the past that, "My music is political. It's always been political." How can instrumental music be political? How can listeners know your message?*

Connors: It has a certain feel to it. Internally it feels rebellious, it sounds

rebellious.

**Cadence:** *So your music is rebellious?*

Connors: Yeah, a lot of it was for a while there. It's not like that much anymore but during the '90s my stuff was about wars and other things. I wasn't rebelling against anything in particular, it was rebellion with a capital R. I was in my forties at that time and I did one piece about the [German] planes that came over and bombed Britain. Yeah, that one worked like a charm. It's called "The End, The Afternoon, The Light."

**Cadence:** *What other pieces of yours are you very happy with?*

Connors: *Airs* [Road Cone, 1999]. I also like my *Departing* of a *Dream* series, especially the new volumes – V and VI.

**Cadence:** *It's hard to find your older recordings.*

Connors: They're impossible to find now, especially the old things. I'm working on taking those of my past recordings which only came out in the form of CDs and re-releasing them as records. I think of CDs, especially in the '90s, as the dark ages of music recording. The sound was missing something, and they aren't a dependable way to preserve music. Sometimes they just stop working. I have so much stuff, it takes a long time to re-release everything.

**Cadence:** *In the early '90s, you found new collaborators and fans of your music in the underground Noise Rock scene. You played with artists such as Thurston Moore, Lee Ranaldo, Alan Licht and Keiji Haino. Would you talk about Noise Rock and its appeal to you?*

Connors: Well, my stuff is not really noise, like a lot of their stuff, but I seem to fit in there at shows with all those guys for a while there in the '90s, mainly. It seemed to work. My quieter style and my bold notes fit in with their kind of freaked-out, noise music. It just worked. It was opposites but opposites work a lot of the time.

**Cadence:** *How has the incorporation of volume and distortion furthered your creative process?*

Connors: That's something I don't use very much of anymore. Distortion is something I did in the past. My tone is clearer now, that's how it's grown, but I can still play like that. My current style is more mysterious than fuzzy.

**Cadence:** *The Curse of Midnight Mary is a recording you released made from a 1981 tape recording you made while playing at the graveyard of New Haven's Midnight Mary, who urban legend has it was a witch who apparently died in 1872 at the stroke of midnight and ended up getting buried while still alive. What possessed you to record at her grave?*

Connors: I thought it would be a cool thing to do. It was kind of a dare, really. It was a hot thing to do.

**Cadence:** *There's supposedly a curse at that graveyard. Legend has it that anyone caught there past midnight will die the next day. Did you feel Mary's presence while recording there and were you there past midnight?*

Connors: It's a big deal in Connecticut. I can't say I felt her presence but it was fairly dark and I was afraid of the dark, I still am, and that kind of got to me. I don't believe in ghosts. I was there past midnight but I didn't die the next day though I stayed in the whole next day, I didn't want to force

anything. I didn't want to get crazy about it.

**Cadence:** *While researching your career I found two other connections to graveyards. You frequented graveyards with your mother who sang at funerals, and also the album covers of your recording *The Stations of the Cross* are actually handmade rubbings off of a specially made gravestone. Do you feel a special connection with graveyards?*

Connors: No, but it's part of the Delta Blues thing. You can't get away from it.

**Cadence:** *The names of many of your recordings are quite expressive of darkness and despair including – *Crucible, Hell! Hell! Hell! Hell! Hell!*, *Long Nights, Let the Darkness Fall, Up in Flames, The Departing of a Dream, I Wish I Didn't Dream, and Pushin' Up Daisies*. Do these titles reflect how you felt while recording them?*

Connors: I wanted to record things and those titles seemed to fit right in there. I wanted these to be intense but I'm not like that anymore. My thing has calmed down a lot lately but back then, I was a crazy man. They probably would have institutionalized me if it was in a different century. I would have been hung or something. I should add that *Crucible, Let the Darkness Fall* and *I Wish I didn't Dream* came from Suzanne's mind. She smiles and is cheerful a lot, but in her music, another side comes out and she takes no prisoners.

**Cadence:** *Were you dealing with depression?*

Connors: No, it wasn't a matter of being depressed at all. I've never been depressed, it was intensity that I was after.

**Cadence:** *What effect on listeners do you find your music has?*

Connors: Some people say they get depressed by it but it's not meant to be depressing. Really, I can't do it when I'm down. It's a joyous thing for me, it's a happy thing.

**Cadence:** *How significant are the titles to your songs and do you name them before or after recording them?*

Connors: I name them later on and sometimes I don't name them at all. Some of the titles are dreamed up by other people. Most are my names but sometimes I'll ask people to listen to a piece and ask them what I should call it, and people come up with names for me.

**Cadence:** *What music do you currently listen to?*

Connors: A lot of twentieth century stuff like [Anton] Webern and Carl Ruggles, from the United States. He was a friend of Ives. I listen to everything, Rock, Blues.

**Cadence:** *Do you listen to your own recordings?*

Connors: Yeah, I listen to my stuff too, which I know a lot of other people don't do with their own music. I listen to my own stuff a lot.

**Cadence:** *A lot of people have trouble listening to their own recordings because they hear things they aren't happy with.*

Connors: Right, but I'm pretty satisfied where my stuff is going and I don't have any qualms about listening to it because it's not gonna upset me. I'm kind of reaching the end of the line here. I'm 67 now and I don't imagine that I can go for another twenty years. Possibly, we'll see.

**Cadence:** *At this point, have you come up with a meaning of life?*



Connors: No. You know I'm a real atheist. I don't believe in God or Heaven and Hell. I want to go to my grave without ever trying to convince anyone that I had any answers or knew what life meant at all.

**Cadence: Do you believe in reincarnation? Are you coming back?**

Connors: No, I don't believe in anything, I just believe that you're dead. When you die – lights out, period, end of story. That's a bleak way to be but that's the way it has to be with me.

**Cadence: How many guitars do you own and which one do you value the most?**

Connors: I have two guitars. The small black-and-white one over there is a hundred dollar version of the bigger model Stratocaster, the full sized one I have, but it's too heavy for me today. The lighter one is more alive in my lap. I've had five or six Fender Stratocasters through the years.

**Cadence: Would you share an interesting travel story?**

Connors: Yeah, there's one thing that was kind of funny, I was up on stage in London, playing with Jim O'Rourke, and some guy didn't like what I was doing so he charged the stage and tried to throw me off the stage but Jim came to my rescue and blocked him before he got to me. They don't want anybody messing up their stage over there in London. They don't want anybody doing something they don't like there. The stage is a very sacred thing in England. Another thing is not too long ago I got to play inside a maze. It was big and all lit up in a weird way. It was an art gallery with all kinds of little chambers in it. Everyone sat outside the maze and just experienced it while I was inside of it.

**Cadence: What are your interests outside of music, art and poetry? Guilty pleasures?**

Connors: I like to fool around with these mannequins. [Points to the two 6-foot tall, well-proportioned figures in the room, facing each other, dressed in leopard skin outfits] I put different outfits on them, dress them up in different ways.

**Cadence: They are quite impressive. What does Suzanne think of them?**

Connors: She likes them, she likes them a lot. They are kind of Amazon women. Yeah, that's my hobby, this stuff. I bought them at the Fulton Mall at a store called Dr. Jays. Actually, these are pretty expensive vintage models. You don't see anything like them anymore in stores.

**Cadence: Or in reality.**

Connors: Yeah, I've taken them out in front of the building a couple times and a hundred people took pictures of them. Everyone that walked by took out their cellphones and took pictures.

**Cadence: What was your 9/11 experience?**

Connors: Oh, the black air came right into the window here. I had to run all around the house and close the windows. It was terrible. I immediately sat down and made a piece called "For NY 9/11/01." Suzanne worked down there, still does, so she might have gotten some kind of exposure. She was in a building a block away at the time of the attack. She was one of the people running around with all the dirt all over their bodies. I was watching it on TV. I didn't know if she was safe or not. It was terrible and the air stunk around here for a long time. We're pretty close to it here. It



was right across the river about a mile away. I'm sure we got a bad dosage of something.

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

*Thurston Moore (guitar, vocals) asked: "Who was the first guitarist you saw live where you witnessed the realization of magic?"*

Connors: Clapton and Hendrix, and then later on, Ron Asheton of the Stooges. Clapton had a puddle of sweat around him, an actual puddle of his own sweat that he was standing in. I thought that was a pretty cool thing. You'd have to be really into it to sweat that much. Hendrix was very much more a showman when he played. I never liked when he played with his teeth because it was never as good as what he could have done with his fingers. Also, although I never saw him live, Robert Quine's solo on Lou Reed's "Waves of Fear" in Barcelona, 1984, blows me over. I met him in 1991 when we were both supposed to be part of a Tim Buckley tribute concert. The head of it kicked me and Suzanne out because she didn't like what we were doing with the song and maybe she wanted to make room to put Eric Anderson on the bill. But Quine said he liked us, so I guess that's okay. Everybody should listen to that Barcelona version. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y1yXmh6Z2o>

*Steve Dalachinsky (poet) asked: "You rarely, if ever, talk about your poetry. Would you do so?"*

Connors: I did poetry for a while but I haven't continued with it. I just did that when I was in my thirties. I did a lot of writing in the Japanese tradition of haibun, which is a combination of prose and haiku. Basho was a pioneer of the form. In the '80s I did a book called Autumn Sun which is really just a bunch of impressions that I got from daily life with my son, who was a year old at the time. I wrote a lot of stories in those days, spent a lot of time with him, looked at the world through his eye. It was kind of a travelogue and short little snippets of words and lines here and there, kind of a little snowstorm or petals of flowers floating around the air.

*Cadence: How does the creative experience and source of emotional release differ for you when working in the field of music, art and poetry?*

Connors: It's all the same thing, really. It all ends up as the same thing, it's all hard work. They all feel the same to me but I know more about music than anything else.

*Steve Dalachinsky also asked: "What are your feelings about Derek Bailey, both as a guitarist and innovator?"*

Connors: I played with him a couple times, he was really good. He was more staccato than I am but he had a nice way of sentencng. I played with him along with Thurston Moore, it was the three of us. He was definitely an innovator but I don't know a lot about his music. I wasn't really influenced by him but he was one of the main guys.

*Chris Forsyth (guitar) said: "Loren is incredible. I think he's one of the most original and unique guitarists I've ever heard. He's always found a way to sound like himself, even with health problems, and I think that's a testament to his artistry. I've seen him play dozens of times, played with him a few times, and followed his work closely, but I still find his methods*

*to be mysterious. My question for you is when you are playing, how much of the sound is a result of theoretical musical approach (thinking about notes, scales, chords, etc.) versus a physical/instinctual approach (tangibly interacting with the instrument and the sounds)?"*

Connors: It's all improvised and more importantly, it's all intuitive. Ninety percent of it just happens, it's intuitive. I don't think about anything. I don't know anything. I don't know what I'm doing or why I'm doing it. Bob Crotty used to say there are two kinds of guitar players – "The regular kind and the kind that leans forward a bit."

*Chris Forsyth also asked: "You've had a number of notable collaborations that lasted a number of records or performances, as well as a long history of solo work. Do you have a preference for collaborative playing vs solo playing these days, and has that changed at all over the years? Do you approach either differently?"*

Connors: I'm starting to have more confidence in myself, as far as a solo player goes, so I'm playing mostly solo these days. Before, like in the '90s, I was playing with people all the time but that just changed. I don't know why but I guess you just get more confidence as a player. I had a lack of confidence a lot of the time.

*Jim O'Rourke (multi-instrument) said: "My best to you and Suzanne, you are the best! You have not used a large pool of musicians to play with over the years, it's been pretty much duos, outside of the group with Suzanne. You've never really had "bands." Have you purposely kept the playing situation small? Is keeping a hand on how your playing is framed important to you?"*

Connors: Yeah, yeah, yeah, it is important. Sometimes people say my solo thing is more essentially me and everything else I do is a compromise but that's not true. You do have to be careful not to dilute your thing. It matters who you play with, because when you play with a partner, you can't just do your own thing. You also have to work with what they're doing. If I'm playing with someone I have to listen and fit whatever I'm doing into whatever they're doing too, so it's actually a duet and not just two solo people playing together. And when you play with the right people, you learn from it, you get cross-fertilization. It's definitely much more of a fun thing than just playing by yourself. Playing by yourself can be sort of brutal. There's no one else to help you out and everything put out there is just from you.

*Kim Gordon (guitar) asked: "How do you listen to the other person you're performing with? Sometimes I'm listening through my body with all my senses without feeling like I am."*

Connors: Yes, that's the way I think, exactly. I feel it through my arms and hands, the palm of my hands. When I play with someone, I listen to them -- not just what they're doing onstage but who they are. It's an intuitive personal experience. I have to be careful who I play with. I don't play with any criminals. I can't stand musical fraud, it drives me crazy.

*Cadence: Would you explain what you mean by "musical fraud?"*

Connors: People who just play tricks. Tricks and licks. People who try to appease, or placate. Or worse -- manipulate. People who want something.

**Isobel Sollenberger (Bardo Pond) asked:** *“Loren, where do you go when you are playing? When I listen to your music, I feel like I am on an epic journey to a far out galaxy. I start the journey from your very first note and meet friends and family along the way. Faces and places that had faded return to me, new paths reveal themselves.”*

Connors: I have to be physically present but also be aware of the future and the past. All of that has to come out in physicality. We're physical human beings, we're not spirits. When music has extreme physicality it makes us travel. Sensuality is the greatest force that we have in music, that's what sets us free.

**Isobel Sollenberger also asked:** *“When I listen to you and play with you, I feel that spark of joy, that feeling of synchronicity, the charge of magic. Like a chance meeting or conversation with a stranger. Like a sunset or a rainbow or the dancing of orgone energy on the beach. Is there a narrative to your pieces? Is it purely the process of making sound?”*

Connors: Music is sound that changes you somehow. It might calm you or disturb you. So it's not really a process of making sound, it's a process of finding it, one second after the next. It's about discovery, not searching. You have to discover the first note that holds all the energy.

**Kath Bloom (guitar) asked:** *“Do you feel the “wisdom of age” as strong as you felt the “passion of youth?”*

Connors: It doesn't really work that way for me. For me, it's about a relentless drive for truth, and that hasn't changed. It's just taken different forms over time.

**Elliott Sharp (guitar) asked:** *“Do you have any desire to notate your music for other musicians to perform?”*

Connors: Yeah, I'm interested in choral stuff. I'd like to do stuff for the guitar and have it transposed into choral music. If he knows how to do that then he can help me with that. I suppose there are programs for that. I'm interested in strictly choral music that has nothing to do with guitar. Like the choral music of Webern.

**Alan Licht (guitar) asked:** *“Would you talk about the influence of Alban Berg and other modern 20th Century composers on your music? It's there and that's something no one ever asks you about.”*

Connors: Right, Alban Berg, he was really something. I'm a big fan of his, especially his opera Lulu. And also the choral music of Webern. Those are my main people in music. With Berg it's the drama of it all, the drama and the tenseness of it. It's very interesting to follow the musical life of Berg from his sensitive, dreamy teenage boy compositions, growing into the deeply serious artist who created Lulu, the greatest opera of the 20th century, even though it was never finished. He died before he finished it. The choral music of Webern was star-like or crystal-like. I learned economy through Webern.

**Bill Orcutt (guitar) asked:** *“I've heard you're a big Eric Clapton fan. What's your favorite Clapton era or records? Are there other guitarists who've had an influence?”*

Connors: Definitely Cream. There haven't been other guitarists who've influenced me as much as Clapton. He had a real influence on me. He was

the best, as far as I could hear, back then. Even still he's one of the best people. I've never met him, I don't know if he even knows my music.

**Bill Orcutt also asked: "Every time I've seen you, you're playing a Strat. Have you always played a Stratocaster? What's the appeal?"**

Connors: I like the Strat sound. It's got a nice sound to it, it sounds like a bell. The neck is real nice, especially for finger sliding, and it's light. It's the primo Rock instrument around the world, which you have to admit.

**Suzanne Langille (vocals) asked: "You did a recording called Red Mars, and now you're working to release a piece dedicated to the seven recently discovered Earth-like planets. Would you talk about your interest in astronomy?"**

Connors: My interest in astronomy is more about awareness of it rather than about the science of it. What I'm interested in is mystery, big mystery, gigantic mystery, unbelievably, gigantic mystery. The biggest mystery you could ever think of. Mystery with a capital M, a big deal. So that's the planets and what exists in the universe – the planets and the stars and the gas and the people.

**Cadence: So how does that inspire you to make music?**

Connors: It doesn't, it's just all I've got left. I think I'm through with Earth and I've taken off into the stars. It's the last big, uncharted area like the Wild West used to be.

**Cadence: Where do you go after the planets?**

Connors: I don't know, that's a good one.

**Cadence: Are you saying you're running out of music?**

Connors: No, I'm not running out of music, I'm just kind of running out of... I don't know that I'm running out of anything. I feel like I just started doing stuff.

**Cadence: So if you always perform without a premise or preconceived notion, how does the inspiration of something like the planets enter into your playing?**

Connors: The sounds I'm making are otherworldly.

**Suzanne Langille also asked: "The most important early influence in your life came while training under sculptor Michael Skop, who was trained by sculptor Ivan Mestrovic, who was trained by sculptor Auguste Rodin. That has been mentioned once or twice but no one has really explored just what you absorbed from that oral tradition of instruction and how you translated it into music."**

Connors: Well, that's a big question, maybe even too big to talk about. Michael Skop was a great teacher I had in college, he was an authentic disciple of Rodin. He taught some crazy ideas that you couldn't get anywhere else about time and space and line drawing. Yeah, he was a phenomenon, I think. We learned about space and time and how they were the same. Rodin talked a lot about that when he was alive. A picture has time and space in it, especially time which is a very hard thing to grasp in your head about what that means but it has something to do with the reality of the universe. It's hard to talk about that. Another thing that Skop also talked about was holding things "in privation," not laying everything out there. When you do that, your art or your music has potential energy.

You create without the help of sound or silence. When you hold a ball up in the air, but it hasn't dropped yet, that's potential energy. When Suzanne's editing something of mine, she always listens to find my first note - she insists that it all has to be there, in that first note. Privation. Potential energy. That's why a painting is more than the paint and the canvas.

**Cadence:** *So when you're doing line drawings, how does time and space enter into it?*

Connors: Everything has to be alive. Nothing can be static or just placed in there. Everything has to explode from some serious place and you should be there all as one and together, all happening in a single instant. It has to be all great, without things that shouldn't be in there. Like Keats the poet said, when you're mining, you've got to fill your pail to the top with ore and take it all out at once. It can't be piece by piece. You have to make sure that every riff is filled to the top with ore. You can't show people half full effort, everything has to be loaded with what you're mining out of yourself.

**Cadence:** *Well, what does time mean to you?*

Connors: Time, to me, means space and a real arrangements of forms. It's not just a haphazard, thrown together of forms. It's more one thing grows out of another thing and growth is the main thing. It's all real, real forms rather than fake shapes. You can put some coins on a table and hit them so they spread all out, that would be an example of form. An example of fake form would be if you put the coins down with your fingers in an arrangement that you want to make. The reality of things is that they will spread out by themselves and you don't have to do it.

**Cadence:** *Final comments?*

Connors: Listen to the Blues. Everything is there.



## **NELS CLINE THE STORY OF MY LIFE IN A NUTSHELL BY KEN WEISS**

*This is a transcription of an informal talk Nels Cline gave prior to a performance with saxophonist Larry Ochs and drummer Gerald Cleaver at the home of super Wilco fan Marc Prizer in Wynnewood, Pennsylvania on December 11, 2016. Cline gave an enlightening overview of his career and took questions from the rapt, intimate audience. Although not intended for official broad public consumption, Cline approved its release and noted – “This is quite illuminating – a text transcribed from me randomly/desperately thinking and trying to speak logically. As such, the run-ons and subordinate clause abuse is at a rather shockingly high level! I am now 62! Yikes!...”*

I’m not sure what anybody wants or needs to know about my life in music except that I am sixty-years-old, so I was born in 1956 and as such, I am the old man of Wilco, by far. I’m somebody who grew up exposed and inspired by music in the mid-to-late-sixties as a boy in Southern California. I was born in Los Angeles and there was a lot going on back then. What I’d like to do is to conceptualize what I am into by first pointing out what was going on in music at that time. As you all know, this was an extremely creative and fertile time in music in general, and certainly in popular music, perhaps like no other period in popular music. That was a really heady thing for a twelve-year-old. I have an identical twin brother, Alex, who plays drums and percussion, and we got obsessed with Rock N’ Roll starting in 1966. I also became obsessed with Indian Classical music because in elementary school we studied different units – we had a Japan unit, a Mexico unit, and in fifth grade I had India, which was taught by a woman named Miss. Godlin, who looked very much like John Lennon. She played a Ravi Shankar live record for the class and this was probably the first big musical “ah-ha” experience for me. I recall many members of the class very vocally and elegantly going, “Ewww, ah, that’s horrible! Ewww, take it off!” [Laughs] I’m not exaggerating. At the same time, I was sitting there thinking this is the most amazing sound that I’ve ever heard and I need to know everything about this music. And



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at that time, Ravi Shankar had a school in Los Angeles but he closed it in 1966, so my career as a sitarist was dashed. [Laughs] It was also dashed by reading his book *My Music, My Life* which came out in 1968. I asked for it at Christmas. In the book he describes his practice regimen – he had to sit with the instrument for a year before he ever even played it and all this kind of stuff, and I said, ‘Man, I am NOT doing that.’ [Laughs] ‘No way!’ He played it eight hours a day until his fingers bled. I said, ‘Wow, I’m just gonna get an electric guitar and be cool.’ And I was obsessed with the group the Byrds who were quite the phenomenon in Los Angeles at the time. My brother was obsessed with the Rolling Stones and, as twins, we basically decided that we have sovereign bands. In other words, we listened to everything together and did everything together. My brother was my best friend growing up and we did everything together the whole time growing up, which is a very unique way to grow up, I guess, and very cool from my perspective. Also, he was always a good drummer once he started playing drums. He was always good and I sucked. I took up guitar and I played with only two fingers. So the two of us started a band called Homogenized Goo and played at our elementary school graduation. We played three original songs – “Flying Frogs,” “Chewing Gum Minds,” which I sang, and our instrumental number - “Nonstop Chicken Flight.” Really at this point it was more important what we were wearing rather than what we were playing. I had my paisley and I had my hair exactly like it looks now. We weren’t allowed to grow our hair at age twelve. At that time, if you think about 1967-’68, you know what I’m talking about. I’m not just talking about psychedelic Rock N’ Roll, which was my favorite, and my other favorite, Blues, but also Soul and obviously Motown era. Everything was happening, along with a lot of schlock, but that’s Pop. Pop is all about all possibilities that are somewhat accessible for someone to sing along with in their car. My brother and I just decided that we were going to form a band and just try to play. I stopped singing and from early on we just messed around and made stuff up. We basically were improvising but we didn’t know that word. We’d say we were jamming but that apparently means something different now because many years ago I was at the High Sierra [Music] Festival with the Scott Amendola Band and I learned that jamming is no longer making stuff up out of thin air, it’s actually playing an endless solo over and over for like half an hour. It’s like trying to sleep in a sleeping bag. That’s not my idea of jamming. My idea of jamming is getting together people and just starting to play and that’s what I still like doing, pretty much the most. Maybe it’s the only thing I feel confident doing, you know, because music is difficult for me. So I like making stuff up because, not just because it’s easy, but because it’s the immediacy of it, the comradery, the psychic energy behind it. There’s that amazing feeling when it’s really coming together as something fresh and new. It’s about who we are, but it’s more than who we are, and that’s when I feel like I almost disappear. I become one with something else, and that’s



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Nels Cline in 2018, Photo Credit: Ken Weiss

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where I'm happiest. And I can do that with music that's planned. I kind of feel like when sound happens, I'm into it, that's it, I'm gone. And it started out really early for me. The first moment that I felt that energy, besides Ravi Shankar, the second big epiphany was hearing "Manic Depression" by the Jimi Hendrix Experience. I heard it on the radio, completely random, now that I think about it, because it wasn't the single, which was "Purple Haze." I hadn't heard "Purple Haze" yet, I'd just looked at the album cover. There was no underground Rock radio in Southern California until late '69, I think, so we used to just buy based off listening to Top 30 radio, which at that time was everything from Soul to Rock. And one Saturday afternoon they played "Manic Depression" on KHJ. Before that we had been looking at that album cover. We used to buy stuff based on how it looked sometimes because we didn't have any reference. I didn't have any older brothers or sisters to guide me. If I had, they would have said, "Just listen to Bob Dylan." [Laughs] That's the only artist any of my friends who had older siblings listened to, and I was just, 'I hate Bob Dylan.' There's no way I was listening to Bob Dylan because at the time it was sonically reprehensible to me. It took me decades to figure out what there was to love about Bob Dylan, and now, of course, I know, but it literally took forever because I like sound and his sound really bothered me. So as I was saying, we had to buy albums based off of what they looked like. You know, the band has a funny name, they looked cool, they had long hair, there's like a lightshow pattern on the cover. Half the time, these records were not very good so we waited on the Jimi Hendrix Experience. We looked at that cover and just thought, 'Oh man, look at these guys! Look at that jacket! This has got to be the best record ever made but how many times have we thought this before and been wrong?' So when we heard "Manic Depression" playing on the radio, we knew right away that it was that record. We could tell by the voice, it was a power trio, the whole thing. We were literally jumping up and down going, 'This is that Jimi Hendrix record!' [Laughs] And then when he got to his solo and sang along with it – that was it. That was it – that's the story of my life in a nutshell, that moment. From then on, I was going to play music for the rest of my life, and I am not exaggerating, because I felt like I was being jolted by electricity, and at the same time, like I had entered a magic realm that I never wanted to leave. I wanted to be part of this realm. So that's really it for me. Other things from that time had a similar power like "7 and 7 Is" by Love, "I am a Walrus" by the Beatles, and "Happenings Ten Years Time Ago" by the Yardbirds. Things where you revisit these songs over and over again just to feel the effect of them. It was all about sound, this magical sound. And then, something happened in '71 - I heard John Coltrane's Africa as a borrowed record from a friend who had bought it for his father who was a notable poet and kind of a weird influence on my life because he was the only super, wild bohemian nut that I knew, and still is – Jack Hirschman. He was sort of the poet laureate of San Francisco at one point. My friend David had lent it to my brother because he said,

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“Well, you like all that instrumental Frank Zappa stuff so you might like this record,” which I find quite perplexing when I think back on it now, but he was kind of right. The first track was this edited version of “Africa,” and that was another one of those moments where my brother and I just looked at each other and had no idea about what was happening. I just thought, ‘This is the most amazing music and why didn’t somebody tell me?’ Then I found out who John Coltrane was. He’d already died and I felt so bereft, I felt so robbed. I needed to know everything, I needed to know all about this man. My brother started investigating sort of randomly and went straight off into Miles, realizing that everything coming and going goes through Miles Davis. This was 1971, the beginning of so-called Jazz Rock, which later became known as Fusion, a word I like to use to upset people, but we know it’s an essentially meaningless term. [Laughs] It kind of means everything instrumental that’s not straight ahead Jazz and not orchestral or so-called Classical. This is the beginning of Weather Report and the middle period of some classic electric music by Miles Davis, of Herbie Hancock’s septet/sextet, Tony Williams Lifetime, John McLaughlin and the Mahavishnu Orchestra. These were huge, huge, heady moments for a high school freshman. Coltrane, for me, was like the embodiment of the same energy I was feeling from Ravi Shankar, which was this very serious spiritual endeavor. It was not just musical expertise, or compositional novelty, or vision, it was all of this mystery and all of this beautiful energy. So I kind of became a Coltrane obsessive, after a whole period of Blues Rock and an obsession with the Allman Brothers Band and Duane Allman. I was also listening to some really bad guitar Blues Rock stuff when I think back on it now. I won’t mention names because I still love these guys, but I have revisited a lot of their music recently and it just doesn’t hold up for me. I didn’t know what to do with the guitar when I heard John Coltrane’s music because there was no guitar in the music and I started listening to these Jazz records and I really liked most of them better when they didn’t have guitar than when they did. I started listening to a lot of Progressive Rock. We were already listening to King Crimson but a friend named Lee Kaplan turned us on to Yes and Focus. I got really into Jan Akkerman and Steve Howe, really heavily, and that expanded my vocabulary on the instrument, which is, even though I didn’t use any effects then, except reverb on my amp, I think it explains why later in life I accidentally started messing with effects pedals right when I thought I was gonna learn straight ahead Jazz. And that happened because I had bought, when it came out, a little Polytone Mini Brute amp, which is like the Jim Hall-Joe Pass-Herb Ellis little amp made by this accordion player in California. It was super dark, had hardly any treble, solid-state – I went out and bought one of those because I thought I was just going to play straight ahead. I was going to learn how to play Joe Pass and Pat Martino, he’s the man! [Laughs] And right around this time, my friend Vinny Golia,

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who's a woodwind player/composer, we were just becoming friends and he left a tube Echoplex in my bedroom, and my friend Brian came over, who I had met in college. He played what we now call analogue synthesizer. We used to call them synthesizers [Laughs], and he played various resistance flutes, like Indonesian flutes, through his tape delay, and we started playing in my bedroom. Next thing I knew, I had this lap steel out that I had been given by a friend of my mom's. I detuned it and I put it into my old Fuzz Box and we started making all this space music. We started the trio called Spiral and everything we did was improvised and it was all really, really spacey and ritualistic. All through the Polytone Mini Brute, which at this point was turned all the way up. You never ever play straight ahead through that amp. That set me on this path of what now are called stomp boxes. I don't ever use that term, it always makes me think of grunge, the Pixies. So here I have all this stuff and my life was going in this weird direction where I just didn't know what I wanted to do because I was torn. I was torn between playing music that was associated with what I generally would call Rock, and music that was called Jazz. So I met a man named Eric von Essen who died in 1997. He and I were like musical partners for about seventeen years, except for a little bit off towards the end because he had a lot of substance abuse problems, and also he went way off into really straight ahead Jazz. He started playing with Jimmy Rowles and Mose Allison and those kinds of people, and his writing changed but [before that] we had a chamber group with my brother and violinist Jeff Gauthier, and I played all acoustic guitars, very influenced by the group Oregon with Ralph Towner, Paul McCandless, Collin Walcott and Glen Moore, and also the Miles Davis Quintet with Herbie, Wayne and Ron. Doing that was completely satisfying but went nowhere as far as trying to get it going. We'd get a grant but no gigs and then Eric kind of crashed and burned and ended up living in his car and I started drifting back towards playing Rock. I got tired of playing with people who were all sitting down, scratching their chins, and I wanted to move around because I was really into Funk in the late '70s, early '80s. I was listening to Reggae and still having a little bit of the Prog Rock tug going on here and there, with some textures, some color extended techniques. You know, things I'd heard Fred Frith doing on the guitar, just trying to add that to a different kind of syncopated Funk sound, I ended up in a band called BLOC and that really was like my attempt at a Rock career. We got signed after years of just playing in Southern California, mostly Los Angeles, to A & M Records, made a record for an exorbitant amount of money, and we were dropped immediately, which kind of rescued me in a way. It rescued me from the stultifying atmosphere of this band [Laughs] who were all my friends but it just was so, so difficult. I can't even explain why it was so difficult but I just had to get out of there because all of our parts were so about each person's personality, I couldn't just say, 'Hey guys, this isn't really working for me.' At this time I was playing nylon string guitar with Charlie Haden's Liberation Music Orchestra West Coast. This is the mid-'80s and up to '91, and I

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was told by the singer in this band that I really can't be doing all this other extracurricular stuff. It was like, wow, I had to "focus on the band," which is kind of like saying basically stab yourself in the eye. [Laughs] I have to do what I'm doing which is why Wilco is such an incredible thing because not only was it something I knew was going to give me creative latitude, but I was told, "And by the way, we know that you do all this other stuff," this is what [band manager] Tony Margherita told me. He said, "Our attitude is that everything you do outside the band is gonna bring something back into the band," which is absolutely true and visionary, even though it is just common sense. And then he said, "And by the way, we'll help you do your own music." So I thought, 'Whoa! That's pretty crazy.' The BLOC situation was the opposite so when BLOC broke up [I changed paths]. One of my mentors was John Carter, a woodwind player who ended up focusing on clarinet. He passed away from lung cancer and I went to his funeral and, I don't know, there was something so sobering and shocking about seeing this man in his open casket. Ornette Coleman was there, and I saw James Newton, Vinny, my brother, and a lot of people from our community. I had grown my hair really long at this point. I was trying to look like Veronica Lake. [Laughs] You think I'm kidding? And people started calling me Nelson. Remember the Nelson twins? That's really what my hair looked like except I hadn't dyed it blonde. I hadn't cut it for four years so the top was really blonde, and I used to wear girl's headbands and had this whole other thing going on, but after the funeral I said, 'No more Rock, no more fucking around. I'm just gonna play improvised music.' My friend cut all my hair off and put it inside her art piece, inside all this resin and inside this big wooden thing she was making. Then I met Mike Watt and I had to start playing Rock N' Roll again. [Laughs] That's what I did. I started kind of this parallel path and, at this point in time, in the late '80s and early '90s, these worlds started to merge in a way that worked for me. I was no longer feeling that by bringing so-called Pop elements into improvised music that I was ruining it, which is what most writers were saying about people like me in the late '70s and early '80s when I was playing with guys like Vinny Golia, Tim Berne and Walter Thompson, and bringing this language into it which they'd asked me to do, by the way. I didn't say, 'Hey, I'll do a big psychedelic Rock solo here.' No, that's what they asked for, and the writers were like, "This guy is evil, he's evil. He's bringing in all these horrible sounds to the music." Well by the late '80s to early '90s, things were really coming together. I think a lot of it had to do with what was happening in New York with the Knitting Factory on Houston where they were booking bands like Curlew, which was kind of like a Progressive Rock band, a bit like Henry Cow, and they were booking all of the avant-garde improviser community, and they had people like Sonic Youth and Arto Lindsay from DNA and the Ambitious Lovers. This meant that these people all started hanging out in the same place. I'm not gonna give them full credit for it but this definitely, with my visits to New York, were starting to feel really

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different. And this was the beginning of me starting to relax, because I was starting to give up music. I was so tormented by all the divisive energies in myself, because that's a Western mindset, very dichotomous, you know, mind/body duality, acoustic/electric duality, Jazz/Rock duality, and I just thought, 'Man, I'm going to quit guitar, I might have to quit music because this is driving me crazy.' So I thought what would I do if I quit playing guitar? Well, the first thing was that I would play upright bass, because I love bass. And then I thought, 'I'm not carting that thing around.' [Laughs] Besides I like playing WITH great bass players, I don't want to be the bass player. And then I thought, 'Well, I'll quit music. It's driving me crazy anyway. So what would I do? I don't know - write or do visual art?' Wow, talk about torment? [Laughs] And those are solitary endeavors and the thing I love about music making is doing it with people and for people in front of people and then being able to move on and do it again and again and again. This is what sustains me, this is my life. So I do it all the time, and now with Wilco, it changed everything. I met Jeff Tweedy when I was playing with the [alt-country band] Geraldine Fibbers in 1996. I was the sub-guitarist at that point, and we were opening for Golden Smog. I sat in with Golden Smog at the end of the tour in St. Louis - I played "On the Beach" by Neil Young - and whatever I played, Jeff remembered. The Geraldine Fibbers loved Jeff and Carla Bozulich from the Geraldine Fibbers stayed in touch for years, which I didn't even know, until we would go to Chicago and we needed a piece of gear. Carla called Jeff and we went to his loft and borrowed the heaviest amp I've ever moved in my life. For all you nerds out there it was a Matchless Chieftain. It was their version of a twin-reverb. Jeff was always super cool to lend us whatever we needed and sometimes the guys from Wilco would come to the show, but I didn't know them. I didn't really know Jeff, even, but Jeff remembered what I did at the Golden Smog gig. After the Fibbers, I played in Carla's band and we opened for Wilco in the Midwest a little bit, and that was when I met everybody and they all heard me. I was playing lap steel, and playing some Willie Nelson stuff, and some Carla stuff. And then when Leroy Bach quit Wilco, somebody suggested that maybe Jeff call me. I think it might have been Glenn [Kotche], I actually should find out, it's only been twelve years now that I've been in the band and I've never quite settled this one [Laughs], but it did change everything for me, joining Wilco, there's no doubt. It's like people actually know who I am, and I have to say even playing with Larry [Ochs] and Gerald [Clever], or any other kind of configuration going around, it basically doubles the number of people that come to my show. If you're playing for fifty people one minute and the next time it's a hundred, it really feels different. And I don't play to play for a large number of people, I don't care actually how many people are there, but when you have to buy gas to get to the next place, a hundred people makes a huge difference, and I am very grateful for this. I also have to say, because I know there



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must be Wilco fans here, I've already talked to some, it's been twelve years now, the same six dudes, that's by far more the most stable personnel of any in Wilco history and we're just having a great time. This is a great, great thing. We're still having a really great time playing the music and we really like each other and we all get along so it's really cool. Plus I get to do all kinds of other stuff. I have my band The Nels Cline Singers for about fifteen years and I still try to play with all my friends that I love, like Larry. I've know his music since ROVA's earliest days. I'm close with people from playing gigs in the Bay area such as Scott Amendola and Ches Smith. Now living in New York, all these people, many of whom I've listened to for thirty years, like Tim Berne and Zeena Parkins and Andrea Parkins and Tom Rainey and whomever, I can play with them a lot, if I like. It's a perfect life, it's really incredible, and I have all these other projects that I'm doing besides when I get to improvise with some of my favorite people on the planet, which is what sustains me.

### QUESTIONS FROM THE AUDIENCE:

*How did you come to make your newest album Lovers?*

Cline – Lovers is an album that came out this year. It was never supposed to be a double album but the songs just kept getting bigger. It was licensed by Blue Note at the last minute. It was recorded some time ago, it took forever to come out. It's just part of what I was doing and thinking about all the time but I think nobody knew I was playing like that except for a few people in California. I'm not a Jazz expert, I don't know millions of tunes. I never learned that stuff. Now you can go to school and learn that stuff, but that kind of education didn't exist, except at the Berklee School of Music in Boston, when I was coming up. I was told it was too later for me to have music studies because I didn't know the rudiments of music. I was just like a dumb Rock dude who was playing with two fingers. I was a philosophy major at Occidental College until I said, 'What am I doing? This is absurd,' and I quit my philosophy studies and just went to community college and started over in music with an amazing teacher. I played in the Jazz band in high school and I played in the Jazz band and big band in Santa Monica College. Pianist John Beasley, who was in high school at the time, his dad was my teacher – Rule Beasley. He was a theory teacher and his name was really Rule! He was an incredible human being, an amazing teacher. At the time, John was better than everyone in the Jazz band, and he wasn't even in college yet! He had like one hair on his beard, this total baby face. So the music on Lovers is stuff that I played or thought about playing for maybe as long as thirty-five years. I never thought I'd do it. I was never gonna stake a claim like, 'Hey, listen to me play Jazz!' You know what I mean? I have to have some sort of acumen or self-confidence to do that and I don't. So in order to do it, I made it a concept album and the concept isn't always straight ahead Jazz. There's all kinds of stuff on it. There's contextual things, and my arrangement ideas involved all the aspects of what you hear me do



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except for masses of distortion. That's what I took out of that equation. But some of it's pretty open. I was bestowed a fund by two different philanthropic arts organizations to make the record. That's the other reason I never did it because it cost an insane amount of money. We had as many as twenty-three people, a five day session for the main thing, and then the one day session for strings and harp. I had some of the best players in the universe and I wanted to pay them. It will never recoup, ever, [Laughs] especially in today's climate.

**Question:** *When you're working on a new song, can you share a little bit about your thought process on deciding which of your guitars and pedals or whatever else you're going to use on that particular song?*

Cline: I'll tell you that I never plug in when I'm practicing or writing, whether it's an acoustic guitar or one of my electric guitars, and I'm sorry, I have way too many guitars. It's embarrassing, but it's all about something that strikes my fancy, either from just messing around, like I hit some kind of sound that leads me to believe that this could be a good idea, certain sonorities, if I hit a chord, and I just love that chord, then I start thinking of relative pitches that could be related to whatever scale is implied. Ok, and then I might think that was boring so what else can happen? So then I hear in my head what's the next note, the next place? Sometimes I just see what's in my head? Sometimes I just have to stop, put the guitar away, hear the note, and then move on. That's how I write a lot. I have the guitar next to me and I hit notes and write it down. Some of it's just based on idiomatic guitar sounds. I'll do that and then it needs a melody, so I'll do that. As far as what guitar I pick? For somebody who owns a billion guitars, it's kind of a joke because I really only need like ten guitars – acoustic, electric, twelve string, six string, single coil and a Humbucker [patented hum-canceling pickup]. That would pretty much take care of it but instead I have like a hundred guitars. I'm not kidding. I'm sorry but it's true. They're not all in New York though, half are in Chicago because there's room in the Wilco loft or at least there was before Jeff Tweedy started buying more guitars! [Laughs] I didn't use to be gregarious and somewhat comfortable speaking like I am now. I was super, super nervous. I don't know what happened. Anyway, let's enjoy a little music. In keeping in the mood of what Gerald and Larry and I do, I'm just gonna make something up and see where this goes. I'm going to utilize harmonizing, distortion, compression, delay, looping, reverb. I'm using the Kaoss Pad, for those guys that don't know, I use it for fake tape delay basically, because I don't want to carry around a tape delay, and I can also switch back and forth between Roland Space Echo and Echoplex, which is really incredible if you know what it'd be like to cart around both of those. Anyway, let's see what happens here...

**NICK FINZER  
INTERVIEW BY  
LUDWIG VAN  
TRIKT**



Nick Finzer, trombone

**Cadence:** *Your website has a quote “Nick Finzer is one of the most dynamic musicians of the millennial generation”; are you a part of a group of similar age and artistic outlook?*

N.F.: There is a huge wave of jazz artists my age who are dedicated to this music. It’s a bit of a new generation of jazz musicians, I think. Most young musicians come through jazz education degree programs, and those programs are becoming more and more established in terms of both their curriculum and reputation. The opportunity for the master / apprentice model that has permeated jazz for most of it’s history leaves a vacuum for many musicians in NY now, and we’re all trying to figure out how to keep learning and getting better, as well as playing as much as possible.

**Cadence:** *It is great that fellow trombonist Wycliffe Gordon as taken such a long term mentorship in your career. Are there any stories that you can recount that revel something about the man?*

N.F.: I think the most compelling story comes from the very first time I met Wycliffe. I was a shy high school student who had only recently taken an interest in jazz, and Mr. Gordon was passing through Rochester to play a concert in the dead of winter. After hearing his first set, my Mom forced me to introduce myself to him. She wanted me to let him know that I played trombone and that I was a big fan of his. Not only did he take the time out of his set break to chat with me, but he actually insisted on me getting the trombone out of the car, and gave me a lesson right there in the green room of the club, while he should have been relaxing and eating dinner! That night really moved a lot of things forward in my life. I started driving down to NYC from Rochester for lessons. It was all my mom’s fault for forcing me to say hello! And I can’t thank Mr. Gordon enough for giving me the opportunity to learn from him. It was the beginning of a long road!

**Cadence:** *I am interviewing you during the tail end of a 23 USA city tour to promote the release of “Hear & Now” (Outsideinmusic OiM1701 \* 2017). What as been the audience*

*reaction? Were there overt questions regarding your politics?*

N.F.: Yes indeed, it was quite a tour! I was glad to connect with so many passionate music fans all over the USA – they are still out there! We just have to go and find them. The audiences were very appreciative of the music, especially tunes from the new album like “Lullaby for an Old Friend” and “Love Wins” People were quite moved by those tunes in particular. Some others seemed to generate a mixed feeling, for example “Race to the Bottom” resulted in mixed mutterings amongst the audience after telling the story behind the composition. Overall though, the reaction was very positive! No one was really asking about my personal politics, as I think it came across pretty clear as to what I was thinking about, and how I felt about the world.

*Cadence: Is the touring model which you recently used during your domestic tour the new normal for upcoming jazz artist; picking up a local band to play your music as opposed to your own band?*

N.F.: I’m not sure I would say it’s the “new normal”, I think artist have to find a way to make it work for them. There are certainly bands that can make it work, just look at Kneebody. Although, I’m not sure if they’re still considered “upcoming”. For me, that meant using my educational contacts and skills alongside the performances to make it a viable model. Jazz artist have traveled and played with local bands throughout the history of the music. There are plenty of stories I’ve heard from people like Benny Golson of being guests for a week in Chicago playing with local band, and then the next week another artist would come in and play with at that club with a rhythm section. Obviously with more complex music and arrangement, it becomes more difficult. But for me, if the choice is simplify and connect with new musicians, or stay home, I’m going to go for it and see what happens. The question of touring domestically, I think comes down to how hard you’re willing to work to make something happen. I think that getting your music out to people in real life, is the most important connection you can make as an artist, and that’s why I poured energy and resources into this tour. This tour turned out to be mostly a solo tour meaning that I connected with musicians in each region that I travel to, and perform with them. This is really exciting for me, because I get to hear how new people will interpret my music. As you mentioned this is also beneficial for the bottom line of the tour because I’m paying travel expenses for one person rather than five or six. Additionally, there’s always a strong educational element that goes along with touring. I’m very fortunate to have had supportive from my instrument sponsor (Conn-Selmer, I play King Trombones), who are very supportive of arts education. There were stops at high schools and universities across the country that help to support the performance arm of the tour. A large part of the jazz audience is definitely in the form of students, so in order to get to them and share your music, you have to go into schools and share your educational perspectives, I remember some of the most formative moments of my early musical development came when a guest artist

was passing through town, and came and gave an informal master class or workshop. In terms of the bottom line, the tour was definitely successful. Through all of the various channels, I was able to make it work, and at the same time share the music with a lot more people than if I stayed in my apartment in New York!

***Cadence: It is obvious from your 3 recordings thus far that you still believe in the viability of the physical disc. Please comment?***

N.F.: I think having physical products is essential for two reasons. One, is as an avenue to introduction to new listeners within the industry at large. It's so easy to just delete an e-mail. Or link to a file. But to receive a physical item requires a bit more consideration before moving on to the next. The second reason is that serves as a commemorative item for audience members at shows. Even if they don't often listen to the physical CD itself, it's a memory of the enjoyable evening they had experiencing your music. Not to mention that CD's sound better than MP3's, and it allows you to have all the information about the album (sidemen, liner notes, etc)! I do believe that that we're at the end of the CD's, but there hasn't been a delivery method introduced yet that can serve all the same functions that a CD does. Not yet.

***Cadence: Let's glance at your composing by looking at your debut 2012's "Exposition" (Outside In Music OIM 1201). All the compositions are memorable and hummable with an equal balance of rhythm and melody driven. Give us a glimpse into how you composed that session?***

N.F.: For that session in particular, it was a collection of compositions that I had been working on up until that point. We recorded in 2012, but many of the pieces were written in 2008 or 2009 when I was first starting to put together a band, and concept. I think each piece has its own origin story, ranging from musical exploration of new sounds and colors (i.e. "Alternate Agenda" was composed to explore some new types of harmonies that I was checking out, and wanted to delve deeper into the time) to being inspired by the compositions of some of my musical heroes ("Introspection" was composed with inspiration from Duke Ellington's great piece "Portrait of Mahaila Jackson" part of Ellington's "New Orleans Suite"). For me, gathering those pieces together and writing some new pieces for the record, shaped the way I composed into the future. I've become more focused on the arrangement of a composition serving the melody, and not the other way around. Sometimes people ask (mainly students) "Do you write the melody, or the harmony first". At that time, I would have said both. At that time, I would have said both. But between then and now, I can decidedly answer that the melody has come first. Everything should try to serve that melody.

***Cadence: While you were completing your education at Eastman School of Music and acquiring a Master's at Juilliard; did you start to formulate concepts in jazz education in or to teach?***

N.F.: Teaching and thinking about music education, have been part of

my conception pretty much since I was in high school. I've always been teaching in one form or another since then. Throughout my time studying in college and grad school; I had the opportunity to learn first hand from some great teachers. This definitely informed my personal conception about teaching jazz. So much so that a group of friends and I started a jazz education non-profit called the Institute for Creative Music . This organization was born out of a number of tours that I booked as a burgeoning band leader while at Eastman. There was always a strong educational component to the tours, and our curriculum more or less developed naturally from those sessions into a much more focused approach that we present today. I've been fortunate to teach at all different levels, with students of all different ability levels and interest levels. I'm always searching for ways to be able to be a more effective communicator with my students and provide them with feedback they need in order to improve.

*Cadence: You have logged a lot of experience playing with large ensembles/big bands; Wynton Marsalis' Jazz at Lincoln Center, Lucas Pino's No Nonet, Ryan Truesdell's "Gil Evans Project", Tommy Dorsey Orchestra and Bob Stewart's Double Quartet. This during a time when the sustainability of large jazz groups are not always feasible. What have these various experiences been like musically and in terms of being on the road (comfort, money, etc.)?*

N.F.: Playing with large jazz groups is the best way for us young jazz musicians to meet lots of musicians, and to learn from more experienced veterans! That is the way that many musicians in history of this music have come up through the scene. I am very grateful to have had the opportunity to play with such great large ensembles. I will however say, that these large projects often don't work as often as smaller groups.

*Cadence: Anything that might reflect the life of a musician and the various places and people you encounter or even a good band story?*

N.F.: I think one of the most memorable experiences with a band I was touring with, happened a couple of years ago.... We happened to have a day off in a VERY rural town in Wyoming on the way from Seattle to Denver. The morning we were set to depart for Denver, there happened to be a big storm and the highway was closed. We rushed to the airport in the very last minute (where one member of the band got detained by airport police), then that flight got canceled, and we waited around most of the day waiting for the road to open, but of course, it never happened. This town was so small that there was only one flight out each day, so there wasn't any way to escape! But, eventually, in order to make the show, management chartered two (yes, two!) private jets to get the band to the venue in Denver. And somehow, we started the show only 30 minutes late! As they say, "the show must go on". Luckily, stuff of this level doesn't happen often, but man – travel sure can be harrowing sometimes!

*Cadence: Correct me if I am wrong but your recordings thus far have*

*largely featured originals as opposed to any traditional jazz standards; was this intentional on your part?*

N.F.: That is totally correct. I have three albums, and all the music is original except for Duke Ellington's "Single Petal of a Rose" that appears on "Here & Now" – and yes, it was totally intentional. I wanted to present something that was unique to me, and wasn't just a rehashing of the same material that has been recorded many, many times. I do have many recordings of some jazz standards on a duo album I recently put online with pianist Chris Ziemba, as well as a series of duets that have appeared on my You Tube channel. And actually just yesterday I recorded a second duo album with Chris, that features a number of standards. If I am going to use other composer's songs as inspiration (e.g. traditional jazz standards), I like to try to present it in a way that might be slightly different than the "usual" jazz quartet of horn player plus rhythm section.

*Cadence: Looking at your individual sound on the "bone"; you don't thus far show any influence by the other more outlier expressionism of say Roswell Rudd, Grachan Moncur III, Ray Anderson, Albert Mangelsdorff, Craig Harris.....?*

N.F.: My musical discovery on the trombone didn't necessarily go straight through those people. But I'm certainly well aware of those people and their music. More recently I've been fortunate enough to play a bit with tubist Bob Stewart (I played on his last record "Connections Mind the Gap") who was heavily a part of that whole more expressionist scene, and he's really allowed me to explore those sounds, and be less "bebop" centric. I've even had the chance to play a bit with Craig Harris! It's certainly a whole world of playing, that I wouldn't say is more strongest suit but over the last four years or so I've been allowing myself to be open to including more gestural type musical ideas into my playing. Always more to work on!

*Cadence: When I look at your website it is probably (in my view) the most complete jazz website that I have seen; with so many aspects from the selling of your music to instructional/educational services, posters, and one on one lessons! Thus I wondered does this setup give you a steady revenue stream for you?*

N.F.: Well, I certainly appreciate you taking a look! The website is something that I've been working on for quite a while now. There have been many iterations, some not quite as functional as what is up on there now. I want there to be a place to access all of the things that I'm doing so whether you are a jazz fan, music student, or anyone else, that there is some value for you visiting there. Even though most people probably consume your content via their social channels, I want people to be able to find my home for that content and be able to peruse it at their leisure. In terms of revenue, I would say that it certainly fluctuates, but there is always some amount of activity coming in off the site. I've been very fortunate to see the site growing more and more in its usership, and hope to continue to provide some valuable content there for people to consume!



**JOHN  
O'GALLAGHER,  
INTERVIEW BY  
LUDWIG VAN  
TRIKT**



*Cadence: We begin this interview with you on tour post election of Donald Trump... what reaction if any are you getting from Europeans regarding the U.S. now?*

J.O.: I think the European reaction to the political events in the U.S. is what would be expected and generally what has been discussed in the media. There is a lot of concern over global destabilization resulting from the new administration. After living in the UK for the past year, and observing the issues surrounding Brexit and other the nationalist trends around Europe, it's clear that there is a climate in politics right now that isn't limited only to the U.S.

*Cadence: Would it be accurate to say that your musical career as gotten an added impetus during the past couple years? If yes what do you attribute this to?*

J.O.: That's an interesting question. It doesn't necessarily feel like I am working more now than I did ten or fifteen years ago. I think that perhaps my Anton Webern Project may have reached an audience I hadn't reached before. That and publishing of my book on improvisation using twelve-tone constructions may have increased an awareness about what I'm doing. I tend to think though that a lot of it has to do with longevity and being an active member of the jazz community while building a body of work as a leader and sideman over a period of almost 30 years. I am always amused by reviews the refer to me part of the 'young generation' of saxophonists since I turn 53 this year. I just take it as a complement since I guess it implies my music is relevant or sounds fresh.

*Cadence: Capture what it was like moving to NYC in 1988; were you welcomed warmly by the jazz community?*

J.O.: It was a very exciting time for me. The music scene in NYC was ripe for new voices. It seemed like there was a kind of nexus of the old guard and the new. The Knitting Factory had just opened and the whole downtown music scene which flourished in the 90's was just starting. I can remember



going down to Bradley's and hanging, hearing Tommy Flanagan while sitting at the bar next to Freddie Hubbard and George Coleman. Everyone, and I mean everyone was there. For me, it represented a snapshot of what the heyday of jazz in the 50's must have been like. I always felt like the jazz community was always welcoming. There are always going to be some people who vibe, but mostly I think musicians are cool that way. I can remember going to Jay's, which was an uptown club on Broadway, to see Clifford Jordan. I'm friends with Sam Newsome who was in the band, so Clifford invited me to sit in. I remember afterwards how warm and supportive Clifford was, he was a true gentleman.

***Cadence: Please break it down if you will for a lay person what "twelve tone constructions" are? Are there any musical comparisons that we (i.e. the listener) can listen to?***

J.O.: Music which uses interval relationships between pitches as the principal means for designing the architecture of a composition are often referred to as serial or twelve-tone pieces.

In twelve-tone music all 12 pitches of the chromatic scale are used as the palette from which these interval relationships are realized. Schoenberg, Webern, and Berg were the major innovators of this style of music in the classical music realm, but the idea of the structural integrity of a musical compositions interval content is one not limited to twelve-tone music. One recent example in jazz is a recent CD by Darcy James Argue called Real Enemies which uses 12 tone constructions.

***Cadence: In preparation for your classical music project did you shed in the classical idiom which Branford Marsalis states is much more demanding than jazz upon a saxophonist?***

J.O.: I really didn't view the Webern project as a classical music project. It was really intended to be reflective on where we are at in jazz, and how there is a tangible link to this other type of music, which on the surface seems so different from jazz. I was trying to not only explore this music's influence on modern jazz, but in the how the aesthetics of these two musics are shared. As a young student I trained for several years in classical saxophone repertoire, but haven't shed any of that for a very long time. I think the discipline and fundamentals of good technique that it has to offer are invaluable, but as far as being more demanding, I think the jury is out on that.

***Cadence: Let's look over your CIMP recordings beginning with "Axiom" (CIMP 265) a session with fellow saxophonist Tony Malaby; any fond or not so fond memories from that date?***

J.O.: I was very happy with how that record came out. This band had been playing for a while together and I think the CD is a good representation of what we were into at that time. Tony, John, Jeff, and I had been working together in a number of other different bands in the late 1990's and so this band came about rather organically from those associations. This session was my first time meeting Bob and everyone

at Cadence. It was a great experience as I think is reflected in the music we made.

**Cadence:** *Continuing to look back at your recordings with CIMP and the session "Axiom" (CIMP 265) featuring fellow saxophonist Tony Malaby from 2012; for the lay person how do you know in selecting a fellow saxophonist that there will be musical chemistry?*

J.O.: The CD "Axiom" actually came out in 2001. Tony and I are friends and had been playing in many other bands together so I knew we were stylistically on the same page. I think as a leader, whenever you choose musicians to play your music, there is that unspoken understanding as to how they will fit into what your vision for the music is. When you hear a musician play, you know immediately on a certain level what they are into. There might be certain aspects of their musical personality that aren't on display when first hearing someone, but you can tell more or less where someone is coming from and whether they would fit into what you are trying to do.

**Cadence:** *On the CIMP session "rules of invisibility volume #1" (CIMP 304) there are some examples of largely free improvisation; "Leakey's Bag" for instance. This too alludes to the inherent trust you must have in your fellow band mates (in this instance Jay Rosen and Masa Kamaguchi). Looking back were you satisfied with the results?*

J.O.: That recording was great fun to make. Masa, Jay and I had been playing quite a bit together, working on not only on developing an improvisational vibe for the trio, but also trying to push jazz standards in different directions by unlocking aspects of their form, harmony, rhythm, and melody for extended improvisation. The piece "Leakey's Bag" is actually based on Charlie Parker's "Anthropology". The title was an allusion to Louis Leakey, a famous anthropologist and archaeologist. Other tunes on the CD that are based on standards are 'It's Very Deep' (How deep is the ocean), 'Titan's Stride' (Giant Steps), 'I Love You Two' (I Love You), and 'You Ain't All That' (All the things you are). I remember that the recording went so well and with takes of so much material, that Bob Rusch decided that he would release two CDs of the session. That is why there is a Vol.1 and Vol. 2.

**Cadence:** *The trio setting is thus far the dominant context for your music? Is that born of economic necessity or just an artistic choice?*

J.O.: Certainly the economics of touring and recording are a significant concern. Touring with a larger group these days can be very difficult as well as the cost of recording a large group like the Webern Project can be incredibly high. I think though for me, the appeal of working with a trio is there is a plasticity and a stream lining down of the music to the bare essentials. It's like a race car that is light and nimble and can respond on a dime. I have been interested in exploring different kinds of harmonic approaches for some time now, and a trio allows for those kinds of uncluttered improvisational explorations. I think if you look at the progression of the five CDs I've done as a trio, the first two engage at the intersection of jazz standards and interpretive freedom. My third trio CD 'Dirty Hands' begins my musical transition into the

much more structured compositions that are found on my last two CD's 'The Honeycomb' and 'Live in Brooklyn'. So as time has passed the conception for my trios has changed.

**Cadence:** *Let's backtrack even further than the latter CIMP sessions to your big band work with the iconic Joe Henderson. How did he hear about you; and did you get to interact with him on any personal level?*

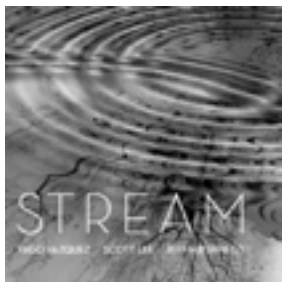
J.O.: I came to work with Joe through through my friend Bob Belden who was producing the Big Band CD for Verve as well as contributing some of his arrangements. He put everything together and was basically the MD for the band. I had never met Joe before then so it was a huge moment for me. It was a great honor to get to play not only with Joe, but a band full of incredible musicians like Al Foster, George Mraz, Rene Rosnes, Steve, Wilson, Chris Potter, and so many others. Joe and I spoke a few times, but I don't really remember much about the particulars, other than he had an amazing presence and was very gracious.

I really didn't view the Webern project as a classical music project. It was really intended to be reflective on where we are at in jazz, and how there is a tangible link to this other type of music, which on the surface seems so different from jazz. I was trying to not only explore this music's influence on modern jazz, but in the how the aesthetics of these two musics are shared. As a young student I trained for several years in classical saxophone repertoire, but haven't shed any of that for a very long time. I think the discipline and fundamentals of good technique that it has to offer are invaluable, but as far as being more demanding, I think the jury is out on that.

End of Interview



**YAGO VAZQUEZ,  
INTERVIEW BY  
LUDWIG VAN  
TRIKT**



*Cadence: Prior to your very extensive formal education in your homeland of Spain; please trace how your early interest in playing the piano and jazz in particular all developed?*

Y.V.: When I was a little kid I used to sing songs from the radio or TV around the house, and my mother thought that it would be a good idea to try music lessons, so when I was 7 years old I started taking piano and guitar lessons. Two years later I auditioned for the music conservatory in Vigo and I got accepted as a piano student there. That was all classical music. But my father always had a lot of music at home, mostly classical and jazz. When I was about 13 or 14 I started to grab some of my dad's records to listen to them, just out of curiosity, and I remember that I immediately loved Charlie Parker and Wes Montgomery, those were my favorites at the time. From there I started to get really into jazz.

*Cadence: When you received your formal education was there any emphasis on the social roots of jazz and it's connection to African American culture?*

Y.V.: Yes, some of my teachers back in Spain made always very clear where this music was coming from. Also I have always been interested in learning this part of history. But to be honest, I wasn't aware of all the implications in terms of race and culture until I moved to New York. In Spain, 10 or 15 years ago, there wasn't a real discussion about it. When I came to New York I was exposed to many social, political and racial issues that I knew nothing about. Now I'm very much aware that I still have a lot to learn.

*Cadence: Please capture what it was like moving to New York City in 2008, in order to attend the New School For Jazz and Contemporary Music.*

Y.V.: When I moved to NYC in 2008 I didn't know many people in the city. Only one good friend lived here at that time, Pablo Castano, he is a great alto player who now lives back in Spain. I was a little scared.

When I arrived I was by myself and went straight to his place, then I had to look for an apartment and all that. It was a little stressful at first but everything was fine. And once I started going to school everything became easier because I got to meet a lot of great musicians and soon I started to play some gigs in the city. But at the time, I was spending most of my time practicing and going out to listen to concerts. It was a great experience.

**Cadence:** *Surely during your first year in New York City you must have a good story about some of your musical or non musical experiences?*

Y.V.: Well, during my first year here I got to meet a lot of new people and some of them would become my closest friends still now. But at that time my English wasn't very good, very often I couldn't understand people, so I would remain quiet and just smile. I think people thought I was a very shy person, but the truth is that I actually didn't understand what they were talking about!

**Cadence:** *Currently I have a number of discs from 2017 all of which share a equal parts jazz & classical influence (The Ethereal Trio on Whirlwind Records; Uri Caine & The Lutoslawski 4tet, "Space Kiss" (816 Music) and Yelena Eckemoff's "In the Shadow of a Cloud" (L&H Productions) Classical music informs your music please comment?*

Y.V.: I'm not familiar with those two particular records, but classical music was a big part of my musical education when I was younger. I've always listened a lot to composers like Bach, Stravinsky, Debussy and Tchaikovsky. They wrote some of the best music ever written. And working on Bach, Chopin or Debussy has been part of my daily routine for the past 10 years or so. When I play or compose I'm not actively trying to resemble or copy any classical composers but they definitely influence my music. I think it's impossible to avoid being influenced by the music you are exposed to. And sometimes those influences show up in unexpected ways. I believe that's a big part of what makes every musician unique, we filter all the music we know and somehow that will be reflected in our music. Everyone has different backgrounds, different experiences and that is the beauty of it.

**Cadence:** *In an October 24th, 2017 New York Times article on the pianist Fred Hersch "The Time I Played for Charles Mingus"; Mr. Hersch recants how hanging out at the piano bar "Bradley's" was an essential rite of passage for a new jazz pianist on the scene. The trading of gossip, the stealing of ideas and begging for gigs....was there a similar place that you hit in your early NYC days?*

Y.V.: I never got to see Bradley's because it was already gone when I moved to NYC. But I heard a lot about that club, everyone says that it was the place to check out all the pianists. People like Jesse Davis or LeeAnn Ledgerwood told me many stories about it. Kenny Barron has a live album that was recorded there and I truly love it. I would have loved to see it!

When I moved to New York, a lot of musicians hung out at places like Fat Cat and Smalls, and I used to go there until very late at night to

play a couple tunes at the jam sessions. Also in NY a very common way to meet musicians is playing sessions at someone's house, that's how I met a lot of the people I now play with.

A couple years ago, Spike Wilner, the owner of Smalls, opened a new club in NY called Mezzrow and for what I understand the whole idea was to have a club with the same concept as Bradley's. They have mostly piano duos and trios, they have a great piano there, and it's a very intimate place to listen to music. I'm actually very excited to be performing there with my trio with Scott Lee and Jeff Hirshfield this January.

***Cadence: Since your graduation in 2010 from The New School for Jazz & Contemporary Music, have you been able to survive by just playing music?***

Y.V.: After finishing my studies at The New School I had to figure out a lot of things. My original idea when I moved to NY it was to be here for a couple years and then go back to Spain after graduating. But I liked NY too much to leave; I felt that I had to stay here. So, I needed to get my artist visa, and also find a way to support myself financially.

The visa was just a lot of paper work, but I didn't really have any problems getting it. And then besides the gigs that I was doing I started teaching piano lessons in a music school in the South Bronx. I was lucky enough to be able to support myself just playing and teaching music, and I really enjoy doing both. I always believed that teaching music, to some extent, would be part of my life as a professional musician. To this day that's basically what I do, I play gigs here in New York, teach and I go on tour a few times a year.

***Cadence: You self produced your first solo effort "Stream"; what does a producer do in the jazz idiom?***

Y.V.: Actually my first record as a leader was "Chorale", I recorded that album in 2010 for the Spanish label Free Code Jazz Records. Paco Charlin, who is the owner of that label, asked me to do one CD for them and he produced it. I was very happy to have Logan Richardson on alto sax, Aidan Carroll on bass and Tommy Crane on drums for that session.

The story with "Stream" was a little different. I had been playing regularly with bassist Scott Lee and drummer Jeff Hirshfield for a couple years and slowly we had built a repertoire of original music. So in 2014 we decided to go into the studio to document it. We were happy with the final product so I approached the label Fresh Sound New Talent and they liked it enough to add it to their catalog. They also supported us economically and with publicity. But all that was after we had the CD already recorded, mixed and mastered.

"Stream" was basically produced by the three of us, Scott, Jeff and me. We chose the studio (Systems Two in Brooklyn), we decided what music was going to be in the record, the order of the songs and we had Katsu Naito mix and master it at Avatar Studios. We had total artistic freedom. After that Fresh Sound took care of the manufacturing and advertising.



In 2016 we recorded “Second Stream” with the same trio with Scott Lee and Jeff Hirshfield, but this time Fresh Sound was already on board before we went into the studio. It’s always been a pleasure working with Jordi Pujol, the owner of Fresh Sound New Talent, he always gave us total freedom in everything related to the music and I’m very grateful for that.

**Cadence:** *Would it be fair to say that the role of a jazz producer changes from project to project; depending upon the artist and label? But I thought it always involved someone putting forth Funds\$\$\$?*

Y.V.: Well, I’m no expert, but I believe that that would be the difference between the executive producer and the producer. The executive producer is the person in charge of providing the funds to make the record. That would involve paying the musicians, the studio, sound engineers, graphic designer, manufacturing the CD, etc. The producer is the person who is in the studio with the band and helps making musical decisions, like if a take is too short or too long. Sometimes having a producer in the studio can be helpful because basically it means having another set of ears to listen to the music from an outside perspective.

During a recording session, the band leader has to worry about so many things; like taking care of the musicians, organizing the session, keeping track of time, deciding how many takes of each song are necessary and also PLAY! So delegating some of those responsibilities to someone else can be helpful.

**Cadence:** *Please give us another glimpse into the art of improvisation for a layman; on “Stream” the composition “Blue Country” there is a midpoint during which you heat up the tempo and raise the roof in dynamics and resolution. Are these things talked about before hand or simply inspiration? On other compositions Scott Lee’s use of bowing the bass too.....*

Y.V.: In this particular band, we don’t really talk much before hand. We just play the tunes and during the solos we build something improvised in real time, usually the only parameter is the form of the composition. The form is the number of measures, chords and metric changes that are already in the song. A lot of our music is conceived this way.

Some of the tunes in the records are completely free, which means that there is no melody, chords or any kind of parameter discussed in advance. We just start playing, listening to each other and take it from there. That’s the case in “The Cloisters” on Stream, or “As If” on Second Stream.

And in other tunes, we also improvise with a different technique that Scott Lee uses a lot in his tunes. He calls it the “game”. Basically he writes different musical cues in the songs, like little parts of the melody or a specific rhythmic cell, that when they are played it makes something change in the form. So in the middle of a solo if someone



plays certain melodic cue, we might start to play in a different tempo, or change the meter or go out of time. Using this technique is really fun and opens a lot of doors for the tunes to be very different each time, but it also requires very deep listening because if you miss one cue you might be lost for the rest of the song! We use this “game” in tunes like “Cue Ball” or “Gratitude”, both on the record *Second Stream*.

***Cadence: Is it difficult working mainly in the trio format knowing how the weight of jazz history is behind you? What makes this collective different?***

In the trio format, the piano is very exposed. It’s similar to the role of a singer or a saxophonist in a quartet, but I can’t really compare myself to pianists like Bill Evans, Ahmad Jamal or Bud Powell because it would be a lost battle. They are incredible pianists who have lead trios for a long time, and I really respect and admire them, but my only chance is just to make music trying not to compare it to anyone else.

In the case of the trio “Stream”, everything happened very organically. We started playing sessions regularly, mostly trio but often with other horn players as well. We tried our compositions and they worked, so it was an easy decision to make a record to document all that music. In my case in particular, it also takes some of the pressure or responsibility off because being a collective trio we always make decisions in a very democratic way, musically but also in terms of logistics. I think we are just trying to be honest with our music and the trio sounds just like Scott Lee, Jeff Hirshfield and me playing together.

***Cadence: The creative trajectory for many pianist has been to record with strings or a large ensemble and to tackle some of the jazz canon? Are any of these formats in your plans or perhaps to touch on the your Spanish roots?***

I would love to make a record with a large ensemble at some point and also a solo piano record. I’m not planning on doing these in the near future, but I would really love to do something like that at some point. Talking about my roots, I’m from Spain but specifically from Galicia. Galicia is the region in the north western corner of Spain. Over there we don’t really have any influences from flamenco, which is probably the most widely known Spanish music. Instead, Galician music is a lot closer to Celtic music, a lot of the music is played by bagpipes and percussion there. Very recently I collaborated in two projects heavily influenced by Galician folk music. One was with Cristina Pato, arranging and playing the music of Martin Codax, a troubadour from my area from the XIII century. And the other one was with Pablo Castano, playing arrangements from popular music sang in the villages of Galicia. Both of them were very interesting and I would love to keep learning about the music from Galicia, which is very rich.

**MICKEY TUKER,  
PIANIST,  
INTERVIEW BY  
LUDWIG VAN  
TRIKT**



*Cadence: When did you seemingly vanish from the New York City scene and why?*

M.T.Well, the easy part is the when; which was actually precipitated by the why. So, long story short – In August 1987 a friend (who lived in the same apartment complex) was accused of murdering two women who were his neighbors. As it happened I was with this friend during the actual time the murders were committed. Because we knew that he was completely innocent and, as we later learned, I had actually seen the murderer (a police officer) leaving our friend's apartment building all hell broke loose. Needless to say our actions in trying to help and support our friend soon led to all kinds of threats – by phone, being followed, phone tapping, etc., etc. – and by early 1988 we were so stressed I decided to move to Australia (my wife's home country). The application process was not that easy and at one point I had to get my passport back from the Australian Embassy because I had a 2-month gig in Japan. Anyway, in May of 1989 we were informed that my application had been approved and that I had to be in Australia no later than 1 December 1989. My failure to arrive as instructed

would have meant starting the process all over again. We left New York November 21, 1989. Only a very few people knew of the actual circumstances under which we were living (existing would probably be a better word) and as I was obviously displaying some 'different' behaviour, others believed I had some kind of mental breakdown. At the time, if I had been sufficiently cognizant of anything other than staying alive, some of the attitudes displayed would have bothered me. However, I didn't have that luxury at the time, and I have now reached a stage where I feel that if people don't believe me that's on them.

*Cadence: I don't want to get side tracked but did your friend ever get released from jail?*

M.T. No, he died in prison in 2006 while still having an appeal pending.

*Cadence: Have you entertained the idea of coming back to the USA to tour? Going to Australia and establishing a career must have been difficult - please comment?*

M.T. I think I should answer the second part of your question first. I really didn't have to do anything much regarding establishing a career in Australia because tours (of Australia) were already lined up before I left the States. Also, as it was the Australian summer when

I arrived here, there were a number of festivals and I was booked for most of them. Fortunately, the then Minister for the Arts was a 'fan' so I applied for a recording grant which was approved and I did a two piano recording with Australian musicians. It was called, appropriately, "176 Keys – Piano Thunder from Down Under". After I had been here for about a year I was approached by the Victorian College of the Arts to do some graduate teaching and I accepted that with a student roster of about a dozen pupils. For convenience (and a better piano) I often had the students come to my sister-in-law's home, which was where we were living since our arrival. However, the college required that I spend some time on site and it was one of those times that, quite literally, changed my life.

As I sat on a chair beside the student at the piano, the back legs of the chair totally collapsed without any warning and I fell very heavily on the base of my spine on a concrete floor that had just a thin carpet on top. This was in May of 1991. So, with regular physiotherapy, I was able to keep going for just over 12 months, during which time I performed concerts, taught and did a couple of recordings in New York. But, in August of '92 the pain became so great I couldn't sit, stand or, more importantly, go to the toilet. That led to some serious spinal surgery and, for reasons known only to "the Gods", I ended up with a condition known as Complex Regional Pain Syndrome (CRPS) also known as Reflex Sympathetic Dystrophy. This means that I have burning pain in my right leg and a knife in my right big toe that never goes away and gets worse the more I use the leg and foot – such as depressing piano pedals and, as my wife learned while trying to find anything to help, it takes 80lbs of pressure to depress the pedal on a grand piano. So, end of playing career.

This then takes us to the first part of your question. If physically able, I very probably would have returned to the USA at some point to tour, although even if physically able I would not remotely consider returning at the present time given the current government.

***Cadence: Is this a sealed fate is there any chance of playing again or teaching; are you homebound?***

M.T. Unfortunately, yes, it is pretty much a situation that I'll have to deal with for the rest of my life, particularly as Neurologists – both here and in the States – have told me I won't live long enough to see any improvement while, at the same time admitting that they don't know why this CRPS even occurs. As for playing again that's really out of the question. You know, before the CRPS thing I practiced between 5 and 8 hours almost every day in order to be a professional musician. At present it's a good day if I can do 10 minutes and most days aren't even that good. Anyway, it is what it is and there's nothing I can do but try to maintain a sense of humor. I did try to have a few private students but even that is a crap shoot. I can make an appointment but when the day comes it can be one of those times when the pain has decided to go up a few notches and I can't do anything but lay down with pillows under my knees. Not being able to

maintain any kind of formal schedule doesn't work for most people so I had to let that go. Actually, the only thing I have as a project is trying to get a performance of an original composition – Spiritual Collage for Saxophone Quartet and Orchestra – for which I obtained a grant from NEA some many years ago. It's been close a few times but it seems something always happens to set it back to square one again.

No, I'm not completely homebound. We had our car modified so that the gas pedal can be changed from right foot to left foot so I can drive relatively short distances. I also have an electric scooter and am looking forward to modifying that with a rocket booster (smile). I have various therapies – hydrotherapy / massage, etc., several days a week and these keep me upright, albeit with the aid of crutches. But look, I'm not complaining. Sure, I absolutely miss being able to play the piano like I used to, but over time you either adapt or go crazy and, as my wife says, if this thing had to happen to me thank god it happened here in Australia and not in the States. They have really good health coverage here and the ancillary services are second to none. We never would have been able to afford the 8 weeks of hospitalization, then the rehabilitation, pain management courses, psychiatric visits, etc., etc., if we'd still been in the States. So, I guess there are positives.

*Cadence: Thus all the more reason to keep your legacy alive... if fans are interested how do they obtain your most recent work? I don't recall seeing an updated website although you seemingly sign into facebook from time to time....*

M.T. It's hard to keep current when you can't put anything new out there. The last recording I did was on Steeplechase - 'Gettin' There' - which is a solo piano album and I went to Copenhagen to do that recording in April of '94. I know there's quite a bit of my stuff available on Amazon and various other online sites, as well as the multitudinous 'streaming' - is that the right word - places like Apple, Spotify, Pandora, etc. I still find it quite amazing when my wife tells me she has come across another recording I did with whoever, that was a concert and wasn't supposed to be recorded. The latest one she's found is 'Art Blakey Live in Moers 1976'. This was when I was with the Messengers and someone obviously recorded the concert and has now put it out commercially. Meantime, of course, the musicians never got paid for a recording date. But that's the way the music business goes and I guess it'll never change. Still doesn't stop me from getting pissed off because to me it's theft. If there's a contract to record a concert fine, but if there's no contract and no mention of any recording beforehand, then it's out and out stealing. However, that all doesn't answer your question does it? I don't have a website but I do have a lot of contacts on facebook and I think word of mouth is probably the best I can hope for at this stage.

*Cadence: I recently read the autobiography of Hampton Hawes - "Raise Up off Me" in which he speaks of the profound influence that the black church had on him. Please detail some of your own memories as a six year old pianist in the church?*

## Interview: Mickey Tucker

First of all at 6 years old I wasn't playing the piano anywhere. I don't think I had even started lessons at that time – that would have been between 6 and 7 years old. As far as playing in the church goes I didn't do that until I was about 13, at Mt. Olive Baptist church on Durham. The pastor's name was Rev. Pepper and it always intrigued me how, once he would get locked into a sermon, his voice always seemed to home in on the note A flat. Curious?! Everything I played in the church was out of the Baptist hymnal which, in my opinion, is some dumb music – with the occasional exception of a negro spiritual. Although I played at Mt. Olive I actually attended Mt. Gilead Baptist and in my experience the black church was as much a social community where you would meet people and socialize, as it was religious. The church was very much a part of the social structure of the black community at large and, at times, the various congregations would get together for things like picnics, etc. Until I went to Morehouse (at age 15½) I guess the church played a reasonably important part in my life because, aside from playing piano in the High School band (the Hillside Joymakers) and the trio gigs I had with Grady Tate and Marion Thorpe (known as The Three T's), it was pretty much the social life of my family and friends.

**Cadence: Did you by chance ever met Hampton Hawes or read his autobiography?**

Funny you should ask that because Hampton Hawes was my first and primary influence. Yes, I have read his autobiography. As far as I know Hampton Hawes was the only musician to be released from prison by way of a presidential pardon from John F Kennedy. I never met him personally but I do believe that there was one night when I was filling in for Roland Hanna with Thad Jones Band at the Vanguard and Hampton Hawes was there although no-one introduced me to him. I was listening to Hampton Hawes before Oscar Petersen, Bud Powell, even Art Tatum. I was introduced to his playing by a bass player named Marion Thorpe who was in a trio consisting of Grady Tate, Marion Thorpe and myself. I would have been 12-13 years old.

**Cadence: I thought that rather than doing the traditional interview from your early beginnings to present; we select some recordings from various times during your career for your impressions.**

**"Moment to Moment" by The Jazztet featuring Philly's Benny Golson and Art Farmer (Soul Note SN1066)... any good stories from that session?**

M.T. If I remember correctly that was done in Milan. I don't remember a lot about the session itself but one thing about it has always stood out in my mind; which is when we took an extended break Art Farmer stayed in the studio and re-recorded several of his solos on various takes. It certainly wasn't because he didn't play well on any of the original takes but that's just the perfectionist he was. I did have a very different experience in Milan on that particular trip. Earlier in the day I had seen a piano bar called 'Scorpion' so, after the session was finished I decided to go check it out. Being acutely aware of my

## Interview: Mickey Tucker

wife's admonishing that I should never order anything to drink that didn't come in a sealed bottle, I ordered the only thing on the drinks menu that I could understand and that was 'Spumante'. I'm sure everyone knows that Spumante is an inexpensive sparkling white wine. So, I figured I couldn't go wrong with a bottle of that and if I didn't drink it all it wouldn't break the bank. Anyway, I listened to some very fair piano playing and a girl singing for a short time and decided to leave. Called for the check and when it came I just knew they'd made a mistake and inadvertently put an extra zero on the end, so queried the waiter who said that the price was correct – it converted to somewhere around \$800 US dollars. At the time I had my wallet open ready to pay and didn't even have a chance to close it before my gold mastercard was whipped out of the wallet by the waiter. Of course my first reaction was 'call the police' but with that exclamation I heard some strange clanging sounds and subsequently found that the door was locked. They took my credit card out a back door and came back with a bill for me to sign (it wasn't even in the name of the Scorpion bar). Needless to say I had no choice so I signed it, got my credit card and the door was unlocked so I could leave. Straight to the police where I was informed that I was probably lucky because in the early hours of that very day a tourist had been found out cold on the pavement outside the Scorpion bar in only his underwear. Everything he had had been stolen. Good ending though because as soon as I called my wife she notified the bank and the Scorpion Bar never did get any money from me. My favourite recordings with the Jazztet would be "Back to the City" and "Real Time" – both live recordings from Sweet Basils.

***Cadence: I am in no way diminishing your being a crime victim during the Jazztet session we are talking about; but it would be a slight not to talk about the artist during that date. Benny Golson in particular ... please talk more in depth about this Philly native?***

M.T. First of all it was an honor and a pleasure to play with Benny Golson and the Jazztet. I am not absolutely certain but I do believe that it was Curtis Fuller's suggestion that Benny hire me for that gig. Benny is one of those musicians/composers who is very meticulous about how his music is interpreted and performed. When Benny writes something he is very specific in how he wants it to sound, even to the point of at times actually writing out chord structures the way he wants them voiced, as opposed to just using chord symbols and sometimes he will not tolerate any deviation from what he has actually notated. This is not to say that there is no freedom involved it's just that in certain specific instances he wants a chord voiced exactly the way he wants it to sound. I suspect that this is because he wants it to fit into what the horns are playing, with no deviations. The way Benny writes reminds me a lot of Mozart in that in those instances he is very specific about the way he wants the ensemble to sound. It's almost like a jigsaw puzzle. There are many pianists who have a problem with this because they feel that it is too confining. I didn't have that problem because,



## Interview: Mickey Tucker

as you may or may not know, I was trained as a classical pianist initially, so I found it challenging and at the same time very rewarding especially when everything came together as he intended. I do believe that some of Benny's compositions are amongst the most performed and recorded compositions in jazz.

***Cadence: What was it like working with the great Archie Shepp - the recording date "Live In Tokyo" (Denon YX7538 ND)?***

M.T. Archie Shepp – I mainly worked with Archie on tours, very seldom within the USA and again I was honoured to be on stage/ on the bandstand with him. Just as I was honoured to be on the bandstand with the great Art Blakey and the great Thad Jones, and the great Junior Cook and many others. I felt blessed and lucky. I do remember that that tour of Japan was a very hectic one. Everywhere we performed there would literally be hundreds of people outside the dressing room after the concerts just waiting to get autographs from the band members and many of them brought gifts for us which is something that I found to be quite common amongst Japanese fans. As relates to the recording – Live in Tokyo – I have a trick that I have played on several musicians, specifically "If you could see me now". I would play the track without telling them who it was and ask them to guess. Most thought it was Ben Webster and when I would tell them "No, it's Archie Shepp", they were all surprised because most people identify Shepp's playing with the avant garde style. And many would not even associate Archie Shepp with playing in a style that was so "TN".

***Cadence: One of the gems in your discography and Blue Note Records' is 1973 release "The New Heritage Keyboard Quartet" with Roland Hanna - who did you meet Roland and then go on to perform in that quartet?***

M.T. I used to religiously attend the Monday night's at the Vanguard when Thad Jones/Mel Lewis orchestra performed. A drummer named Bill English introduced me to Thad who introduced me to Roland Hanna who, as you know, was the pianist with the band. When Roland's schedule became so crowded with performances/recordings, etc., he suggested to Thad that I cover the piano chair in addition to which he also had me cover other gigs that he could not make. But, before all of that John Hicks and I had talked about doing a two piano recording. I made a nuisance of myself to George Butler to produce the album and by that time John Hicks had moved back to St. Louis so I asked Roland if he would do it with me and the answer of course was yes. I knew George Butler from my days as musical director for Anthony and the Imperials, at which time he was working for United Artists. I would sometimes just show up at his office to heckle him about going forward with this project and I suspect that he pushed the issue just to get me out of his hair. He did tell me later on that the company referred to this album as a "sleeper" which means that it may, or may never see the light of day. They did take up the option under contract to record another New Heritage Keyboard Quartet



album which never came to fruition. However in as much as they had taken up the option to do a second album they still had to pay us as if they had recorded. During those years Roland Hanna was probably one of the most in demand pianists in New York and if you are familiar with his playing you can understand why.

***Cadence: Did the duo of you and Roland Hanna ever jointly tour? Roland seemed like such a stately gentleman wondered if you have any amusing or reveling stories about him?***

M.T. No, as a matter of fact the recording was the only project that we did together. We never performed or toured together.

Now, don't get me wrong – I really like him but, in my opinion, there was nothing amusing about Roland Hanna at all. Roland was a very opinionated and outspoken person when it came to music; which was the only thing I ever heard him talk about. I do remember him referring to Michael Jackson as a “non-person” which took me aback a little. Not that I'm a huge Michael Jackson fan but I just sort of felt that just because he was not a “Jazz” musician it did not necessarily mean that he was a non-person. But you have to understand that Roland was very staid in his opinions/assessments of other musicians. This is something that sort of perplexed me about him, and surprised me a little that he would throw gigs my way so many times. I considered Roland to be one of those guys who was in a class of his own. This is not to say that he was better or less than any other jazz pianist in New York, he was just “different” and very innovative.

***Cadence: I just so happened to pick up an old edition of cadence from dec. 1979 (page) with a review of your second Denon recording “Theme For A Woogie Boogie (YX 7804 - ND) from a November 1978 session... any recollections on this recording?***

M.T. Instead of the conventional three horn front line I wanted another voice with the horns but I did not want to have another saxophone player or any other instrument that's usually found in that setting, i.e. trumpet/saxophone/trombone, so I chose French horn and I then chose Jimmy Buffington because of the work he did on Thad Jones/Mel Lewis recording “Consummation”. Buffington did remark that our session was the most fun he had since doing “Consummation”, and I think that was pretty much the opinion of all the musicians – we had a good time! Edward Louis Smith was someone I had worked with in Atlanta during the time I was attending Morehouse College and, at the time of the recording, Smitty was teaching in Michigan. Other than a brief stint with Horace Silver he had chosen the teaching path as opposed to being a full time performer and I was lucky to be able to recruit him for that record date. The bass player, Takashi ‘Gon’ Mizuhashi, was brought from Japan by the producer. He really fit into the ensemble like a custom-made glove, although he didn't speak one word of English. We later became good friends and I subsequently recorded two albums with him as leader – “Gon's Delight” and “Early summer in Tokyo”. The other thing was that, fortunately, I had secured payment for all of the musicians on that record date beforehand. However I got stuck with a check for myself that is till

bouncing to this day! In other words everyone got paid but me.

***Cadence: Rather than do a blow by blow of both your sideman work and dates that you led; are there any records in particular that have a heart in your personal memory?***

M.T. Actually my answer would be, they all do. However, I do have my personal favourites which are “Hang In There”, “Gentle Time Alone” Ted Dunbar, “The Crawl”, “Blues in Five Dimensions”, “You Leave me Breathless” Junior Cook and “Sojourn”. There are others that I really like, but these are my favourites.

I have felt that my best work was usually done in small ensemble settings which is something that all of the above have in common. I have always been fascinated by how many different sounds you can get with small ensembles – sextet preferably, but also quintets quartets, trios in that order. I was fortunate enough to work with the great Benny Golson and the Jazztet which, in itself, was a crash course in small ensemble writing – what a break for me!

***Cadence: My last question is basically ... do you have anything which you would like to add to this interview about your musical legacy.***

***Now that this interview will appear internationally what if anything can fans do to support both you and your music?***

M.T. My legacy, if you want to call it that, concerns two compositions as yet un-performed. In 1978 I received a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts to compose a work for Saxophone Quartet and Orchestra – “Spiritual Collage for Saxophone Quartet and Orchestra”. To my knowledge this is the only composition done under an NEA grant that has never been performed. The original Saxophonists, who were interested in doing a performance, have now all passed away. My friend, Branford Marsalis, is interested in doing the project should it ever come about. I think the major drawback is that the National Endowment did not expect a composition of that scope; it would require a 70 piece orchestra, so you can see that logistically/financially it would be a huge undertaking. My other “legacy” is a composition for Piano and Orchestra which the copyright office referred to as a Concerto, but the title is simply “Trilogy for Piano and Orchestra”. There was no grant for this; it was a labor of love and is one of few compositions of mine that is non-improvisational. I call these compositions ‘legacies’ because I feel that I will not live long enough to witness a performance of either, but should they ever be performed I would hope that the listeners would enjoy them. ! Everything else I’ve done is recorded on albums/videos/Lp’s, etc. My answer to the second part of the question is “That’s easy, play it”! Also, I guess the most important thing would be to try to keep my name ‘in the mix’ so to speak and then, word of mouth would, hopefully, turn some of the younger fans onto my work. I am always gratified when someone posts the picture of an Album cover/CD on facebook and then the comments from others can be quite uplifting, especially considering the fact that I’ve not been able to play for some 25 years.



**SKETY**  
**Czechoslovakian**  
**a capella jazz**  
**group**

**MONA, MUSEUM**  
**OF OLD AND NEW**  
**ART**  
**HOBART**  
**TASMANIA**  
**July 28 2018-08-09**

**Veronika Vitova**  
**Marta Klouckova**  
**Alice Bauer**  
**Michal Strnad**  
**Petr Wajsar**  
**Stepan Janousek**

**CAD** *How did the name SKETY originate?*

**VV** Well it originally comes from the word scat, like jazz improvisation but in Czech language it actually means scatter – a kind of a mean person.

**AB** There's two meanings, I mean the way I understand it it is a tough kind of a person, basically you don't put up with any you know...so it's a kind of a game with the word and then we discovered another meaning in English and that is a scatty girl, so it's the combination of those three words I think.

**CAD** *Have there always been six members of the group?*

**VV** I had no idea how many people we actually need when we started because the only a capella group I knew was Take Six. I just had a strong feeling inside that I should do something like that. I called about eight people that I knew from our jazz school and stuff, so we were meeting and fooling around and then I realised that eight was too many. Then someone brought Petr who is our arranger and then someone brought Alice because they knew each other from previous projects and Alice brought Lucas Prchal who is our Manager. We decided that six would be a nice number but there were several personnel changes at the beginning.

Then we went to Graz in Austria in 2014 for the festival called Vokal Total and we won the jazz competition.

AB We hardly realised what the world of a capella meant and we listened to the Take Six recording and memorised everything, even the spoken word and we only then understood that there was a whole world of singing nerds.

VV Then we met Kim Nazarian the member of the New York Voices who is every time a judge and we kind of fell into each other's eyes – I don't know how to say that - we liked her and she liked us and she encouraged us to stick together.

**CAD** *Do you have perfect pitch?*

AB No but a song that you have been singing in a particular key if you've been doing it for long enough ninety nine percent of the time you remember the key.

**CAD** *Yes but you can't suddenly drop an octave if the song has gone out of someone's range.*

VV It's a feeling in the throat really.

AB If it's a step as big as a third you will not only hear it you will feel it.

**CAD** *Where did you get the interest in jazz from, were your parents interested in it?*

AB For me it goes back a long way, my Dad has always been playing jazz ever since he was a teenager, one of the few remaining classical highschools in the 1950s in Prague established a jazz band, so he was part of the underground scene while still having a job with the Ministry of the Interior or whatever it was. They had to cover for him when he went to these underground meetings because your ID was checked and there were regular raids. He was part of the jazz scene until lately but he is still playing the piano.

**CAD** *Was jazz difficult to hear in Czechoslovakia?*

AB Oh there was always jazz, especially taped stuff, everybody would tape everyone else's stuff and that's the way it spread. One person would have it and in the next week all of Prague had it.

VV They had to be careful because it was against the idealism of communism. When someone wanted to sing or perform jazz it wasn't easy, they had to translate the English lyrics into Czech. My mother in law was a jazz singer and she would tell me that if she wanted to sing it, she had to sing it in Czech, these were the times, but they never managed to erase jazz from people.

AB After 1918 we had our first republic the first Czechoslovakian Independent State and then in the 1920s we'd get a lot of recordings in and people would transcribe from the recordings, so it meant that if you really wanted to learn something you had to learn the recording by heart. So you would transcribe every single part and you would wear out the LP. And some of the composers like the man who the Czech Jazz Conservatory in Prague is named after was doing that.

**CAD** *Who were your early influences?*

**VV** For me when I was a kid it was the Beatles.

**CAD** *Did you hear the King Sisters' recordings?*

**VV** Alice I think would know them better, we used to listen to the Mills Brothers and the Hi Lo's on tape in our early days. When I first established SKETY people would come and tell us we sound like the Hi Lo's and Swingle Singers. We listened to the Swingle Singers and Lambert Hendricks and Ross.

**AB** You see when you have limited access you have to make the most of what you have, you want, you want more, so you're reading into it as much as you can.

**CAD** *When you first formed the group did you have a set idea of what format you were going to use?*

**VV** Yes we started with Take Six and then Petr started bringing his own arrangements and we basically started making arrangements out of jazz standards and then started doing our own stuff. When we started investigating the a capella world around us we discovered that there are many Pop a capella groups that started doing covers and it's nice because the vocal possibilities are endless but we felt like it was too much and it was already covered. So we decided we wanted to continue with jazz but add something special to it and Petr already had it because he was composing some really weird stuff which we all like and we are not afraid of it and I think that this is the thing that we have that is special.

**AB** We don't want to sound like everybody else no matter how technically perfect. We went to Boston for the CARA Awards three years ago just to see what it was like and won four nominations for our debut album.

**VV** Since we first got together in 2014 we have really developed a lot because initially we were afraid to improvise, not improvisation with the theme and chords, but I always felt that with voices you could do a free improvisation because that is really something magical if a little scary. Bobby McFerrin always says that when he's improvising he's scared because he never knows what is to come next.

**CAD** *Well it's been lovely to talk with you here at this amazing venue and good luck for the rest of your tour.*

Alwyn and Laurie Lewis  
MONA  
Hobart

### **BILLY COBHAM: ONE NIGHT AT YOSHI'S - SIX AT RONNIE SCOTT'S BY TEE WATTS**

In these days of reimagined music, hologramed dead heroes, possible poltergeists and old soldiers re-recording substandard versions of past hits, a recent engagement at Yoshi's March 13th and 14th, 2018 presented Jazz and Fusion pioneer Billy Cobham with his Crosswinds Project in a brilliant update of Cobham's sophomore effort as a bandleader, Crosswinds. The album was originally released forty years ago in 1974.

In this 74th year of William Emanuel Cobham, Jr.'s existence, a comprehensive oral history of the artist's life work is being released on 6/25/18 a week prior to this July issue of Cadence. Penned by global correspondent and author Brian Gruber, the publication of *Six Nights At Ronnie Scott's; Billy Cobham On Jazz Fusion And The Act Of Creation* was officially launched at Ronnie Scott's, two days into Cobham's annual 6 day appearance with the Guy Barker Big Band, making it a book release party for the ages. (A review of the book follows.)

In the original Crosswinds lineup Billy marshalled the forces of since departed masters keyboardist George Duke, saxophonist Michael Brecker and guitarist John Abercrombie. Still around today from the original lineup are trumpeter Randy Brecker, trombonist Garnet Brown, bassist John Williams and percussionist Lee Pastora. When released, Crosswinds garnered less praise than its predecessor *Spectrum*. Indeed, *Guitar Player Magazine* called *Spectrum*, profoundly inspirational. Much of the evolutionary Jazz music from the period starting in the late '60s draws from the experiments in melding elements of Post-Bop, *avante garde* and other shadings with new electric instrumentation; electric piano, bass and guitar. Cobham's exceedingly powerful drumming enlarged the visibility of this new genre with highly visible players like Miles Davis, Tony Williams, Chick Corea, Herbie Hancock, Joe Zawinul, Jaco Pastorius, John McLaughlin, Jimi Hendrix, Sly Stone, et al. Cobham's sessions with Miles on the *Bitches Brew* and *Tribute to Jack Johnson* helped mark the beginning of this new era.

Prior to the ascent of Fusion, Billy Cobham traded licks with many Jazz giants such as Ron Carter, Billy Taylor, Alvin Batiste, Kenny Burrell, Thad Jones, Jaki Byard, Kenny Barron Stanley Turrentine, Shirley Scott, George Cables, George Benson among others. As a teenager he performed with Leonard Bernstein's Youth Orchestra.

In retrospect, since the coining of the term Fusion there has been a lot of noise seeking to reduce the relevance of the genre. Some purists resent the use of electrified instruments and the advent of Rock elements. Nonetheless Cobham's place in the hierarchy of great Jazz or Fusion drummers is assuredly near the top.

Back on March 13 when the Billy Cobham Crosswinds Project blew into Yoshi's at Jack London Square, I eased into a booth with author Brian Gruber while Mr. Cobham did a meet and greet in front of the stage before the first show. Cobham, six feet away, is polite and confident to the throngs scrambling for a word, autograph and a smile before Yoshi's cuts it off for the show. The line stretches from inside the performance room out the door to the bar.

Can't help but notice the accoutrements of Mr. Cobham's work tools mounted

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onstage. A massive TAMA drum kit that is hard for an un-percussionist like myself to fathom. I count six toms in layers of varying sizes. (A quick visit to the TAMA website reveals that there are actually eight in Cobham's custom set.) A double bass drum set up, two different sized snares (also adding to the possible tom configuration), six Sabian cymbals plus two in the high hat, not to mention the hardware built for speed. Also on stage are music stands, guitars, bass and keyboards for the band.

As the lights dim, the house is full. The musicians assemble on stage precisely at eight; Paul Hanson-bsn/ss, Fareed Haque-g, Tim Landers-el. b, Scott Tibbs-kybd and Billy Cobham-d. Out of the gate they come with a super sonorous, funk matrixed version of the title track, *Crosswinds*. They immediately establish the obvious: That they are all hugely talented, standalone musicians immersed in a cohesive performance that is startling with its power, riveting in its complex majesty. Author Brian Gruber leans in to suggest the band is hitting its full stride since opening the stateside tour in Seattle days before. Reedman Paul Hanson is aptly able to extricate exotic sounds from his bassoon through use of analog effects – harmonized delay, envelope filter and Pog 2 octaver pedal. A quick visit to his website reveals a vast array of his favorite gear. Hanson can make that thing sound like a keyboard, guitar or muted trumpet and more. Because of its unique double reed design, complex fingerings, embouchure, wind and pitch control requirements, bassoon is a hard axe to grind. Throughout the set, the interplay between Cobham and Hanson was musicianship at its best. An aside by Mr. Cobham's publicist Nancy Balik, who was also in attendance, reveals that before the *Crosswinds* Project was unveiled at Blue Note Milano, Cobham and Hanson had only met one month prior.

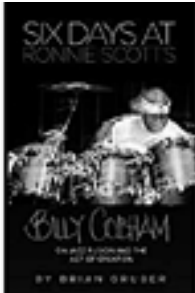
Guitarist Fareed Haque adds his own unique Fusion brand to the mix. Aside from tirelessly touring, he is professor of Jazz and Classical guitar studies at Northern Illinois University. In 2009 *Guitar Player Magazine* named him Best World Guitarist. Cobham expressly wanted Fareed to interact with Paul Hanson to add a sonic amalgamation unheard in prior incarnations of the *Crosswinds* Project.

Bassist Tim Landers worked in Cobham's group *Glass Menagerie*, formed in 1981. He is regarded as a Fusion pioneer and top session player with a reputation that spans both coasts and extends globally.

Keyboardist Scott Tibbs actually designed sound for the electronic instrument manufacturer Roland Corporation (model SE-02) in the '90s. His skilled persona injects a "mad professor" vibe to the proceedings. Alternatingly sitting and standing when the spirit hits, he too elevates the atmospheric pressure generated by the team. I've also got to mention Cobham's impressive use of four sticks at a time. How many lpm's (licks per minute) can one drummer generate?

The set list also included *Spanish Moss*, *The Pleasant Pheasant* and *Heather* from the *Crosswinds* album. *Taurian Matador* and *Stratus* were reprised from *Spectrum*. The band tried to close with *Cap Breton* from *Tales From The Skeleton Coast*. However, the ebullient crowd would not let them go without an encore. The *Crosswinds* project refired and discharged us out into the Oakland night with a rousing version of *Red Baron*.





### SIX DAYS AT RONNIE SCOTT'S: BILLY COBHAM ON JAZZ FUSION AND THE ACT OF CREATION

Brian K. Gruber and  
Creative Multimedia  
Concepts, Inc

[www.grubermedia.com](http://www.grubermedia.com)

ISBN-10:1717493009

ISBN-13:978-1717493002

201p

Review by Tee Watts

Author Brian K. Gruber's prior literary offering is a tome that details his sometimes dangerous globe-trotting forays to countries that have experienced the effects of American military intervention and how the people fared as a result. Cerebral stuff.

In his latest work he has taken on the task of examining the life work of Jazz and Fusion drummer Billy Cobham, culminating in and juxtaposed against Cobham's work being performed by a 17-piece orchestra at Ronnie Scott's London Jazz venue during a six day run that began on June 12th, 2017. Bandleader/gifted trumpeter Guy Barker calls the gig a celebration of Bill's life and work in music. The book is a massive undertaking that includes distilled transcriptions of interviews with Bill Cobham himself, musicians, crew, club management, fans, super fans and the Jazz police. The musicians interviewed include former Mahavishnu Orchestra bandmate, Jan Hammer, Ron Carter, the aforementioned Guy Barker, Randy Brecker and a host of others.

The book's preface introduces a snapshot of Gruber family living in Brooklyn in 1970 as the war in Vietnam winds down. This is just about the time Billy Cobham was laying tracks with Miles Davis for the Bitches Brew sessions. Coincidentally, Gruber was taken to his first concert ever in early March of that year. It was at Fillmore East and featured Neil Young and Crazy Horse, the Steve Miller Blues Band and the Miles Davis Quintet, not necessarily in that order.

Despite being raised a generation and culture apart from Bed-Sty raised Panamanian born William Emanuel Cobham, Jr., Gruber manages to pull off a remarkable feat of music journalism. After meeting Cobham in France 2010, Gruber bonds with the drummer and asks him to be on the board of directors of Gruber's Jazz streaming startup company. As a result, they spent a fair amount of time riding around together. As Cobham regaled Gruber with stories about Jimi Hendrix, Muhammed Ali and a bevy of others, Gruber realized that the oral stories, histories and anecdotes that Cobham effortlessly spouts are certainly worth notating and convinced Cobham of the viability of the project. The interviews with Cobham cover a galaxy

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of subjects; from the cruel realities of the New York public school system, to the rhythmic complexity of a woman sashaying when walking or the sonic intricacies of live performance. Whew! That's just a few of many. Gruber has also seen Cobham perform in excess of twenty times, not only at Ronnie Scott's, but also at the Blue Note in Milano, Italy, Jazz Alley in Seattle, B.B. King's in New York, The Mint in L.A., the Rio Das Ostras Brazilian Jazz Festival and several more settings both public and private.

Apparent from hanging out with Cobham, according to Gruber, is the solid work ethic of the artist. It is a trait he inherited from his dad, William Cobham, Sr. whose straight gig was a statistician for Bronx General Hospital. By night though, he was a gifted pianist who took requests at the local bar, making more money in six or seven hours than his monthly salary at the hospital. Young Billy started sitting in with his dad when he was all of eight years old. In one segment, Cobham tells the author that despite a relationship with his dad that grew strained and tenuous over time, the resulting ability to make people happy with music, ultimately passed from father to son, is the foundation of how Cobham performs to this day.

So much pride is infused into Billy Cobham the musician, that even at 74 on a gig in which he will play 2 sets, he is hands on at load in, personally schlepping and directing the setup of his drum hardware. He is part Sumo, part ninja, 100% Panamanian-American.

The author faithfully transcribes exactly what he saw and heard at rehearsals for Cobham's big band performance run. The musicians patter, what they wore, what they ate, equipment they utilized and so on. Not much is edited out. Not even the throat clearings or false starts. If you really want to be there you are.

From opening night, to a packed house, Managing Directing Simon Cooke speaks to the crowd:

A wonderful week ahead of us. It's completely sold out. Featuring a great collaboration between Guy Barker up there on trumpet (applause) and this wonderful big band, who are all resplendent before you, and with one of the great jazz drummers, a real figure in history at Ronnie Scott's, and a massive figure in the history and the ongoing story of jazz, ladies and gentleman please welcome to the stage the Guy Barker Big Band with...MISTER BILLY COBHAM!!!

On day two of the Billy Cobham/Guy Barker Big Band run, the venue dropped a press release.

On June 13, 2017, the Ronnie Scott's Charitable Foundation invited legendary drummer Billy Cobham to take part in a workshop involving a local primary school, the Soho Parish Primary School. Pete Letanka, a jazz pianist/educator worked closely with the foundation to give children the chance to perform and compose in the style of internationally renowned drummer Billy Cobham. Billy himself worked with the kids and joined them in performance at Ronnie's.

Four pages are devoted to Cobham's total devotion to music education for children. He realizes it is the wellspring of his own upbringing and gladly gives of his time and knowledge, passing it forward.

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The largest chapter of the book is chapter 3 entitled Miles, Mahavishnu, Montreux. Obviously it covers a lot of ground. Miles work from '67 forward laying the groundwork for Fusion. Cobham meeting Miles, John McLaughlin and the development of the Mahavishnu Orchestra. Its peak earning period of \$50,000 nightly. The awkwardness of leaving the band in the early '70s yet returning for recording dates later in the decade. Cobham's thoughts on playing with McLaughlin again at Montreux in 2010.

In the latter chapters of the book, the author returns to Ronnie Scott's for additional vignettes on the Cobham/Barker Big Band run at Ronnie Scott's. Through the use of flashback recollections in various interviews Gruber weaves a fantastic historical record.

There is a chapter entitled, The Art Of The Rhythm Section, which maybe not so coincidentally, is the title of Cobham's Annual Music Retreat (coming up this year 7/22-28/18 in Mesa, AZ – [www.billycobhamretreat.com](http://www.billycobhamretreat.com) ) for advanced players seeking to up their performance ante. In Gruber's book though, the focus is more about how the musicians at the Ronnie Scott's gig prepare for and interact with each other in such a challenging musical presentation.

Chapter 6 is the setting for the final conversations with Cobham and Barker with all the sentiments and compliments thereof. There is so much information in this book that any serious student of Jazz, Fusion or music history will reap a bountiful harvest.

Conversations with band members, club management, fans, reviewers and crew took place during the six day run as indicated. They were conducted just prior to or shortly after performances.

A nice touch is the Spotify Soundtrack for each chapter of the book that contains some very unexpected musical gems. Hats off to Brian Gruber who accomplished what few could have written with such elaborate authority.

# Book Look



**EXPERIENCING BESSIE SMITH: A LISTENER'S COMPANION**  
BY JOHN CLARK  
ROWMAN & LITTLEFIELD.

A welcome 2017 addition to the impressive The Listener's Companion series for the Rowman and Littlefield Publishing Group this 187 page volume joins other editions covering musical personalities from the Beatles to Beethoven and genres Film and Broadway musics. A college music teacher and professional musician, John Clark has certainly done his homework which included some serious listening and deep research exploring the life and recorded works of blues queen Smith. After the Series Editor's Forward, Acknowledgments & Introduction and Timeline starting with her birth in 1894 (possibly 1892) up to the HBO bio-pic in 2015, the seven chapters (named after tune titles) and the eighth naming her influences this hardbound book contains a wealth of information for blues hounds. Following those chapters are a Conclusion, Bibliography & Discography, a comprehensive Index and short About The Author. The bibliography is conveniently annotated while the discography not only holds recordings with Ms. Smith but other recordings by other performers mentioned in the text. An easy read chock full of pertinent information and tasty tidbits, this is easily recommended to all lovers of classic blues.

Larry Hollis

# DVD Review

GUNTNER HAMPEL

TIME LIVE AT THE GOTTINGEN JAZZ FESTIVAL

BIRTH RECORDS BLUE RAY 171106

NO COMPOSITION TITLES LISTED 92:32

Gunter Hampel, flt, b cl, vib; Cavana Lee Hampel, vcl; Johannes Schleiermacher, ts; Bernd Oezsevirm, d; Danilo Cardoso, dance; Chin Mei Huang, dance; Magdalena Dzeco, dance; Ruomi Lee Hampel, dance Gottingen, Germany Nov. 6, 2017

This is the third DVD of this group. As I reviewed them here, I thoroughly enjoyed the first two and am looking forward to this one.

This was filmed at the 40th anniversary of the Gottingen Jazz festival and on Hampel's 80th birthday.

It begins with a 5 minute intro all in German so I missed much of it. And the group then enters while playing and walks around the stage in front of the audience. Schleiermacher stays offstage while Hampel moves around and eventually everyone gets on stage. The dancers all sit on the edge of the stage and we see body movements trying to reflect the music. Then we get a nice drum solo with brushes which leads into Hampel playing vibes with Cavana Hampel scatting.

The dancers move in various ways with lots of body motion—very athletic. We get a nice musical interlude and the dancers reappear moving to the music. The dancing moves from solo to ensemble work and is always interesting to watch. The dance moves here could just as well have been performed with contemporary classical music as well as jazz since the dancing is abstract, though some of the movements here clearly reflect the looser, syncopated jazz rhythm.

The last section, which lasts some twenty five minutes, is based on a repeating riff which sounds like something that Monk or Mingus could have composed. It goes through various tempo changes but comes back and repeats.

The only criticism I have of this performance is that there were a number of places near the end where I thought it was going to end, and then it picked up again. But that is a minor criticism.

The music was composed, but there were places for improvisation. And the dancing was clearly choreographed, but again, it appeared as if there was some improvisation in the specific movements.

The performance was filmed by one camera person who moved around. Most of the filming was fine but every once in a while the camera wasn't sure where to go. Again a minor point.

Over all, another excellent performance of mixing great jazz with great dance.

Bernie Koenig

# Feature CD Review

## LEH CATS MOVEMENT TO EGALITARIA

PRP RECORDS 2018 1) SOUL

CHA CHA

2) THE NATIONAL ANTHEM OF EGARITARIA

3) SUNSHINE

4) DOPPLER EFFECT

5) MANDELA

6) 9 LIVES

7) STEP ON IT

8) CELIA'S BOMBA

9) GOODBYE ELGIN PARK

10) MESHAUGAZA

11) MOPAR'S SONG



### Personnel:

Karen Stachel: Flute and Vocal Norbert Stachel: Reeds and flute  
Nanny Assis: Brazilian Percussion Francis Benitez: Drums

John Benitez: Acoustic and Electric Bass

Will Bernard: Guitar

Ivan Bodley: Acoustic Bass

Chris Beisterfeldt: Guitar

Carlos Chong: Guitar

Walfredo De Los Reyes, Jr. Drums Ricky Encarnacion: Electric

Bass Pete Escovedo: Percussion Gary Fisher: Piano

Riche Flores: Congas and Percussion Edsel Gomez: Piano Dan

Gonzalez: Drums & Percussion Slavash Haghtalab : Iranian

Hand Percussion

Bob Lanzetti: Guitar

Axel Laugart: Piano

Ray Obiedo: Guitar

Mike O'Brien: Acoustic Bass

Lonnie Plaxico: Acoustic & Electric Bass

Melissa Rodnon: Pandeiro

Elizabeth Schwartz: Vocal

Dave Solomon: Guitar

Mike Stern: Guitar

Yale StroM: Violin

Yunior Terry: Shekeres

Renato Thomas: Urdu & Percussion

Peter Washington: Acoustic Bass

Lenny White: Drums

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Although you may not know it Latin Jazz is making a rebound. It is on the up-and-up. In 2011, for example, the Grammys doing away with the category of 'Best Latin Jazz' caused an uproar within the music industry. Many cried loud and hard and the award was reinstated a year later. In 2017, the industry seemed to balk at more recent developments within the genre, choosing instead to recognize older, established artist's, such as pianist Chucho Valdes-who founded the legendary latin jazz band Irakere, bassist Andy Gonzalez, and trombonist Wayne Wallace. So much for the Grammys. While those named above were trailblazers in their own right, each is over 60. They represented an earlier era and sound which would be considered classic Latin Jazz. But like other jazz sub-genres I have heard lately, Latin jazz has become a backbone, a caldron in which many other elements have been blended.

One possible reason? When a soloist performs, much of the shape of his/her improvisations is determined by the rhythm. The basic 4/4 jazz rhythm will cause a different kind of movement than, say, a samba or a bomba. This process is expertly executed in the work of Karen & Norbert Stachel-better known as LeHCats (an anagram for Stachel)- on their recent CD Movement to Egalitaria.

Such is the case with many pieces on this CD, including the opening selection Soul Cha-Cha. The sixteen bar melody-with Karen featured on piccolo recalling the early Hubert Laws-gives way to series of loose yet deliberate exchanges between Karen and bassist Ricky Encarnacion. This track also proves that the use of the piccolo has reached the projection Laws made in 1965 that 'despite its small size... the piccolo will someday give the flute some real competition' Title track The National Anthem Of Egalitaria, sets forth a political/cultural goal of an egalitarian vision. Beginning with a dark mood, almost M-Base in its structure suggesting a current dark, hopeless world for many of us, the tune moves into more festive, upbeat traditional Latin Rhythms. Karen's telling vocals are featured on Sunshine. Her affection comes through despite some lacking vocal technique. A short, at times perpendicular piano solo from Edsel Gomez follows, then another change in rhythm gives Norbert-on Tenor- the opportunity to exchange breaks with his wife on flute. His Brecker-ish tone is contemporary, but not 'smooth'. Doppler Effect is something else again. Though the rhythm is traditional, long melodic statements are backed by electric bass and guitar which suggest the influence of fusion, if not heavy metal. Mike Stern-one of several top drawer players on the date-has a powerful solo. He is, of course, a fusion veteran having worked with Miles Davis, Jaco Pastorius and others.

Mandela is another tune of contrasting moods: Down and yet celebratory in this the 100 th anniversary of the great South African activist, prison detainee and president. The appropriately titled 9 Lives (shouldn't it be 18?) is tune that is in straight 4/4 time. Karen's mysterious and sultry- quasi-scat vocals dubbed in unison with her flute playing is a most effective contrast to the feel of the other selections. Then Gomez plays a solo which tip toes around his influences, Hancock and Tyner, yet is artistically original enough to be called his own. Norbert then executes a



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rare feat: A bass flute solo. The use of the upper register of the instrument makes me wonder why he did not use an alto or C flute. Perhaps the timbre plus the contrasting, occasional use of the lower register of the instrument is why. A thematic interlude is followed by brief solo by guitarist Bob Lanzetti which takes out the tune. His tone-in contrast to Stern-is that of a traditional jazz guitarist, such as Kenny Burrell or Grant Green. Shifting rhythms and a dynamic solo by Norbert-at times reminiscent of Lenny Pickett-characterize Step On It. The tune ends on an unresolved tonic. Celia's Bomba features a solo by Karen which is more reminiscent of the sound of the '60's-at least to my ears. Its changing rhythms, however, are ear-catching and perhaps stylistically more contemporary. Goodbye Elgin Park-again a more traditional jazz tune in 4-is a warm vocal ballad sung by Karen. It makes compelling use of devices which make traditional jazz ballads romantic, but not saccharine: Blues, swing, dissonance and fine solos by pianist Gomez and veteran N.Y. bassist, Peter Washington. Master drummer Lenny White-late of 70's fusion band Return to Forever, but also more traditional/modern jazz artist's Freddie Hubbard and Joe Henderson- is on hand. Meshugaza has a compelling eastern sound and propulsion which gives it a quasi- radical quality. Pianist Gary Fisher explores several different harmonic directions in his short, but compelling solo. Gimmick-free use of effects characterize the solo by guitarist Will Bernard. The CD closes with the syncopated rhythm-horn interaction of Mopar's Song, a decidedly traditional Latin rhythm; yet more contemporary melodically and thematically. Some have recently suggested that Latin Jazz has a surge in creativity because of looser, pure and less academic sounding quality than traditional jazz. While this may be true, Mr. & Mrs. Stachel prove on Movement to Egalitaria that when one blends the virtues of ethnic purity, virtuoso musicianship and mix those in the caldron with a variety of classic and contemporary ideas to support a vision of hope, the future of Latin Jazz can only be a bright one.

Fred Kellogg

# Papatamus

## REVIEWS OF CDS, LPS AND BOOKS

A collection of  
sometimes  
disparate  
material though  
generally  
relating to music  
recordings or  
performance.



*A NOTE TO READERS: I cover a lot of items in this column and it is only a fraction of what crosses my desk. I choose to only write about things that I find of interest, usually that is due to quality of music but not always. You can contact me at [rdr@cadencebuilding.com](mailto:rdr@cadencebuilding.com). Mail received is subject to editing and may be included in the next column at my discretion. If you do not want your correspondence printed please let us know. Cheers, rdr.*

The ALCHEMY SOUND PROJECT, a group led by SUMI TONOOKA [p], has released ADVENTURES IN TIME AND SPACE [Alchemy Sound Project arc-2857]. Recorded 6/23&24/16, this septet [Samantha Boshnack-tpt/flg; Erica Lindsay-ts; Salim Washington-ts/flt/b.clt; Michael Spearman -tbn; David Arend-b; Johnathan Blake-drm] presents very full listening with an economy of time. There are 6 compositions here [41:29], each written by a member of the group, which may account for the variety in the music. The music all has an optimistic nature and is forward looking, not happy jazz but thoughtful music punctuated with some strong solos by Arend, Tonooka and in particular, Washington. Blake maintains effective drumming throughout offering tempo shifts and platforms off of which the music or stage of music is passed on to the next player. It held my attention throughout. My only complaint is some of the compositions feel unresolved. GEOFF BRADFIELD's [ts/ss/b.clt] new CD is titled YES, AND...Music for nine improvisers [Delmark de 5027]. From the title, one might assume this is a free jazz outing for a nonet but that is not the case. The music on the CD is quite structured, it is also interesting. The opening track, "Prelude" opens with a feature for Bradfield's light tenor which dances around with bass and drums, and for me is the highlight of the 8 tracks [51:55]. Subsequent tracks employ greater amounts of the nonet as ensemble framework and for the most part excellent solos from Marquis Hill [tpt], Scott Hesse [gtr], Joel Adams [tbn] and others. By the end of the suite-like program, the music becomes more and more structured, at times almost third stream. Bradfield shows skill at both ensemble writing and leaving space for soloists.

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After umpteen recordings of original music, RICH HALLEY [ts] has issued THE LITERATURE [Pine Eagle Records 011], an album of 12 compositions [57:35] by artists who have inspired him from Jimmie Rodgers and A.P. Carter to Mingus and Sun Ra. Joining Halley in strong, if staid, are Carson Halley [drm] and Clyde Reed [b]. Recorded 8/26&27/17, one of the reasons this works as well as it does is because the playing time on the familiar repertoire averages under 5 minutes. Many of the heads are so basic as to sound like a student recital, fortunately the development gives lie to that. One of Halley's best.

From the opening notes on trombonist NEIL MAXA's first leadership date, VOILÀ [Bedlam Factory Records 888295 646208], I had a smile on my face—this is a happy date [7/17]. The quartet [Steve Flora-b, Dave Loeb-p, Bob Chmel-drm] digs in on five jazz compositions [25:35] including two by Frank Rosolino, who obviously is dear to Maxa's heart. One major complaint is the disc is too short. 25 minutes of honey just t'aint enough.

CHRIS MONSON [gtr] makes his recording debut on SELDOM IN THE WELL [no label 1929144 38885], an undated session with Kelly Jefferson-ts, Kevin Turcotte-pt/fg, Anthony Panacci-p, Artie Roth-b, Tom Rasky-drm. The 9 compositions are all Monson originals [42:32] and are structurally fine and judging from their titles relate to the non-sequester album title. The band plays well but do not expect to hear much from the guitarist. I can only surmise Monson put this out for the compositions. Unfortunately the music is rather generic.

JÖP [Gutman Records cd174] is the name of the CD and the group [Örjan Graafmans-p, Joost Kesselaar-drm, Paul Berner-b]. As far as I can tell this is the first release as a group, although they have played together within other groups. The Gutman label has a catalogue that is almost entirely made up of classical music. One might assume as a result any jazz release would perhaps have more than a classical bent to it. This 4/20-21/14 does not, what it is, is a lyrical piano trio. Graafmans wrote 6 of the 9 tracks [63:01]. Other tracks are by Ravel, Lennon & McCartney and Stevie Wonder. It's all presented very even handedly by Graafmans, who is

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the defacto leader of the sessions. The focus is almost entirely on him and his Schubert-like playing with a hint of the blues. Good listening with a subtle impact.

CROSSING PATHS [No Label 888295 688505]

is drummer SAMUEL MARTINELLI's debut.

This quartet date [Claudio Roditi-tpf/flg, Marcus McLaurine-b, Tomoko Ohno-p]

from 7/17 is notable for Martinelli's writing, he wrote 7 of the 9 compositions [50:45]. As a drummer he has a light touch but his compositions are finely constructed and nicely complimented by Roditi's dry horn work. The 2 standards are "St. Thomas" which unfortunately opens with a painfully boring bass solo, and "Birks' Work". Overall Encouraging.

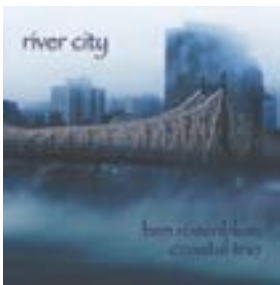
LARRY McDONOUGH [p/synth, voc] has released a curious 2CDr set: ALICE IN STONEHENGE AND OTHER ACOUSTELECTRIC ADVENTURES [no label, no #]. McDonough gives very extensive notes on the music, although one would be hard pressed at a glance to figure who is in his quartet/quintet [Richard Terrill-sax, Greg Stinson-b, Dean White-drm, Steve Kenny-tpf,]. There are 2 CDrs here and as the title would suggest, one is acoustic and one is electric.

The acoustic side has the foot prints of Bill Evans, Chet Baker and Miles Davis all over it. It begins with a very nice reading of "Alice In Wonderland" followed by Terrill reading his text to Chet Baker, followed by McDonough singing a la Baker on "The Thill Is Gone". Following the spoken/sung tracks is some instrumental music. The rest of the 8 tracks [45:12] offers a Terrill poem of Miles and McDonough singing "You Must Believe In Spring". The electric side [42:01] plays off a mix of originals and non jazz standards including Clapton's "Layla", Prince's "The Question Of U" and Sting's "She's Too Good For Me". This side is pretty tame, electric keys and bass are also pretty tame, unfortunately this half of the set just sounds like poor jazz. The leader's singing is better on the acoustic side. An interesting effort with a home-made feel.

STEPHANE SPIRA [ss] has put out a lovely CD called NEW PLAYGROUND of mostly his own music with the exception of one composition by bandmate Steve Wood. [8 tracks/57:33/Jazzman jm80403]. This quartet [Joshua Richman-keys; Steve Wood -b; Jimmy



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MacBride-drm] sits very well together. I'm not much of a fan of electric piano and Richmond plays both electric and acoustic over this disc. However the softness of the Rhodes does lend itself to the softness of the music, that said, Richmond's gentle attack works equally on either instrument. The other selling point of this recording is the unforced beauty of Spira's soprano. This is a happy meeting of compositions, playing and creativity. Based on his bio, Spiro is well-traveled and this is his first release in the States. Balance of trade—in favor USA.

ROGER DAVIDSON [p] in the past has shown a fondness for Brazilian music and this release *MUSIC FROM THE HEART* [Soundbrush Records sr 1039] continues in that vein. This undated recording plays 15 Brazilian Davidson originals [55:51] with his quartet [Eduardo Belo-b, Adriano Santos-drm] featuring Hendrick Meurkens [harm/vbs]. This is, in part, a love letter to Davidson's wife and Meurkens brings out the joy and pathos of the music.

Pianist MICHIKA FUKUMORI is a great fan and student of Steve Kuhn's and in fact Kuhn appears with her, in duo, on one track of her new release, *PIANO IMAGES* [Summit Records dcd725], a 8/6/14 recording. Fukumori plays with a light but certain hand on the 13 tracks (a mix of standards and originals) here [54:31]. The exception to her quiet soft personal style appears on the opening track, her original "Colors Of Blues" which is a raggedy-funky-Monk-y piece and rather out of character with the rest of the program. This is a sensitive thoughtful piano excursion. The centerpiece of the program is a 4 sectioned "The Seasons", not Vivaldi, but quite nice.

*RIVER CITY* [One Trick Dog Records 888295 772242] by the BEN ROSENBLUM [p] trio [Kanoa Mendenhall-b, Ben Zweig-drm] is an undated recording of 9 tracks [53:42], 3 of them originals. It is Rosenblum's compositions that caught my ear in this otherwise generic piano recording. His compositions have body and lyric framework that struck me as notable: so noted. Mendenhall and Zweig are strong. RAFAŁ SARNECKI is listed as the guitarist on his record *CLIMBING TREES* [Outside In Music

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om 1804] but in fact his 10 originals [58:35] are the showcase here. His compositions most of the time are dense and spiral up with an intensity held together by drummer Colin Stranahan and/or bassist Rick Rosato. Bogna Kicińska is credited as voice and it plays a major part as accompaniment. Her wordless vocals run, in tandem and parallel, with the theme's structure. The rest of the band [Lucas Pino- ts/b.clt, Glenn Zaleski-p] adds body to the music; it is not that complicated and it moves along nicely.

In the last few years and some 50 years after its heyday, the Hammond B-3 organ has renewed interest. On LIVE AT VIVA CANTINA! [Chicken Coop Records ccp 7027] JOCELYN MICHELLE takes over the B3 for a pretty laid back set from May 2017. On the mostly familiar program of 8 standards and 4 originals [69:58], Michelle offers a light jazz outing backed by an octet exposing only average ability and which rarely performs as a group. Two standouts are drummer Sammy K who takes an extended drum solo and Laura Dickinson who sings on 2 tracks and whose contributions would have been best left off the CD.

LIVE AT VAN GELDER'S [Celler Live Records clo32218] presents BEN PATERSON [B-3] and his trio [Ed Cherry-gtr, Jason Tiemann-drm]. The group invited a small audience for this session/recording at Rudy Van Gelder's studio 3/22/18. Judging by Cory Weeds' notes there was awe just being on the premises. Moods, inspiration and other non-musical elements can effect musical results, which may account for the success of this trio recording. The program here is 10 tunes [59:30] by jazz composers [McDuff, Holmes, Shorter, Silver etc] including "I Remember Clifford", a beautifully tensioned reading. JAKE MASON [organ] and trio [James Sherlock-gtr, Danny Fischer-drm] have released THE STRANGER IN THE MIRROR [Soul Messin' Records smrcd 0118] an undated session out of Melbourne, Australia. This is a soulful and occasionally funky date. The program is made up of 10 Mason originals [51:15], some of which are quite lyrical and reach past the characterization of being funky or soulful. It





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is all pleasant in its variety. On some tracks Paul Williamson [ts/bari] is added for coloring more than a featured roll. Pleasant but forgettable.

The B-3 is also present on the recording debut of tenor sax man TUCKER ANTELL on GRIME SCENE [OA2 Records 22159]. Antell opens the disc with some nice solo signifying on the title track. Following that he is joined by Carl Eisman [gtr], Jake Sherman [B-3] and Lee Fish [drm] and on half the tracks, trumpeter Jason Palmer chimes in. Here the quintet launches into Monk's "I Mean You", the only non-original tune on the date. Recorded 7/27/17, Antell shows a good emotional range from the slow blues to some tenor a cappella work to up-tempo inventions. This recording really holds promise for the future, and it is top rate here, but I feel the albums title and inclusion of B-3 may suggest the future of another glorified bar walker. There is talent to be taken seriously here. [63:36].

TONY KOFI [bari] joins with THE ORGANIZATION [Pete Whittaker-org, Simon Fernsby-gtr, Peter Cater-drm] on POINT BLANK [Last Music Records 209]. Kofi who has been working out of the UK for some time plays a robust bari on this retro album of 10 compositions [55:05] by 10 well known jazzmen, recorded 8/10/17. One point that pisses me off is there is a "bonus track" only available thru iTunes. What the heck is this about? Hell, there is enough space on this record to add another twenty minutes of music. That aside, and more importantly, the music is solid.

I'm ambivalent about PETER NELSON's ASH, DUST, AND THE CHALKBOARD CINEMA [Outside In Music 1813]. Nelson's trombone playing is terrific with a wide capacity from triple tonguing to going to the borders of free music, but at the same time I find the music almost un-musical. To be blunt, I found the 10 originals [43:00] boring. Nelson chooses from a pool of 8 to play in smaller groups on this undated recording.

ALBERTO PIBIRI's [p] playing has a touches of Oscar Peterson, in its dynamic edge and John Lewis in the spacing. JAZZ LEGACY [Aberto Pibiri Music rpm 1001] is a 12/6/16 recording with Paul Gill [b],





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Adrian Cunningham [ts/clt] and Paul Wells [drm], with guest appearances from Dave Stryker [gtr] and vocalists Sheila Jordan, Jay Clayton and Miriam Waks. This is a rather entertaining album. Pibiri wrote the 10 tracks [43:53] which are catchy. Notable is the care/respect given to Sheila Jordan (b.1928), who at the time of the recording was in her late eighties and sounds it, but on “Be Free”, the music is tailored to her diminished ability allowing dignity and pathos to shine.



MUSÆUM CLAUSUM is both a trio [Louis Laurain-corn, Hannes Lingens-drm, Sebastien Beliah-b] and the name of the recording [Umlaut Records 2018]. Recorded 9/26&27/16 this is free music but very accessible. Cornetist Laurain has the lead over 3 tracks [54:01], and is subtle in his playing—not front and center, as he plays a “monolog”, the bass and drum improvise alongside. This is not intrusive music and makes nice accompaniment to other activity.

I’m usually excited when a new ICP record comes out as the label has a track record for well thought out creative music. New out is a JORIS ROELOFS [clt/b.clt] and HAN BENNINK [drm/balk/clt/p] duo called ICARUS [ICP059] recorded 4/9&10/18. Roelofs has made his own recordings and spent time with the VAO [Vienna Art Orchestra]. Considering the backgrounds of these musicians and this label, it is puzzling that this performance is so boring. There are 14 titles [40:36], all originals except for 2 and there is little sense of unity, there is more a sense of parallel playing. The average tune time is under 3 minutes which is not much time to get a unified front.



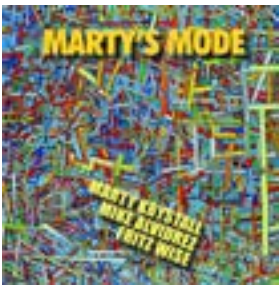
MATT LABELLE [tpt/flg/clt/cuica] goes duo with drummer REGGIE SYLVESTER on RETROGRADE [ESP 5010]. Lavelle takes 6 tracks/planets [45:57] and as the liners inform us, it is an attempt to pick up where Coltrane left off with “Interstellar Space” ...and look into the mind of god through the vast and as not yet understood power of sound. That’s a pretty ambitious and assuming project and one I get no inkling of succeeding. Things start off nicely enough with a familiar trumpet-drum exchange but

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too soon falls into sound for the sake of sound—a lack of ideas passing for avant guard. Lavelle plays the cuica; a brazilian drum that here sounds like unmusical farts. Recorded 10/18/15. I would have expected more.

Cuneiform Records has issued 2 CDs by THUMBSCREW [Michael Formanek-b, Mary Halvorson-gtr, Tomas Fujiwara-drm]: OURS [Rune 439] and THEIRS [Rune 441]. Both of these CDs were recorded during a residency in Pittsburgh from June 22-25, 2017. On the Ours set, the program is made up of 3 originals a piece contributed by the members of the trio [56:00]. This group has been together since about 2012 and have previously issued 2 CDs on Cuneiform—they have also played together within other bands. Halvorson dominates here and while there are areas of flash, I find more ephemera than flash. The compositions are of quality, though Formanek seemed to drag. On Theirs, as might be assumed the material is composed by others [Herbie Nichols, Jimmy Rowles, Wayne Shorter, Misha Mengelberg, Stanley Cowell etc.]. The group opens the 10 tracks [46:05] with “Stablemates” and sounds like they are trying to avant guard it but bring nothing new to Benny Golson’s tune other than a sophomoric attempt to be different. However on “The Peacocks” they do a masterful job coming at it from outside the box and it held my attention. This is an interesting recital and casts enough spotlight on the individual players to assess their rolls to each other and to the music. If you had to choose between the two releases— go with the Their disc as it reveals itself more with each listening.

MARTY KRYSTALL [ts/as/b.clt] has a new issue out with his trio [Mike Alvidrez-b, Fritz Wise-drm] on an undated performance called MARTY’S MODE [K2b2 records 739978 486928]. This recording is made up of 4 originals, 5 Herbie Nichols tunes and 1 composition each by Monk and Bird [65:34]. The Leader’s playing is often exciting but the recording sound is flat and there is little sense of interplay and development within and from the rhythm section. What the reeds need is something to play into and to ignite the rhythm section which rarely ignites



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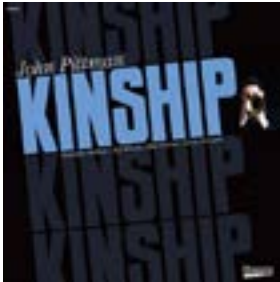
or sounds inspired. Krystall is credited as player, recording engineer and producer, here he only succeeds as player.

JOHN PITTMAN is a Toronto trumpeter whose previous recordings have been with big bands. KINSHIP [Slammin Media Records 0001] is his debut outside those groups. On this 8/22&23/17 issue, he has written 6 of the 8 tunes [45:11] and is joined by Shirantha Beddage-bari, Jeff McLeod-p, Curtis Nowosad-dms and Mike Downes-b. This is nice, if a bit generic. Beddage's baritone is a welcome deviation from the typical front line and Pittman has penned some fine tunes which could use better showcasing. As it stands here—it is just generic.

THE LIVING LIVES NOT AMONG THE DEAD.

WHY SEEK IT THERE? [Bill Cole 06] is the name of a live recording from 10/11/02 with BILL COLE's Untempered Ensemble. The ensemble includes Warren Smith, Joe Daley, William Parker, Cooper-Moore, Sam Furnace, Atticus Cole all playing their instruments along with double reed horns or percussion. The music here [52:42] is inspired by the writings of Chief Fela Sowande and snakes around freely, braced by percussion and reed horns, with interjections from time to time by narrative poetry spoken by Patricia Smith. While I didn't get any obvious spiritual jolt from the listening, I did enjoy the meditative mesh of the whole, particularly the percussion in the first part and the more specific free playing of the ensemble on the second half.

BARRY WALLENSTEIN is a poet of some renown, whose 7 previous recordings have all employed jazz, some of which I've been involved in producing. His latest is LISBON SUNSET [Sintoma Records no number.] This was recorded 10/28/16 and is backed by Massimo Cavalli [b], Ricardo Pinheiro [gtr], Luis Barrigas [p/org], Jorge Moniz [drm]. These are accomplished musicians and play it light and leave plenty of space around Wallenstein's readings of the 12 poems [29:44]. I enjoy his writing very much although I don't claim to understand it all, but at least it is not full of Greek & Roman god references. His poems convey short stories full of characters and pretend places. But what I most enjoy about



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Wallenstein is his voice, it has a comforting tonality. He has, like Jean Shepherd or Walter Cronkite a voice that is instantly recognizable. With that voice some words have an expanded meaning and here it is willies, do the doo and pooped to name a few words. I suspect he would do a fine job reciting “ The Owl And The Pussy Cat”. His is a masterful voice; try it, you’ll like it. This set is too short.

VINCE BELL [voice / gtr] has also put out a CD of his poetry. OJO [Mulatta Records 039] is an undated recording of 11 poems [35:52]. Bell speaks in hushed tones and delivers stories full of quotable thoughts... first time its art, second time it’s showbiz... The hardest thing to do is nothing at all... music changes the world. Bell’s work is less deadpan and more ethereal than Wallenstein’s. On many of these poems Laura Cantrell [voc] joins in, as well as Dave Soldier and/or David Mansfield [vlns]. Their contributions give the effect of early Appalachian music while at other times they add a touch of the blues to backdrop the text. Other instrumentalists include Rob Schwimmer [keys], Ratzo Harris [b], Robert Dick [flt]. Bell and Wallenstein each present a distinct voice and both should be heard, their words play a mean sax, straight from their soul.



In the June 2017 edition of Papatamus, I covered OCTOBOP’s last 5 recordings. Octobop is a West Coast octet formed at the end of the Twentieth century. A group that came together out of impatience with the mediocrity of rehearsal bands at the end of the century. The emphasis was on the West Coast sound established in the 1950s, i.e. Gerry Mulligan, Chet Baker, Shorty Rogers and so on. Over the years the group broadened its approach and ironically lost some of its retro identity and has become more or less just another band. It has been 5 years since their last release and I was looking forward to music similar to their previous releases. Their new release is LIVE @ SAVANNA JAZZ [1/14/2018][no label cd 070-100]. While the music has its moments—especially from Jack Conway [gtr] and Randy Smith [tpt/flg], overall, for me the recording was a disappointment. I appreciate the effort that went into squeezing 16 tracks (mostly



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standards) into the 74:55 minutes on the CD but perhaps it would have been better to drop 2 or 3 titles and allow some time to expand more on less music. The problem is there is little enthusiasm from the audience or the band. There are exceptions, the main one being, Dick Clark's Bandstand Theme. The sound on the CD is muffled and flat. The last thing is sequencing; while there is no book on this it can be a killer to the set if the flow isn't working—at the same time there is more than one way to get to Rome. Dave Casini [vbs] and Frank Wyant [drm] are new members to the group. 5 steps forward 1 step back. I look forward to the next effort.



HORNS [Spin Radical Records 888295 788649] is an undated recording by MIKE SPINRAD with Guido Fazio. On the cover it shows Spinrad holding a tenor sax, baritone sax and trumpet. He's a horn player, right? Wrong!—he is a drummer. The horns are Guido Fazio [ts/flute/arr], Richard Conway[tpt/flg] and Larry Stewart [bari]. Don Turney is on piano and organ. Spinrad supplied the program of 8 originals [43:10] perhaps the most interesting on this competent but faceless recording.



Right on time, here is the 8th of 12 planned releases over the course of a year celebrating SATOKO FUJII's 60th birthday in 2018; LIVE AT BIG APPLE IN KOBE [Libra Records 204 050]. This 1/23/18 date is with a quartet [Lotte Anker-sax, Natsuki Tamura-tpt, Ikue Mori-electronics] named Mahobin. As is usual with Fujii, long form is the order of the day, in this case 2 lengthy improvs [49:32]. Both improvs seem very much built around Mori's use of electronics, which is omnipresent, at times up front and at other times in the background. The sax and trumpet work is mostly distorted. It may sound like a mess but because of the equilibration of the volume and members of the quartet, this works very well. In effect there are 4 sound makers, Fujii being the least distorted and because of this, at times, sounds almost out of place. And while there are spaces for individual instruments, the lasting effect is a jigsaw pattern of sound and it fits very well and naturally so. Fujii obviously has many visions and thankfully the resources and talent to

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see them through. This is one of her most successful recordings of late.

Stunt records has a new [7/14&15/17] recording, this is a duo with ENRICO PIERANUNZI [p] and THOMAS FONNESBÆK [b] titled BLUE WALTZ [stucd 18012]. This is a beautiful set recorded at Gustavs in Copenhagen. Pieranunzi has a definite structure to his playing and Fønnesbæk falls into place and for a minute I thought I was listening to NHØP! The 10 tunes [54:09] here are a mixture of standards and originals. No more need be said—listen.

ELODIE LAUTON: ORIGINES [Double Moon Records dmchr 71197] is a singer very much influenced by the pre/post WWII singers/actors Damia (Marie-Louise Damien) and Édith Piaf and should not be confused with the experimental composer Elodie Lauten [1950-2014], daughter of musician/composer Errol Parker. Here the 11 tracks [55:04] are sung in French and they are pleasant enough but as I am neither fluent in French nor the sound of Damia I can't address this from a cultural point of view per se, though she does a bang up job on "Gloomy Monday" and one doesn't need to be bi-lingual to enjoy this recording. Recorded 3/27/13 with excellent backing from the main group of Stéphane Belmondo [tpt/flg], Kirk Lightsey [p], Tibor Elekes [b] and Jorge Rossy [drm]. There are added musicians on various tracks.

FLORIAN WITTENBURG [org/vbs/syn/elec] has issued FOUR WAVES [Nurnichtnur Records 118 03 06]. This is a puzzlement. The experience of listening to this is akin to watching thick paint dry. The 7 tracks [47:31] here are repetitious, slow and quiet. I cannot detect any movement, theme opening or closing. I listened twice to make sure I did not miss anything—I did not. Neither of us had moved or changed.

To be frank the only reason I mention MACIEK SCHEJBAL's AFRO POLKA [no label #600140 399752] is because I was curious by the title. In the 8 originals [51:55] here I found little that sounded like polka and the afro reference was electro bass heavy fusion, which took a toll on my ears. Schejbal draws from a pool of 14 musicians that include John Patitucci, Jerome Harris, Essiet Essiet and Fred Doumbe.

The DEAD SINGERS SOCIETY [Gutman Records





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8715143 500639] by MIRJAM VAN DAM [voc] and Ed Boekee [p] is a collection of 15 songs [52:40] associated with Billie Holiday [4], Etta James [2], Whitney Houston [2], Amy Winehouse [2], Judy Garland [2] and Janis Joplin [3]. Hmm, a tribute?-ok, but it was missing any nuance or attitude or style that any of these singers being paid tribute to had. For me, the best tributes are not the ones where the performer mimics but where the performer offers an original take on familiar material. This was pleasant enough but not more than average renditions of good material.

POCKET ACES [Eric Hofbauer-gtr, Aaron Darrell-b, Curt Newton-drm] play free on CULL THE HEARD [Creative Nation Music cnm 032]. Although it doesn't say it so it sounds to me that perhaps the 8 improvs [48:34] here are issued in the order they were played as the music gets more comprehensible and coordinated as the CD plays out. This impression stayed true upon re-listenings. There is a certain humor from Darrell on the CD. The only way to improve upon this otherwise fine CD is to have more extended time on the solos.

THE TORONTO JAZZ ORCHESTRA is now 20 and to celebrate the occasion, they have issued their 4th recording, this one is called 20 [tjo004]. This was recorded May 26-28, 2017 under the artistic direction of Josh Grossman. Grossman did all of the arrangements and wrote 7 of the 8 tracks (there is one Lennon-McCartney track; "Brad's Prudence") [45:47]. This is not a screaming big band, while they can heat it up, they pretty much keep a soft underbelly. That said, Grossman shows a bit of Maynard Ferguson but the TJO is at least 3 decimals lower in volume. The soloists on this 20 piece band are clearly noted on the packaging. I was more impressed by the arrangements than the playing—with the exception of Paul Metcalfe [ts], the soloists seemed average. The [Uof T Jazz 829982 196420]. The 9 tracks [61:50] here draw from Cedar Walton, Juan Tizol, Tom Harrell, Mike Murley and others and ranges from soft, almost commercial jazz, to straight ahead. There are a number of vocals by Brooklyn Bohach—



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which are on the spacey side but interesting and pleasant. It will be interesting to hear if Bohach goes further than University level.

A couple of years ago I urged readers to look into the talents of AYN INSERTO, her previous work, *Home Away From Home*, was done with an Italian workshop orchestra. Her current work [1/3/17] is back with her Jazz Orchestra. *DOWN A RABBIT HOLE* [Summit Records dcd732] brings together a number of players found on her 2008 recording *Muse* on Creative Nation Records. As with all her domestic recordings, George Garzone is a featured player along with soloists John Fedchock [tbn], Sean Jones [tpt], Randy Pingrey [tbn], Allan Chase [ss] and Rick Stone [as]. As with her previous works she voices her work on a series of platforms on which the soloists play. Of the 7 compositions [51:13], I find the title tune most attractive with its shifts and turns and Austin McMahon's drums booting it along. Once again, Inserto produces a mindful and well-voiced work. One tune and the only non-original, "I'll Be There", was recorded 2/1/15, with Inserto's arrangement, I found it of the least interest.

I have had a hand in producing a number of DARRELL KATZ and the JCA Orchestra, so my objectivity may be questioned, however, from the first recording, I have always found his music challenging in its complexity and depth. I have not always found his recordings to my liking but more because the material is "out of my area" than for any musical shortcomings. Katz' latest is the palindrome titled *RATS LIVE ON NO EVIL STAR* [jca 1804]. For this recording Katz has called upon almost 30 players, including strings, to produce perhaps his most compelling work. Recorded 12/1&3/16, and 1/17/17, the 8 pieces [76:01] here are long (most are over or close to 10 minutes), contain many layers and often involve voice. Part of the joy of these titles (and they are joyful) is the amount of space given so singers and orchestration have room to fill the canvas. A print out is part of the packaging which is very important as at times the text is not clear. The songs are thought provoking and at times pointedly political ...Donald



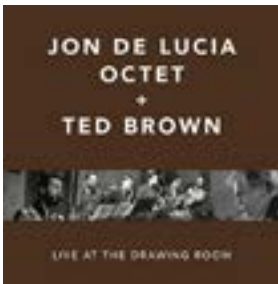
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Trump / is a vicious punk /with a big mouth full of lies / and a soul full of junk—This is from Katz' "Red Dog Blues", a piece as strong as Shepp's "Attica Blues". Perhaps this is Darrell Katz' finest work to date. Pay attention.

GREG DIAZ [ts/clt/voc] debuts *The Art Of Imagination* Jazz Orchestra on *BEGIN THE AGORA* [no label # 888295 791120]. This is a much too short [37:03], undated performance of a Florida group playing 5 mostly originals, the exception being "Iko Iko"; a lively second line strut with Diaz taking the lead vocal. Diaz' initial CD was as a vocalist. What strikes me about this band, aside from its overall excellence, is its movement, they rarely come up for air, yet there is no sense of crowding or jammed pacing. Too good and too short, a full CD with some change of pace would be welcome.

JON DE LUCIA [as] turns in a decidedly retro date on *LIVE AT THE DRAWING ROOM* [Gut Stings Records gsr 033]. This recording [10/22/16] is a nonet featuring Ted Brown. Part of the retro feel is the repertory of 10 tunes by the likes of Giuffre, Mulligan, Ted Brown and Konitz as well as some of the arrangements by Giuffre and Holman. There are times the solos and music sounds a bit flat, in the way that Tristano, Warne Marsh and Lester Young could be, but the mood is captured. They're not makin' this music much anymore and that's a shame. If you have waited 70 years to get hip to this branch of jazz, here is your chance to get with it.

Bass trumpeter AL MUIRHEAD is now in his early 80s [b.1935] and even though I have heard of him for decades, it seems, according to my records, that he has made very few recordings. *UNDERTONES* [Chronograph Records cro68] is a 2/18-20/18 recording of 2 originals and 8 mainstream standards [48:41] played by some of Canada's finest [Kelly Jefferson -ts, Reg Schwager-gtr, Neil Swainson-b, Ted Warren-drm]. This is wonderful mainstream, in the original sense of the word, the catch here is Muirhead plays bass trumpet which sounds like a trombone. In fact, when I play a recording I often do not look at the cover or read the promotional hype, I like to come to



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my own thoughts and as a result, I thought this was a trombonist's date and a very fine one indeed.

A new label and new orchestra: BANSANGU ORCHESTRA [Pathway Records pbcd 0121]. This orchestra was formed in 2014 by Paul Booth [sax], Kevin Robinson [tpt/flg] and Giorgio Serci [gtr/oud]. Excepting "Light My Fire" the 9 compositions [67:50] on this CD are all written by members in the band. The name of the band comes from an accented (non English) pronunciation of band so good to ban san goo which in turn became Bansangu. The name, suggests perhaps World music and there is a touch of that but so slight no one would mistake this as anything but a jazz band. Any suggestion otherwise would be corrected by the bands rolling version of "Light My Fire" with a tight arrangement by Kevin Robinson. In general the music here presents itself carefully voiced and revealing some fine soloists; Barnaby Dickinson [tbn], Trevor Mires [tbn], Gemma Moore [bari] to name but a few. The low point is a rather dismal vocal on "My Old Life" with lyrics hard to make out completely. Recorded in January of 2016. JOHN WOLF BRENNAN [p] has composed a most interesting CD, GOT HARD [leo cd lr 835]. This CD celebrates everything from Robin Williams to Irish reels to variations on folk songs to large sculptures to Paul Desmond's "Take Five"—here a nod with "Fake Five". The music was recorded 8/19/17 at the Alpentóne Festival with the Alpentóne Bläserorchester [ABO] augmented by Brennan's house band, Christy Doran and others. Even though the 16-page booklet breaks down all the music, in German and English, it is confusing to me still in the busyness of the layout. There is a lot of humor in the concert and improvisation within the confines of the whole. The 10 tracks here [73:13] are a surprise ball of music and I think Brennan's most successful venture to date. Gary Lindsay is probably best known as a member of the Miami Saxophone Quartet [MSQ]. The MSQ is also on this date by THE SOUTH FLORIDA JAZZ ORCHESTRA [SFJO] and here they present THE MUSIC OF GARY LINDSAY: Are We Still Dreaming [Summit Records dcd 728]. Lindsay only wrote 3 of

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the 8 tunes [68:41], but arranged them all. There is a particularly nice arrangement of “Round Midnight” featuring Ed Calle [ts] and a standout vocal by Julia Dollison on “Spring Is Here/Up Jumped Spring”. This un-dated session was under the direction of Chuck Bergeron.

Trumpeter RANDY BRECKER and arranger MATS HOLMQUIST are together, with the UMO Jazz orchestra, on TOGETHER [Mama Records maa 1056]. Recorded on 3/15-16/18, there are nine 9 tracks total (5 by Holmquist, 3 by Corea plus the standard, “Never Let Me Go”). All the material features the dramatic arrangements of Holmquist, the solos by Brecker are numerous and often lengthy. Other soloists are rather subservient to the drama of the whole. A solid, if faceless effort.

Although there is no signature sound, they are a tight swinging unit and as soon as North Texas’ ONE O’CLOCK LAB BAND hits, there is the immediate recognition that this is a Jazz band. This edition of the One O’clock Lab band, LAB 2018 [UNT 1a1801 ab] is under the direction of Alan Baylock. While I have my reservations about jazz (and the arts in general) being taught in schools, I have yet to hear a NTS unit be anything less than sparkling. This is a 20 piece unit including singer Marion Powers, who does a nice job on “A Flower Is A Lovesome Thing”. Also a standout is drummer John Sturino who starts the CD rocking and it is heard/felt elsewhere. The liners are a 24 page booklet full of photos, discography, program notes and soloists identification on the 9 tunes [65:53]. Recorded 5/20-22/2018.

Blujazz Records has issued TURKISH DELIGHT [bj 3464] by the WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY JAZZ ORCHESTRA, under the direction of Scott Cowan. This CD opens with a roaring arrangement of “Bebop”. Cowan’s arrangement is wonderful—giving new legs, at 90 miles per hour, to Dizzy’s classic and he has beautifully captured the spirit of the Gillespie big band. Other highlights are delightfully in an Ellington sway on a couple of Duke’s tunes. There are also two vocals that fall gracefully in the 10 tune [59:00] program: Alexandra Robson on “Goin To Chicago”



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and “All Right, Ok, You Win” sung by Christian Diaz. Wow, these guys are past ready for the big time. BOBBY SANABRIA put together a big band for a club date on 11/19/17 and recorded WEST SIDE STORY REIMAGINED [Jazzheads Records jh1231]. This is a 2CD set [79:38] that reimagines the music from WSS in a latin setting. About a dozen different arrangers are employed on the 20 titles and the parts hold together beautifully. What keeps the music exciting and unified is the bongo and percussion work, it is never far from the music. Sanabria is the musical director and does wonderful work with the drums, whistles and shouts. Matthew Gonzalez plays claves, bongos and various latin percussion. Takao Heisho contributes claves and more latin rhythm while Oreste Abrantes handles bata drum and bongos. The music is familiar and Sanabria handles it lovingly and brings an excitement to it. The band is energetic and on its mark, offering some fine features.

On ENCONTROS [AAM 0712] pianist ANTONIO ADOLFO enlists Orquestra Atlantica, a Brazilian jazz orchestra. The 10 tracks [53:02] are all Adolfo originals except for “Milestones”, which is given an effective hurry-up, I’m-late arrangement. This band is not solo heavy, there are capable solos and soloists but it is the arrangements of Jessé Sadoc and Marcelo Martins that really carry Adolfo’s music which incorporates various Brazilian forms such as samba, frevo, bossa and the like. Very listenable and likeable.

If you’re a fan of singers like Dick Haymes or other smooth crooners to the right of jazz then SPELLBOUND [jhs 201801] by JOEL SHERIDAN [voc] may be of interest. Sheridan is a confident and solid singer, as much cabaret as jazz. This was recorded between 9/9 and 12/13 2013 and backed by Mark Kieswetter [p], Jordan O’Connor [b], Maxwell Roach [drm] and Reg Schwager [gtr]. Sheridan sings sensitively through 15 tunes; an un-hackneyed mixture of standards and originals. Sincerity projected.

MAURICE FRANK is a vocalist for whom it would be easy to dismiss as a singer of a certain age (he looks to be 55ish and sounds 45ish). After many have



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encouraged him to do so, Frank has taken this time to fulfill a pipe dream of making a record. The result is *MAD ROMANCE AND LOVE* [Jumo Music Records 1007] and here we don't just get another generic singer, to begin with Frank has taken on the expense to bring aboard excellent back up [John di Martino-p/arr, Eric Alexander-ts, Aaron Heck-ss/clt/flt, Paul Meyers-gtr, Luques Curtis-b, Obed Calvaire-drm, Sam Torres-perc] and has put some thought into choosing 12 un-hackneyed standards [49:33]. I am further encouraged that Frank shows the possibility of expanding his range and pushing his voice in that effort. There are hints of Mark Murphy and a touch of Tony Bennett. We can always use a singer who takes chances and pushes his instrument. Perhaps the direction will be clearer with a follow-up issue, if there is one. This release is undated but probably is from 2018 sessions. Special note of the inclusion of clarinetist Heck, he is a studio player with a considerable discography over the past 35 years but with only one session as leader on a Japanese label.

[Whaling city sound wcs 107] might suggest a cabaret date but this is a solid jazz date to the point that it opens with an instrumental from the quintet [Bill Miele-b, John Harrison III-p, Yoron Israel-drm, Donn Legge-gtr, Bryan Steele-ts/ss, Ian Rubbico Legge-cello]. Following the instrumental are 10 standards plus one original by the singer. Rubbico does a very nice job on "Imagine", "Throw It Away" and "Twisted" in particular. Rubbico has a strong voice and a healthy touch of Melissa Manchester. I believe this is her first release and please let there be more. *MARTY ELKINS* is a throwback as she sounds very much like a jazz singer from the 1950s. On *FAT DADDY* [Nagel Heyer Records cd 124] she is wonderfully backed by a group [Jon-Erik Kellso-tpt, James Chirillo-gtr, Joel Diamond-keys/as, Steve Ash-p, Lee Hudson-b, Taro Okamoto-drm, Leopoldo Fleming-perc] that accompanies her in the vernacular of the era. Special note of Kellso's work, his tender Louis-like obligatos behind Elkins are thoughtful and controlled. The 14 tracks [55:24] here include "On Revival Day", "Cow Cow Boogie", "Fat Daddy"





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and “It’s Too Hot For Words” and others that are well chosen for the occasion of this non-campy outing. My only complaint is the use of organ which often sounds too heavy. Elkins recorded this date on 8/9&10/17.

This her 4th release and she is averaging one recording every 10 years. Well worth the wait.

SteepleChase has never put out a lot of vocal CDs, yet ALLEGRA LEVY has issued 2 previously on this label and now here is her third release; LOOKING AT THE MOON [sccd31852]. She presents a set of 13 tunes

[57:57], for the most part dealing with the Moon—the theme of the recording. Trying to make a performance

fit a preconceived concept such as here can lead to an ill-fit, luckily this is not the case here. Levy has a fresh voice, sultry at times, wispy at other times but

always involved with the lyrics. She is backed by a trio [Carmen Staaf-p, Alex Goodman-gtr, Tim Norton,

b] on this February 2017 recording. There are many standout performances and here we get all original

unforced interpretations. For me the highlight is an over 7 minute reading of Neil Young’s, “Harvest

Moon”. She is, or should be one of The jazz singers. Initially, I had hopes for singer CHRISTINE HITT’s,

MAGICAL KITE [no label 192914 122197] based on the lead track, “Wade In The Water”, that offers some

nice choruses from the back-up quartet. After that opener, it was downhill from there as the record failed

to ignite due to the material—which includes clunkers like “Believe In Me”, “Around The World”, “Shower

The People” “Shine On Harvest Moon” among others. 9 tracks [42:12] recorded 6/14&15/2017.

MARK WINKLER and CHERYL BENTYNE join up again for EASTERN STANDARD TIME [Cafe Pacific

Records cpd 4065]. This is a polished voicing of 7 duets and 2 solos for each singer [48:43]. This is a

classy group of songs just south of standard hits; those preferred by the hip folks. Joining featured backup are

Rich Eames-p, Gabe Davis-b, Dave Tull-drm, Grant Geissman-gtr and some well placed sax solos by Bob

Sheppard. These two are very accomplished singers, the cover photo shows them dressed to the nines,

they are ready for their next supper club gig. This CD is swell. The Jackie and Roy for the 21st century.





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Pleasant fun.

LUCIA JACKSON [voc], daughter of guitarist Ron Jackson, has issued a debut recording; *YOU AND THE NIGHT AND THE MUSIC* [Roni Music Records 6672]. I am ambivalent about this undated recording.

The singer is capable and the backing [Yago Vázquez-p, Matt Clohesy-b, Corey Rawls and others] is fine, especially Ron Jackson's guitar work. The program [49:48] of 1 original and 12 standards is pleasant enough and the disc and liners packaged in a 3 fold digi-pack is, as it should be. So what is not to like?

The problem is Jackson really does not own any of the music and as a result is unconvincing. I've listened and re-listened but aside a growing familiarity with the music, there remains a feeling of detachment from the singer. At 26 she strikes me as supper club material, not more.

Another distinctive singer is RACHEL CASWELL whose third leadership CD is *WE'RE ALL IN THE DANCE* [Turtle Ridge Records trr-003].

The 10 well chosen tunes [Fragile, Two For The Road, Reflections, Drowning In My Own Tears and others] [58:28] here emphasize internal emotional pain. Caswell's voice well captures longing and pain and she is tied to the lyrics. She believes them and so in turn, does the listener. Caswell uses a technique of drawing out the final syllable at the end of a line, she does this often mid line too, it is effective in giving the lyrics an extra punch/meaning. Dave Stryker, credited as producer, also adds some tasty guitar solos which gives the recording added credibility as a jazz session. Caswell's sister, Sara joins in on violin which, though only heard on 3 tracks, is a plus. The rest of the group [Fabian Almazan-keys, Linda May Han Oh-b, Johnathan Blake-drm] also does a fine job. Caswell does a fair amount of scatting (all of "Dexterity" is scatting) and does so credibly. This CD won't leave you smiling but will touch you and make you think. An outstanding effort!

Another outstanding effort is JOANI TAYLOR on *IN A SENTIMENTAL MOOD* [Cellar Live cl 111517]. I had this on default in my CD changer and I enjoyed it from the first playing as well as subsequent playings.



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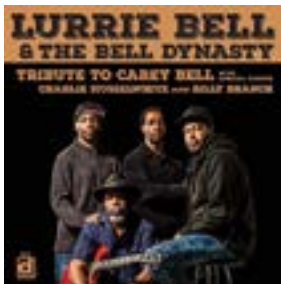
12 standards [60:20] with PJ Perry[as/ts], Miles Black [p], Neil Swainson [b] make up the 11/15/17 recording. Taylor is a veteran, her first recording was in 1990 and I believe this is her first recording as leader in 10 years. All the tracks except 2 were first takes. Taylor sings and talk/sings in a natural manner, comfortably and in a knowing way as to suggest she paid some dues. There are moments when her singing deviates off course but she always managed to right herself, which I think is a choice in style as opposed to technical errors. The weakest moment is on “I Just Had To Hear Your Voice” which, besides being a song of questionable quality, she goes over the top emoting uncontrollability.

VIVIAN LEE is a much more controlled vocalist and is convincing over the 11 tracks [53:06], on LET’S TALK ABOUT LOVE [Tara Records 1929143 19597]. Lee has chosen wisely from the Great American Songbook [53:06] including “Wives And Lovers”, “Some Other Time”, “Secret Love”, “Out Of Nowhere”, “Bein’ Green” and others. In addition, pianist Brenden Lowe adds some nice touches to the program. The rest of the backup includes Buca Necak-b, Jeff Minnieweather-drm and on track 3 Joe Gilman-p and Jeff Clayton-as on track 6.

Previously, VIVIAN LEE made other recordings, two of which are still in print: HAVE YOU MET MISS LEE? [Tara Records 766057 023620] and FROM MISS LEE TO YOU [Tara Records 766057 091926]. Both recordings are undated. I’d guess the Have You Met... is circa 2008 and the From... circa 2013. Have You Met... is very similar to Lee’s current CD in material and pacing. Here she chooses 11 familiar tunes [53:03] including a moving rendition of “It Never Entered My Mind”. Backing comes from a pool of 8 musicians. From...is a bit different than the other two CDs in that here Lee sings some up tempo material, including a fresh arrangement of “Surrey With The Fringe on Top”. The 12 familiar titles [44:28] also show an expanded view of Lee’s talents on tunes like “Stormy Blues”, taken as a slow traditional blues, and “Afternoon In Paris”, to which she has given fine lyrics to John Lewis’ tune. This CD does not have the



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consistency of the other two CDs but each tune has its own charm and all together it makes for an impressive listen. (Note: this is not the Vivian Lee that shows up playing cello on a 1996 Anthony Braxton recording). Backing on From Miss Lee is Ron Foggia [p], Paul Klempau [b], Jeff Minniweather [drm] and guest spots for Jeff Clayton [as] and Darius Babazadeh [ts]. After numerous recordings over the past (almost) 40 years, ROSEANNA VITRO says of her latest recording, TELL ME THE TRUTH [Skyline Records 888295 802529], “this is a return to my deepest roots—Southern gospel”. It is also one of her strongest works. On the 11 well chosen tracks [60:36] she sings about life and at times there is a subtle political message. She doesn’t preach in typical gospel fashion but sings it and lets it stand. Besides the title track by Jon Hendricks, there are convincing versions of “Respect Yourself” (a duet with Al Chestnut), “When Will I Be Loved”, “Your Mind Is On Vacation”, “A Healing Song”, “Walkin’ After Midnight”, “Fortunate Son” and others. Mark Soskin [p] heads up her Southern Roots Band which notably includes Nathan Eklund [tpt] and Rudy Royston [drm]. Recorded May/Oct 2017. One of her best.

Delmark Records returns to its roots with LURRIE BELL’s TRIBUTE TO CAREY BELL [de855]. Bell Senior [1930-2007] was from Macon, Georgia and came to Chicago in the mid 50s—early enough to be part of the classic Chicago blues scene but a bit younger than most of its members. His son, Lurrie was born in 1958 and grew up in the latter part of Chicago’s classic blues period. This 9/13/17 recording returns to the classic sound, a refreshing departure from the ersatz blues that much of R&R and R&B is packaged as today. The Bell Dynasty; Steve (harmonica), Tyson (b) James (drm/voc) are the foundation here with guests Charlie Musselwhite-harm, Billy Branch-harm/voc, Eddie Taylor Jr.-gtr and Sumito Ariyoshi-p all making appearances. 12 cuts [57:55] including tunes by Muddy Waters, Walter Horton, Little Walter, Amos Blackmore, plus others make up the CD. A gust of good wind blows in from Chicago.

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## REISSUES AND HISTORICAL

THE SAVORY COLLECTION 1935-1940 [Mosaic md6-266] contains music curated by Bill Savory [1916-2004]. Savory was a recording engineer who had occasion to record jazz artists privately or during broadcasts. The who and why and how of these recordings is illustrated through 4 essays by people who were present at different stages of assembling this material compiled by Mosaic. As, with most recording treasure hunts, this is a heroic tale of preventing the “goods” from final destruction. A fascinating account and even today, one wonders if any Buddy Bolden cylinders existed and if they did how many were tossed in the garbage and is there possibly one just laying around somewhere waiting to be discovered. Regarding the Savory sides—to date 2 CDs worth of the material issued here was available through internet download. Now Mosaic gives us a total of 6 CDs along with 36 pages of notes, photos and discography—all done in the usual meticulous fashion we have come to expect from Mosaic. This box of goodies starts out with Colman Hawkins and his orchestra from 5/17/40 playing, among other things, “Body and Soul”. This version was recorded less than year after his famous Bluebird [RCA] recording. The version here is almost 6 minutes long and done before Hawk made it the band’s theme. Hawk’s handling of the solo and the building up of choruses (4 here) is one of the great touchstones in jazz and continues to be influential. Without Hawk, there never would have been a “Giant Steps”. There is not a sax player today who, whether she/he knows it or not, is playing off the base that Hawk laid down nearly a century ago. 80 years later, Hawk’s handling of this tune continues to give goose pimples. Next up is Ella Fitzgerald (with the Chick Webb orchestra) singing her first hit, “A-Tiskit, A-Tasket”, a pouty masterpiece from 1938 which she still owns. Next is Fats Waller and His Rhythm from the Yacht Club this time from 10/22/38. Fats was one of a kind and I’ve listened to his patter and stride playing for over 60 years without tiring of it. Time to dust off that old pi-ano.

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Lionel Hampton is next up from 12/28/38 which is best for the tender chorus' of Hershel Evans. Carl Kress and Dick McDonough have a spirited duo from 3/29/36 followed by the Emilio Caceres [vln] trio. This brings a glorious end to CD#1. "China Boy" from 10/19/37 is the Caceres brothers first recording. Ernie [bari/ct] went on to have a full recording career while Emilio had a very slim discography. Fortunately they both had a full LP on Audiophile before Ernie died in 1971.

Disc #2 opens up with Albert Ammons of 12/14/39 playing "Boogie Woogie Stomp". Then Roy Eldridge with the Chick Webb band from 8/13/38. Then from 11/23/38, six titles with Fats Waller and an all star band that included Jack Teagarden, Pee Wee Russell, Bud Freeman, Zutty Singleton and Eddie Condon. Next up, John Kirby and his little orchestra. This band seems to have fallen out of favor. This was a superb group with a recognizable sound. They were a sort of chamber group with Charlie Shavers, Buster Bailey and Russell Procope in the front line. This sextet could swing. Maxine Sullivan had recorded with Kirby just prior to when these 3/11/38-7/28/40 air checks were made but unfortunately she is not on these checks. Disc 2 ends with 2 tracks from Benny Carter's band, and one track from pianist Joe Sullivan [12/14/39].

Disc #3 opens with a lively Joe Marsala jam with Bobby Hackett, Ernie Caceres, Joe Bushkin, Carmen Mastren, Sam Shoobe, and George Wettling from 12/7/38. Except for some "to hep to be hip" remarks from Martin Block, this is a fine set. Bobby Hackett plays pretty on "Body And Soul" [6/23/40].

Following this it is a 8/17/38 set with Hackett with Brad Gowans, Pee Wee Russell and others including Eddie Condon (who solos!). Following this a Jack Teagarden jam which included vocals from T and Leo Watson and Johnny Mercer, an interesting piece of ephemera from 1/11/39. Next up are a couple of Mildred Bailey items. The first set is a 9/19/39 check with Paul Whiteman. Then it is a 3/29/36 check with Red Norvo's octet. Bailey was perhaps the first great white jazz singer but these checks don't do her justice. 2 checks with Stuff Smith and his Onyx

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Boys from 5/29/38 and 3/29/36 follow. The '38 date included Ben Webster. This, and the Bailey sides suffer deteriorating sound quality.

Disc #4 open with tracks by Teddy Wilson from 12/29/39. Ben Webster was also part of Wilson's orchestra at this time and gets some solo space on the 3 tracks, as does J.C. Heard. Glenn Miller, thanks to his Chesterfield radio shows, was probably the most recorded jazzman in 1940. The 2 tracks from 2/3/41 will do little to Miller's legacy except remind us how stellar this band was. The rest of the disc is devoted to Joe Sullivan. These sides include "Just Strollin'" and "Little Rock Getaway" from Kraft Music Hall 1/1/39. Also included is a broadcast from 12/14/39 of "China Boy" and 4 improvs from a private party of 1/28/40 as well as "Gin Mill Blues" from 5/26/40—a Henry Levine Lower Basin Street affair. This offers a great opportunity to hear this piano master, unfortunately the improvisations from the private party are anticlimactic as they are rambling piano solos, but being as they are recovered artifacts, they are not without interest.

Disc #5 and #6 are totally devoted to Count Basie. It is fair to say that if the check of "One O'Clock Jump" that John Hammond heard was anything close to what the 5/29/38 check reveals it is no wonder that he sought Basie out and signed him. This check opens disc 5. Pres, Rushing, Helen Humes, Herschel Evans, Earle Warren, Sweets, Buck, Page-Jones-Green et al. I find it impossible that anyone could listen to this and not be moved. Most of the checks are from the Famous Door and they are a joy.

Mosaic is to be commended on issuing this material and also Loren Schoenberg should be commended on his notes which put the music in context. Mosaic never takes the easy way out. Jazz is a respected art form and Mosaic treats it with the respect it deserves.

**JOHN COLTRANE: BOTH DIRECTIONS AT ONCE:**

The Lost Album [Impulse! 80028228-02]. I often wonder about folks who bought the "complete" or "definitive recording" by an artist only to realize that was the complete version at one time—well—that was then, this, however, is now. And I suspect there is even more unissued from these dates being

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issued now as there are multiple takes here and the numbering system suggests there are other tracks. Of course, these missing takes may be incomplete and very short but if history is any predictor and more does exist, it will eventually appear. The 16-page booklet includes liner notes by Ashley Kahn and points to where this recording falls within the Impulse-Coltrane discography. There are also specific notes about the music which includes 4 untitled originals, 4 takes of “Impressions” and 1 track previously issued—plus some new photos (I believe). Oh yes, the music is quite wonderful and for readers familiar with Coltrane’s middle work this may also unearth memories. 14 tracks, historically important, non-essential unless it is essential.

ERROLL GARNER (1926-1977) was one of jazz’s biggest draws in the 1950s, made bigger by the 1955 release *Concert By The Sea*, one of the best selling albums of the 50s and perhaps Garner’s finest recording. Garner was heavily recorded from the 1940s, up until the early 70s. Those who are familiar with the *Concert By The Sea* recording may experience a throw back, listening to *NIGHT CONCERT* [Mack Avenue mac 1142]. It took me to the time and place(s) when I first heard and reheard and reheard that recording. This new Garner item strikes me as the equal to the *..Sea* recording. Originally released (partially) on vinyl by Phillips, this 11/7/64 concert in Amsterdam is issued here in its entirety. There are 16 tracks [79:49] with bassist Eddie Calhoun carried over from *..Sea* and drummer Kelly Martin who joined the trio in 1958. Interestingly there is no duplication from the earlier *...Sea* issue except both open with “Where Or When”. Garner was one of the great stylists, he would begin by hiding the theme of a piece in flourishes and different keys, while building a tension and then targeting a release into the tune. My buddies and I used to see who could first correctly guess the tune title before it got to the point where it was obvious. It is obvious the Dutch audience did this to an extent as well, as with each release and theme there is broad applause. It got me thinking what is it about Garner’s playing besides his style that is so appealing and I think it’s a combination of a repertoire





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of standards and precision and clean execution. Garner could neither read or write music but he sure could play it. He was known as “The Elf”, lest we forget. From Avid records the following might be of interest to jazz fans for their jazz interest:

**NAT KING COLE: FOUR CLASSIC ALBUMS** [amsc 1303]. This brings together: Two In Love [1953], Penthouse Serenade [1952/1955], 10th Anniversary [1955] and Just One Of Those Things [1957]. Originally, Cole started out as a jazz pianist with various trios which are well documented from 1930 to about 1940— Then his iconic voice was uncovered. In 1945, Capitol Records took him on and produced dozens and dozens of LPs. The 4 here all include some jazz curtesy of Cole’s trio which never seems far away and I suppose one could extract about 1/3 of the 52 tracks to support jazz interests, but not to be dismissive of his singing, as like few others, his voice is singular and a reward in of itself. There are tracks on Penthouse Serenade that are instrumental only and case in point, I found myself missing his voice. Everyone should make space for Cole’s voice, it is transporative.

**LESTER YOUNG: FOUR CLASSIC ALBUMS** [amsc 1307]. Chances are if you’re a collector of any depth you probably have this material as it has been reissued many times. Pres was a beautiful and emotive player. There exists a debate as to what was his greater period; before or after WWII. Nonsense, although a bit different, they were both great periods. The latter period is more shaded, more melancholy. These 4 LPs are all post WWII and they are beautiful. If you’re not knowledgeable about Pres, get yourself a copy of this, but be aware—it may be the start of a quest to find more. The added allure on these sides are the pianists: Nat Cole (originally listed as ‘Aye Guy’), Teddy Wilson and Oscar Peterson, all 3 capable of making their own memorable recordings. The LPs are: Lester Young/ Buddy Rich Trio [Mar/ Apr 1946], With Oscar Peterson [11/28/52 & 8/4/52], Pres & Sweets [11/1/55], Pres And Teddy [1/13/56]. Dig It!

**DELLA REESE: FOUR CLASSIC ALBUMS** [Avid amsc 1295] brings together: The Story Of The Blues [1958], The Classic Della [1961], Della By Starlight [1960], What



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Do You Know About Love? [1958]. Only The Story Of The Blues could be characterized as jazz-ish. Arranged and conducted by Sy Oliver with large bands that included Sam "The Man" Taylor, Charlie Shavers, Joe Wilder, Milt Hinton and George Barnes among others. On the other 3 LPs she is backed by unidentified orchestras with strings and things.

JUNE CHRISTY: FOUR CLASSIC ALBUMS [Avid amsc 1305]. This brings together Something Cool [1953-55], Misty Miss Christy [1955-56], Gone For The Day [1957], Ballads for Night People [1959]. Christy took over the vocal chair in the Kenton band after Anita O'Day left. A very consistent singer on the 4 LPs covered here. Something Cool, I think, was the bestseller of the many albums she cut for Capitol. She sings mostly ballads and her aloof but emotive voice is consistent with the west coast sound of the time. The material is not free wheeling. These sides are large groups made up of "studio players", a great cast of who's who of west coast jazz players. Wonderful sides, even if they sound a bit dated.

ABBEY LINCOLN: FOUR CLASSIC ALBUMS [Avid amsc 1302] brings together: That's Him! [1957], Abbey Is Blue [1959], It's Magic [1958], Straight Ahead [1961]. Lincoln had an up and down career. These LPs catch her at the beginning of her first period of popularity and one can hear the basis of her later very distinctive delivery. Despite a top notch group that included Sonny Rollins, Kenny Dorham and Max Roach the back-up falls flat. Notable is Lincoln's take of "My Man" in that it owes nothing to Billie Holiday; not one inflection. Abbey is Blue also has a heavy line up including the Turrentine Brothers, Kenny Dorham and Max Roach. The program seems hand picked, probably by Lincoln, and includes some music that has social comment/content. It's magic with Benny Golson, Art Farmer and Sahib Shihab has Lincoln sounding off-voice. Ironically, Straight Ahead is the least straight ahead of the four LPs. It is also the closest to her later work in delivery and voice. The line up here almost duplicates the personnel, with Coleman



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Hawkins, Booker Little, Julian Priester and Max Roach, on the ground breaking album *We Insist* recorded 8 months later, also included here were Eric Dolphy and Mal Waldron. Part of the 7 cuts here include 4 tracks which Lincoln collaborates on. She would not lead a session under her own leadership for 11 more years and that was for a Japanese company.

## GEORGE RUSSELL: FOUR CLASSIC ALBUMS

[Avid amsc 1298] brings together: *Jazz in the Space Age* [1960], *In K.C.* [1961], *Stratusphunk* [1960], *Stratus Seekers* [1962]. Russell was jazz' great theoretician as he developed the Lydian Chromatic Concept, a concept I only vaguely understand beyond it opened jazz harmonically and helped usher in modal playing. You don't have to understand the L.C.C. to enjoy the music which is quite excellent and does not sound dated. These 4 reissues represent the very best of Russell's work. Alongside his best work, I would include *New York*. N.Y [Decca], *Workshop* [RCA/Koch] and *Ezz-Thetics* [Riverside] in Russell's "best of" list. Russell's later work, for the most part, pales in comparison to this earlier work. Russell died in 2009 and made his last recording in 1995 (in 2003, there was an 80th birthday party album released that he directed). This 2CD set is magnificent, a cornerstone of modern jazz it should demand space in your collection.

DAVID "FATHEAD" NEWMAN: FOUR CLASSIC ALBUMS [Avid amsc 1308] brings together Fathead's first four releases as leader: *Ray Charles Presents DFN* [11/5/58], *The Sound Of Wide Open Spaces* [4/26/60], *Straight Ahead* [12/21/60], *Fathead Comes On* [5/3/61]. Newman had been with Ray Charles since 1954 and members of the band, Hank Crawford, and Marcus Belgrave helped make Charles' band as distinctive as it was and also helped make his debut leadership [11/5/58] one of the best. The secret ingredient here is Ray Charles on piano; present but not a scene stealer. The 4/26/60 date is the first of the Cannonball Presents series for Riverside Records. Cannonball worked



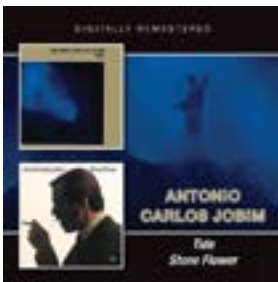
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for a while acting as a scout for the label. On this recording Newman is paired with sax man James Clay. Heavily recorded, Newman made dozens of recordings, none of which were more distinct than his first led sessions. A solid player.

**SAM COOKE: FOUR CLASSIC ALBUMS** [Avid amsc 1304] brings together 4 LPs: Sam Cooke [1957], Cooke's Tour [1960], Hits of the 50s [1960], Twistin' The Night Away [61-62]. Cooke's first big hit was "You Send Me" and over these LPs that reference sneaks into tunes over and over again especially on the 1957 and 1960 recordings. On the Hits of the 50s recording, it sounds like someone thought turning Cooke into a Johnny Mathis-like crooner would be a good idea. On the Twistin' The Night Away date, one might be surprised that it is not as insipid as the title would suggest. Most of the 12 tracks are Cooke's and while it is not Bacharach— it is listenable. Cooke ushered in soul singing and these 4 LPs give a good taste of the Sam Cooke style.



BGO Records has reissued **TIDE/STONE FLOWER** [bgo cd 1338] by **ANTONIO CARLOS JOBIM**. These two LPs are from 1970 and were early CTI releases, most of the music is Jobim's, all of it bossas. Soloists include Jerry Dodgion, Joe Farrell, Hermeto Pascoal, Urbie Green, Hubert Laws, and Harry Lookofsky. Ron Carter was the bassist for both LPs. At best, this is easy listening jazz—albeit tasteful. The added plus to this and all BGO reissues, I believe, is the liners booklet which fill information in on the issues. Here it is, 20 pages most of it a lengthy essay from 2018 by Charles Waring. Yet another first class reissue from BGO Records.



BGO CD 1337 Reissues 3 **NARADA MICHAEL WALDEN** [drm/voc] LPs [Devine Emotion/The Nature Of Things/Looking At You, Looking At Me. It is the compressed back beat sound of NMW. The 1980s sounds are tiring but good for dancing. Again Charles Waring contributes 2018 notes in a 24-page liner booklet. In this case the liners are more interesting than the music.

BGO CD 1335 reissues 4 LPs of **RAMSEY LEWIS** which are: Funky Serenity [1972], Golden Hits [1973], Solar Wind [1974] and Sun Goddess [1974].

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This material comes after Lewis' *Argo/Cadet* recordings. Columbia very quickly turned him commercial. These are the second through fifth LPs Lewis recorded for Columbia. On these dates he plays all manner of keyboards. The *Golden Hits* release is updated by added funk and a new trio [Cleveland Eaton-b, Morris Jennings-drm]. Much of the music here is for effect, not for artistic merit, and fade-outs are numerous. The liners in the 24-page booklet [Charles Waring 2018] nicely covers the music.

FREDDIE HUBBARD: *GLEAM* [bgocd1341] was recorded in concert, 3/17/75 and issued by Japanese Columbia (2 LP) and reissued on cd by Wounded Bird in the States but was only available for a little while. This came after Hubbard's CTI period and heralded in the Columbia period which had Hubbard turning toward Miles Davis' in sound. Here he is joined by Carl Randall Jr [ts/flt], George Cables [keys], Henry Franklin [e-b], Carl Burnett [drm] and Buck Clarke [perc]. For Hubbard fans there is much to enjoy here—provided you can allow some electricity into your listening. The percussive breaks are exciting and there a several vintage Hubbard solos over the 7 tracks [88:31], with perhaps "Betcha By Golly Wow" being the highlight. A 16-page liner booklet puts it all in context.

JIM HALL: *CONCIERTO/BIG BLUES /STUDIO TRIESTE* [bgo 1342] reissues the 3 CTI recordings listed in the title [1975, 1982, 1978]. This CD set includes 3 alternate takes on *Concierto*, while the other 2 are straight reissues [139:58]. Back up includes, among others, Roland Hanna, Paul Desmond, Art Farmer, Chet Baker, Hubert Laws and Ron Carter. Add CTI into the mix and you can pretty much guess what the vibe of these recordings is; lyrical, soft and lush. There is no disappointment here and the 24-page liners book (a combination of original liners with an update) puts the cherry on top.

JOE FARRELL: *QUARTET/OUTBACK/MOON GERMS* [bgo1346] reissues the three recordings in



# Papatamus



the title [7/7011/11/71,11/72]. CTI did not do as well with Farrell as with other artists. Farrell was a strong, hard driving tenor and CTI took the edge off his sound with electronic echoes and delays and sweeteners. Chick Corea or Herbie Hancock are the pianists here and they are displayed little beyond sideman's talents. To find the better Farrell checkout his 60s work especially with Elvin Jones. A disappointment.

NoBusiness has reissued BOBBY NAUGHTON's THE HAUNT [nbcd 105]. Originally issued on Otic Records. This 4/21/76 date improves the original issue by adding an alternate take to the 5 Naughton originals [46:29]. The 16-page liners by Ed Hazell, puts the music in context and brings it up to date. Otic was one of a handful of labels coming out of Connecticut in the 1970s—all are since gone. Naughton, frustrated with the jazz/new music, for the most part left the music scene and one assumes, moved on to more lucrative things. This recording is about tones and 3 artists telling stories in unison. The story tellers, besides Naughton [vibes], are Wadada Leo Smith [tpt] and Perry Robinson [clt]. I assume it is called The Haunt for its sounds. The music still sounds contemporary and Robinson's clarinet brings humor and occasional lightness to the avant meanderings.

NoBusiness next mines Chap Chap Records' archives and issued CHOI SUN BAE's ARIRANG FANTASY [nbcd 108]. This is a quartet [Junji Hirose- ts/ss, Motoharu Yoshizawa-b, Kim Dae Hwan-perc], recorded live in Tokyo 6/12/95. Here we have 66 minutes of free jazz spread over 5 improvs which was perhaps enjoyable live but doesn't come off to this listener as too interesting past some trumpet flourishes, a la Bill Dixon and some nice percussion moments, all of which gave way to tedium.

KAORU ABE [as/ss/sop s] was a tremendously strong reed player who, judging by his work I have heard (about 20 CDs and a couple of LPs) seldom seems illogical or without purpose, maladies that often arise even from the best free players. This guy



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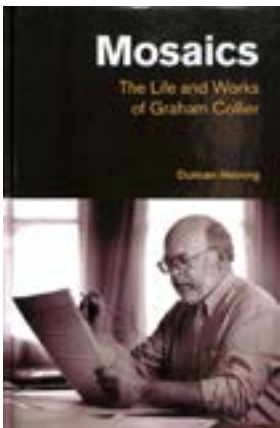
Photo: © John Papatamus  
© Papatamus

was a monster soloist. MANNYOKA [nbcd 107] is made up of two sessions [73:58]; from 7/7/78 a 2 part duo with Sabu Toyozumi and from 1/13/78 a 3 part solo outing.

## BOOKS

Equinox published **MOSAICS: THE LIFE AND WORKS OF GRAHAM COLLIER** by Duncan Heining [316 pages, hard cover with photos]. British composer and bassist Graham Collier's [1937-2011] work has not gotten much exposure in North America, despite studying at Berklee [Boston] and having toured a bit in the States. His home and work was mostly in the United Kingdom. This book is a fascinating look at an artist who rose up in his field by just stubbornly keeping forward in spite of the usual philistines and homophobes that try to block artistic advancements. The latter not much a concern as he surrounded himself with nice people. Homosexuality had been a reality for him since teenage hood and as an adult he was in a stable relationship. Collier's work was well represented in the U.K. and Europe and well commented on in the press. The book's title is from the Mosaic record label Collier started [1974-1976] and has no relationship to the American label. Heining has cited and printed hundreds of excerpts from reviews, articles and interviews to illustrate Collier's life and the reception of his work and keeps the narrative moving along. Collier was not without his grumpy moments, manifested out of frustration from being ignored by record labels who settled for less talented youngsters that looked good on record covers. By the time of his death, the realities and frustrations of being an artist in a capitalist state remained but now, so does his artistry. Collier died of a heart attack on 9/9/2011.

Also from Equinox publishers comes **BILL RUSSELL AND THE NEW OREANS JAZZ REVIVAL** [ 8"X10" hard cover, 335 pages, illustrated / photos, \$70.00] by Ray Smith and Mike Pointon. Let me get this out of the way by saying anybody with an interest in the traditional jazz revival or traditional jazz in general should acquire





# Papatamus



this book. If you're a jazz fan and the name Bill Russell only suggests that of a former great NBA basketball player—then you really should get this book. Bill Russell [1905-1992] was born in Canton, Mississippi and studied music and violin. At about 25 picked up a record by Jelly Roll Morton, in the 1930s he started, with Steve Smith, HRS [Hot Record Society] and in 1942 started the American Music label which still exists today as part of the family of labels of George Buck's Jazzology imprint. In the 1960s he played with the New Orleans Ragtime Orchestra. This book is a scrapbook of one man's life, much of it in first person and it is exciting to hear talk and direct experiences with Jelly Roll Morton and the almost accidental way the first Bunk Johnson band recording came about. After Bunk Johnson, the story goes to George Lewis to Wooden Joe Nicholas to Armand Piron and a host of now-gone legendary New Orleans area musicians. It is exciting to hear these accounts knowing that they take place at a time when the originators and second liners are still alive. In addition to the wonderful tales told, the book is loaded with handbills, photos, copies of letters etc.. Russell then moves from N.O. to Boston, New York City and Chicago. The narrative in the first person pretty much ends with N.O. and with Bunk's death and Russell's move to Chicago. Russell eventually moves back to N.O. and opens a record store to make authentic New Orleans Jazz available. While there is mention of Buddy Bolden, unfortunately Russell never had direct contact with him and Bolden is only brought into this narrative by third person accounts. It is amazing how history slips away and is not retrievable. A most enjoyable account and you can pick up the narrative at any point. Put it in the bathroom and enjoy it for many sits.

Robert D. Rusch

[edited by Kara Rusch]

# Reissues

## LESTER BOWIE NUMBERS 1 & 2

NESSA 1

Number 1 / Number 2. 44:45.

Bowie - tpt, flgh, kelp horn, steer horn, etc. / Roscoe Mitchell - as, ss, flt, clt, recorder, gourd, balls, gong, etc. ; Malachi Favors - b, kazoo, etc. Joseph Jarman - as, ss, cly, bsn, bells etc (Number 2 only). 8/11/67 and 8/25/67. Chicago, IL.

**T**rumpeter Lester Bowie was always considered the most overt prankster of the Art Ensemble Of Chicago. And he fostered that reputation with his trademark lab coat (although there were serious implications in that) and especially in his projects outside the AEC. But travel back to the origins of these musicians and a good listen to Bowie's Numbers 1 & 2 show that his music was indeed as serious as your life but conversely there are unexpected doses of humor in this music as well.

It's hard to believe that this album has now reached 50 year mark. It was shocking when it was first released. This listener came to it around three years after it was released and it was just as shocking, especially after listening to Coltrane and Ayler. I suspect there a lot of new people who will approach this on its fiftieth anniversary and many will still be shocked.

Each side contained a separate piece, in itself a radical approach in 1967, especially for a first album. "Number 1" is a trio group improvisation that while random still seems cohesive. There are some surprising interludes. It opens with a beautifully rendered drone motif, supplied by Mitchell and Favors with Bowie soaring above. Around the 8 minute mark, after about 15 seconds of silence, Bowie enters with a melody. Favors responds by entering and they engage in interlude that falls somewhere between a slow spiritual and a mournful ballad. Around the 14 minute mark Mitchell delivers a characteristic solo that shows many of his key elements (tart tone, a line that unfolds almost moebius strip-like that becomes gradually distorted into a series of shrieks and shouts) already in place. Everyone plays percussion and little instruments. The seeds of the Art Ensemble Of Chicago are being sown.

"Number 2", is a Roscoe Mitchell composition crucially adds a second reed player, Joseph Jarman. They had recorded a trio version of the piece at the first session but decided to redo it at the second. But with Jarman in the group, this completes the lineup that recorded the first Art Ensemble Of Chicago records, done two years later in Paris. And although here they appear here under Bowie's name this is, for all intents and purposes an Art Ensemble Of Chicago recording. Jarman adds a further level of density and intensity to the group. Whereas "Number 1" was characterized by a lot of space, "Number 2" has a fuller, dense sound and a higher level of activity.

This album has been reissued several times before. It came out as part of The Art Ensemble: 1967/68, the superb boxed set of historic pre-AEC recordings Nessa released back in 1993. That release also contained outtakes from the sessions. All the Bowie-related recordings (including outtakes) were present on a 2009 double disc set, All The Numbers. This is the first time the original recording with the original tracks ("Number 1" had been edited by a couple of minutes on that release) has been issued on CD. (At one point there was an issue of dodgy provenance released on CD in Japan.) This is important music. It's essential listening for anyone interested in the development of jazz beyond the Coltrane - Coleman - Ayler axis.

Robert Iannapolo

# New Issues



**BILL WARFIELD BIG BAND, FOR LEW**  
PLANET ARTS 301738.  
OLD DEVIL MOON / TOTEM POLE / STREET CORNER SUPERMARKET / IN YOUR OWN SWEET WAY / SCOOTZIE / TENTIGO(\*) / SOME OTHER BLUES / GOODBYE PORKPIE HAT(\*) / SALSA EN MI ALMA (\*) / A LITTLE CIRCUS MUSIC(\*) / THE THREE MARIAS / WHEN JANIE TAKES THE STAND.  
71:50.

**B**efore acquiring this disc, my exposure to the work of Bill Warfield was quite limited. In my possession were two cds of his big band playing an accompanying role to organist Gene Ludwig and on a Steeplechase import to guitarist Dave Stryker. This is my first listen to the aggregation completely under his name. It's also debatable whether this album should be considered a reissue or new issue since a mere pair of the numbers are unreleased with the other ten having appeared previously on a quartet of Warfield releases duly noted in the credits. In this heartfelt salute to the late, greatly under-valued trumpeter Lew Soloff, the musical chairs are occupied by many names regular Cadence readers will recognize. Soloff is present as a soloist on the Latin title( the sole chart that Warfield did not arrange) and is in the lead trumpet role elsewhere. The leader gets off some nice solos on three of the tracks. The unused tune are the lead-off standard and the Coltrane title. This is a first class production with soloist identification on all tracks, a three fold photo of the crew enclosed in the digi-pack and extensive liner notes by Arnold Jay Smith. A keeper for sure.

Larry Hollis

Collective personnel: Warfield, tpt; Lew Soloff, tpt(\*) ; Tony Kadleck, Jon Owens, Dave Ballou, John Eckert, Earl Gardner, Joe Mosello, Jeff Parke, Jerry Sokolov, Dean Pratt, Bob Millikan, Dave Trigg, Randy Brecker, Bud Burridge, Colin Bridgestocke, Darryl Shaw, tpt; Tim Sessions, Dan Levine, Matt Havilan, Earl McIntyre, Herb Besson, Conrad Herwig, Larry Farrell, Matt Finders, Jeff Nelson, George Flynn, Mike Christiansen, Charlie Gordon, Sam Burtis, tbn; Andy Fusco, Dan Block, Ed Xiques, Mike Migliore, as; Walt Weiskopf, as, ts; Alex Stewart, Sam Bortka, Matt Hong, bari s; Richie Perry, ft; David Diggs, picc; Bob Hanlon, clt; Tom Olin, b clt; Dave Stryker, Chris Rosenberg, Vic Juris, g; Joel Weiskopf, Greg Cogan, Ted Rosenthal, Roberta Picket, Art Hirahara, p; Lynn Seaton, Mike Richmond, Jeff Fuller, Gene Perla, Tom Hubbard, b; Grisha Alexiev, Bob Weller, Tim Horner, Scot Neumann, d; Dan Sadownick, Emedin Rivera, perc. Recorded circa 1990, 1994, 1997, 2005, 2014.

# New Issues

## 1) JARED GOLD,

REEMERGENCE / IT AIN'T  
NECESSARILY SO / LOOKING  
FOR ANOTHER PURE LOVE /  
SHE'S LEAVING HOME / ONE  
FOR JOHN A / HOW LONG  
HAS THIS BEEN GOING ON  
/ BLUES à / SWEET SWEET  
SPIRIT / NOMAD. 51:19

Gold, org; Jeremy Pelt, tpt (\*);  
Dave Stryker, g; Billy Hart, d.  
1/22/2018. Paramus, NJ.

## 2) MCCLINTY HUNTER, JR., THE GROOVE HUNTER, STRIKEZONE 8816,

BLUE CHOPSTICKS / THE  
BIG PUSH / AUTUMN / THAT  
GIRL / MY LOVE / SACK FULL  
OF DREAMS / I REMEMBER  
WHEN / COUNTDOWN / GIVE  
THANKS. 51:58.

Collective personnel: Hunter,  
d; Eddie Henderson, tpt;  
Donald Harrison, as; Stacy  
Dillard, ss, ts; Eric Reed, p;  
Christian Sands, el p, p; Dave  
Stryker, g; Corcoran Holt,  
Eric Wheeler, b. Brooklyn,  
NY, 11/23/2015. Paramus, NJ.  
1/23/2018.

Quiet as its kept, Dave Stryker is on a roll. He's led four albums under his name on his Strikezone label, three of which featured a foursome of guitar, organ, vibes and drums, that have garnered favorable notices in the jazz press. Now comes a pair under that logo captained by two charter members of that quartet, keyboardist Gold and percussionist Hunter.

Jared Gold established his credentials primarily as an organist (he plays piano also) on over one-half dozen discs for the Positone label under his leadership plus sideman roles on several labels. He has appeared numerous times at Small's, the Village watering hole that has fostered so much talent. (A) is another quartet date with boss Stryker but this time under his leadership, along with veteran drum master Billy Hart and trumpeter Jeremy Pelt on three tunes. Produced by the stringman, the program consists of a nice blend of standards (two by Gershwin, one from Ornette), a couple of pop oldies from Stevie Wonder & Lennon/McCartney and originals from the players. The leaders "One For John A" acknowledges his time spent playing with the late John Abercrombie as does the Coleman classic. This is neither a soul-jazz date nor a straight-ahead jazz date. It is a combination of both strained through a soulful sieve to preserve the very best. Solid gold.

Drummer Hunter heads an A-list of musicians on his debut disc (B). He's been "kickin' tubs" with Dave Stryker for close to a decade now and is a non-showy, dependable timekeeper. Old hands like Henderson and Harrison make up the front line with Small's vet Dillard while mostly Reed guides the backing section. Hunter contributes a couple of charts to the setlist which includes Herbie Nichols' "Blue Chopsticks" (wish more would do his compositions), Trane's "Countdown" and "The Big Push" from Shorter. There's some tasty brushwork on "Sack Full Of Dreams" but the highlight for me was the salty shuffle of Stevie Wonder's "That Girl". Not many current drummers can handle that kind of groove these days. All in all, both of this albums are impressive additions to the Strikezone catalog.

Larry Hollis

# New Issues

(1) JOE ROSENBERG  
ENSEMBLE  
TOMORROW NEVER  
KNOWS  
QUARK RECORDS R2  
01724

LALIT / BEFORE / PORTRAIT  
OF TRACY / DURING /  
TOMORROW NEVER KNOWS  
/ AFTER. 52:52.

Rosenberg, ss; Didier Petit,  
cello; Bruno Angelini, p;  
Arnault Cuisinier, b; Edward  
Perraud, d. December  
2016, Paris, France.

(2) FREE RESERVOIR  
NABATOV -  
JOHNSON - SARIN  
LEO RECORDS CD LR 800

FREE RESERVOIR / SLOW  
DROPLETS / MARACATU  
ASKEW / TAP DANCE  
INFERNO / SHORT  
STORY LONG. 56:58.

Simon Nabatov, p; Max  
Johnson, b; Michael Sarin,  
d. January 11, 2016, New  
York, NY.

(3) GIANNI LENOCI  
AND FRANCESCO  
CUSA  
WET CATS  
AMIRANI RECORDS

AMRN052  
WET CATS. 51:36.

Lenoci, p, prepared p,  
wooden flt; Cusa, d.  
Monopoli, Italy, June 25,  
2015.

Joe Rosenberg on soprano sax leads his ensemble, comprised of skilled players in open improvisation, on (1). Large sections of the program have a meditative quality, with frequent sustained tonal centers evolving and forming the basis for solos by members of the group. In "Lalit," for example, prevailing harmonies generated by pianist Bruno Angelini and bassist Arnault Cuisinier lay the groundwork for solos from Rosenberg, Cuisinier, and drummer Edward Perraud, followed by a middle eastern-influenced theme in the last minutes of the piece. "Portrait of Tracy," running over 11 minutes, displays the creative interplay between strings (cellist Didier Petit and bassist Cuisinier) as well as the quintet's artistic portrayal of the interesting Jaco Pastorius theme. Following some energetic and high intensity playing on John Lennon's "Tomorrow Never Knows," the group returns to more sedate form on "After," the closing piece composed by Ellis Marsalis, in which Rosenberg and Angelini play pensively over sublime harmonic resolutions.

The acoustic trio of Simon Nabatov, Max Johnson, and Michael Sarin plays with much creativity and musical interaction on (2), stretching out in free improvisation mode for over 15 minutes on both the opener "Free Reservoir" and on the closing piece "Short Story Long." The well-shaped "Slow Droplets" begins quietly with Nabatov on piano and Johnson on bass conveying a sense of foreboding, joined in the second half of the piece by drummer Sarin for further development until the piece winds down in its final minute. On other cuts, creative musical ideas from Nabatov evolve into fascinating grooves with the help of Johnson and Sarin, and are well developed on "Maracatu Askew" and "Short Story Long."

On (3), Gianni Lenoci and Francesco Cusa begin their fifty-one minute freely improvised performance with Lenoci's brooding low harmonics and tinkling piano notes barely accompanied by Cusa's cymbals. Further development of the upper register from Lenoci leads to an open percussive section from Cusa in the third minute and an increase in the rhythmic intensity.

# New Issues



## PHIL PARISOT, CREEKSIDE

OA2 RECORDS 22148.

EMERALD CRESCENT /

EARTH TONES / DISRUPTION

/ DARK ALLEYS / TONIC

/ROCKET SURGERY /

AZALEA / SAMURAI RISING

/SAMURAI FIGHT SONG /

WATER. 60:28.

Parisot, d, cymbals, gong,  
shaker; Tatum Greenblatt,

tpt; Steve Treseler, ts; Dan

Kramlich, p; Michael Glynn, b.

5/16&17/

2017. Seattle, WA.

Later in the performance, Lenoci's rapid avant guard lines in the 15th and 26th minutes contrast sharply with his contemplative playing in the 18th minute and in a moving section begun in the 35th minute. Cusa's drumming is intense yet wisely restrained during the turbulent sections, allowing Lenoci's creative virtuosity to rise to the forefront on these occasions. In turn, Cusa sets the terms and pace in the 27th minute with a strong rhythmic backbeat, joined later by Lenoci in this genre. Beyond the 37th minute are further swings between forceful and meditative playing, with a faint lullaby part of a thoughtful final few minutes from these two brilliant musicians.

Don Lerman

Parisot's second OA2 project utilizes pretty much the same names as his first Lingo with local Seattle musicians and NYC-brass ace Greenblatt. It starts off with a tune title that is a dead giveaway for what is to follow with its second-line Big Easy drum patterns. After that it's a fairly predictable mix of ballads like "Earth Tones" & "Azalea", a short boogaloo "Tonic" and Hard Bop "Disruption" & "Rocket Surgery". The eighth cut is a minute & a half drum preface to the following full band blowout.

Things wrap up with the brief "Water" that fades in with a group improvisation. Would someone please explain the James Michener quote means?

Larry Hollis

# New Issues

## ZEM AUDU, SPIRITS

ORIGIN 82735.

NEON NIGHTS / BIG QI /  
MUSO / BIRD / SPIRITS /  
FLOW / DRAGON / BAMIIJO  
/ ARCADE / MOTHS /  
NEBULA. 72:02.

Audu, ts; Mike Stern,  
g; Benito Gonzales, p;  
Ben Williams, b; John  
Davis. 10/13&14/2015. NYC

## CORY WEEDS & THE JEFF HAMILTON TRIO

DREAMSVILLE,

CELLAR LIVE 072216.

WHO CAN I TURN TO /  
LADY WANTS TO KNOW /  
HOW DO YOU LIKE THEM  
APPLES / BLUE DANIEL /  
DREAMSVILLE / HAMMER'S  
TONES / NOTHING TO LOSE  
/ BENNISSIMO /  
LOVE IS A NOW AND THEN  
THING / ROBBINS NEST /  
SHE WALKS THIS EARTH.

61:54.

Weeds, ts; Hamilton, d;  
Christoph, Luty, b; Tamir  
Hendelman, p. 7/22/2016.  
Vancouver.

Probably due to his Nigerian roots this all-original program has a heavy African tinge to it. The compositions are fairly simple from the start 1; tenor/guitar line 2; bass vamp 3; simplistic funk 4; repetitive piano based in 11/4. 5; reggae flavored 6; more heavy electric bass 7; same over drums 8; simple vamp 9; same 10; tenor/guitar head plus fours 11; piano solo in 5/4. Stern is wasted on five tracks and the bass/drums are usually headache inducing. This is being written the day before Mother's Day and my mother taught me when you have nothing much good to say about something don't say anything at all. Sorry Mom.

Larry Hollis

When it comes to long term working piano trio the threesome helmed by drummer Jeff Hamilton sets a bar too high for most current rhythm sections to attain. Over the course of a decade plus they have issued a half dozen excellent examples of the jazz art up to their most recent endeavor Live In San Pedro. This is their second meeting with reed ace Weeds which is every bit as good as their initial title This Happy Madness from three years ago. There is only one Weeds original "How Do You Like Them Apples" among numbers from Illinois Jacquet, Michael Franks, Frank Rosolino, Ivan Lins, a pair of Anthony Newly songs and the Hank Mancini title track. Pianist Hendelman contributes the swingingly infectious "Bennissimo". While penning this I came across my coverage of the Hamilton Trio's From Studio 4 (8/06, p125 & 126) which included the line "this is state-of-the-art piano trio" which could easily be appended with "joined by some fine tenoring from Cory Weeds"

Larry Hollis



# New Issues

ROSCOE MITCHELL  
MONTREAL-TORONTO ART ORCHESTRA  
RIDE THE WIND  
NESSA NCD-40  
THEY RODE FOR THEM—PART ONE/  
SPLATTER/RIDE THE WIND/THEY RODE FOR THEM—PART TWO/RUB/SHARDS AND LEMONS/  
NONAAH 55:46  
Mitchell, sop;  
Gregory Oh, cond;  
Marilyn Lerner, p;  
Lori Freedman, E-flat, B-flat, contrabass, b cl; Jean Derome, pic, flt, bass flute;  
Yves Charuest, as;  
Kyle Brenders, B-flat cl, ts; Jason Sharp, bari s, bs; Peter Lutek, bsn, ss; Nicole Rampersaud, tpt;  
Craig Pedersen, tpt;  
Tom Richards, tbn;  
Scott Thompson, tbn; Julie Houle, tba;  
Jean René, vla; James Annett, vla; Rob Clutton, b; Nicolas Caloia, b; Michael Davidson, vib; Isaiah Ceccarelli, d; Nick Fraser, d  
October 17, 2016 Toronto, Canada

The premise for this project is a fascinating one, even by master Roscoe Mitchell's challenging and creative standards. Transcribe the improvised music from two previous CD's featuring Mitchell on various instruments, Craig Taborn on piano and electronics, and Kikanju Baku on drums, then orchestrate it for various ensembles to allow for the music to ebb and flow between further improvisation and the written score. Mitchell teams up with two former students who assisted with the transcription, composers Daniel Steffey and Christopher Luna-Mega, along with a band that is a blend of players from Montreal and Toronto. The results are very rewarding and stimulating, and I was surprised at how disappointed and sad I was as the last notes faded away and I exited the mysterious and intriguing world that Mitchell and cohorts had created.

The first piece, "They Rode for Them—Part One," opens with dramatic and brooding orchestral currents that lead to an ever-changing landscape of sparsity and density of sound, at one moment suggesting primordial forests with animals awakening, and the next you are out on the street in some serious traffic. Most notes don't last long in this universe, pauses and silences are welcome, and the direction can change suddenly. "Splatter" is just that, an orchestral splatter that despite all the cacophony and simultaneity of sound has a clarity within the circus atmosphere. The title tune displays how Mitchell employs instrumental swells and decays combined with short, staccato bursts from myriad musicians to keep the listener on their toes as they absorb these scripted improvisations. Mitchell's only instrumental contribution on this date is showcased on "They Rode for Them—Part Two," and it is classic Roscoe Mitchell. He burns and buzz saws his way on soprano saxophone, using circular breathing to affect at times a bagpipe-like sound with extreme focus. On "RUB" it is back to exploring an elemental and ancient land, where piccolos and flutes awake the birds, and tubas and trombones project elephants and rhinos walking through the grasslands. The music then seamlessly segues into "Shards and Lemons," a world where sublime abstraction makes its own kind of sense. Mitchell works with a palette of sound textures and tapestries that have so much going on within the interplay of delicate drops of paint and washes of color. This music clutters and unclutters the head at the same time. The finale is a stripped-down quartet of bass, trumpet, alto sax and clarinet on "Nonaah," which buoyantly erupts with an angular and loping groove that splits off into free exchange that has a satisfying fullness. They left me wanting more. Mark Klafter

# New Issues



## DIANE MOSER BIRDSONGS

PLANET ARTS 30174

BIRDSONGS FOR ERIC/HELLO/  
DANCIN' WITH THE SPARROWS/  
IF YOU'LL CALL ME, THEN  
I'LL CALL YOU/WON'T YOU  
COME OUT TO PLAY/THE (UN)  
COMMON LOON/VARIATIONS  
ON "A HERMIT THRUSH AT  
EVE"/FOLKSONG/WHEN BIRDS  
DREAM 78:19

Moser, p; Anton Denner, ft,  
pic; Ken Filiano, b June 9, 2017  
Montclair, New Jersey

This very beautiful and successful concept album was birthed ten years ago in the life of Diane Moser as she spent five weeks at the MacDowell Colony for artists in Peterborough, New Hampshire. It was there in those sylvan fields that she encountered birds and their songs, and they won over her heart, and became her muse. On this recording she employs a trio to a captivating and gorgeous effect to express the morning and afternoon of a day in the life of these woodland creatures; the evening she reserves for her piano alone as she leads herself and the listener through her sincere and compelling ruminations.

There are many pleasures in this music. Flute lovers will have a feast enjoying Denner's many offerings and stylings. The warmth and dynamism of his tone and overall approach are a triumph as he runs the gamut from soaring joy to mournful cries, from fluttering flights of delight to tender trills and murmurings. Filiano on bass is very powerful and expressive as he embodies various moods and layers of presence. His bowing on several songs is a great highlight, splendidly echoing the avian theme through his deep, woody tone and singing lines. Moser is an earnest, clear and confident piano player, never dazzling with her technique but committed to communicating the beauty of the love she feels for these birds and their music. The trio peaks for me on "Won't You Come Out to Play," featuring a soulful and memorable theme that is pleasant and pure and fun. Solo piano from Moser captures a lovely and provocative Latin feel on "Variations on A Hermit Thrush at Eve, while the last two numbers, "Folksong" and "When Birds Dream," use sustain and delicate clusters of notes to leave us with the peace that these bird songs surely planted in her soul. Very refreshing music.

Mark Klafter

# New Issues

## RUDRESH MAHANTHAPPA'S INDO-PAK COALITION AGRIMA

MAHANTHAPPA MUSIC

Alap / Snap / Showase

/ Agrima / Can-did /

Araikapriya / Revati / Take-

Turns. 61:29.

Mahanthappa - as; Rez Abassi

- g; Dan Weiss - d, tabla. ; no

recording date or location

## JAMES BLOOD ULMER / THE THING BABY TALK

TROST 0006

Interview / High Yellow /

Baby Talk / Proof. 33:16.

Ulmer - g; Mats Gustafsson

- bars, ts; Ingebrigt Haker

Flaten - b, el b; Paal Nilssen-

Love - d. 7/15/2015, Molde,

Norway.

Saxophonist Rudresh Mahanthappa has been recording since 1998 and he has amassed an impressive discography. Several are with straight ahead jazz ensembles dealing with post-Coltrane jazz, although Mahanthappa's alto playing is as influenced by Charlie Parker / Jackie McLean as Coltrane. But he's also released recordings that meld the music of his Indian heritage (Mahanthappa is American-born) into the jazz tradition. *Kinsmen united* his trio (sax / guitar / drums) with Tamil saxophonist Kadri Gopalan's trio of sax, violin and mrandangam (a double-sided hand drum) for a unique and powerful musical experience. In 2008, he released *Apti*, a group by his trio Indo - Pak Coalition with guitarist Rez Abassi and drummer / tabla player Dan Weiss. *Apti* was a solid effort opening new avenues of improvisation for all three players. Unfortunately for fans of that disc the band seemed to lie dormant for nearly ten years.

But nine years later Mahanthappa has resurrected the ensemble on *Agrima*. There are many of the same elements that made *Apti* such a success. The opener "Alap", is a traditional slow raga opening, the difference being Weiss is adding cymbal splashes signaling a change in sound. "Can-Did" is most reminiscent of the material *Apti*. But there have been changes. The personnel is the same. But Weiss now divides his time between tabla and a traditional drum kit. Mahanthappa has added an electronic element in addition to his quicksilver saxophone. Abassi is playing with a more aggressive demeanor. The music still has a strong Indian flavor but it is tempered as much by rock rhythms as it is by jazz. And this is not a bad thing. Weiss is a drummer who can handily maneuver between both worlds, sometimes within the same track, and not sound cliché. Add the tabla (check out his solo on "Revati") and it's a hat trick about which few drummers can boast. Abassi straddles all three worlds confidently as well and brings a healthy command of electronics as well.

However the electronics can, at times, get in the way. When they first appear (on "Showcase"), they sound like an overdubbed noodling intrusion, taking away from Mahanthaappa's developing solo. But elsewhere, they seem just the right touch. An interlude a few

# New Issues

minutes into "Rasikapriya" is unexpected and particularly effective, giving the music an ambient other-worldly interlude before Mahanthappa takes off into a soaring solo. The epic (nearly 15 minutes) "Revati" brings all of these elements together (electronic, jazz, rock and Indian rhythms, unfettered soloing) to make it the best track on the disc. Ultimately Agrima is another success in Mahanthappa's discography. Let's hope he delivers a follow-up sooner than ten years.

**A**nother band that has amassed an impressive discography is The Thing. A trio of Mats Gustafsson (saxes), Ingebrigt Haker Flaten (bass) and Paal Nilssen Love (drums), they've released at least 20 recordings since 2001. They've been known for their intense live trio performances and, although they're known as a "free jazz trio", they frequently explore jazz history by using the material of Don Cherry, Ornette Coleman, Duke Ellington and Albert Ayler as springboards. They're a band not averse to collaborations either. They've recorded with Joe McPhee, Ken Vandermark, Nehneh Cherry and Barry Guy among others. Their most recent, *Baby Talk* brings guitarist James Blood Ulmer into the mix.

Initially, Ulmer may seem an unusual choice. He came up with organ trio combos including a stint with John Patton. He eventually gained notoriety as Ornette Coleman's guitarist when the saxophonist went "electric" in the mid 1970s. And since his first release *Tales Of Captain Black* he's been his own man, incorporating all of his experiences from blues to soul jazz to free jazz to harmolodics into his music. And The Thing has never shown any hesitation to collaborate with anyone who has developed his own voice. Their fondness for Ulmer's music goes back to their first release (*She Knows...*) which featured a version of Ulmer's "Baby Talk".

This *Baby Talk* stems from a performance at the 2015 Molde International Jazz Fest. All compositions on the disc are by Ulmer and it's amazing how in tune with each other these players are. Ulmer grooves away, in his own inimitable style, taking off on his oblique tangents with trio following behind him, supporting him with an energetic accompaniment. Gustafsson's earthy saxophones are a good match for Ulmer's rootsy sound, especially his baritone on "Proof".

*Baby Talk* shows how Ulmer is willing to open his music up to players that aren't necessarily in his comfort zone. And it shows just how mutable The Thing is that they can carry other people's material off with finesse giving it their own spin as well.

*Going South* is the third recording by saxophonist Omri Ziegele to bear the *Where's Africa* appellation. It was first used in 2005 on an album of duets with pianist Irene Schweizer. The album didn't seem particularly African containing a number of Monk covers among others but ending with a version of Johnny Dyani's "Ntyilo Ntyilo". The second time the group was a trio with the addition of South African drummer Mkaya Ntshoko and Ziegele drew more directly on South African material by Dyani and Abdullan Ibrahim. For the latest *Where's Africa* release the band is a trio with two new recruits: Yves Theiler (keyboards) and Dario Sisera (percussion).

Robert Iannapolo

# New Issues

## OMRI ZIEGELE / WHERE'S AFRICA GOING SOUTH

INTAKT 284

Afreaka / Make Me Mad /  
Laughing Your Tears Away  
/ Will You Marry Me After  
So Many Years / Space /  
Yesterday's Tomorrow /The  
Milkman Always Paid My  
Rent / Camel, Where's My  
Land / Ithi Gqi. 49:51.  
Ziegele, - as, uzbek ft; vcl;  
Yves Theiler - kybds, reed  
org, melodica, vcl; Dario  
Sisera - d, perc.  
9/22-23/2016, Winterthur,  
Switzerland.

On this album, Africa is in the grooves. The compositions are mostly originals by either Ziegele or Theiler. The opener, "Afreaka" comes charging out of the gate in 7/8 and it doesn't let up over its nearly seven minute run. Theiler's keyboards reinforce the rhythm and meter and Sisera is a dynamic and crafty drummer. Many soloists might be boxed in or tripped up by playing in an odd meter but Ziegele's alto sounds positively liberated. He's always searched for Africa in his music, even his nominally "non-African" albums (i.e. Edges And Friends) so this type of groove playing is down his alley. About two thirds of the way, the entire proceedings break into a free climax before returning to the initial groove to take it home. "Make Me Mad" has a reggae feel. The music frequently seamlessly alternates between slow and moody to danceable rhythms, sometimes within the same track. The only cover is Johnny Dyani's "Ithi Gqi" (also featured on the second Where's Africa album) and it ends the proceedings on a danceable, upbeat note.

The general feel of the album is spacious with each instrument having a sonic clarity that makes it seem like a trio of equals. Perhaps the only element that seems a bit out of place are the vocals but they're a minor part of the proceedings. Going South puts the African vibe front and center with some tasty and unusual side bars to make a complete and enjoyable album.

Robert Iannapolo

# New Issues

## TOM HARRELL MOVING PICTURE

HIGH NOTE 7301

Moving Picture / Apple  
House / Montego Bay / Time  
Passage / Different Clouds  
/ Gee, A Bee / Happy Ring  
/ Vibrer / Sea / Four The  
Moment. 67:25.

Harrell - tpt, flgh; Danny  
Grissett - p; Ugonna Okegwo  
- b; Adam Cruz - d. 9/20 -  
21/2016. Pompignan, France.

On the surface, trumpeter Tom Harrell and pianist Vijay Iyer would appear to have little in common. But digging deeper, there are some striking similarities in their approaches. Harrell is a jazz classicist with an adventurous, probing streak. Iyer is a committed modernist but he also respects the jazz tradition, especially the post-Coltrane strain. Both also seem to appreciate a committed backing group (Harrell, his quartet and Iyer, his trio) while open to other forms and formats to explore.

Trumpeter Tom Harrell has had a long and fruitful career in jazz releasing albums since the late 1970s. Despite well-documented medical issues, his music has grown and developed and his output since 2000 has been exceptionally good and very consistent. His last two albums (*First Impressions*, a take on Ravel and Debussy recorded with his group and a small chamber ensemble) and *Trip*, a quartet replacing piano with a tenor sax) were among his best of his recorded career. His latest, *Moving Picture*, recorded with his performing quartet is nearly the equal of those. Harrell clearly values his sidemen. Bassist Okegwo has been with him since the early 2000s. Pianist Danny Grissett, since the middle of the decade. Drummer Aaron Cruz is the newest member but he has recorded with Harrell sporadically since the early 2000s. They are all high quality players and seem to relish playing Harrell's music.

The title track kicks things into high gear with a strong 6/8 rhythm. Cruz drives but he never swamps the music. Harrell's flugelhorn takes charge with strong assured lines. Everyone get his say and it's a great opener. Harrell frequently overdubs a second or third horn on the heads which gives the melodies a subtle but significant heft. "Apple House" is an odd little number. It almost has the flavor of a late 60s Burt Bacharach piece. The presence of a flugelhorn and that staccato melody will do that. But its playful, light character pushes Harrell and pianist Danny Grissett toward solos that give the tune a melodic depth that belies its light (not lightweight) flavor. But the best track is the most anomalous. "Vibrer" is a nearly twelve minute duet between Harrell and Grissett. It's multi-sectioned, frequently shifts rhythm and tempo and has a full harmonic palette peppered with dissonance.

# New Issues

## VIJAY IYER FAR FROM OVER ECM 2581

Poles / Far From Over / Nope  
/ End Of The Tunnel / Down  
To The Wire / For Amiri Baraka  
/ Into Action / Good On The  
Ground / Threnody. 57:55.  
Iyer - p, el p; Graham Haynes  
- cor, flgh, electronics; Steve  
Lehman - as; Mark Shim - ts;  
Stephan Crump - b; Tyshawn  
Sorey - d. 4/2017, New York  
City.

Several themes weave in and out of the piece. Grissett's piano is a lush cushion underneath Harrell and when he steps forward (he gets a couple of solo sections) he shows himself to be a melodist in total simpatico with Harrell's conception. Makes one wish for a full album with these two

Harrell has been on a roll for quite a while and Moving Picture only serves to confirm that he has been one of the most productive and creative players around this past decade.

Another player who's been on a roll is pianist Vijay Iyer. While his trio with bassist Stefan Crump and drummer Marcus Gilmore has been the most consistent dissemination of his music (and let's hope he keeps it that way), Iyer frequently mixes things up: an album with a string quartet (Mutations), sitting in with the legendary Trio 3 (Wiring), a large ensemble scoring a film celebrating the Indian Holi festival. Iyer is clearly not a one-trick pony. His most recent release, Far From Over (after the excellent trio record Breaking Stuff and a duet with trumpeter Wadada Leo Smith) is a sextet recording populated by some of the finest of his contemporaries on the New York scene and should be no surprise. He has written these pieces to their strengths and he features them well. He highlights the electronics in trumpeter Graham Haynes playing on the mysterious "Wake" and "End Of The Tunnel". Tenor player Mark Shim delivers a galvanic solo rising out of the hyper energy (courtesy of Tyshawn Sorey) of "Down To The Wire". The listener is treated to a brief glimpse of the trio (with Sorey replacing Gilmore) on "For Amiri Baraka". The piece is elegaic, but never maudlin and builds to a stirring rise before settling back to the elegaic mood with which it started. "Threnody" makes good use the doleful elements found in alto saxophonist Steve Lehman's playing. His solo brings the album to a powerful climax spurred on by a growing intensity from the backing horns and rhythm section. As the last notes fade and the album reaches a logical conclusion the listener leaves it with a feeling one has heard a complete work.

Robert Iannapolo



# New Issues

## CORY DENNISON BAND, NIGHT AFTER NIGHT, DELMARK 852.

HEAR MY PLEA / MISTI / I  
GET THE SHIVERS / BETTER  
MAN / PHONE KEEPS  
RINGING / NOTHING'S TOO  
GOOD (FOR MY BABY)  
LOVE AIN'T FAIR / ARE YOU  
SERIOUS? / NIGHTCREEPER  
2 (STILL CREEPIN') / IT'S  
SO EASY / STUCK IN  
CHICAGO / TROUBLES OF  
THE WORLD / DOWN IN  
VIRGINIA. 61:14.  
Dennison, vcl, g; Gerry  
Hundt, g, org, hca; Nik  
Skilnik, b; Joel Baer, d,  
perc. 4/11&12/2017.  
Chicago.

## DELFEAYO MARSALIS, KALAMAZOO: AN EVENING WITH, TROUBADOUR JASS 093017, TIN ROOF BLUES / AUTUMN LEAVES / MY FUNNY VALENTINE / SESAME STREET THEME / IF I WERE A BELL / THE SECRET LOVE AFFAIR / IT DON'T MEAN A THING / INTRODUCING THE BLUES / BLUE KALAMAZOO(\*) / DO YOU KNOW WHAT IT MEANS TO MISS NEW ORLEANS. 67:38.

There is one thing you can make book on when it comes to hardcore blues, the esteemed Chicago-based Delmark doesn't sign and/or record any artist that is not ready. Take Cory Dennison, for example, who has paid mucho dues for over a dozen years on the local scene. His background is well-covered in the booklet notes by Dennis Rozanski for his second Delmark album. This is a super tight foursome that has honed its skills on many a bandstand for numerous nights providing roots music fans with an eclectic mix of all the good stuff that makes up the Chi-Town Sound. Utility man Gerry Hundt is the talented multi-instrumentalist that forms the backbone of the band and he is no slouch in the song writing department putting his head together with the leader to compose more than half of the selections heard herein. Everyone will have their own particular favorites but, trust me, there's something here for all tastes. One slight personnel change, bassist Skilnik has been replaced since the recording session by Aaron Whittier who is captured on the cover. Like his previous self-titled debut this one spells more good blues news.

Larry Hollis

It is probably a safe bet to say of all the Marsalis brothers, Delfeayo is the least publicized. Any recordings under his leadership have been few and far between so it is a rare treat to see this concert date from over two years ago finally available to the general jazz public. He has chosen his backing musicians well, with a blue ribbon rhythm section headed up by his father Ellis along with bass ace Reginald Veal (on a rented axe) and the always interesting Ralph Peterson kicking tubs. They sail through the ten song program dotted with some Delfeayo originals (including the title tune co-penned by singer Diaz) with an aplomb befitting their musicianship. The elder Marsalis is featured on the Frank Loesser standard while the leaders Curtis Fuller-tinged slide is front and center. Nothing drastic or earthshaking here, just good old swinging sounds book ended by a pair of traditional themes. Nice.

Larry Hollis

MARSALIS, TBN; ELLIS MARSALIS, JR., P; REGINALD VEAL, B; RALPH PETERSON, D; CHRISTIAN O'NEILL DIAZ, VCL(\*)/  
MADISON GEORGE, D(\*). 4/17/2015. KALAMAZOO, MI.

# New Issues

**ELLA FITZGERALD,  
'S WONDERFUL,  
NEDERLANDS JAZZ  
ARCHIEF 1701.**

Singing The Blues / Angel Eyes  
/ Lullaby Of Birdland / Love For  
Sale / Dancing On The Ceiling  
/ April In Paris / Just One Of  
Those Things / Roll 'Em Pete  
/ I Can't Give You Anything  
But Love / Air Mail Special / 'S  
Wonderful / Our Love Is Here  
To Stay / Gone With The Wind /  
Misty / Just In Time / The Lady  
Is A Tramp / The Man I Love /  
I've Got The World On A String /  
Too Darn Hot / Mack The Knife  
/ Roll 'Em Pete. 73:50.

Fitzgerald, vcl with:

1-10: Don Abney, p; Herb Ellis,  
g; Ray Brown, b; Jo Jones, d.

11-21: Paul Smith, p; Jim Hall,  
g; Wilfred Middlebrooks, b; Gus  
Johnson, d. 5/5/1957, 2/27/60,  
Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

**T**his is Ella Fitzgerald live at the peak of her powers. Really, what more do you need to know?

This material came from two Jazz at the Philharmonic concerts held in Amsterdam in 1957 and 1960. In the 1957 set she sticks to singing mostly standards with "Singing The Blues" the only bow to the pop music of the day. She glides beautifully on "Love For Sale" and "Dancing On The Ceiling" over Don Abney's and Herb Ellis' feathery accompaniment, scats through on the Count Basie-Will Bill Davis arrangement of "April In Paris" and really goes to town on "Air Mail Special", wordlessly flying along and incorporating the melodies of "Moose The Mooche", "The Ballad Of Davy Crockett" and the "Hawaiian War Chant" in her improv.

Her voice sounds even fuller and more resonant in the 1960 concert. Through the hip bounce of "Just In Time", the slow elegance of "World On A String" and the sheer beauty of "The Man I Love" and "Misty" she is impeccable. Paul Smith and the rest of the rhythm section swing hard on "Mack The Knife" as Fitzgerald works in a Louis Armstrong impression and the grand finale is a marathon sprint through "Roll 'Em Pete" where this time her improvising touches on "Volare" and namechecks Dinah Washington and Joe Williams. There is obviously a truckload of live Ella Fitzgerald out there but these shows sound especially good and show the great lady at her best.

Jerome Wilson

# New Issues

## JANE IRA BLOOM WILD LINES: IMPROVISING EMILY DICKINSON

OUTLINE 143

Disc One (Music) : Emily And Her Atoms / Alone And In A Circumstance / Other Eyes / Singing The Triangle / Mind Gray River / One Note From One Bird / Cornets Of Paradise / A Star Not Far Enough / Hymn: You Wish You Had Eyes In Your Pages / Wild Lines / Say More / Bright Wednesday / Big Bill / It's Easy To Remember.

Disc Two: (Music & Poetry): Wild Lines / Emily And Her Atoms / Aline And In A Circumstance / One Note From One Bird / Dangerous Times / a Star Not Far Enough / Singing The Triangle / Mind Gray River / Cornets Of Paradise / Other Eyes / Say More / Hymn: You Wish You Had Eyes In Your Pages / Bright Wednesday / Big Bill / It's Easy STo Remember. (total time: 119:34)

Bloom - ss; Dawn Clement - p; Mark Helias - b; Bobby Previte - d. on disc two add: Deborah Rush - voice. 4/1/2017, New York City.

Soprano saxophonist Jane Ira Bloom is a performer who has been recording for 40 years. Her first, *We Are Outline*, a duo with bassist Kent McLagan was self-released in 1978. Since then she's been one of those players who always seemed on the brink of a popular breakthrough. At one point she even had a contract with Columbia Records. But she's still remained someone who's known only by discerning jazz listeners. However, around 2008, after many worthwhile releases with various labels, she reinstated her *Outline* label and proceeded to make the best music of her career. Last year's *Early Americans* was given high praise all around, was on many 10-best lists and deservedly so. As a soprano saxophonist, she is at the top of her game. Along with Dave Liebman, she is among the few players on the instrument who has carved out a distinctive sound (i.e. not a Coltrane, Lacy or Shorter imitator) and her improvising is never less than interesting. She's composed memorable pieces, released well-received albums and has assembled a top-rate trio (with bassist Mark Helias and either drummer Bobby Previte or Matt Wilson) to perform them. It's a measure of her excellence that she's able to keep players of this caliber in her orbit.

Bloom's latest recording, *Wild Lines* is subtitled "Improvising Emily Dickinson". Inspired by the 19th century poet, Bloom said she was attracted by the poet's "use of words". She feels Dickinson used words "the way a jazz musician uses notes". She assembled former pieces that she felt were appropriate ("Singing The Triangle", "Mind Gray Ribert", "Other Eyes" were all originally on *Early Americans*) and wrote new pieces to present a full program. She uses Helias and Previte and expands her trio with the addition of pianist Dawn Clement. Clement has worked with this combination before on Bloom's *Wingwalker* so this group sounds like a cohesive unit.

The program is presented in two discs. The first consists of instrumental versions of the material. It's a coherent set that flows from track to track. Bloom's lithe soprano floats and soars over the rhythm section. It's a marvelous group performance. "Dangerous Times" is organized around a pulsing malleted tom tom rhythm and drone from the bass. It creates an ominous mood. Clement's deep chords add to the mood as Bloom etches spiraling lines with an almost Middle-Eastern flavor.

But on the second disc the listener gets to the heart of the matter. Bloom selected several poems from

# New Issues

## STEVE HOBBS, TRIBUTE TO BOBBY, CHALLENGE RECORDS

73433.

THE CRAVING  
PHENOMENON / INTO THE  
STORM / BESAME MUCHO /  
NEW CREATION /TRES VIAS  
/ MILLIE /THELONIOUS  
FUNK / THE ROAD TO  
HAPPY DESTINY / BLOWING  
IN THE WIND / EL SUENO DE  
HORACE SILVER / IN FROM  
THE STORM / LET'S GO TO  
ABACO / WHERE OR WHEN.

74:50.

Hobbs, vib, marimba ; Adam  
Kolker, ss, ts; Bill O'Connell,  
p; Peter Washington, b;  
John Riley, d; Carol  
Ingbretsen, Maurice Myers,  
Marvin Thorne, vcl. 7/12 &  
13/2016. Brooklyn, NY.

Dickinson's major body of work and short pieces from Gorgeous Nothings, a collection of the poet's miniatures and rough drafts. They are read by actress Deborah Rush in a calm, considered voice subtly conveying the underlying emotion.

Bloom rejigs the sequence of the tunes from the instrumental disc. She also doesn't follow a strict pattern regarding the placement of the poetry vis-à-vis the music. Many are read as preludes before the music begins, sometimes with piano or bass accompaniment. "A Star Not Far Enough" is accompanied throughout by music. A diary excerpt (?) of a circus' arrival in Amherst (her hometown) is accompanied by drums and soprano saxophone. "Take all away from me..." is read at the end of "Big Bill" preceding the concluding solo soprano version of Rodger and Hart's "It's Easy To Remember" (a very appropriate conclusion to both discs). " Disc two has an entirely different feel from the first.

Bloom is on a roll. One could pick up any of her last five releases and be assured of a worthwhile listen. But Wild Lines, is my recommendation. It's a good demonstration of what a creative musician can do when faced with presenting material in multiple ways.

Robert Iannapolo

In the text of his comprehensive essay inside the accompanying booklet mallet-man Steve Hobbs relates the background scenario of each of the ten Hobbs charts and comments on the three familiar covers. Hobbs writes in a direct and clear prose style that actually mirrors his playing manner. On the section where he talks of the dedicate e, the late Bobby Hutcherson, his admiration is abundantly evident. His use of the marimba more than usual, instead of his normal vibraphone and the employment of voices on two tracks shows an admitted Hutch influence. The augmentation of Hobbs' long-held rhythm section with Kolker's reeds adds needed tonal variety. Since everything is more than thoroughly explained in the booklet all I can add is everything about this issue is first rate.

Larry Hollis

# New Issues

## ROCCO JOHN - PEACE AND LOVE

UNSEEN RAIN 9932

Aurora Borealis / Evolutions / What If The Moon Were Made Of Jazz. 62:08.

Rocco John Iacovone - as, ss, p; Ras Moshe Burnett - ts, flt, bells; Michael Lytle - b clt; Sana Nagano - vln; Rich Rosenthal - g; Phil Sirois - b; Dalius Naujo, d; John Pietaro - perc. 12/26/2014, New York City.

The passing of saxophonist Will Connell in 2014 was felt deeply throughout New York's jazz community of forward thinking players. Connell was probably not well-known outside that small enclave. But his history was deep and he was involved with the free jazz movement on both coasts. During the early 70s, he moved to the West Coast and hooked up with Horace Tapscott's Pan-African People's Arkestra as a copyist and player. But by the middle of the decade he had moved back to New York and immersed himself into that city's free jazz loft scene. His skills as a copyist led to working with Ornette Coleman on revisions of "Skies Of America". He also worked and recorded with William Parker, Sam Rivers, Butch Morris, Chico Hamilton and many others as both a copyist and player. As things developed, he showed his generosity by working with players who were just emerging in the 1990s/2000s. One of his last projects (in 2014) was as a member of a trio organized by trombonist Steve Swell with drummer Reggie Nicholson. Sadly, he passed away a month before he was to put on a week's residency at The Stone. Among the players he bestowed his generosity upon was saxophonist Rocco John (Iacovone). John was one of the players Connell was going to feature in his Stone residency. That residency went on despite Connell's passing and became a tribute to him. Peace And Love was recorded during it. But rather than a mournful cry, the band's set had a spirit of energy and affirmation of the existence of a good friend and mentor. John had assembled an eight piece ensemble called the Improvisational Composers Ensemble. That night, the band played three pieces by John all given lengthy interpretations and featuring the players in solos. While some of the band members have a bit of notoriety (including saxophonist Ras Moshe Burnett and bass clarinetist Michael Lytle), the others are all lesser known but on the basis of this recording deserve a hearing.

While all pieces have something to recommend them there are some truly notable moments. "Evolutions" has a wistful melody beautifully etched by violinist Sana Nagano. The piece also has tinges of those modal "Egyptian" melodies that Sun Ra often used. "What if The Moon Were Made Out Of Jazz" at nearly 23 minutes goes through several changes. The opening contains a fiery alto sax / drummer dialogue between John and drummer Dalius Naujo. Throughout the set Naujo propels this music as well as adding subtle shading during the quieter interludes. Things wind down for a piano interlude by John before guitarist Rich Rosenthal enters for a sustained interlude that seems like a quiet meditation on a departed friend. For this listener it's the highlight of the disc. Bassist Pietaro follows with a lovely solo before the music ratchets up again for a fiery solo by Burnett, a wonderful solo by violinist Nagano and conclusion. The entire set comes together to work as a fitting tribute to a man who had a lot more influence on the New York scene that most people realize. And John is to be credited for organizing this wonderful tribute. Those who are curious should seek out the music of Connell, Rocco John and the rest of these players.

Robert Iannapolo

# New Issues

## CHRIS SPEED TRIO PLATINUM ON TAP

INTAKT 294

Red Hook Nights / Arrival  
High / Buffalo 15 / Crossface

Cradle / Pretty Much /  
Crooked Teeth / Platinum

On Tap / Stardust / Torking /  
Spirits. 45:18.

Speed - ts; Chris Tordini - b;  
Dave King - d. 3/3/2016,

Brooklyn, NY

Chris Speed can be an unassuming saxophonist. He's not one to scream and shout but he can build up the intensity nicely when the music calls for it. And his value to a group is demonstrated by those who have tapped his talents: John Hollenbeck for his Claudia Quintet (he's the perfect saxophonist for that group), Tim Berne's Bloodcount, Mary Halverson, Myra Melford a/o.

Speed is a player more concerned with melody and line and development of his approach to them. Much like Jimmy Giuffre, he will build a solo slowly, mining his phrases for all they're worth. And paying close attention matters while listening to Speed's work, especially with Platinum On Tap.

This is the second album recorded with a trio of himself, Chris Tordini (bass) and Dave King (drums). He begins "Red Hook Nights" unaccompanied, slowly, falling somewhere between Giuffre's considered approach merged with Ben Webster's breathy phrasing. It's a ballad whose phrases seem to fold in on themselves. The development is slow, almost methodical and the net effect is beautiful. But it goes against all rules for an album's opening track. It's undynamic, not shouting "hey, look at me". But it does draw the listener in. "Arrival High" shows Speed's penchant for going against the grain. With the rhythm section flailing away, Speed enters with a slow line (at seemingly a third of the tempo) and it creates an edgy push-pull with bass and drums. By "Crossface Cradle" the band is cooking with Tordini's deep bass giving Speed a cushiony base from which to work and King's high-energy (but never overwhelming) drumming taking care of the rhythmic accompaniment. One can tell that these three work together and know they're creating music with a unique sound.

The program consists of mostly Speed originals with two standards. Hoagy Carmichael's "Stardust" is given a beautiful balladic treatment. And Ayler's "Spirits" takes the album out on a playful note. Speed and his trio have delivered something unique, an album that draws attention to itself by underplaying. Platinum On Tap is well worth hearing.

# New Issues

## JASON STEIN QUARTET LUCILLE!

DELMARK 5025

Marshmallow / Halls And Rooms / Dexterity / Roused About / Ryder's Uncle Dragon / Wow / Little Rootie Tootie / I Knew You Were / April. 48:58.

Stein - b clt; Keefe Jackson - ts, contra b clt; Joshua Abrams - b; Tom Rainey - d. 3/16-17/2017, Chicago, IL.

A different kind of subtlety informs Jason Stein's quartet on Lucille! The 2 reed frontline consists of the leader on bass clarinet and Keefe Jackson on tenor saxophone and contrabass clarinet. Both players have strong voices on their instruments. So when the leader shares the frontline with Jackson on contrabass clarinet it could signal impending doom. But one listen to Bird's "Dexterity" should allay any fear of booming lower horn overload. Stein has the ability to play both light and heavy and does so throughout. But Jackson's facility on the lower clarinet is nothing short of amazing, especially considering the convoluted theme to "Dexterity" which he maneuvers with ease. The two also fare well on the more free form interpretation of Monk's "Little Rootie Tootie". These are two players who have been playing together in various groups since around 2007, so they know each other's stratagems well.

Lucille! is the second album by Stein's quartet. Bassist Josh Abrams returns and this time the drummer chair is occupied by drummer Tom Rainey. But despite a deniable muscularity from all involved, subtlety is an operative motif. One key is the obvious influence of the Tristano school approach. They cover two tunes by the pianist ("Wow" and "April") and one ("Marshmallow") by one of his finest disciples, saxophonist Warne Marsh. These convoluted themes are effortlessly maneuvered by Stein and Jackson. Their improvisations are brawny and agile, not an easy thing to achieve. But, when playing together, they never get in each other's way. Of the originals, "I Knew You Were" is particularly effective. The freest piece on the disc, it has the flavor of a ballad but one with a deep intensity not usually associated with the form.

The rhythm section is crucial to the success of this set. Abrams bass is strong and he's constantly in there, prodding the soloist with the right amount of push and support. Rainey (the only non-Chicagoan) is the most musical of drummers and his ability to stay within the beat and tempo yet give the music an almost loose freedom is uncanny.

Stein is starting to make a name for himself. He's among the few who have decided to focus solely on the bass clarinet and that makes him stand apart. And Lucille! is an excellent second release that points the way to further success.

Robert Iannapolo



# New Issues

ERNEST MCCARTY  
JR./JIMMIE SMITH,  
A REUNION  
TRIBUTE TO  
ERROLL GARNER,  
BLUJAZZ3452.

CARAVAN / GEMINI /  
WHEN A GYPSEY MAKES A  
VIOLIN CRY/ THE SHADOW  
OF YOUR SMILE/ MAMBO  
CARMEL/ MISTY/ GET  
HAPPY / AUTUMN LEAVES  
/ IT COULD HAPPEN TO  
YOU. 63:40.

McCarty Jr.,b; Smith, d;  
Noel Quintana, cga; Geri  
Allen, p. No dates given.  
Aspinwall, PA.

Quiet as its kept, there has been a small resurgence regarding the great Erroll Garner of late.

This renewed interest was sparked, no doubt, be the issuance of Ready Take One on the excellent Legacy series licensed from Octave Music and distributed by Sony. These unreleased tracks got rave reviews from the cognoscenti and the piano master's influence can be detected in younger players such as Champian Fulton. Thus we arrive at this disk which can definitely be considered a sleeper. A handful of the titles on the aforementioned album sport the co-leaders heard here and was co-produced by pianist Geri Allen who contributed to the booklet annotation and produced the delicious Complete Concert By The Sea some years back. I found it rather odd that she is only listed once here and on the inside of the liners Rounding out the quartet is the percussive talents of Noel Quintana which gives most of the selections a Latin tinge. He is the replacement for original congerro Jose Mangual who was in the Garner Quartet with Ernest and Jimmie for almost a decade in the seventies. Both of the latter two get solo space but it too the outstanding pianistics of Allen that this listeners ears were inevitably drawn. She doesn't adopt Garner's voicings especially or his trademark lag-behind-the-beat left hand but shows a comprehensive command of her axe. Erudite liner notes from Garner scholar James Doran who penned the descriptive paragraphs of the song selections on the Legacy package. It is unclear when these tracks were recorded so they could be the final Geri Allen session but whenever it occurred fans of the late pianist and completists will want to nab this disc.

Larry Hollis

# New Issues

## CHRIS PASIN AND FRIENDS, BABY IT'S COLD OUTSIDE,

PLANET ARTS 301714.

HAVE YOURSELF A MERRY  
LITTLE CHRISTMAS / SANTA  
CLAUS IS COMING TO TOWN  
/ WE THREE KINGS OF ORIENT  
ARE / OH COME OH COME  
EMMANUEL / BABY IT'S COLD  
OUTSIDE / IT CAME UPON  
A MIDNIGHT CLEAR / GOD  
REST YE MERRY GENTLEMEN /  
GREENSLEEVES / CHRISTMAS  
TIME IS HERE / I'LL BE HOME  
FOR CHRISTMAS. THE

CHRISTMAS SONG. 55:17.

Collective Personnel: Pasin,  
tpt, flgh, vcl; Peter Einhorn,  
g; Armen Donelian, p; Ira  
Coleman, Rich Syracuse, b;  
Jeff Siegel, d; Patricia Dalton  
Fennell, vcl.

Although this disc was covered in Bob Rusch's column last issue here are a few additional thoughts. The leaders horn displays several stylistic influences from Miles on "I'll Be Home For Christmas" to Clark Terry on the semi-humorous title song which, while entertaining, doesn't cut the Ray Charles/Betty Carter version. The basic quartet which includes pianist Armen Donelian whom many longtime Cadence readers will probably recall offer up three numbers, "Santa Claus Is Coming..." set in a medium swing, the Harmon-muted "Christmas Song" & a sixish "We Three Kings" with Donelian flexing some McCoy Tyner chops. The pianist is joined by the trumpeter for a pairing on the fourth track and the standard "Greensleeves" is heard as a duet between Pasin and Ms. Fennell is heard in duet with Donelian on Vince Guaraldi's popular "Christmas Time is Here". Elsewhere she sings on the opening cut "Have Yourself A Merry Little Christmas". Guitarist Peter Einhorn arranged "I'll Be Home For Christmas" and his understated Jim Hall-ish sound is present on four quartet titles.

Most won't read this until after the New Year but keep this in mind for next year, it's going in my holiday cd collection right up there between Christmas With Etta Jones originally on Muse and Christmas In Swingtime by Harry Allen both sadly out of print.

Larry Hollis

# New Issues

## TOM RAINEY OBBLIGATO FLOAT UPSTREAM INTAKT RECORDS

1. Stella by Starlight (Victor Young) 5:15; 2. Beatrice (Sam Rivers) 6:21; 3. What Is This Thing Called Love (Cole Porter) 4:02; 4. What's New (Bob Haggart) 10:35; 5. There is no Greater Love (Isham Jones) 6:48; 6. Float Upstream (Obbligato) 5:23; 7. I Fall in Love too Easily (Jule Styne) 4:53

Ralph Alessi Trumpet; Ingrid Laubrock Saxophones; Kris Davis Piano; Drew Gress Bass; Tom Rainey Drums

If you've somehow let yourself be "distracted away" from "the true jazz", all you need do is dial up this excellent excursion from Tom Rainey and his cohorts... they play standards in totally new ways... just listen to their take on Bob Haggart's "What's New" to see how fresh (and refreshing) their approach is... the keyword here is "playful"... they genuinely seem to be having fun with it - and, for this reviewer anyway, that's really what jazz should be all about... fun... of course, the 10:35 length of the track makes it all the more enjoyable, because each of the players gets a chance to shine and shimmer with their instrument!

I've never heard such a cool rendition of "Stella By Starlight" in my life... the group's "pacing" is what makes this so unique... & of course, it's Tom's drum work that steers that leisurely, yet vibrant, jazz chill... this is (really) my all-time favorite performance of this great tune!

Those who know me realize that it's ALWAYS the "original" cuts that curry my favor... though I loved each of the songs on this great album, it is unquestionably the band's collective composition on the title track, "Float Upstream", that made it my personal favorite of the seven they play for you... picture a late-night, dark-alley club somewhere in Europe (the JazzKeller, in Frankfurt, Germany, comes to mind for me), and you'll have the "feel" for what they do with this superb piece of jazz. I give Tom and his group a MOST HIGHLY RECOMMENDED, with an "EQ" (energy quotient) rating of 4.99 for this superb jazz adventure. Get more information on the Intakt Records label page for the release.

Dick Metcalf, aka Rotcod Zzaj

# New Issues

## BARRY ALTSCHUL & THE 3DOM FACTOR LIVE IN KRAKÓW NOTTWO

- 1) MARTIN'S STEW 11:46;
- 2) ASK ME NOW 7:28; 3)  
FOR PAPA JOE, KLOOK,  
AND PHILLY TOO 10:20;
- 4) IRINA 8:31; 5) THE  
3DOM FACTOR 13:56

Barry Altschul/drums;  
Joe Fonda/bass; Jon  
Irabagon/tenor & soprano  
saxophones, 2016

Excellent work from a splendid trio that I've reviewed (at least) a couple of times before (most recently in issue # 161 of my ImprovJazzation Nation magazine)... there's a big difference on this fine recording, though... it's all recorded LIVE, & these jazz giants just SMOKE the crowd with their high-energy playing at Alchemia club in Krakow, Poland ... nearly an hour worth of solid jazz that's very accessible, despite the seriously "out there" tendencies of these modern jazz giants... one thing that makes the songs so vibrant (I believe) is the fact that they are all, except Monk's "Ask Me Now", original pieces written by Barry. The drum solo/intro for the opener, "Martin's Stew", is chock-full of exciting surprises, with some of the best jazz cymbal work I've ever heard (& that's saying a lot, because I've heard - literally - thousands of them)... when Joe & Jon roll in at the 3:25 mark, it becomes a totally delicious concoction that will sate any serious (or, even not-so-serious) jazz listener... superb work that will be staying (& playing) in your collection for years to come! Of the five tunes offered up for your aural adventure, it was an easy pick for my personal favorite... the fantastic closer, "The 3Dom Factor", has the band blowing & shredding it's collective bunzoff... this one gets the honor of being added to my iPhone as a permanent placement. I give Barry and his musical cohorts a MOST HIGHLY RECOMMENDED, with an "EQ" (energy quotient) rating of a (perfect) 5.00... meaning that they also get my "PICK" for "most on-fire live jazz trio". Get more information on the NotTwo label page for the album.

Dick Metcalf, aka Rotcod Zzaj

# New Issues

IRENE SCHWEIZER &  
JOEY BARON  
IRENE SCHWEIZER  
JOEY BARON LIVE!  
INTAKT RECORDS,  
SWITZERLAND

1. FREE FOR ALL (IRÈNE SCHWEIZER) 7:59; 2. UP THE LADDER (JOEY BARON) 2:22;
3. STRING FEVER (IRÈNE SCHWEIZER) 7:59; 4. JUNGLE BEAT II (IRÈNE SCHWEIZER) 10:49; 5. SATURDAYS (JOEY BARON) 4:14; 6. BLUES FOR CRELIER (IRÈNE SCHWEIZER) 3:34; 7. THE OPEN WINDOW (JOEY BARON) 3:57

Irène Schweizer: Piano  
Joey Baron: Drums recorded LIVE,  
2015

Just when I think I've "heard it all", I'm reminded (by great recordings like this) that there's more (EVER more) out there in the fantastic world of jazz... Irene's piano is a brand-new listening experience for me... bright & bubbly, yet full of a measure of soul I would have never equated with a Euro-jazz player (my bad, sorry)... just listen to her stunning keyboard work on the opener, "Free for All", and you'll hear why I say that... when you put that together with the intricate drum/cymbal work from Joey, you've got an "instant" jazz classic in your ears, no doubt. All seven tunes are originals from the duo, so that adds an element of energy (I believe) that ramps their performance up to the very top levels of the genre... Joey's composition, "Up The Ladder", is a perfect example of that... truly one of the very best live songs I've heard (yet) in 2017! It was an easy pick for my personal favorite of the seven marvelous originals offered up... "Jungle Beat II" (by Irene) is a perfect match for Joey's super-syncopation, and Irene's piano lends an aura of deep/dark mystery, as well as some very calming moments (the piece is 10:49, so there's a great deal of room for each of them to stretch out)... I just LOVED the "changes" on this piece... I give the duo a MOST HIGHLY RECOMMENDED, with a (perfect) "EQ" (energy quotient) rating of 5.00... meaning that they also get a "PICK" from me for "best piano/drum duo recording"! Get more information on the Intakt Records label page for the release.

Dick Metcalf, aka Rotcod Zzaj

# New Issues

## THE PETE MALINVERNI TRIO, HEAVEN, SARANAC 1010.

HEAVEN / PSALM 23 /  
DOWN IN THE RIVER TO  
PRAY / SHENANDOAH\* /  
ELLI, ELLI / PEOPLE GET  
READY / COME SUNDAY\*\*  
/ A CITY CALLED HEAVEN  
/ WADE IN THE WATER\*\*\*  
/ ASHOKAN FAREWELL.  
55:48.

Malinverni, p; Ben Allison,  
b; Akira Tana, d; Karrin  
Allyson, vcl\*; Jon Faddis,  
tpt\*\*; Steve Wilson, as\*\*\*.  
9/12/16, Brooklyn, NY.

## JOSHUA GEROWITZ SOLANO CANYON

PFMENTUM 099  
SMOOTH AS ICE/  
HAMBURGER ISLAND  
#1/ SWOOT/ MORNING  
LANDSCAPE ILLUSION/  
HAMBURGER ISLAND #4/  
CHICKEN, CIGARETTE,  
BED #3/ HAMBURGER  
ISLAND #3/ ANGEL'S  
POINT 36:57

Joshua Gerowitz, g; Louis  
Lopez, tpt 1-7; Colin  
Woodford, d 1-7; Jake  
Rosenzweig, b, 2,5,6,7;  
Carmina Escobar vcl, 2,5,7;  
Joe Santa Maria, as, bs,  
1,3,4; David Tranchina b,  
1,3,4 Glen Cove NY July,  
2016

Pianist Pete Malinverni has long been concerned with spiritual matters and performs music for both Christian and Hebrew services regularly. This CD reflects those concerns with his trio and a few special guests performing a variety of work from diverse sources with religious undertones.

Malinverni, Ben Allison and Akira Tana make a crisp, sharp-edged trio with echoes of blues and gospel in their sound that recall another spiritual pianist, Mary Lou Williams. That is prominent in the elegant swinging of “Down in the River to Pray” and the sense of mystery and awe conjured on “A City Called Heaven” and “Psalm 23”. The guest performers further enhance the music. Karrin Allyson provides strong singing on the old folk song “Shenandoah”, Jon Faddis does gorgeous trumpet wailing on “Come Sunday” and Steve Wilson’s alto is a forceful, hustling presence on a fast-stepping “Wade In The Water”.

Malinverni’s jazz on this CD is suffused with humility, respect and joy. It makes a beautiful, rewarding and hip sound.

Jerome Wilson

All the tunes except for the “burgers” were written by Gerowitz while the burgers are listed as by all so I assume they are collective improvisations. And these are the tracks which feature Escobar using her voice like an instrument. I really like what she does on #4. The arrangements are all very dense with ensemble playing along with the soloists. Maybe it is because of the guitar but the ensemble sounds larger than it is. This is a good thing and a bad thing. The big sound is nice but some of the melodies are interesting but get bogged down by the arrangements.

As for the soloists, I like Santa Maria’s baritone on Smooth and Swoot, but I find Lopez inconsistent. Sometimes he has a warm tone, making his trumpet sound almost like a flugelhorn, and at other times he sounds harsh. Gerowitz is good at single note solos, chordal lines, and guttural sounds.

Over all, though I can’t say I enjoyed this CD. In some ways I wasn’t sure what to make of it and thought about playing it again to see, but I decided not to. I guess that tells the real story.

Bernie Koenig

# New Issues

## HANK MOBLEY, TO ONE SO SWEET STAY THAT WAY – HANK MOBLEY IN HOLLAND,

NEDERLANDS JAZZ  
ARCHIEF 1604.

SUMMERTIME / SONNY'S  
TUNE / AIREGIN / I DIDN'T  
KNOW WHAT TIME IT WAS /  
TWENTY-FOUR AND MORE  
/ BLUES BY FIVE / LIKE  
SOMEONE IN LOVE / VIERD  
BLUES / THREE WAY SPLIT /  
AUTUMN LEAVES. 72: 27.

Mobley, ts, with:

1-3: Pim Jacobs, p; Wim  
Overgaauw, g; Ruud  
Jacobs, b; Han Bennink,  
d. Amsterdam, The

Netherlands, 3/20/68.

4-5: Frans Mijts, Gerard  
Engelsma, Eddie Engels,

John Bannet, Fons Diercks,  
tpt; Rudy Bosch, Cees Smal,  
Bertil Voller, Erik Van Lier,  
tb; Piet Noordijk, Herman

Schoonderwalt, as; Ferdinand  
Povel, Sander Sprong, ts;

Joop Mastenbroek, bari  
s; Frans Elsen, p; Joop

Scholten, g; Rob Langereis,

b; Evert Overweg, d. 3/28/68,  
Hilversum, The Netherlands.

6-10: Rob Agerbeek, p; Hans  
van Rosset, b; Cees See, d.

3/29/68, Rotterdam, The  
Netherlands.

By 1968 Hank Mobley's star had been eclipsed somewhat in the United States. Blue Note was sitting on a bunch of recordings he'd done for them and his sound was felt to be a bit old-fashioned compared to younger tenor players like John Coltrane and Sonny Rollins. So, in the spring of that year he traveled to Holland and left behind these tracks.

He sounds mostly in good form here, maintaining the smooth sound and logic of his prime years while making some tentative stabs at the then-current harder tenor sound. On the first three tracks he's in front of a quintet powered by the maniacal drummer, Han Bennink, who is still coloring inside the lines at this point, but already playing with fury. Mobley sounds confident and relaxed on "Summertime" and "Sonny's Tune" but on Rollins' "Airegin" his tone gets uncomfortably harsh and brittle as he tries to keep up with the combo's blistering pace.

Mobley fronts a swaggering big band on the next two tracks. He's controlled and careful on "I Don't Know What Time It Is" but on "Twenty-Four And More" he's more integrated into the band's swift, sweeping blues and sounds relaxed in his theme statement and solo. For the balance of the CD, Mobley is recorded live in a Rotterdam club with local musicians. Again, he tries his hand at the modern approaches with generally satisfactory results. He moves to a harder, squealing sound on fast tunes like "Blues By Five", experiments with his tone and time on a casual lope through "Like Someone In Love" and varies his sound even when the band is feeding him a steady rhythmic push on "Three Way Split" and "Autumn Leaves".

This is a nice snapshot of a musician still trying to expand and grow at a time when he had been left behind by the changing scene. Some of Mobley's experiments don't come off too well but overall, he still plays a lot of excellent music here.

Jerome Wilson



# New Issues

**GREGORY LEWIS,  
ORGAN MONK: THE  
BREATHE SUITE,  
(NO LABEL OR NUMBER).  
FIRST MOVEMENT –  
CHRONICLES OF MICHAEL  
BROWN / SECOND  
MOVEMENT – TRAYVON /  
THIRD MOVEMENT – AIYANA  
JONES SONG / FOURTH  
MOVEMENT – ERIC GARNER  
/ FIFTH MOVEMENT – AUSAR  
AND THE RACE SOLDIERS /  
SIXTH MOVEMENT – AUSAR  
AND THE RACE SOLDIERS  
(REPRISE).**

Collective personnel: Lewis,  
org; Nasheet Waits, Jeremy  
'BEAN' Clemons, d; Marc  
Ribot, Ron Jackson, g; Reggie  
Woods, ts; Riley Mullis, tpt.

It's no secret that there's been a lot of political turbulence in this country over the past couple of years. Even before the last presidential election, there was the trauma of unarmed African-American people being shot and killed all over the country in confrontations with police. There have not been a lot of jazz musicians commenting directly on that issue yet but organist Gregory Lewis (AKA Organ Monk) has taken up the charge with *The Breathe Suite*.

This composition consists of six movements named after some of the black people who have died in police custody. Lewis uses the common organ trio instrumentation on some tracks and goes beyond it on others. The opening "Chronicles Of Michael Brown" is a deep mix of horns, spiky guitar and organ with an ominous feel and soulful solos by Riley Mullins and Reggie Woods that convey a sense of outrage. That outrage turns to sorrow on "Eric Garner" by the same expanded band with ghostly droning organ, spectral guitar by Marc Ribot and weeping horns.

"Trayvon" and "Aiyana Jones Song" have the more conventional organ trio lineup with Lewis, Ron Jackson and Jeremy Clemons. They sail along fast on "Trayvon" and come up with a more grandiose and tense sound on "Aiyana Jones" that eventually slides into a smooth strut. "Ausar" is a dizzying whirlpool of sound with the organ and drums whirling in a prog rock duel before the horns and guitar careen in spitting fire. The reprise of "Ausar" is Lewis swooping all over his keyboard while both drummers, Clemons and Nasheet Waits, boil over in response.

This is some of the sharpest and most emotional jazz protest music I've heard since Charles Mingus' "Fables Of Faubus" and Archie Shepp's "Attica Blues". Lewis can be an over the top, dramatic player just doing standards. Here he has channeled that energy into a howl of angry emotions and created an amazing work.

Jerome Wilson

# New Issues

**GREG MILLS,  
MOSAIQUE,**

FREEDONIA MUSIC 39.  
FOR BERIO / FOR MESSIAEN  
/ FOR CARTER 1 / FOR  
CARTER 2 / FOR XENAKIS  
/ FOR TAKEMITSU / FOR  
STOCKHAUSEN / FOR BABBIT  
/ FOR LUTOSLAWSKI. 62:49.  
Mills, p. 2/7/16, St. Louis, MO.

**DOMINIC DUVAL  
/ VINCENT  
LOCCISANO / CHRIS  
COVAIS  
THE PROJECT**

CJR 1257  
REGINA / NIGHT AND DAY  
/ CATABILE / FACES FACE /  
YES OR NO / GARY'S WALTZ  
/ THIRTEEN / THE SUMMER  
KNOWS / LOOKING UP. 75:21.  
Duval (b), Loccisano (p),  
Covais (d). June 2014, Long  
Island, NY.

**T**he concept of this set is piano improvisations based on the methodologies of modern classical composers. As you'd expect from the subjects listed, the results vary greatly in approach. "For Berio" is a delirious run of tinkling and crashing piano notes while "For Messiaen" is more deliberate, contrasting fast runs and ghostly single notes while also dropping in suggestions of bird calls. "For Takemitsu" is the most conventionally melodic piece, gentle bits of Japanese folk music played delicately with single notes falling like drops of water. "For Stockhausen" brings forth hammered single notes, repeated chords and silence while Elliot Carter gets two dedications based on his late piano work, the first with single notes springing up amidst craggy clusters and the second full of fast, stumbling runs. The Lutoslawski dedication is lurching and ominous while the Babbit is a trickle of sparsely arranged notes.

This is stimulating and challenging piano music, worth a listen even if you don't know the composers being referenced.

Jerome Wilson

**A**las, it's a melancholy air that hangs over this recording featuring the late, great Dominic Duval. Teamed with a pair of players I'm unfamiliar with, this is a fabulously-inspired program grounded in music associated with Michel Petrucciani. They're great tunes, as fans of the late pianist already know. But what's so compelling about this date is the forward-thinking approach and arrangement this trio brings to the table, and also the organic feel that underpins all the music-making. It's wonderful to hear Duval do his thing in this kind of context, with such energetic partners to boot. Loccisano acquits himself admirably, playing with real fluidity, energy, and sensitivity throughout, from the opening "Regina" to the Cole Porter rearrangement to Gary McFarland's "Gary's Waltz." Regardless of the variation in material and tempo, things are invariably propulsive (Covais brings great energy without sacrificing sensitivity), harmonically advanced (as with Shorter's "Yes or No" or "Thirteen," with Loccisano at his best), and very expressive (check the fine Duval work on the Michel Legrand ballad "The Summer Knows," or the funky "Catabile"). Top shelf stuff here.

Jason Bivins

# New Issues

CRAIG TABORN,  
DAYLIGHT GHOSTS,  
ECM 2527.

THE SHINING ONE /  
ABANDONED REMINDER /  
DAYLIGHT GHOSTS / NEW  
GLORY / THE GREAT SILENCE  
/ ANCIENT / JAMAICAN  
FAREWELL / SUBTLE LIVING  
EQUATIONS / PHANTOM  
RATIO. 55:41.

Taborn, p, elec; Chris Speed,  
ts, cl; Christ Lightcap, b, b gtr;  
Dave King, d, elec perc. 5/16,  
New York, NY.

Chris Taborn continues his streak of excellent music on ECM with a quartet session of turbulent and haunting sounds. A lot of this CD's liveliness is due to the work of the rhythm section, bassist Chris Lightcap and Bad Plus drummer Dave King. Their constant chatter on "New Glory", for example, provides a powerful bedrock for the thorny riffing done by Taborn's piano and Chris Speed's tenor sax.

There's also a melancholy edge to much of this music. Roscoe Mitchell's "Jamaican Farewell" is a pretty, sad miniature for clarinet and piano and "Daylight Ghosts" begins with a combination of lonely clarinet and dark piano before building into a grander statement by the entire quartet with progressive rock overtones. "Ancient" has a similar structure to "Ghosts" but with Lightcap's throbbing double bass kicking things off.

On "Great Silence" clarinet and piano make sounds in a small space with slight electronic embellishments and "Abandoned Reminder" is an atmospheric ballad with Speed and Taborn playing circular figures against soft bass and drums and electronic whispers. "Subtle Living Equations" features Taborn creating placid hallucinatory beauty on his piano that's accented by King's whispering cymbals while "Phantom Ratio" has everyone playing slow, sustained notes against a droning electronic backdrop that eventually crowds out the real instruments.

Craig Taborn's music contains a lot of misty, dreamlike gestures more in tune with classical music than jazz but his bandmates provide the kinetic power that makes this such a forceful statement. This is magical music that sounds richer and deeper every time you listen to it.

Jerome Wilson

# New Issues

## TO BE CONTINUED, POETRY FROM THE FUTURE,

LINE ART 1003.  
INVISIBLE COLORS /  
POETRY FROM THE  
FUTURE / EVERY WHICH  
WAY / BLUE DANIEL /  
CASCADEASCOPE / SONIC  
MIRAGE / BEAUTIFUL  
OUTCAST / FOR ALL  
TIMES / RINGING CIRCLES  
/ RIVER RUN. 45:43.

Carol Liebowitz, p; Claire  
de Brunner, bsn; Daniel  
Carter, sax, tpt, cl, fl;  
Kevin Norton, vib, d, perc.  
3/18/17, New Jersey.

This quartet, with an unusual lineup of reeds, piano, percussion and bassoon, produces a hazy sound that is more impressionistic than abstract with Claire de Brunner's bassoon making a strong impact throughout. On "Every Which Way" de Brunner sings along with Daniel Carter's saxophone while Kevin Norton's vibes and cymbals color the background and Carol Liebowitz's piano fills in the cracks. Carter's forlorn saxophone takes the lead on "Blue Daniel", crying sadly as the others make odd noises around him. "Sonic Mirage" has the reed players moaning in unison as the piano trills. On "Beautiful Outcast" Liebowitz plays a more solid repeating figure, grounding the music as the reed players go exploring.

"For All Times" starts with the piano and vibes playing clipped notes together in harmony, then deBrunner and Carter, on trumpet, softly join in for a ghostly bit of meandering. "Ringing Circles" is a noisy track of everyone charging in at once and going on a careening tear together and "River Run" ends things authoritatively. Tenor wails, piano clangs, and drums and bassoon roll, all coming to a stormy and forceful climax.

The presence of bassoon as a lead instrument and Norton using his percussion instruments for coloration instead of timekeeping gives this group a unique sound, both driving and dreamlike. It's a different type of free jazz.

Jerome Wilson

# New Issues

## SESTETTO INTERNAZIONALE, AURAL VERTIGO, AMIRAM 049.

AURAL / VERTIGO. 77:10.

Harri Sjostrom, ss, sop; Gianni Mimmo, ss; Alison Blunt, vln; Achim Kaufman, p; Veli Kujala, acc; Ignaz Schick, turntables. 9/9/2015, 9/12/2015, Helsinki, Finland, Turku, Finland.

This is a free improvising group containing a singular blend of instruments, two soprano saxes, violin, piano, accordion and turntables. Recorded live during two 2015 concerts in Finland, this group creates a wildly varying sound tapestry.

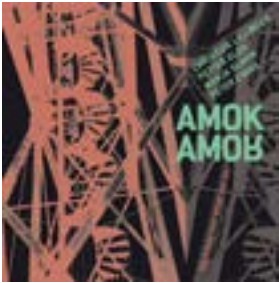
“Aural” starts with the individual instruments making brief statements before playing together in near unison, creating a nebulous mass of warped and twisted sound that gives way to small, piping soprano notes and pizzicato strings. The collective din can get intense but the passionate edge of Alison Blunt’s violin and the high, keening sound of the saxes still manage to keep their individuality and stand out.

In the “Vertigo” concert the acoustics have a deeper and more echoing sound which flatters the stop-start running of Achim Kaufman’s piano as it rubs against the fast piping of Harri Sjosstrom’s soprano. Then the group rolls in with a static-filled blanket of long sonorous notes in which finer individual details can be heard. Later, there are dive bombing electronic sounds mixing with skittering violin and stumbling piano and rumbling turntables noises which contrast with quieter passages which boil down to an essence of slow violin bowing, single piano chords and accordion drones.

This is a collision of instruments with enough time and range to allow for infinite combinations of sounds. Sometimes it comes out hypnotic, sometimes tender, sometimes violent. However, you approach this it’s 77 minutes of fascinating music that rewards repeated listening, You always hear something new.

Jerome Wilson

# New Issues



## AMOK AMOR WE KNOW NOT WHAT WE DO

INTAKT 279

PULSAR/ BODY DECLINE/

BRANDY/ ALAN SHORTER/

TRIO AMOK/ ENBERT

AMOK/ THE NEW PORTAL/

JAZZFRIENDSHIP/ A

RUN THROUGH THE

NEOLIBERALISM 46:56

Christian Lillinger, d; Petter  
Eidh,b; Wanja Slavins; Peter  
Evans, tpt May, 2016, Berlin

## BORDERLAND TRIO ASTEROIDEA

INTAKT 295

BORDERLANDS/ CARNAVAL

HILL/ FLOCKWORK/ OCHRE/

BODY WAVES/ FROM

POLLIWOGS 52:42

Stephan Crump, b; Kris

Davis p; Eric McPherson

d Queens, NY December  
18, 2016

This is a high-energy band, working that line between structure and free. There are proper tunes but they are written with dissonances which allow a lot of freedom in the solos and the rhythm section really keeps things moving. Lillinger likes to play patterns under the solos instead of just keeping time and in doing so really keeps things moving. After a few tracks I thought of Lillinger's playing as taking an early New Orleans drummer like baby Dodds and putting him into a free setting. Not as strange as one might think.

The tunes are all a bit jagged, which keeps the listener's ears up. Not sure what is coming next which adds to the energy. Sometimes it sounds to me as if Evans is running out of breath trying to play really fast, complex lines, but obviously he isn't.

The ensemble work is excellent. Everyone is right on with everyone else on those fragmented lines. Really great playing all around. Given the high energy of the playing I felt as if I was tired at the end.

Bernie Koenig

This is a very enjoyable CD. A nice trio which moves easily from free to structured playing. Davis has learned his lessons well and moves from Cecil Taylorish phrasing to nice melodic playing. He also maintains interesting single note or chord rhythmic patterns under solos by McPherson and Crump. This is especially the case on Flockwork.

Crump plays very nice lines and stays that way during his solos, which maintain the structure of the piece while McPherson provides excellent support throughout. He does some nice mallet work in the background and his solo work also maintains the structure of the piece.

While there might not be anything really new here, it is nice to hear some really competent players bring their own voices to the music.

Recommended to all trio lovers.

Bernie Koenig

# New Issues

## ANCESTRAL ALLIANCES IN THE TRADITION

AFJ MUSIC COMPANY  
1907/8

CD1 WE CRY FREEDOM/  
HERE'S ONE/ BROTHER  
CHOKWE/ LUMUMBA/  
STEPHEN/ DO YOU  
REMEMBER/ COCOLATE  
BUTTERMILK/ FANTASY FOR  
VIOLIN AND FOUR WINDS/  
WAR IS HERE 66:32  
CD2 THE SLEEPER/ HEAT  
FROM DOWN FRONT/  
CARAMBA/ COUSIN MARY/  
GEMINI/ FOOTPRINTS/  
SUMMERTIME/ SMILE  
HAPPY/ ASSATA 76:50

Collective Personnel

Mark Berger, bs, bsn,  
winds; David Cheney, d,  
perc; Dr. Kefentse Chike,

Djembe, congas, perc;

Karim Tabu Gideon, tpt  
flgh, mellophonium; Aurora

Harris, vcl; Imari Akua.

Jendayi vcl.vln. shakere,  
kalimba, ballophone; Foluke

Shearer, p, kybds; Olujimi

Tafataona, sax, flt; Alex Webb  
acoustic b elec b Eastpoint

Michigan August 2 and 9,  
2016

I am not sure what to expect here but given the African percussion and the theme I was at least expecting some serious African rhythms. What I got was some good big band jazz with an undercurrent of African rhythm. So I just sat back and listened to music.

The vocals are powerful. We Cry Freedom has an old-fashioned gospel sound to it, very powerful. I don't know who Stephen is but he is one nasty person. The lyrics are very powerful. And War is Here is more talk to music than singing but the lyrics are very political and relevant to today's political and racial situations, especially with regard to police shootings. But it goes on too long and it is too easy for a listener to lose interest. And the piano vamp under the lyrics also became monotonous, which detracted from the lyrics. This should have been at least three different tracks.

The music is fine, good large band music with some nice arrangements and some good solos by Berger, Gideon and Shearer.

CD 2 is more straight ahead small band jazz and it is good solid bop styles playing. Arrangements are straightforward and uncluttered and they swing. Cheney and Webb keep things moving. And again, Berger, Shearer and Gideon are the primary soloists and they do a fine job. As does Tafataona on soprano sax. Ebb has a nice solo spot on Cousin Mary And Akua has a nice violin solo on Footprints.

For me the weakest track is Summertime, with overblown vocals and a way too busy arrangement. But over all, over two hours of some solid playing.

Bernie Koenig



# New Issues



ROYCE CAMPBELL  
TEA FOR THREE  
MOON CYCLE, NO #  
IT MIGHT AS WELL BE  
SWING / SIMMERTIME /  
IT COULD HAPPEN TO ME  
/ AUTUMN IN NEWARK /  
TEA FOR THREE / STORMY  
SATURDAY BLUES / HOW  
HIGH THE MOOD / YOU  
STEPPED INTO MY DREAM /  
THE CLOSER. 70:58.  
Campbell (g), Hod O'Brien  
(p), Bob Bowen (b). April  
2008, Luray, VA.

This is a subtle, elegant, accomplished set of trio music from players who deserve wider renown. It's fair to see that the late O'Brien was reasonably well known, but when listening to his accomplishments on this decade-old live set, I'm reminded of just how superb and inventive a player he was. As for the leader, this is the best I've heard him. He plays crisply, fluidly, and imaginatively throughout. His work is clearly informed by a wide variety of sources, but (correctly or not) I hear a pronounced Pat Martino influence in places here. These gentle reimaginings of chestnuts are pleasing. At times the chordal structure is emphatically present in these performances, while elsewhere there's more of a harmonic interpolation and alternation going on. I especially dug the grooving "Simmertime," where Campbell gets into some tasty Grant Green-isms, and the lyricism and counterlines on "It Could Happen to Me" were also quite strong. Most important, there's a very strong, organic connection between the musicians. As crucial as Bowen's earthy swing is to these pieces (and he stretches out quite nicely on "You Stepped Into My Dream"), it's the interplay between Campbell and O'Brien that grabs your ear, on material as varied as the tasty, organic "Stormy Saturday Blues" or the ballad "Autumn in Newark." As a whole, it's bright and swinging, inventive and expressive. Fine record.

Jason Bivins

# New Issues



## THE MUH TRIO PRAGUE AFTER DARK

JMOOD 015

ANOTHER MORE BLUES  
/ NENAZVANA / THIRD  
WORLD / PRAGUE AFTER  
DARK / JOYCIE GIRL /  
FROM HEART TO HEART  
/ SONG FOR AN AFRICAN  
CHILD / A SUMMER'S KISS  
/ IRAQI BLUES / IN LOVE IN  
VAIN. 65:37.

Roberto Magris (p),  
Frantisek Uhlir (b), Jaromir  
Helesic (d). October 9, 2016,  
Svarov, Czech Republic.

**B**right, unpretentious, and accomplished piano trio music on deck here. Clearly the players are capable, and there's good synergy between them. But this date shows how much personality can be achieved by combining unexpected elements in both style and repertoire. The opening minutes of the blues lead-off track don't necessarily compel, but the music quickly turns around when Magris is in full flight. He's an engaging player, and uses the full range of the piano effectively. Over the course of the record, though, it's Uhlir who emerges as the most interesting of these musicians. It's not just because of his very suggestive improvising (not least the arco solos he sprinkles throughout), but his writing. "Nenazvana" has a vibrant, early 1960s Blue Note feel to it, while "From Heart to Heart" is an affecting ballad. And as noted, the fascinating influences give some character to this record: there's a nicely understated take on Herbie Nichols' "Third World," a funky Don Pullen tune "Joycie Girl," and an Abdullah Ibrahim-influenced "African Child." And though the title track and "Summer's Kiss" sound just a bit too redundant in terms of tempo and arrangement, there's more than enough on balance here to be worth your while.

Jason Bivins

# New Issues



ELLIOTT SHARP/MARY  
HALVORSON/MARC  
RIBOT  
ERR GUITAR  
INTAKT 281

BLINDSPOT / THE SHIP I AM  
ON / WOBBLY / SHREDDING  
LIGHT / SINISTRE / I'M  
GONNA PARTY LIKE IT'S 1998  
/ SEQUOLA PT. 1 / SEQUOLA  
PT. 2 / ORONYM / SEA BUZZ  
/ NEKTONE / KERNEL PANIC.  
65:55.

Sharp (g), Halvorson (g),  
Ribot (g). July 25-26, 2016,  
Manhattan, NY.

Guitar summits can be awfully dull affairs. But with the right players – understanding the possibilities of effects and percussive techniques as well as chords, color, and line – they can be dazzling. Like this one. But even before you listen, you know from a glance at the players here that we're a long way from McLaughlin, DiMeola, and DeLucia, sisters and brothers. That's not just because of the quirky recording method, which featured one duo per day, with conscious effort to leave room for the third player to record their contribution subsequently. It has more to do with the way each player here exults in idiomatic properties of the guitar, without being constrained by the instrument's expectations.

The opening trio sets the table, with a full strings ecosystem of wild little buzzes and scuffles. Halvorson is unmistakable at this point, with her cosmic effects and earthy lines contrasting masterfully. And indeed, taking Sharp's flinty playing and Ribot's quirky twang into the equation, counterpoint takes on new meanings here. Instead of mere notes and chords, these pieces are overstuffed with anything sonic that the guitar can produce but with a musical logic that makes intuitive sense and grabs you if your ears are open enough. Chiming, resonant repetitions dot the multi-tracked Halvorson piece "Ship," all loops stacked up and toppling over. There's a fine feature for Ribot and Sharp on acoustic, "Wobbly," with loads of rough woody slashing contrasted with sudden introspection and dynamic shifts. But generally things tend towards the more cosmic ("Shredding Light") or the noisy ("Sinistre" or "I'm Gonna Party Like It's 1998"). Sharp makes nifty use of his Ebow on the resonant "Sequola," where Halvorson plays with an unmediated, emphatic lyricism on her acoustic. And there's a monster drone on "Oronym," which also crawls with little electronic insects struggling to stay alive under the sonic weight. The final trio returns to the vibe of the opener, darting and slashing everywhere. Lots of settings like this can sound clinical and overly technique-obsessed. These three use the guitar as a springboard to pure, shared invention.

Jason Bivins

# New Issues



## DYLAN TAYLOR ONE IN MIND

BLU JAZZ 3450

THE ONE OR THE NINE /  
LOFT FUNK / JUMBO LIAR  
/ SONG FOR DENNIS / WAR  
AND PEACE / HITTIN' AND  
MISSIN' / JOHN'S ABBEY /  
JEM'N'EYE'N / ALABAMA  
RHAP COROLLARY / THE  
DRAGON GATE. 64:43.

Taylor (b, clo), Larry Coryell  
(g), Mike Clark (d). February  
23, 2015 and May 10, 2016,  
Oreland, PA.

It's sad to be engaging this music after Coryell's passing, but nice to check in with his playing regardless of circumstance. The bustling, fulsome groove on "The One or the Nine" makes for a rousing start. There's strongly motivic playing at the heart of things, and the leader Taylor sounds fantastic in the thick of it all. Coryell's playing suggests he's fallen back in love with Grant Green, with a much more pared down phraseology than many associate with him. "Loft Funk" sounds especially dialed in, and it's certainly more than a pedestrian vamp, since there are nice chord changes and rhythmic shifts. Obviously, the key to generating excitement in such contexts is band chemistry, which is here in abundance with this trio. Indeed, as much fun as it is to focus on Coryell, you can't help but be impressed by the tasty press rolls from Clark and the nicely rotund shapes from Taylor. "Jumbo Liar" is a kind of Monk-like lope, another tune where Taylor and Coryell dig into unisons in ways that don't detract from the rhythmic needs of a trio. The back half of the disc finds the trio stretching out a bit more in thematic terms. They range from the soft, acoustic ballad "Song for Dennis" to a laid-back tour of Bud Powell's "John's Abbey" to Taylor's fine "Hittin' and Missin'," which recalls some of Pat Metheny's more Ornette-influenced pieces. On the latter two pieces especially, Coryell's harmonic range and imagination shine through. And he's in positively blistering form on acoustic on "ARC," a vivid reminder of his power and technique. It's fitting, too, that Coryell's rousing "The Dragon Gate" closes out this fine session.

Jason Bivins

# New Issues



## TED BROWN QUARTET LIVE AT TRUMPETS

CADENCE JAZZ RECORDS

1260

SOMEBODY LOVES ME /  
RELAXIN' AT CAMARILLO  
/ LOVE ME OR LEAVE ME  
/ SWEET AND LOVELY /  
BROADWAY / WHEN YOU'RE  
SMILING / THE BEST THING  
FOR YOU WOULD BE ME /  
PENNIES FROM HEAVEN /  
ANTHROPOLOGY. 68:45.

Brown (ts), Jon Easton (p), Don  
Messina (b), Bill Chattin (d).  
August 27, 2006, and August  
7, 2010, Montclair, NJ.

One look at the setlist compiled from these two dates lets you know where Brown's heart is. The seasoned saxophonist favors standards, and balances things out with two bop evergreens. He's got a soft tone, and plays with an unhurried elegance and assurance. Those qualities hold true for his estimable band, who not only provide great support but are consistently nimble, with subtle invention abounding. Because of the general aesthetic and tone of these performances, if you're not careful you might miss some really interesting harmonic and rhythmic details throughout. Brown isn't showy, but there's some really nice stuff going on in "Sweet and Lovely," "Pennies," and other pieces. Most of the material can be fairly described as amiable, and the pace generally sauntering. But while that's accurate, there's no dearth of chemistry and creative interaction here. They're at their most buoyant and swinging on the fine reading of "Relaxin' at Camarillo," which is more sprightly than their take on "Anthropology." Nearly as enthusiastic, though, is "The Best Thing for You Would Be Me," which features some exceptional synergy between Brown and Easton. And "Love Me or Leave Me" is particularly impressive in terms of Messina's contributions. All in all, fine mainstream jazz from players deserving of attention.

Jason Bivins

# New Issues

LISA CAY MILLER

682/681

TRYTONE 559-07

ONNO / OGUZ / YEDO / MARK, JASPER / IG / GEORGE / ANNE, IG / MARK / JOHN / ANNE / JOHN, OGUZ / YEDO, GEORGE / ANNE, IG / WILBERT / YEDO, GEORGE / IG / JOHN / ONNO / ANNE / JASPER / YEDO / ONNO, WILBERT. 60:38.

Miller (p), Ig Henneman (vln), Anne La Berge (flt), George Hadow (d), Yedo Gibson (ss), Mark Morse (g), Jasper Stadhouders (g), Oguz Buyuberber (cl), John Dikeman (ts), Wilbert de Joode (b), Onno Govaert (d). December 17, 2015, Amsterdam.

Many readers will be familiar with some of the names on this release from the contemporary Dutch scene. The pianist Miller is featured in a wide range of duos and trios, in mostly small, episodic improvisations. The results are generally provocative, and often unpredictable, even if I came away wishing some of the pieces had more time to develop. Miller's one of those players who's clearly steeped in various traditions, and isn't ashamed to demonstrate her affection for, say, Tristano (hear this in her duet with Hadow, for instance). You can hear similar styles in play in the trio with Dikeman and Buyuberger, where the lushly blended winds are woven together with Miller's effective left-hand lines and jabbing right hand. Elsewhere, though, Miller does a 180 and veers into the world of prepared piano and percussive effects, in duo with the clarinetist and on the first "Yedo" especially (which ends with what sounds like rattling chains and lone honks). She mixes it up with strings very robustly, in a brief and scratchy duo with Henneman as well as a rousing trio with the guitarists. To my ears, the most satisfying tracks are those which meld the two approaches: the lovely, textural "Anne, Ig"; the spooky, hushed "John"; the earthy "Wilbert"; and the nicely spacious "Jasper." As noted above, my gripe is that some of these pieces deserve to stretch out a bit, and others could be slightly more focused given how concise this format is. But that doesn't stop me from giving this fine music a solid recommendation.

Jason Bivins

ROSCOE MITCHELL

BELLS FOR THE SOUTH SIDE

DISC ONE: SPATIAL ASPECTS OF THE SOUND / PANOPLY / PRELUDE TO A ROSE / DANCING IN THE CANYON / EP 7849 / BELLS FOR THE SOUTH SIDE. 63:51. DISC TWO: PRELUDE TO THE CARD GAME, CARDS / THE LAST CHORD / SIX GONGS AND TWO WOODBLOCKS / R509A TWENTY B / RED MOON IN THE SKY – ODWALLA. 63:43.

Mitchell (reeds, winds, perc), James Fei (reeds, elec), Hugh Ragin (tpt, picc tpt), Tyshawn Sorey (tbn, d, perc, p), Jaribu Shahid (b, perc), William Winant (perc), Craig Taborn (p, elec), Kikanju Baku (d, perc), Tani Tabbal (d, perc). September 2015, Chicago.

# New Issues

The last few years have seen significant changes, and departures, for the generation of Chicagoans who spent time in and around the late Muhal Richard Abrams' Experimental Band. Few of the Chicago artists of the 1960s have been as chance-taking and productive as reedist and composer Roscoe Mitchell. While many of his releases have been polarizing – in their instrumentation, the apparent austerity of some of the music, or perhaps its playfulness – there are some consistent through-lines that go all the way back to the AACM's longstanding focus on place. That's a focus not just in the sense of neighborhood activism but, for lack of a better term, attention to sonic environments.

Mitchell has always been obsessed with this attention, and with this powerful, seasoned group of musicians, he delivers a two-hour-plus master-class, live at Chicago's Museum of Contemporary Art. The opening "Spatial Aspects of the Sound" intones piano and bells before opening up into a dynamic procession through what could almost be Morton Feldman playing the blues. Instruments come and go patiently, attentively, and Mitchell is very deliberate in layering sound, especially the electronics. Whether it's the near-klangfarbenmelodie of "Panoply" or the stately "Prelude to a Rose," these players deal marvelously with shifts in color, contrasting registers, balancing counterlines, or the occasional mischievous blast of noise. Most of Mitchell's best releases have been similarly broad in the range of material they cover. And while *Bells for the South Side* does have a more consistent aesthetic than some, Mitchell remains as ambitious as ever.

"Dancing in the Canyon" opens with a punch and it's good old fashioned free jazz for small group, with some AEC humor honks, skirling, note-heavy Mitchell soloing, and some crushing piano. On "EP 7849" there's a deep dive into subterranean texture: massive room echo, a creaking door, a hint of didgeridoo, and then gnarly detuned electronics making up a nice tonal study. Most of the tracks feature bells, naturally, and there's also plenty of room for a pennywhistle or a hubcap, regardless of the different acoustics and arrangements on separate tracks. Appropriately, though, it's on the title track that these elements are foregrounded most, in beds of almost reverent percussion, alongside a snaking low electronic background, the dark energy of the city giving life.

As sprawling a release as this is, there's a focus and economy to the music here, and little overstays its welcome. The sparse, percussion-heavy "Prelude to the Card Game, Cards" is like sculpture in sound. "Last Chord," on the other hand, is extremely dense, with crashing percussion and churning work from Taborn, all of it achieving liftoff from the sheer energy of these effects. "Six Gongs" begins with some declamatory moments, but drops from there into a drone, atop which Mitchell holds a long note with exquisite tension over the undergrowth. And the closing piece is epic. Initially pointillistic and heavily electronic, over its length it grows in density of detail, like the city awakening on a very busy morning, the street sounds notated collectively and given as an offering to the gods of the hupkapphone! And after a graceful shift to a laid-back piano swing, this triumph of a release closes with a glorious rendition of the well-loved "Odwalla." Essential.

Jason Bivins



# New Issues



## MARIA PORTUGAL/ PAUL VAN KEMENADE/JASPER VAN 'T HOF DAYTIME SKETCHES

KEMO 017

PRIME TIME SERENADE /  
GATO / DAYTIME SKETCHES  
/ DRY FOUR / COUNT  
US IN / UM DRAMINHA  
PRO SENHOR INCRIVEL /  
DRUMS TALK WHILE SAX  
WALKS / HOSPEL / MUSIC  
IN THE BOX (PRIME TIME  
SERENADE, BONUS) / TIME  
IS UP / DANCE ON THE  
WATER. 46:35.

Portugal (d), Van Kemenade  
(as), Van 't Hof (p, kybd,  
samp). February 14 & 17,  
2017, Tilburg, Netherlands.

Oftentimes recordings of improvised music end up treading overly similar territory across their duration. But every so often, you encounter a recording like this one, which arguably is too decentered, despite having some strong moments from the three Dutch musicians. A nicely melancholy duo opens things up, Van 't Hof quite lyrical, and some searching melody from Van Kemenade. But before you know it, there's quite the barreling change of direction. Portugal's a bit heavy-handed in moments like these, but thankfully the piece cools off quickly and there's some actual space to play. That kind of quick-change approach characterizes this entire program of short pieces.

Your mileage may vary when hearing the wafting keys on the title track. I wasn't exactly compelled, but when the piece evolves into a space groove, the trio stretches out nicely, not indulging in mindless blowing but keeping the tension admirably stoked until they lock into some tight thematic material. To my ears, this is revealing: in general, the trio is much more cohesive and satisfying when sinking their teeth into written material like this, and the closing "Dance on the Water" or the unexpected, rich "Hospel," with Van 't Hof dialing up the organ nicely. Elsewhere, things can vary too widely and without enough direction. This, at least, was my impression of the wispy "Dry Four," the occasionally noodling "Count us in," and the fragmentary "Time is up." Some nice licks and moments, but not enough to warrant a full recommendation from me.

Jason Bivins

# New Issues

## ENZO ROCCO, FERDINANDO FARAO FIELDS

SETOLA DI MAIALE 3420

SPLINTERS/ STAINS/ FOUT-OFF/ FERDINAND SOLAIRE/ MALLETS/ FIFTY-FIFTY/ THE GLANCE/  
GOLEP/ THE BOW/ A(FREE)KA/ LES CLOCHES 49:37

Enzo Rocco, g; ferdinando Farao, d Cremona, Italy December 2016

**T**his CD is not for me. The brief notes give the impression that these two players have worked together in different settings and finally got to sit down face to face to improvise together.

Rocco does not sound terribly free. He likes melodies---so do I—but his improvisations seem to stay close to the melodic and harmonic structures he starts out with. So he does not sound very free to me. Farao sounds like a straight-ahead drummer who relies on grooves and patterns. He does give me the impression that he is listening to Rocco, but his playing is a bit stiff and he relies too much on hitting cymbals. And his snare drum is tuned way too tightly and is too bright and so doesn't blend with Rocco's guitar.

On the positive side both are good players. Some of the highlights include some nice interplay and alternating on Fifty-Fifty. Nice mallet work on Mallets and some nice effects on rims and what sound like the shells of the drums on The Glance.

Fans of straight-ahead guitar playing will like this one.

Bernie Koenig



# New Issues



## FLORIAN EGLI WEIRD BEARD ORIENTATION

INTAKT 291

HANAKO/ EMPTY SHELL/  
ORIENTATION/ WINTER/  
THE BIG WASY/ THE  
CAT/ NO MORE RAIN/  
PLAYGROUND 43:04

Florian Egli, as, ts, cl; Dave  
Gisler, g; Martina Berther,  
elec b; Rico Baumann, d  
January 2017, Noyant-la  
Gravoyere, France

## THE GREAT HARRY HILLMAN, TILT,

CUNEIFORM RUNE 433.  
SNOEZELLEN / STRENGEN  
DENKT AN / THE NEW  
FRAGRANCE / 354\*  
/ AGNES FLIEGT /  
REMAZING ACE / HOW  
TO DICE AN ONION /  
MOUSTACHE.

Nils Fischer, rds; David  
Koch, g, effects; Samuel  
Huwyler, b; Dominik  
Mahnig, d. 11/16.

**V**ery nice playing but definitely not my kind of music. For me a lot of this CD made for some very nice background music. The playing is perfectly fine. The combination of the clarinet or sax, and guitar is quite nice. Gisler gets a nice warm sound which blends very well with the reeds. A lot of the music can be described as impressionistic in that the players create nice moods which, I believe, try to reflect the titles. For example, Orientation goes in a couple of different directions, Winter starts off moody as if to try to capture a cold, bleak day. Big Wasy, I wonder should have been called Big Easy since the rhythm is marchlike. At times I am not sure of Egli is playing a tenor or alto. The notes don't say. It is clearly a tenor on Hanako but it sounds like an alto on some of the other tracks. But regardless of which horn Egli is playing, he blends well with Gisler. Many of tunes feature what I call a fusion rhythm, i.e., an eighth note patten, while a couple of others have a looser, almost swing feel. Bernie Koenig

**T**he Great Harry Hillman is a Swiss group that explores moods and ideas with the measured pace and deep sonics of some of ECM's Scandinavian artists. On "354\*" guitarist David Koch and reed player Nils Fischer play a pretty, meandering melody that is overtaken by chugging rock rhythms that build with slow intensity. Other tunes like "Agnes fliegt" and "Snoezelen" progress slowly in a still haze while "Reamzing Ace" has the guitar doing choppy repetitions and melodic explorations in the manner of British guitarist Vini Reilly while embellished by soft sax blowing. It's not all soft sounds. "Strengen denkt an" is a loud mix of violent drumming and stabbing, distorted guitar and "How To Dice An Onion" is a bruising mass of metallic beats that expands into lumbering but fun jazz-rock reminiscent of King Crimson. Meanwhile on "New Fragrance" Koch settles into playing a repeating rock riff while Fischer's saxophone softly cuts across him. This CD is an intriguing mix of guitar, sax, bass and drums working with mechanical riffs and plush melodies and coming out with music as much a part of the rock world as any form of jazz. If you are into groups like Tortoise or Can, you might like this. Jerome Wilson

# New Issues



## FRED FRITH AND HANS KOCH YOU ARE HERE

INTAKT 288  
JUST A CRACK/ STRANGE  
IS THE NIGHT WHERE  
THE BLACK STARS  
RISE/ EXERCISES  
CHRONOLOGUES/ LOTS OUT  
LARGE/ IMAGINE PRIMA/  
ROAD MIRROR, FOREST SEA/  
EVER WONDER 54:27

Fred Frith, elec g, various  
small objects; Hans Koch, b  
cl, ss, ts spit April 23/24 2016  
Basel Switzerland

I am quite familiar with Frith, but not with Koch, so I had some idea as to what I would be hearing, and I was not disappointed. He creates all kinds of sounds on the guitar using electronics. In some cases the music clearly is music, in other cases it is noise---and I mean this in a good sense. After all I do play with the Nihilist Spasm Band, a great noise band. We love to debate the difference between dissonant free jazz and noise music. While there is a clear difference, sometimes the boundaries get very close. Especially when electronics are involved.

Some of the tracks feature lots of electronic sounds highlighted by Koch's horns, which do a good job of blending with and enhancing Frith's electronic sounds. And on tracks such as Strange is the Night, there is very haunting moody sounds.

All the tracks are somewhat different in how they sound which keeps this CD interesting all the way through. Koch's clarinet really shines Lots with Frith creating percussive sounds on the guitar. Imagine is way too short. It sounded like the players were just getting warmed up when it stopped. But Road, Mirror, Forest, Sea creates some great moods with Koch and Frith working very well together.

I really enjoyed this CD.

Bernie Koenig

# New Issues

## JASP BLONK 1) IRRELEVANT COMMENTS

KONTRANS 164  
YEAH POO WAP/ BORING  
CONVERSATION/ ONE  
AMONG MANY/ CIRCULAR  
DEPRIVATION/ CACOTOK/  
DIRGES (FOR HUGO BALL)/  
IRRELEVANT COMMENTS/  
BUBBLE AND SQUEAK/  
SOME ATTEMPTS/  
KNACKERSUMM/  
RAADGEVINGEN VOOR DE  
JONGE MAKER/ SLIGHT  
INCISION/ BURNING  
TONGUES/ INTERESTING  
CONVERSATION/ ALISHA'S  
DANCE/ A SONG FOR MY  
DENTIST 49:49  
Jaap Blonk vcl, elec,  
p Arnhem, Netherlands,  
2010—2016

## 2) TOMOMI ADACHI & JAAP BLONK ASEMIC DIALOGUES

KONTRANS 264  
FIRST DIALOGUE/ SECOND  
DIALOGUE 40:35  
Tomomi Adachi, vcl, elec;  
Jaap Blonk, vcl, elec Berlin,  
July 31, 2017

Since there was no information about Blonk on the CD I had no idea what to expect. I am pleasantly surprised. This CD is an interesting mix of poetry, vocal noises and electronics. A mix I thoroughly enjoy. Some of the pieces are very short, at around one minute while others last up to 7 minutes. As with so many titles, especially when the music is abstract, I am not sure of their significance, but it really doesn't matter. The point is to sit back and enjoy the sounds. The shorter pieces are fun and often end very abruptly while the longer pieces show some sense of development. For example, Dirges, the longest piece on the CD uses a real theme which develops. It is a real composition, though, I am sure, the piece is basically improvised within a framework. It builds with what sounds like multiple tracks laid over each other.

Bubble and Squeak reminded me a bit of Stockhausen's *Gesang der Junglinge* because of the way in which Blonk uses distorted voices. Too bad it was so short. Slight Incision is a 35 second piano piece made up of chords, while Burning Tongues sounded like an electronic dirge.

2) is similar but with two people in dialogue it was twice as much fun to listen to. The two pieces are longer so the performers get to stretch out more. To my ears it sounds like they are having a lot of fun with their vocal noises but they also get into dialogues with electronic sounds. Some times it sounds like they are actually saying words but since I don't speak Dutch, I could never be sure. But it doesn't matter, because the dialogues are all about sounds. Well into the first dialogue, the two get into a great vocal duet, comprised of sounds, though some sound like distorted words. The second dialogue is more spirited than the first and thus more interesting. It really commands one's attention.

I still hear Stockhausen like sounds, especially in the distorted voices.

As much as I enjoyed listening to these CDs, I would love to see the duo perform live to see how they react top each other.

In short a must for lovers of electronic sounds.

Bernie Koenig

# New Issues



**JOHN STOWELL/  
ULF BANDGREN  
QUARTET,  
NIGHT VISITOR,  
ORIGIN 82746**

SKIES / WHEN JASPER GROWS  
UP / REUNITED / NIGHT  
VISITOR / ODE TO SPRING  
/ TAUGHANNOCK FALLS /  
GHOST IN THE CORNER /  
ANOTHER STORY / TAPIOCA  
TIME / EARLY FIVE. 63:45.

Stowell, Bandgren, g; Bruno  
Raberg, b; Austin McMahon, d.  
5/2016. Boston, MA.

With a recording resume starting in the seventies John Stowell should be known to most long-time readers of Cadence. A thoughtful guitarist out of the Jim Hall mold he has collaborated with a myriad of other players the latest of which is Swedish fretman Ulf Bandgren. Something like five years ago they joined forces on Throop for a duet recital on the Origin label. Now they have added two like-minded musicians to form a quartet that sounds like it has been in operation for many moons. In fact, the deft interplay is so close-knit at times one would be fooled into thinking there was a four-handed guitar player present on some tracks. Right up there in importance with the two principals has to be bassman Bruno Raberg who not only is heard in several impressive solo spots but contributed a third of the compositions that make up the all-original program. Plus he was the recording engineer at his studio where everything was preserved for posterity. Although he has no writing credit drummer McMahon gets to make some percussive sounds here and there most notably on top of the descending chord walk downs on "Ghost In The Corner". All of this is taken at mid-level tempo-wise yet there is an inner heat heard here. Guitar hounds take note.

Larry Hollis

# New Issues



**SYLVIE COURVOISIER  
TRIO  
D'AGALA**

INTAKT 300

IMPRINT DOUBLE/

BOURGEOIS'S SPIDER/

ECLATS FOR ORNETTE/

SIMONE/ OIERINO

PORCOSPINO/ D'AGALA/

CIRCUMBENT/ FLY WHISK/

SOUTH SIDE RULES 54:13

Sylvie Courvoisier, p; Kenny

Wollesen, d, wollensonic;

Drew Gress, b June 22, 2017

Mount Vernon, NY

Just when I think I've "heard it all", I'm reminded (by great recordings like this) that there's more (EVER more) out there in the fantastic world of jazz... Irene's piano is a brand-new listening experience for me... bright & bubbly, yet full of a measure of soul I would have never equated with a Euro-jazz player (my bad, sorry)... just listen to her stunning keyboard work on the opener, "Free for All", and you'll hear why I say that... when you put that together with the intricate drum/cymbal work from Joey, you've got an "instant" jazz classic in your ears, no doubt. All seven tunes are originals from the duo, so that adds an element of energy (I believe) that ramps their performance up to the very top levels of the genre... Joey's composition, "Up The Ladder", is a perfect example of that... truly one of the very best live songs I've heard (yet) in 2017! It was an easy pick for my personal favorite of the seven marvelous originals offered up... "Jungle Beat II" (by Irene) is a perfect match for Joey's super-syncopation, and Irene's piano lends an aura of deep/dark mystery, as well as some very calming moments (the piece is 10:49, so there's a great deal of room for each of them to stretch out)... I just LOVED the "changes" on this piece... I give the duo a **MOST HIGHLY RECOMMENDED**, with a (perfect) "EQ" (energy quotient) rating of 5.00... meaning that they also get a "PICK" from me for "best piano/drum duo recording"! Get more information on the Intakt Records label page for the release.

Dick Metcalf, aka Rotcod Zzaj



# New Issues



ROHAN  
DASGUPTA, LUIGI  
DI CHIAPPARI,  
RICCARDO DI  
FIANDRA, DANIELE  
DI PENTIMA  
ANATMA  
SLAM 586  
LACRIMOSA (FOR  
PAUL)/ RAGA ZILA KAFI  
(SHADOWS)/ KOLKATAY  
STOMP (TAKE ME HOME)/  
RAGA LALIT (LATE NIGHT,  
NAILS AND SPARKS)/  
LALITA (LOVELY AND  
WHITE DRESSED)/  
BENGAL (I KNOW YOU,  
BIDESHINI 64:07  
Rohan dasgupta Sitar;  
Luigi Di Chiappari, p;  
Riccardo Di Fiandra, b;  
Daniele Di Pentima, d  
November 6, 2016 Rome,  
Italy

Sitar finally comes to jazz. And why not! As with many pieces written for the Sitar there is a lot of repetition but there is also lots of development and improvisations. Think of a 60s bop band with sitar. Take the bop structure and put it over a raga structure. You end up with some very interesting music. The highlight of the CD is Raga Lalit which takes up almost half the CD by itself. It is a wide ranging piece which shows off everyone's talents. It has up tempo moments, spaces, very slow moody moments, even some blues sounding moments and it all adds up to a great piece.

Dasgupta is a fine sitar player and has learned western music well. He gets his sitar to sound, at times, like a guitar with his single note playing. His mix of Indian Raga technique and western playing is really interesting. This really comes through on Lalita., where he really cooks. The other main soloist is Di Chiappari who knows how to listen and develop on what he hears. Like the rhythm players, who do an excellent job, they are primarily bop players who work very well in this situation, blending bop with raga. I really like Di Pentima's playing here. Appropriately busy but subtle, which fits since he wrote the raga.

This is record for my permanent collection.

Bernie Koenig

# New Issues

**WADADA LEO  
SMITH  
NAJWA  
FLOAT UPSTREAM  
TUM RECORDS**

ORNETTE COLEMAN'S  
HARMOLODIC SONIC  
HIEROGRAPHIC FORMS:  
A RESONANCE CHANGE  
IN THE MILLENNIUM /  
02 OHNEDARUTH JOHN  
COLTRANE: THE MASTER  
OF KOSMIC MUSIC AND HIS  
SPIRITUALITY IN A LOVE  
SUPREME / 03 NAJWA /  
04 RONALD SHANNON  
JACKSON: THE MASTER OF  
SYMPHONIC DRUMMING  
AND MULTI-SONIC  
RHYTHMS, INSCRIPTIONS  
OF A RARE BEAUTY / 05  
THE EMPRESS, LADY DAY:  
IN A RAINBOW GARDEN,  
WITH YELLOW-GOLD HOT  
SPRINGS, SURROUNDED  
BY EXOTIC PLANTS AND  
FLOWERS

Wadada Leo Smith trumpet;  
Michael Gregory Jackson,  
Henry Kaiser, Brandon Ross  
and Lamar Smith guitars;  
Bill Laswell electric bass;  
Pheeroan akLaff drums;  
Adam Rudolph percussion

**J**azz aficionados who merit that label will have heard trumpeter Wadada Leo Smith on his many highly acclaimed albums... I have listened to and reviewed his eclectic jazz many times, but can honestly say that this is the first time I've heard him so actively engaged with guitarists... as you can see from the player list, the album is definitely guitar-heavy. & that's not a "bad thing" at all... those screamin' guitar strings on the opener, "Ornette Coleman's Harmolodic Sonic Hierographic Forms: A Resonance Change in the Millenium" will take you to brand-new horizons... his horn is both mellow and penetrating, in the best sense of both those words, on this track... since it's an extended piece (16:28), each of the players gets their chance to illuminate your mind... loved this one. Since there are only four pieces on the album (it still clocks in at just under an hour's worth of splendid jazz), it was much easier to choose my personal favorite track... "Ronald Shannon Jackson: The Master of Symphonic Drumming and Multi-Sonic Rhythms, Inscriptions of a Rare Beauty" is, without qualification, the best extended collective work I've heard since Miles Davis on Bitches Brew... of course, the guitars are seamlessly integrated again, but Bill's bass work surges through each & every bar in most splendid fashion. I give Wadada and his high-talent, high-energy players a **MOST HIGHLY RECOMMENDED**, with an "EQ" (energy quotient) rating of 4.99 for this astounding album. Get more information on the Tum Records page for the release.

Dick Metcalf, aka Rotcod Zzaj

# New Issues



## ARUAN ORTIZ TRIO LIVE IN ZURICH

INTAKT CD 301

PART 1, ANALYTICAL

SYMMETRY/FRACTAL

SKETCHES/ARUAN ORTIZ TRIO

LIVE IN ZURICH, PART 2, BASS

IMPROVISATION/ETUDE #6

OP 10/OPEN OR CLOSE & THE

SPHINX/ALONE TOGETHER

60:21

Ortiz, p; Brad Jones, b; Chad  
Taylor, d, mbira November 26,  
2016 Zurich, Switzerland

The eclectic influences and inspirations for Ortiz's artistic vision are very much on display in this live set, ranging from Muhal Richard Abrams, the AACM, analytical mathematics, classical music, to Ornette Coleman. Through his mostly free-form explorations Ortiz asks his audience to join him in searching out the cohesiveness he finds in mind challenging abstractions, as well as the bracing energy he mines from boundary-busting trio interplay. As you patiently work with this music, this music works on you, yielding surprises and rewards.

Drummer Taylor starts things off with the mbira, an African thumb piano, and combined with Ortiz's dampened piano thumping and Jones' gently wailing, scissoring attack on bass the atmosphere thickens and becomes mysterious. Suddenly, there is an abrupt change of direction as a jumpy, repeating, synchronized pattern erupts, which just as suddenly calms down to the previous dream-like mood. The rest of the piece generates much steam with swirling, dense clusters of dynamic group interaction that reminded me of Chick Corea's trios of the 60's and 70's. Part 2 begins with an authoritative and articulate bass solo, followed by some lovely piano and bass unison lines in the Chopin etude. From there it is down the rabbit's hole and out the other side. They grab hold of each other and the listener, whipping everyone into an exhilarating frenzy that will not let you go. This fantastic, unrelenting section resolves as the Ornette theme comes flying through, and they flash to a furious finish. Their delicate treatment of "Alone Together" reveals a very tender and sensitive side to Ortiz and his mates. The wispy and somber music evokes flower petals floating in a fog-shrouded pond, and the hearts of two lovers suspended in their own emotions. Ortiz fades this scene to black as his almost invisible right-hand notes bring the concert to a peaceful close.

Mark Klafter

# New Issues

## SARAH BUECHI CONTRADICTION OF HAPPINESS

INTAKT CD 299  
CHILD OF OUR TIMES/  
NEVER ENOUGH/  
AFTER WE'VE  
KISSED/FAHAMORE  
(PARADISE)/ WHEEL  
OF TEMPTATION/  
HERE AND NOW/  
THE WORD/SNOW  
TRAIL/SCHONSCHTE  
OBIGSTARN (TRAD)  
57:27

Buechi, vcl; Stefan Aeby,  
p; Andre Pousaz, b;  
Lionel Friedli, d; Estelle  
Beiner, vln; Isabelle  
Gottraux, vla; Sara  
Oswald, cel June 8-10,  
Winterthur, Switzerland

Why is happiness so fleeting and so difficult to attain and hold onto? Why are there so many forces and tensions both inside ourselves and in the world around us, that actively oppose the very state of being we so desperately desire, namely happiness? How do we live in this contradiction, where happiness is our believed for destiny, but pain, failure and disappointment are our reality? Swiss born and world-traveled singer, lyricist, composer and arranger Sarah Buechi, uses poetic passion and intriguing soundscapes to ask those questions on this record. She resigns herself to an ongoing struggle for answers amidst life's challenges, and provides some comfort along the way as she succeeds artistically. For this project Buechi added a string trio to her usual piano trio, composing all the parts herself, and their dramatic chamber music stylings help to create an atmosphere of existential alienation and yearning. Buechi drips and drapes her lyrics and free form vocalizations over, under and around the contours of the music, painting a tapestry of quest, and leading the listener along in suspense. This is "art music," structurally challenging, somewhat experimental and boundary-stretching, but also lovely and eminently musical. As she walks in a remote hamlet in western Ireland ("Fahamore") both she and the music evoke a paradise of wild and untamed conflict, of "Tears—Relief—Fear—Readiness. The sea: A wild raging cat—crawling out of the water and onto the land—and into the landscape of my soul. Fear—and readiness—to face it—anytime." Arco bass and the spaciousness of the skipping strings form an impressionistic and emotional landscape on this song. On "Snow Trail" a buoyant drum intro on brushes leads to some Rickie Lee Jones sounding vocals that notice "A snow trail—I follow it with my eyes—I walk it in my mind on light feet—feeling only its soft texture, not its cold sting—Where do you think it might lead to?—It might lead to nowhere—and for how long?" The jazz trio and the string trio complement and surround each other well on this date, creating suitable moods to fit the vulnerable and sometimes bleak lyrics. Buechi is a mature singer with an older woman's world-weary wisdom, and the hopes and dreams of a young girl's heart.

Mark Klaffer

# New Issues

## HOWARD RILEY LISTEN TO HEAR

SLAMCD 2106

RUSH/DEEPER STILL/CARING/THREE TO FOUR/EYES WIDE OPEN/EYES WIDE OPEN-TAKE 2/  
EQUATION/EQUATION-TAKE 2/STILL RETURNING/MOVEMENT/EXTINGUISHED/MAJOR TO  
MINOR/PASSING/LISTEN TO HEAR/YOU SAID/FLUENCY/THINK ALOUD/APRIL IN PARIS/APRIL IN  
PARIS-TAKE 2 63:58

Riley, p September 12, 2017 London, England

Howard Riley is a veteran of the British free jazz scene, having teamed up with Barry Guy on bass and Tony Oxley on drums back in the 1970's. Here he plays mostly original solo vignettes that stretch and challenge the ears and listening expectations of conventional jazz fans. No matter how quirky, angular or unexpected the note choices and overall flow may be, he is asking you to really listen to hear the inner logic and coherence of his varied and episodic explorations. He has a style that is more of a counter-style, moving themes and fragments around at will, changing directions playfully and erratically, keeping you guessing as to where he is going next. Music like this is more a mental exercise than an emotional catharsis, more head than heart. It is fascinating and interesting, abstract and fragmented, suggesting a different form of unity and flow.

The two highlights are his interpretations of the classic "April in Paris." With fleeting but recognizable references to the familiar melody, he sustains interest as he deconstructs and reconstructs the song, taking possession of the music and mood, opening its cracks and fissures in a Monkish mode. On "Three to Four" he employs a Cecil Taylor-like feel with some two-handed question and answer technique, a bit fractured, a bit rolling, yet connected by his ongoing investigations. "Still Returning" is dominated by right hand runs and ruminations with a lot of subtle stops and starts and discussions between his two hands, which require the listener to hear what he is striving for, asking you to go with its ups and downs and changes. Riley doesn't ask you to hold onto anything for very long. "Movement" is just that, scampering, hands poking and prodding at each other with quick staccato runs, like two piano players that are in different rooms but hearing and responding to each other. The title track triumphs with plucked high notes, mid register left hand chords answering, then a bluesy right hand that is plaintive and melancholy, pleading gently, graced by a Spanish feel blowing through, leading to a nice finish.

Mark Klafter

# New Issues

## HERMAN SCHOONDERWALT

### THE WINNER

#### NEDERLANDS JAZZ ARCHIEF 1702

THE WINKER/GET OUT OF TOWN/THE WINNER/I LOVES YOU PORGY/NARDIS/OL' MAN RIVER/  
SPEAK LOW/MY PLEA/THEMA UIT DE FILM MENSEN VAN MORGEN/VISCA L'AMPURDA/CHEOPS/  
TRANQUILLITY/OUR DELIGHT 75:36

Schoonderwalt, cl, as, ss; Rob Madna, p; Ruud Bos, p; Jan Huydts, p; Ruud Jacobs, b; Jacques Schols, b; Peter Trunk, b; Cees See, d; Jan Vleeschouwer, tpt; Cees Small, tpt, flgh; Rudy Bosch, tbn; Tony Vos, as; Rudi Brink, ts; Harry Verbeke, ts; Toon van Vliet, ts; Fred van Ingen bari s December 20, 1963, April 2, 13, 14, 1964, May 11, 1964, October 11, 1965 Duivendrecht, Hilversum, Netherlands

One of the greatest exports that American has ever produced is jazz, and since the 1920's the Dutch have been very willing recipients and practitioners of the music. The Winner is a beautiful example of the joy, love and care that musicians from The Netherlands have shown in their embrace. This album sold only 200 copies when it first came out in the 1960's, and since then has attained legendary status. Now, a re-release of only 500 copies has arrived, and it is a cause for celebration. The original mono release has been supplanted by a far superior stereo version, sounding as fresh, clean, clear and dynamic as the day it was recorded. For lovers of the sounds of hard bop and Cannonball Adderly's groups you can sign up here. Alto sax, clarinet and soprano sax master Schoonderwalt and company are the heroes this time, with a tip of the hat to the Dutch Jazz Archive for making this recording available again, and making it sound so good.

Schoonderwalt employs some of the best Dutch players of the time, and uses quartet, quintet, septet and orchestra configurations to handle a compelling mix of originals by himself and his countrymen, as well as Broadway, Cole Porter, Miles Davis and Tadd Dameron compositions. On all three of his instruments the leader is superb and sets the tone. His clarinet is warm, alive and comforting in its swinging beauty. His alto playing has a purity of expression that is refreshing and reminiscent of Cannonball and Charlie Parker, but not necessarily derivative. On soprano he sounds like himself and, at times, he sounds like Coltrane. In 1965, how could you get away from Trane's explorations on soprano? Pianist Rob Madna leads some intense and driving trio romps, and rearranges "Ol' Man River" into a much faster tempo for this evergreen, really pulling the life and soul out of this normally languid tune. They swing like fools on this one, and as it is for the entire disc, there are no wasted notes. There is nothing not to like on this album. The commitment to the music is palpable. The music on this disc swings, grooves and locks in like mad, and attracts with an irresistible force. If you are down or sad, this music will make you happy. If you are already happy, you will be made happier. Get it if you can.

Mark Klafter

# New Issues

## LINA ALLEMANO FOUR SOMETIMES Y

LUMO 2017

SOMETIMES Y / KANADA /  
COWLICK / MARINA AND

LOU / TWEETER / O (WITH AN  
UMLAUT). 41:48.

ALLEMANO - TPT; BRODIE WEST  
- AS; ANDREW DOWNING - B;  
NICK FRASER - D. 4/11-12 +  
27/2016.TORONTO, CANADA

## PORTA PALACE COLLECTIVE STONE

RUDI 1036

STONE / INSTANTS /

NEUROPLASTIC GROOVE /  
ITINERARIES / WHY NOT? 50:41.

JOHNNY LAPIO - TPT,

CONDUCTION; ROB MAZUREK

- COR; PASQUALE INNARELLA -  
TS; GIUSEPPE RICUPERO - BARS;

LINO MEI - P, EL P; GIANMARIA

GERRARIO - B, ELECTRONICS;

DONATO STOLFI - D.

10/22/2016,TURIN, ITALY.

## RAOUL BJORKENHEIM DOORS OF PERCEPTION

CUNEIFORM 443

IDES OF MARCH / ANSWER IT! /  
BUZZ / SURF BIRD / ELEMENTAL

/ TALKIN' TO ME? / DOORS OF

PERCEPTION / JITTERFUG /

SUNFLOWER / ECSTASY DANCE.  
43:11.

RAOUL BJORKENHEIM - G;

PAULI LYYTINEN - SS, AS,

TS, BARS, WOOD FLT; JORI

HUHTALA - B; MARKKU

OUNASKARI - D, PERC. NO

DATE, FINLAND.

1) Trumpeter Lina Allemano seems to have been one of Canada's best-kept secrets for the past fifteen years. At least this listener hasn't heard of her until this recording. Her first recording was released in 2003. Her quartet has had a stable personnel since 2006 (with exceptional alto saxophonist Brodie West, drummer Nick Fraser... both of whom I have heard previously, and bassist Andrew Downing). Based on their most recent recording, Sometimes Y, both Allemano and the group should have a lot higher profile. Perhaps that is changing. She was recently on Satoko Fujii's Orchestra Berlin recording, (she spends part of the year in Germany) so she's clearly getting around. Sometimes Y is as good as any recent recording I've heard of contemporary composition and free interplay. All compositions are by Allemano and they're interesting, complex and give the group plenty of material to explore. The group interplay is the most obvious feature of this disc. It sounds like a band that's been playing together for over ten years. But it also sounds like they're still finding exciting and new things to say within the music. It's a band that knows dynamics and knows when to employ intensity and when to rise barely above the whisper. This is particularly evident on the disc's closing track "O". It starts with a lengthy bass solo by Downing that is initially barely audible. The band eventually enters creating a dense but quiet web of sound. The piece builds in volume gradually never going over the top before gradually receding back to the whisper. It's not the most show stopping way to end an album but it's highly effective. Sometimes Y is a remarkable disc and should be heard by anyone with an interest in the cutting edge side of jazz. Listening to this, it looks like I'm going to have to play catch up with Allemano's discography. I'm looking forward to it.

2) Stone is the third album by Turin's Porta Palace Collective. A young band led by trumpeter Johnny Lapio, they're an unusual quintet that seems to take its cues from recent jazz history: European developments, post-Coltrane jazz, early fusion (the better stuff), free jazz, even a taste of hard bop are all prominent features of this band. They deal in a nice blend between the acoustic and electric. They seem to relish collaborations. Even their first self-titled release from 2014 found the group augmented by veteran Italian trombonist Giancarlo Schiaffini. Their



# New Issues

second release, *Neuroplastic Groove*, (2016) featured guests Satoko Fujii, Natsuki Tamura and Jimmy Weinstein. Stone is a live recording with cornetist Rob Mazurek added to the mix. While there are a few problems with this recording soundwise, Stone really captures the energy this group in live performance. The program of five compositions (only one previously recorded, "Neuroplastic Groove") is presented as a non-stop suite with each tune segueing into the next. The band attacks the music with enthusiasm, humor and ferocity. Mazurek fits quite nicely into the band. Tenor saxophonist Pasquale Innarella, another veteran Italian player, is also present. The Collective's usual tenor player, Giuseppe Ricupero switches to baritone saxophone and they work well together. Ricupero gets a particularly galvanic solo on the title track. But Innarella gives "Itineraries" a real kick as well. "Instants" is in two sections and starts as a group ballad but midway through bassist Gianmaria Gerrario starts playing an ostinato that pushes the tune into an uptempo section that includes interludes for pianist Lino Mei and another eruptive solo by Ricupero. "Neuroplastic Groove", in a very different version from the original, moves along on an ominous figure stemming from Mei's electric piano. There's always something to listen to on this disc. Only the funk closer "Why Not" goes on a little too long (could have done without the clapping section) but it's a minor complaint. The other complaint may lie in the recorded sound. Lupa even alludes to it in his brief liner notes. It's a typical live sound, a bit hollow and a bit raw, definitely not state-of-the-art. But, oddly, to these ears it enhances the immediacy of the performance. And, for the most part, the group interplay (including Mazurek) was at a particularly high level that evening.

**3**) *Doors Of Perception* is Raoul Bjorkenheim's eCsTaSy's third release. With this one, Bjorkenheim seems to be reverting back to the first album's concept. While the last album, *Out Of The Blue* contained several longer tracks (one clocking in over 10 minutes), *Doors...* keeps things short and not-so-sweet. Although there is a conciseness to these tracks there's no diminution of power and that serves to make them more immediate and effective. One still gets Bjorkenheim's distortion-drenched guitar in large doses. And one gets Lyytinen's characteristic throaty, vocalized saxophones as well. The rhythm section still mixes rock-ish energy with free jazz openness. But that said, it's not all mere energy and aggression. There are several interludes that give the music a wider range. The title track has a smoldering essence that always seems on the verge of erupting but never quite does. And that's very satisfying in and of itself. "Sunflower" which matches Bjorkenheim's guitar to Lyytinen's baritone sax recalls the free flow of a late-period Coltrane. There's a clarity to this recording that makes it quite appealing. For the most part one can hear all voices clearly which especially works to acoustic bassist Jori Huhtala's advantage. It's good that Bjorkenheim has opted to use acoustic rather than the more expected electric bass. It's the secret weapon of this band. Huhtala's big sound and solid lines give the music the base it needs. At times it's more felt than heard but if one listens deeply, Huhtala is always doing something interesting. Bjorkenheim seems to have a large number of projects but eCsTaSy is, in many ways, his most effective.

Robert Iannapallo

# New Issues

## 1) ROBERTA PIKET WEST COAST TRIO

13TH NOTE RECORDS 011  
MENTOR / FALLING IN LOVE  
WITH LOVE / A BRIDGE  
TO NOWHERE\* / HUMPTY  
DUMPTY / FLOR DE LIS\*\*  
/ YEMENJA / MY BUDDY /  
CONCEPTION\* / WINDMILLS  
OF YOUR MIND. 54:41.

Piket – p; Darek Oleszkiewicz  
– b; Joe LaBarbera – d; on \*  
add Larry Koonse – g; on \*\*  
add Billy Mintz – perc. 4/13-  
14/2017, Glendale, CA.

## 2) DAWN CLEMENT TANDEM

ORIGIN 82749  
BLUES FOR WAYNE / I THINK  
OF YOU / ABLUTION / IN THE  
WEE SMALL HOURS OF THE  
MORNING / SUGAR CLIFF /  
MEMORY / IMPROVISATION  
#3 / BEMSHA SWING / MY  
IDEAL / STAY AWAKE. 39:53.

Clement – p, vcl; collective  
personnel: Julian Priester –  
tbn; Mark Taylor – as; Michael  
Glynn – b; Matt Wilson – d;  
Johnaye Kendrick – vcl,  
harmonium. 7/6 + 21/2017,  
Seattle, CA.

1) Since the late 90s when she began recording sessions under her own name, Roberta Piket has released a number of worthwhile recordings. The last recording, *One For Marian*, was a tribute to one of her mentors, Marian McPartland, who encouraged her, featured her as a guest on her show and in 2001 did a piano duo concert that presented both pianists to advantage. Piket's most recent release is *West Coast Trio*. It finds her with an unfamiliar but very sympathetic rhythm section: bassist Darek Oleszkiewicz, an accomplished bassist with a nice woody sound that compliments Piket nicely; and drummer Joe LaBarbera, someone who Piket has admired since she first heard him on Bill Evans' *Paris Concert* releases (1983). He's an incisive time-keeper who knows how to push and prod a pianist. For an unfamiliar trio, these three sound like they've been working as a unit for years.

Piket presents an interesting program. There are only two originals: the driving opener "Mentor" (dedicated to Richie Beirach) that shows how well Oleszkiewicz and La Barbera inspire the pianist; and an attractive ballad "Bridge To Nowhere" (featuring guest guitarist Larry Koonse). But the bulk of the program is comprised of tunes by other pianists. Some are famous (Chick Corea's "Humpty Dumpty, here given a bright reading and George Shearing's "Conception"). Others are obscurities that deserve be resurrected. John Hicks' "Yemenja" is a melodic gem given a breezy reading and is one of the highlights of the disc. *West Coast Trio* is a winning disc of solid, straightforward piano trio music that's a strong addition to Piket's discography.

2) Northwest-based pianist / vocalist Dawn Clement has been making quite a name for herself. In addition to releasing several albums under her own name since 2003, she has also made substantial pianistic contributions to others' works. Recently she's been appearing on albums by soprano saxophonist Jane Ira Bloom. (That's the first place I heard her.) Her work in the rhythm section (with bassist Mark Helias and drummer Bobby Previte) on Bloom's recent *Wild Lines* is one of the reasons for the major success of that record. Fresh off that success, Clement releases *Tandem*, a

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## 3) LESLIE PINTCHIK YOU EAT MY FOOD, YOU DRINK MY WINE, YOU STEAL MY GIRL PINTCH HARD 004

YOU EAT MY FOOD, YOU  
DRINK MY WINE, YOU  
STEAL MY GIRL / I'M GLAD  
THERE'S YOU / SMOKE  
GETS IN YOUR EYES /  
MORTAL / YOUR CALL  
WILL BE ANSWERED BY  
OUR NEXT AVAILABLE  
REPRESENTATIVE, IN THE  
ORDER IN WHICH IT WAS  
RECEIVED, PLEASE STAY  
ON THE LINE, YOUR CALL  
IS IMPORTANT TO US /  
HOPPERESQUE / HAPPY  
DOG / A SIMPLER TIME.  
46:37.

Pintchik – p; Scott Hardy –  
b, el b, g; Michael Sarin – d;  
Satoshi Takeishi – perc;  
+ (on selected tracks)  
Ron Horton – tpt; Steve  
Wilson – as; Shoko Nagai  
– accordion. No recording  
DATE; STAMFORD, CT

collection of duets with players with whom she shares an obvious affinity. They include legendary trombonist Julian Priester (with whom she recorded an album back in 2003), Seattle-based saxophonist Mark Taylor, vocalist Johnaye Kendrick, bassist Michael Glynn and drummer Matt Wilson (who Clement used on her trio album Break).

Tandem's program is a mix of originals, standards and a couple of unusual tracks. Her two duets with Priester are wonderfully oblique and the two sound like they are having fun musically jousting with each other. Monk's "Bemsha Swing", done with Wilson, is playful with unexpected pauses and an erratic pace. Lennie Tristano's "Ablution", performed with alto saxophonist Mark Taylor is taken at a fiery tempo and given a reading that will have Tristano-ites nodding in approval. The second tune with Taylor, "Sugar Cliff" by guitarist Brad Shepik, is a nice find. Clement sings a wordless vocal on this one. Her voice has a light quality but don't read that as insubstantial. Her phrasing is unique and works perfectly on this tune. "I Think Of You", one of the two tracks with vocalist Kendrick, is a particularly nice with the two harmonizing over Clement's piano.

Tandem is an enjoyable, well-organized recording, well worth hearing.

3) Pianist Leslie Pintchik has been releasing recordings under her own name since 2004. Her latest is the humorously titled *You Eat My Food, You Drink My Wine, You Steal My Girl!* (Apparently the title comes from a heated conversation overheard while crossing the street.) Pintchik is primarily a lyrical player with a taste for a Latin undercurrent. The opening title cut which has a funk underpinning still has a Latin swagger to it. The program is comprised primarily of originals with two standards rounding it out. Most of her accompanying group has worked with her on her previous albums. Bassist Scott Hardy has been her most frequent collaborator and she's used drummer Michael Sarin on her last two discs. Saxophonist Steve Wilson, percussionist Satoshi Takeishi have been with her on and off since her first album. Newest member in her circle is accordionist Shoko Nagai on two tracks. With a shifting personnel on each track, variety is assured. But oddly the most interesting track is the original "Your Call Will Be Answered..." with Hardy, Sarin and Takeishi. It has a series of breakdowns at various intervals

# New Issues

## 4) DAVID HANEY ANGEL FOOT SHUFFLE

CADENCE 1258  
FREEDOM SUITE PART ONE  
/ ANGEL FOOT / PRETTY  
PRANCING HANG-UP / BODY  
AND SOUL / MEETING OF THE  
SWANS / FREEDOM SUITE  
PART TWO. 47:16.

Haney – p; Julian Priester  
– tbn; Andre St. James – b;  
Bernard Purdie – d. 6/8/2014,  
Portland, OR.

## 5) DAVID HANEY QUARTET LIVE FROM JAZZ CENTRAL

CADENCE 1224  
JEANAYE /  
EXTEMPORANEOUS FLUX  
/ SOL INVICTUS / BAMBOO  
RHAPSODY / WHY NOT /  
BLUE GOTAN / WEBB FORM /  
FLANNEL-EARED FRIENDS /  
BLUES FOR ALEX. 63:50.

Haney – p.; Doug Webb –  
t; Jorge Herneaz – b; Mat  
Marucci – d. 6/18/2008,  
Syracuse, NY

## 6) PAUL GIALLORENZO TRIO FLOW

DELMARK 5026  
A-FROLICK-ING / FRACTURES  
/ ROLLING / INTERSTICE /  
OVER – UNDER / FLIPD SCRIP  
/ DARKNESS / LIGHTNESS / A  
WAY WE GO. 55:03.

GIALLORENZO - ; JOSHUA  
ABRAMS – B; MIKEL PATRICK  
AVERY – D. 5/15-16/2017,  
CHICAGO, IL

after driving swinging passages. On the ballad side, there's nice take on "I'm Glad There Is You". It's a fine melodic take on a song that's not overly covered. While there's nothing here that's overly dynamic or edgy, it's still a fine album and Pintchik knows how to match players with a worthwhile program.

4) Pianist (and august editor of this magazine) David Haney has a pair of recent releases that showcase two instances of his musical activity over the past decade. Starting with the more recent release, *Angel Foot Shuffle* (from 2014) is a quartet session that sounds almost tossed off... and I mean that in a good way. It sounds like four friends (Julian Priester on trombone, Andre St. James on bass and drummer Bernard Purdie) who happen to be great musicians got together and decided to put together a date. The focus of the session for this listener is Purdie. Veteran of innumerable sessions going back to the 60s, he was one of the key players who added a funk backbeat to the swinging jazz tempo. He's played with everyone from Nina Simone to Aretha Franklin, from Gene Ammons to Albert Ayler. Here he lays down a number of distinctive rhythms that drive the pieces (all by Haney except for "Body And Soul") forward without overwhelming any of the players. His shuffle rhythm on "Angel Foot" is flawless. Throughout, Priester usually blows serene lines that flow and arc atop the rhythm section. "Body And Soul" is a good example. Haney's piano fires out in bursts and staccato jabs, fitting in between Purdie's beats. St. James' bass seems to be the glue that ties these three players together. All in all, a relaxed date that stands up to repeated listening.

5) A completely different side to David Haney's music is presented on *Live From Jazz Central*. Recorded at the titular club in Syracuse, NY in 2008, the group (Doug Webb - tenor saxophone, Jorge Herneaz - bass and Mat Marucci - drums) was together for a CIMP session recorded earlier in the day that produced the *Avenue Of The Americas* CD. Oddly, only two songs are played from that session Haney's "Jennaye" and

# New Issues

Marucci's "Why Not". The remainder includes a pair of tunes by Webb ("Webb Form" and "Blues For Alex"), one by Hernaez ("Blue Gotan") and the remainder of the tracks are credited to the group but several sound like they're composed. Only "Flannel-Eared Friends" carries a free improv feel to it.

Surprisingly considering that they had recorded for 7 hours previously in the day, the band sounds anything but tired. "Jennaye" opens the proceedings and it sounds like they're feeling out the space. But as the program progresses (the disc sounds like it was programmed as performed) the energy level rises. By Haney's "Sol Invictus" the band is firing on all cylinders. It begins with an unaccompanied piano solo with beautiful harmonic abstractions in the left hand. Webb picks up the melody and invests it with a yearning quality accompanied by Haney's dense chords and Hernaez' fleet-fingered runs. The tempo picks up when Marucci enters and the band is off. When about halfway through Marucci switches to a 6/8 rhythm everything builds to a peak until the music recedes and concludes with a surprising end. Marucci's "Why Not" is given a vibrant reading with Webb and Marucci stating the tricky theme in tandem. The concluding "Blues For Alex" ends things with a Coltrane-ish blues. The band rises to the occasion: the driving rhythm laid down by Hernaez and Marucci, the lengthy continually inventive solo by Webb with the interjections by Haney bring things to a rousing conclusion.

6) Chicago-based pianist Paul Giallorenzo has been making a name for himself recording with such Chicago stalwarts as Dave Rempis, Fred Lonberg-Holm, Mars Williams, Jeb Bishop a/o. Flow is the sixth album that has been released under his name. Those have been with various groups. This is recorded with a trio: bassist extraordinaire Josh Abrams and Mikel Patrick Avery on drums. There are signposts in Giallorenzo's playing: Monkian dissonances, a Herbie Nichols-style bounce, early Cecil Taylor abstraction. But these are merely signposts. Giallorenzo fashions this type of material into a fine piano trio album that doesn't give the listener that "heard it all before" feeling. The tunes are individual. "A-frolicking" opens the proceedings on a bright note with arcing piano figures over a loping gait. The tempo alternates between that loping gait and swinging passages. Both "Fractures" and "Flipd Scrip" are built upon left-hand figures from which springs the abstracted melody line. More tempo shifts adds to the mysterious atmosphere but it never sounds contrived. Abrams and Avery maneuver through the shifting minefield with aplomb. It seems as if Giallorenzo focuses on keeping the music fresh and unexpected. That's a hard thing to do in standard piano trio music but on Flow he succeeds handily.

Robert Iannapolo

# New Issues

## (1) DAVID LOPATO GENDHING FOR A SPIRIT RISING

GLOBAL COOLANT 02

DISC 1: LADRANG /  
THIS LIFE / JALAN JIWA  
/ GENDHING. DISC

2: BEBOPPIN' WITH  
BELLA / JAKSHI / SUITE  
911: AMBUSH AND  
AFTERMATH / PEACE  
MARCH. 79:05.

Lopato, p, keyboards, vb,  
marimba, glockenspiel,  
sudanese kendhang,  
gongs, hand claps; Marty  
Ehrlich, as, ss; Mark  
Feldman, vln; Lucas  
Pino, ss, car; Bill Ware,  
vb; William Moersch,  
marimba; I. M. Harjito,  
javanese rebab; Erik  
Friedlander, cel; Ratzo  
Harris, b; Tom Rainey,  
Michael Sarin, trap set;  
Anne Stebinger, Marc  
Perlman, javanese  
kendhang;  
John Hadfield, perc. New  
York, NY, no date.

## (2) MATT WILSON'S HONEY AND SALT

PALMETTO RECORDS

CHAPTER ONE: SOUP

/ ANYWHERE AND

EVERYWHERE PEOPLE

/ AS WAVE FOLLOWS

WAVE / NIGHT STUFF

/ WE MUST BE POLITE

/ FOG / CHOOSE.

CHAPTER TWO: PRAIRIE

BARN / OFFERING AND

**D**avid Lopato's recent recording (1) provides a unique listening experience. Containing original music based on the music of Java, Indonesia as well as jazz, the eight selections on this two-CD set make extensive use of Javanese percussion as well as traditional jazz instrumentation. Each piece has significant musical development, utilizing sustained notes and chords and repeated and evolving lines, generating a grand and majestic quality to the music which often spurs spiritual contemplation. Sections of energetic jazz soloing by Lopato on piano, Lucas Pino on clarinet, Bill Ware on vibes, and Ratzo Harris on bass are uniquely integrated into the music. The moving and evocative ode "Peace March" provides resolution within the two-part "Suite 911" and serves as a fitting closing for this exceptional musical program.

**D**rummer/composer Matt Wilson presents original music inspired by the poetry of Carl Sandburg on (2). Wilson, a distant relative who grew up in the same location (Knox County in Illinois) as Sandberg, learned in college that the great poet had an interest in jazz, perhaps motivating this project. As a whole, Wilson's music is quite varied and eclectic in its musical depiction of 18 of Sandburg's poems, as performed by his quintet and segments of his quintet. The Sandburg poems which are profiled here are on the short side, ranging from 4 lines ("Choose") to 20 lines ("We Must Be Polite"), and are replicated in the liner notes. Eight of the poems are presented vocally, most sung by vocalist/guitarist Dawn Thomson in a mixture of styles, including country ("Offering and Rebuff," "Bringers," and "I Sang") and rock ("Soup). Thomson sings in a more contemplative manner on two other pieces, the eerie "Night Stuff" (well scored by Wilson with Ron Miles on cornet and Jeff Lederer on bass clarinet) and the deeply meaningful "Stars, Songs, Faces." Ten of the remaining poems are recited by readers with Wilson's accompanying music, the readers being members of the quintet (including Wilson) and several prominent jazz musicians, including Christian McBride, John Scofield, Jack Black, Bill Frisell, Rufus Reid, Joe Lovano, and Carla Bley. Black's colorful recitation of "Snatch of Sliphorn Jazz" provides useful advice to kids followed by a rollicking and rambunctious soprano sax solo from Jeff Lederer, while Wilson's solo drums forms a stark and effective background accompaniment to Sandburg's classic, "Fog," the reading from Sandberg himself (presumably a recording).

# New Issues

REBUFF / STARS, SONGS, FACES / BRINGERS. CHAPTER THREE: SNATCH OF SLIPHORN JAZZ / PAPER 2 / TRAFFICKER / PAPER 1 / I SANG. EPILOGUE: TO KNOW SILENCE PERFECTLY / DAYBREAK. 64:02. Dawn Thomson, vcl, g; Ron Miles, cornet; Jeff Lederer, rds, harmonium, vcl; Martin Wind, acoustic bass g; Wilson, d, vcl. October 17-18, 2016, no location.

(3) HELIOSONIC  
TONEWAYS VOL. 1  
THE HELIOSONIC TONE-  
TETTE FEATURING SCOTT  
ROBINSON & MARSHALL  
ALLEN  
SCIENSONIC LABORATORIES  
SS10  
HELIOTONE 1A / HELLROTEN 1B /  
HELIOTONE 2A / HELIOTONE 2B /  
HELIOTONE 3A / HELIOTONE 3B /  
HELIOTONE 4A / HELIOTONE 4B /  
HELIOTONE 5B / HELIOTONE 6 /  
HELIOTONE 7. 62:16.

Robinson, b marimba, Wurlitzer el p, ts, pic, timpani (3), model 201 theremin, power bore bugle, Faventia barrel p, treichel bell, soundsheet, dragon d, space magnets; Marshall Allen, as, EVI (el valve instrument), Casio VL-tone, Steinway p (7, 8), b marimba (9); Philip Harper, tpt; Frank Lacy, tbn; Tim Newman, b tbn; Pat O'Leary, b, waterphone; JD Parran, b cl; Yosvany Terry, as, woodblocks, bells; Danny Ray Thompson, bari s, flt, bongos, space sound tube; Matt Wilson, d, timpani, Korean gong, dragon drum (6); misc. perc, Unidentified Flying Sounds by any/all. April 20, 2015, no location.

This release (3) by the Heliosonic Tone-Tette commemorates and honors the 50th anniversary of The Heliocentric Worlds of Sun Ra, which was made on April 20, 1965 in RLA Studio in New York City. The goal as described by Scott Robinson was to record new and original music with the same vision and "sonic character" of Sun Ra's milestone recording. Toward this aim, a total of ten musicians (including longtime Sun Ra Arkestra members Marshall Allen and Danny Ray Thompson) and recording engineer Richard Alderson (who recorded the 1965 sessions) were brought in, and the same or similar instrumentation was used. ScienSonic Laboratories, which owns the actual bass marimba that Sun Ra played as well as other instruments used on the original Heliocentric sessions, was a natural site for this follow-up recording, which occurred in 2015 exactly fifty years to the day after the original recording. Marshall Allen, who was present and performed on the 1965 Sun Ra recording, here plays alto, Steinway piano, and other instruments. Allen and Robinson share the duties for the current album of performing on the bass marimba and other instruments that Ra played on that original album. It is a worthwhile undertaking. The music is freely improvised and is presented in the order in which it was recorded, and brings to mind the unique qualities of the adventuresome space-like music of Sun Ra, while also being fine musical performances on their own right. While all or most musicians on this recording played miscellaneous percussion or unidentified flying sounds and some electronic instruments were used, it is noteworthy and refreshing that eight of the ten musicians also played a wind instrument (such as trombone, alto, etc.), with the other two players being the bassist and drummer. Such a significant role for horns in space-like music might be surprising today but was part of the musical legacy of Sun Ra's musical creations..

Don Lerman



# New Issues

## (1) TOBIAS WEINDORF STORIES TO BE TOLD

JAZZ SICK RECORDS 5102  
YOU NEVER KNOW / PRELUDE  
NO. 2 / OFFDAY / PRELUDE  
NO. 1 / A LITTLE SONG FOR  
YOU / BOPSHKA / SWEET  
TEMPTATIONS / A NEW START  
/ FOR JOHN / MADE OF  
BROKEN PARTS. 56:36.

Weindorf, p; Gunnar Plumer, b;  
Peter Weiss, d. Bonn, Germany,  
September 15-16, 2016.

## (2) LUCIA IANNIELLO LIVE AT ACUTO JAZZ

SLAMCD 585  
OUR SUMMER / PEYOTE  
SONG NO. III / OTHER /  
LITTLE AFRICA / DESERT  
FAIRY PRINCESS / QUAGMIRE  
MANOR AT FIVE A.M. / BALLAD  
FOR SAMUEL / MAINTENANT /  
ETERNAL EGYPT SUITE, PART 4  
(OF FOUR PARTS). 68:35.

Ianniello, C tpt, objects; Diana  
Torti, voc; Andrea Polinelli, ss,  
as, flt; Paolo Tombolesi kybds;  
Cristina Patrizi, el b. August 10,  
2016, Acuto, Italy.

## (3) DEBBIE PORYES TRIO LOVING HANK

OA2 RECORD OA2 22146  
LOVING HANK / BOTH SIDES  
NOW / HOW ABOUT YOU /  
PHRASES OF THE MOON /  
THE WISH / CONFIRMATION /  
TEARS WE'VE SHED / ALL OF  
YOU / OUR STAR / AUTUMN  
IN NEW YORK / TOSSING,  
TURNING / WONDERFUL DAY.  
61:38.

PORYES, P; PETER BARSHAY,  
B; DAVID ROKEACH, D; ERIK  
JEKABSON, FLGH (1). APRIL  
4-5, 2017, BERKELEY, CA.

Pianist Tobias Weindorf's recent recording on (1) presents outstanding music both from the performance and compositional standpoints. Stylistically, the spritely "Bopschka" and the more reflective and harmonically advanced "Prelude No. 1" display the wide musical range of Weindorf's compositions. "You Never Know" and "A Little Song for You" are waltzes with interesting chordal structures and compelling melodies. These qualities are also present in bossa form on "Offday" and "A New Start." Weindorf's improvisations emerge quite naturally from largely his own compositions (8 of the 10 selections are his originals), with bassist Gunnar Plumer contributing several excellent solos as well. The empathetic playing of drummer Peter Weiss combines with Weindorf and Plumer to complete a top flight acoustic jazz trio whose performances here will be much enjoyed by jazz listeners.

Trumpeter Lucia Ianniello's group of five contains no drums, but adds vocals to its two-horn, two rhythm lineup on (2). Recorded in an intimate setting of a 12th century church in a live concert, the music seems centered on the dynamics of group playing, rather than on featured soloists of its individual members. Interpretations of Horace Tapscott's "Ballad for Samuel" and Michael Session's "Quagmire Manor at Five AM" are the more traditional tracks of this largely adventuresome concert, which includes compositions from Ianniello, Jesse Sharps, and Fuasi Abdul Khaliq.

Pianist Debbie Poryes and her trio present a well-played acoustic set on (3), her fourth album as a leader. Poryes is a California native who spent some years performing and teaching jazz piano in Europe before returning to the west coast to resume her performing and teaching activities. Her composition "Our Star" is one of six originals, an appealing and interesting jazz melody in the medium swing mode, with fine solos by Poryes and bassist Peter Barshay. Of her six arrangements of jazz and other standards, the fine and overlooked Gene de Paul show tune "Wonderful Day" displays Poryes's sensitive touch and thoughtful and laconic style, with drummer David Rokeach subtly aiding in the fine musical development throughout and in the closing vamp.

Don Lerman

# New Issues



**ERIC SIEREVELD'S  
ORGANIC QUINTET,  
WALK THE WALK  
SHIFTING PARADIGM  
RECORDS.**

THE LAST INNOVATOR  
/ TOUGHIN' UP / WALK  
THE WALK / BEWITCHED,  
BOTHERED AND BEWILDERED  
/ OCCAM'S RAZOR / B-TOWN  
BOP / THE OTHER SIDE (OF  
THE HUDSON) / SPLIT-  
FINGER(\*). 58:55.

Siereveld, tpt, flgh; Tony  
Barba, ts; Jonathan Kreisberg,  
g; Steve Snyder, org; Mitch  
Shiner, d; Aaron Gochberg,  
cga(\*). No dates given.  
Madison, WI.

**B**rass cat, educator and author of method books, Eric Siereveld is a fresh face to yours truly and probably many others reading this. For this album he has assembled five musicians from as many sections of the continental nation (plus a conguero for one tune) to interpret five scripts from the leader, as well a pair of collaborations with guitarist Kreisberg and European bassist Haxholm along with a well-traveled standard from Rodgers and Hart. There are those who will maintain that not only is Kreisberg the most well-known sideperson but hands-down show stealer of this set. He first came to my notice in the combo of organ icon Dr. Lonnie Smith's combo is surely destined to become one of the next "critic's darlings". The hornmen are confident and interesting if not particularly fiery; tenorist Barba falls in the middleweight category with a combination of George Coleman and Hank Mobley while the leader's trumpet made this listener recall Carmell Jones and Kenny Dorham. As an organist Steve Snyder is not a screamer in the Earland tradition but a more thoughtful player like, say Mel Rhyne. I like that he kicks his own bass. Although the guitarist steals the show solowise, there is much to savor here. If one digs Hard Bop horn lines atop a Soul Jazz organ setting then I say "Go for it!"

Larry Hollis

# New Issues

**(1) ROCKWELL  
AVENUE BLUES BAND,  
BACK TO CHICAGO,  
DELMARK 854.**  
BLUES FOR HARD TIMES  
/ BOOGIE IN THE RAIN /  
THAT FACE / FREE TO LOVE  
AGAIN / LONESOME FLIGHT /  
CHARIOT GATE / WE BELIEVE  
/ STRANGER BLUES / FOR A  
REASON / RICH MAN / HEY  
BIG BILL / LOVE POLICE /  
BACK TO CHICAGO / HAVE  
YOU EVER TOLD YOURSELF A  
LIE / DREAM. 69:50.  
Collective personnel: Tad  
Robinson, hca, vcl, bg vcl;  
Steve Freund, g, vcl; Ken  
Saydak, p, el p, org, vcl;  
Harlan Terson, b; Marty  
Binder, d. 10/25-27/2017.  
Chicago.

**(2) BREEZY RODIO,  
SOMETIMES THE  
BLUES GOT ME,  
DELMARK 853.**  
DON'T LOOK NOW BUT I'VE  
GOT THE BLUES / CHANGE  
YOUR WAYS / WRAPPED UP  
IN LOVE AGAIN / I WALKED  
AWAY / MAKE ME BLUE / LET  
ME TELL YOU WHAT'S UP /  
SOMETIMES THE BLUES GOT  
ME / I LOVE YOU SO / YOU  
DON'T DRINK ENOUGH /  
THE POWER OF THE BLUES  
/ A COOL BREEZE IN HELL /  
DOCTOR FROM THE HOOD /  
BLUES STAY AWAY FROM ME  
/ FALL IN BRITISH COLUMBIA  
/ NOT GOING TO WORRY /  
ONE OF A KIND / CHICAGO  
IS LOADED WITH THE BLUES.  
66:02.

Collective personnel: Rodio,  
vcl, g; Sumito "Arito" Ariyoshi,  
Luca Chiellini, p; Chris Forman,  
org; Light Palone, John Lauler,  
Brian Burke, b; Lorenzo  
Francucci, Greg Essig, Rick  
King, d; Constantine  
Alexander, Art Davis, tpt;  
Ian Letts, ts; Ian "The Chief"  
McGarrie, As, ts, bar s; Billy  
Branch, hca, vcl; Slim "Harp"  
Noble, hca; Joe Barr, bg vcl.  
No dates given. Chicago.

For over six decades now Bob Koester and his Delmark label have steadily produced a stream of jazz and blues releases to make them the oldest surviving indie music label. These two new productions are a good cross sampling of their newly recorded contemporary blues projects.

This is far from the first time a record label has assembled veteran players for an all-star (I hesitate to use that term but these guys (1) are all-stars to some of us) outing. There have been mixed results; the great pairing of Albert Collins, Johnny Copeland & Robert Cray on Alligator or the weirdly disastrous collision of Muddy, Wolf and Bo Diddley on Chess's Super Super Blues Band? It is with a happy heart that the report here is in the positive nature. The three vocalists (Freund, Robinson, Saydak) all have at least two leadership titles under the Delmark logo not to mention numerous sideman listings as do the bassist and drummer. The majority of the program stems from the band members along with a pair of covers. As far as songwriting chores go Freund weights in with four, Saydak penned five, Robinson at two not counting the title song which seems to be a collaboration between him, Saydak and bassman Terson who also wrote "Love Police".

None of these bluesicians are newcomers to the Windy City blues scene and their credentials would fill too many pages of this publication to list sufficiently. The first three listed are all capable vocalists, especially Robinson who can handle a mean Mississippi sax (harp) in the manner of Kim Wilson. Freund's guitar skills are on par with labelmate Dave Specter with whom he shared a previous recording (DM-779). Ken Saydak is a talented songwriter in the idiom not to mention a certified "professor" of the keyboards. Last but certainly not least, the team of Terson and Binder form the sturdy backbone. Newcomers to these blues master will find this volume a welcome introduction and a invitation to further explore each members Delmark back catalog.

For his sophomore effort (2) relative new face Breezy Rodio (are we sure that's not a stage name?) has assembled a much larger cast than was heard on (1) although he and producer Steve Wagner have wisely sparsed them out to appropriate tracks. The name that

# New Issues



**JEREMY BACON TRIO,  
CAGE FREE, FREE  
RANGE  
SQUATTY ROO  
RECORDS.**

GOODNIGHT MOON /  
WOODY'N YOU / SO IN LOVE  
/ MY SHINING HOUR / LITTLE  
OLD LADY / LADYBIRD / THE  
LAST ISLAND / SOON / TURN  
OUT THE STARS. 43:23.

Bacon, p; Thomson  
Kneeland,b; Shawn Balthazor,  
d. 10/10/2016. No location  
listed.

immediately caught this writer's eye was the presence of organist Chirs Forman (of Deep Blue Organ Trio renown) and a two brass/two reed horn section that appears on some cuts. My former exposure to Rodio has been limited to one of blues belter Linsey Alexander's three albums on Delmark and that was mainly in a supporting role. Here he gets to strut his stuff over a lengthy setlist made up mostly of his writings; eleven out of seventeen. Most of these are capably described in Justin O'Brien's booklet annotation so there is no need to go into detail about them. Needless to say Breezy Rodio is a strong triple threat as singer, guitarist and composer who will bear watching in the future.

Larry Hollis

In the credits for this compact disc the names of Don Pullen and Phineas Newborn, Jr. are mentioned but these ears hear a large Bill Evans strain throughout this short program of two originals , three jazz staples and standards from Harold Arlen, Cole Porter, Hoagy Carmichael and George Gershwin. The compositions from the leader are the opening "Goodnight Moon" that has a neat samba insertion plus a good bass exposition before ending too abruptly and "The Last Island" with a wispy ballad beginning that jumps into a smoking up-tempo walk. The trap set is mixed way too high on "My Shining Hour" but things really pick up for the remainder of the set with a fairly obscure Hoagy piece "Little Old Lady" that springs along atop brushes followed by the Dameron classic that features the drummer after the head then kicking up hot & heavy before returning back to the regular time. The Gershwin evergreen is lightly swung with another nice upright spot before things end with a lilting take of the Bill Evans writing. Despite the brief playing time and a slow start this one impresses from halfway on.

Larry Hollis

# New Issues

**CLIFFORD LAMB,  
BROTHERS & SISTERS,  
WEBERWORKS**  
ENTERTAINMENT CORP.-  
17201.

HOLD THE LINE / BROTHERS  
& SISTERS / WHAT'S GOING  
ON / RED AND BLUE / FAIR  
WEATHER / KAMALA'S  
DANCE. 25:45.

Collective personnel: Lamb,  
p; Laura Vall, vcl; Chaim  
Dunbar, spoken word, poetry;  
Nicholas Payton, tpt; Buster  
Williams, b; Cindy Blackman  
Santana, d. No dates given.  
Hollywood, CA.

**JIM VIVIAN NEW CD  
REVIEW**  
**JIM VIVIAN,  
SOMETIME AGO,**  
CORNERSTONE RECORDS  
1 12.

EVERYTHING I LOVE / IN  
YOUR OWN SWEET WAY / MA  
BEL(\*)/ NARDIS / ANOTHER  
RALPH'S(\*) / PETTY HARBOUR  
BAIT SKIFF / STELLALUNA(\*)/  
SOMETIME AGO. 58:22.

Vivian, b; John Abercrombie,  
g; Ian Froman, d; Mike Murley,  
ts(\*). No dates given. Toronto.

Currently residing in the San Francisco Bay area, pianist Clifford Lamb has just issued his fifth project, an extended play compact disc that is short on playing time but long on quality. A graduate of the esteemed Berklee School of Music, Lamb has an impressive resume stashed in his gig bag and this disc sports the presence of three big name players most Cadence readers will instantly recognize; Payton, Williams & Blackman-Santana are all musicians of world class stature. The last named two were present on Lamb's previous album *Bridges* so the rhythmic base is super tight yet loose when it needs to be. Payton's main instrument is used sparingly but quite effectively and Kenny Dorham's "Fair Weather" & "Kamala's Dance" from Roy Hargrove are solo numbers for the leader's florid pianistics.

His harmonic reconfiguration of Marvin Gaye's iconic "What's Going On" would be perfect fodder for a flying blind test. It's good to hear Cindy Blackman-Santana back on the drum throne again. Larry Hollis

This was not the first musical meeting between Canadian bassist Jim Vivian and the late guitarist John Abercrombie. They had spent studio time together for a previous album under Vivian's command some years back and it is obvious from the short statement inside the cover of the digi-pack the high regard in which Abercrombie was held. This is basically a trio outing for guitar, upright bass and drums with tenor saxophone added for three tracks. Murley adds some welcome brawn to those cuts and is notably effective on the lone Vivian original "Stellaluna" a ballad built over obvious chord changes. The same can be said for Abercrombie's sole contribution "Another Ralph's" yet it is wished he was present on the title right before it, Miles' "Nardis" which is the most animated heard herein. This is much interplay among the three principals heard with Froman utilizing both sticks and brushes throughout. There should be no doubt that this date is under the leadership of a bass player as there are upright solos on every track. As there are no recording dates listed and the package has a copyright date of last year this very well could be the last recorded statement issued by John Abercrombie. For that possibility alone this is recommended.

Larry Hollis

# New Issues

## FRANK KOHL QUARTET - RISING TIDE

PONY BOY PB50186-2

ROCK AND ROLL / RISING TIDE / WITH TEARS OF JOY / RICHMAN POORMAN / LOVE LETTERS / LATE NIGHT / MY ROMANCE / BEAUTIFUL LOVE. 51:16.

Kohl, g; Tom Kohl, p; Steve LaSpina, b; Jon Doty, dr. 3/2013, New York, NY; 3/2015, Paramus, NJ.

Frank Kohl's quartet is such a cohesive unit that its performance on *Rising Tide* invites writing its guitarists and jazz listeners venerate Wes Montgomery's work on his *Smokin' at the Half Note* album, less discussed, though certainly appreciated, is the involvement of Wynton Kelly, Paul Chambers and Jimmy Cobb, who are equally engaged in making the album special. Or even more appropriately, the value of Wes Montgomery's *Groove Yard* album performance increases as a result of the equally engaged back-up of his brothers, Buddy on piano and Monk on bass. Similarly, guitarist Frank Kohl's quartet, perhaps modeled after the Montgomery Brothers, includes his brother, Tom, on piano. As had Buddy, Tom has released a few well-received albums of his own, including *Dances with the Sun*. More importantly, the brothers' shared upbringings create musical cohesiveness and special moments, fraternal gives-and-takes, filling in of the rests, expanding the harmonies. Steve LaSpina is a 20+-year veteran of the jazz scene. And his resume includes work with Marian McPartland, Pat Martino, Bob Brookmeyer and other jazz icons, not to mention recording his own *SteepleChase* albums and pursuing a jazz education career. Drummer Jon Doty, a regular with Frank Kohl's quartet and Paul Connors' *Organ Trio*, recorded an album too, *Until the Last Star Is Out*, with his own quintet. And then there's Frank Kohl himself, the leader of another accessible and finely articulated album that, coincidentally or not, does recall the *Groove Yard* groove. That affinity commences with *Rising Tide*'s first track, incongruously entitled "Rock and Roll." "Rock and Roll" does suggest ease of motion and undulating rocking and rolling, if not the musical genre. The track is more closely aligned with confident, seasoned musicianship than showmanship, complete with intentionally audience-wowing and distracting special effects, before throngs of partying revelers. Yes, Frank Kohl's approach too is one of full authority and immersion in the joy of performing, as if in a session that could continue for hours, that joy transferring to the listener. The rolling motion of "Rock and Roll," like a rising tide's gentle surge without the roughness of rocking, continues into "Late Night," its counterpart. "Late Night" contains a similar feel, and its recording stretches as long as necessary to allow for fully conceived solos by each quartet member. In this way, "Late Night" is similar to the introductory "Rock and Roll," which at midpoint releases brother Tom in an initially chorded solo, full of vigor and swing, before gliding into LaSpina's no less energetic and no less melodic bass statement. "Rising Tide" allows the guitarist to express an unaccompanied solo before the rest of the group comes in. The beauty of Kohl's tone, which receives brief suggestion during "Rising Tide's" intro, with ringing, singing naturalism, receives full confirmation during the album's last track, "Beautiful Love." Alone, Kohl constructs a richly harmonic interpretation of the song that allows appreciation of Kohl's command of the instrument with complementing chords and noticeably the use of the lower string to anchor the improvisational phrases which flow as prismatic, shifting angles as if in consideration of the object of wonder: the song itself. From the assured stroll of "My Romance" to the carefree swing of "Richman Poorman," Frank Kohl's quartet again proves to be one deserving of greater attention for its seasoned professionalism and natural cohesion.

Bill Donaldson

# New Issues

## THELONIOUS MONK, MONK,

GEARBOX GB1541,

BYE-YA / NUTTY / I'M GETTING SENTIMENTAL OVER YOU / BODY AND SOUL / MONK'S DREAM. 41:56.

MONK, P; CHARLIE ROUSE, TS; JOHN ORE, B; FRANKIE DUNLOP. D. 3/5/1963. COPENHAGEN.

**T**he year of 2018 saw a bonanza of excellent here-to-fore unheard jazz flooding the marketplace,

Historically significant recordings, mostly live, surfaced with regularity from the likes of Trane, Bill Evans, Wes, Hank Mobley, Erroll Garner, Art Farmer & Jackie Mclean, Grant Green, etc., Yet here is another, this time from the inimitable Mr. Monk himself. But first some brief backstory is in order; As Gail Tasker of Gearbox told me, the Scotch Broadcast Tape of the original Danish Broadcast Corporation recording was purchased from a collection held by a unnamed Danish producer after which several years were spent in restoration. So here it is in glorious analog to savor.

By the time this concert happened Monk was signed with Columbia, had issued two LPs and was just a year away from making the cover of Time magazine. His third album for the label was from May of that same year in Tokyo but with Butch Warren in for Ore. Monks writing slowed during his Columbia period with only ten new originals composed during his tenure under the six-eye logo. "Bye-Ya" is an older title and despite a few reed whistles from Rouse's tart tenor this version is every bit the equal to the Misterioso version of 1958. Next up is a cornball pop ditty from 1932 "I'm Getting Sentimental Over You" that Thelonious transformed into his own and recorded more than any of the other non-originals in his book. He had been investigating it since the late fifties. It opens with the

piano san band for a melodic chorus semi-rubato before the rest of the group joins in with Rouse taking four choruses before the leader takes it around for a half-dozen thematic times until Rouse re-enters for the reprise. The other standard follows, a completely solo piano rendition of the classic

"Body And Soul" which is several minutes longer than when he performed it at a previous Danish date at the same venue with the same quartet on May 17th, 1961. As annotator Ethan Iverson notes one can only marvel at the endless inventiveness of this true jazz giant. The foursome returns to wind things up with "Monk's Dream" which alludes back to the opening selection with its hint of the Latin tinge.

Many of the maestro's compositions in the AABA format were simple blues lines for the first two verses with a more complex bridge before the last verse but this one keeps things flowing easily between the sections with Monk/Rouse playing it all together before a dramatic tenor solo, drums propulsive and pushing behind the leader's extended romp then Rouse returning to the head alone atop Monk's complimentary comping and occasional filler asides. The end to an exhilarating listen. Kudos to the Greabox crew which will also be releasing this on 180 gram vinyl. Sphere Lives!

Larry Hollis



# New Issues

## 1) JORG FISCHER & INGO DEUL VINKENSLAG

SPOREPRINT 1801-10

VINKENSLAG 1/ VINKENSLAG 2 46:36

Jorg Fischer d, perc; Ingo Deul d, perc 11.08.2017, Wiesbaden

1) A drummer's delight. Two drummers in a duo setting. What more can a drummer reviewer ask for.

On the sleeve they list influences from Kagel to Cage and state that Vinkenslag was the street that Han Bennink lived. I am a big fan of Kagel, Cage is a major influence on me and Bennink is on my top ten drummers list, so I really looked forward to this CD. I just sat in front of my stereo transfixed, enjoying the whole CD. The separation of each person on a different channel was great so I could tell who was doing what. The styles and sounds of the two are distinct and complement each other very nicely. There are sections where both drummers are playing together and solo sections. Vinkenslag 2 is more spirited while Vinkenslag 1 has more quiet solo sections. The notes acknowledge that while these pieces are largely improvised, there was some rehearsal and agreement as to where the pieces would go. And, of course, as with all improvised music, visual cues were given. The playing goes from all out drumming to nice quiet melodic sections showing real musicianship on the parts of both players. Both players also move from sticks, to mallets, to brushes, creating a very nice array of sounds and textures. A CD for all drummers to seriously listen to. And other musicians might learn a few things about the musicality of percussion.

## 2) JOEY BARON, ROBYN SCHULKOWSKY NOW YOU HEAR ME

INTAKT 307

CASTINGS/ PASSAGE/ THE GAZE/ JUST LISTEN 68:30

Joey Baron, d, perc; Robyn Schulkowsky d, perc March 21,22 2016 Berlin

2) I am quite familiar with Joey Baron but not with Robyn Schulkowsky, but I love drum duos so I just sat back to listen. The great thing about this CD is how they play melodically, setting up patterns which they repeat and vary. There are different textures and sounds and great contrasts between drums and cymbals and gongs. At times I had to stop and I thought I was hearing electronic sounds, but no, just great gong sounds played with mallets. There is also a lot of tom tom mallet work, which I love. As I listened to this CD two thoughts kept going through my head. One was the influence of Max Roach, especially his Drum Also Waltzes, which exhibits some very subtle playing, and an old LP called Pieces of Time which featured four drummers. Some of the sounds I heard on this CD reminded me of that old LP. And some of the gong sounds on The Gaze reminded me of some Japanese classical percussion music. These comments are meant as very high praise. Some of the patterns I heard on this CD definitely, at least to my ears, certainly showed a Max Roach influence in terms of phrasing.

Bernie Koenig

# New Issues

## LURRIE BELL & THE BELL DYNASTY, TRIBUTE TO CAREY BELL,

DELMARK DE855.

GONE TO MAIN STREET /  
HARD HEARTED WOMAN  
/ I GOT TO GO / KEEP  
YOUR EYES ON THE PRIZE  
/ TOMORROW NIGHT  
/ SO HARD TO LEAVE  
YOU ALONE / WHAT MY  
MOMMA TOLD ME /  
WOMAN IN TROUBLE /  
CAREY BELL WAS A FRIEND  
OF MINE / BREAK IT UP /  
HEARTACHES AND PAIN /  
WHEN I GET DRUNK. 57:53.

Collective personnel:

Lurrie Bell, vcl, g; Steve  
Bell, Charlie Musselwhite,  
hca; Billy Branch, vcl, hca;  
Eddie Taylor, Jr., g; Sumito  
"Ariyo" Ariyoshi, p; Tyson  
Bell, b; James Bell, d. vcl.  
9/13/2017. Chicago.

## VARIOUS ARTISTS,

### TRIBUTE: DELMARK'S 65TH ANNIVERSARY,

DELMARK DE856.

1) TRAIN I RIDE/ 2) ONE  
DAY YOU'RE GONNA GET  
LUCKY/ 3) ALL FOR BUSI  
NESS/ 4) RIVERBOAT/ 5) SHE  
LEFT ME A MULE TO RIDE/  
6) SPEAK MY MIND/ 7) OUT  
OF BAD LUCK/ 8) BROKE  
AND HUNGRY/ 9) SO MANY  
ROADS/ 10) NEED YOUR  
LOVE SO BAD/ 11) BOOT  
THAT THING. 48:33.

The familial lineage in blues is a time-honored and well-respected tradition. Ralph, Don and Kenneth of the much-missed Kinsey Report are a representation of this aspect yet there are many more. The sons of the late Carey Bell have formed the Bell Dynasty to celebrate the life and music of their father and what better place to do it than under the Delmark logo where the matriarch recorded. Hot of the heels of their appearance at the Chicago Blues Festival this combo is joined by two harmonica masters, the revered Charlie Musselwhite and Lurrie Bell's old buddy and co-leader of the Sons of the Blues, Billy Branch. The former shines on "I Got To Go" from Little Walter Jacobs while Branch treads a more formalized path on "So Hard To Leave You Alone" and with Steve Bell (who is no slouch on harp either) on the battling "Carey Bell Was A Friend Of Mine" which he also wrote. Elsewhere, guest Eddie Taylor, Jr. adds his stinging guitar to all but three tracks while piano ace Ariyoshi provides a keyboard wash to those three cuts. The recognized bandleader and eldest son, Lurrie, is his usual firebrand self on vocals and six-strings but his singing is eclipsed by that of drummer James on three selections, one of which he composed. Little more need be said of this sterling production(a) from Dick Shurman and Steve Wagner.

The Bell brothers show up on Delmark tribute album: the various artists celebration of Delmark's over six decades of musical excellence. This is a veritable who's who of the label and an eleven track overview of the Chicago blues as it is today. Each selection is a tribute to some duly noted blues giant and to echo my late uncle "Y'all Knows What Yuh Come For". My only complaint is a minor one; the major performers are not identified by voice or instrument. A small slight. From the opening "Train I Ride" a jaunty tip-of-the-harp by Omar Colman to idol Junior Wells to the concluding "Boot That Thing" a rowdy 88-pounding salute to The Honeydripper this is a delghfull cornucopia of grade A Windy City sounds. Talk about a blues book.

Main Performers: 1=Omar Coleman; 2=Lurrie Bell & The Bell Dynasty; 3)Linsey Alexander & Billy Flynn 4)Demetria Taylor 5)Jimmy Burns; 6) Lil' Ed & Dave Weld; 7)Jimmy Johnson & Dave Spector; 8)Corey Dennison & Gerry Hundt; 9)Mike Wheeler; 10)Shirley Johnson; 11) Ken Saydak. Collective Sidepersons: Steve Bell, hca; Eddie Taylor, Jr., Billy Flynn, Mike Wheeler, g; Hank Ford, ts; Sumito "Ariyo" Ariyoshi, p; Roosevelt Purifoy, p, org; Tyson Bell, Melvin Smith, b; Willie Hayes, James Bell, d. #10 La Veta, Colorado Unknown Date, Circa late 2017 & early 2018 Chicago. Larry Hollis

# New Issues

## TRIBU EL MATADOR

MANDALA RECORDS 105  
EL MATADOR/ SLEEP ON  
IT/ JOYA/ I'M ON MY WAY/  
AFRONIKA/ EL TONTO/ EL  
HOMBRE/ Y YA YE VAS/ BLUE  
TWO/ MEQUEDO CON TI/  
WW/ NITE WORK 58:57  
David Casini, vib, perc; Ruben  
Salcido, as, ss, flt; Marcu  
Lopez, Bass, perc vcl; Mario  
Salomon, d, timbales, perc;  
Jesus Gonzalez, Congas, perc;  
Steve McQuarry, Grand P,  
B-# org, elec p, Synth Guest  
Erick Barbera, Bata drums (5)  
Shekere (10) San Francisco,  
no date

## LURK LAB MORE TROUBLE WITH HONEY PUMPS SPOREPRINT 1712-09

FOURMI PLUS/ NEO ZISCH/  
FOURMI MINUS 48:35  
Matthias Schubert, ts; Uli  
Bottcher, elec, beat box;  
Jorg Fischer, d Aug 7, 2017  
Kassel, Germany

This CD is a really nice presentation of very danceable Latin jazz. I found myself tapping my feet and even getting up to move around a bit. The rhythm section works very well and provides a solid foundation to the band. The tunes are nice and melodic and the solos are all in keeping with the danceable structure. Afronika has a more solid beat, and perhaps the least African track on the whole CD. I enjoyed Casini's vibes and Salcido's alto very much. I sometimes found his soprano playing a bit harsh. McQuarry's keyboard work is also fine. His B-3 playing on Me Quedo Con Ti changes the feel of the tune, making it stand out from the rest of the CD. But then he reverts to piano. I wish he had stayed on the organ. AS I listened to the CD I was reminded of Cal Tjader This group can be seen (or heard) as a new version of what Tjader was doing back when. In short a very pleasant record.

Some very high energy improvisation with an interesting mix of sounds. This is a CD I should really like, but parts of it left me cold. The opening track, which lasts more than half of the whole CD is in three parts. It starts off with very high energy playing by everyone, has a slow mid section and then picks up again I found lots of repetition, which is boring to the listener, but, as someone who has played in this kind of context, I can understand how the players are reacting to each other. This music would probably have been more enjoyable watching the band live rather than just listening to it at home on a CD player.

By the end of Fourmi Plus my ears were tired. Neo is much quieter. On this track there is some open space, which I like. One can more clearly hear the musical conversations, unlike the first track where everyone was talking loudly at the same time. But it builds into very loud noise. Fourmi Minus starts off a bit more open but also becomes a shouting match. The main problem I have with this CD is that rather than the music being a conversation between three people, it, to my ears, sounds more like a shouting match with all three people shouting at the same time and rather than talking to each other they are talking past each other.

Bernie Koenig

# New Issues



**KUKURUZ QUARTET  
JULIUS  
EASTMAN PIANO  
INTERPRETATIONS  
INTAKT 506**

Fugue No. 7/ Evil Nigger/  
Buddha/ Grey Gorilla  
76:46

PHILLIP BARTELS, P; DURL  
COLLENBERG, P; SIMONE  
KELLER, P/ LUKAS RICKLI, P  
NOV 29, 30 DEC 1 ZURICH

Julius Eastman is a composer I am not aware of, but after checking on him, he is someone I should be aware of. He is called a minimalist, and that comes through in this CD. He also performed pop music and jazz. He was involved with the contemporary music scene at University of Buffalo and Lukas Foss was a champion of his.

This CD contains four of his pieces arranged for piano quartet. I have no idea what they were originally written for. Indeed, they have been written for this ensemble.

The opening piece is heavy and dark with loud bass chords. Evil Nigger also very dark and heavy with minimalist themes slowly developing.

Buddha is very quiet. Lots of open space. I suppose the idea was to create a contemplative mood, or perhaps the music is reflective of the composer's contemplations.

The last piece, Gay Guerilla is gayer. It has a dance feel to it—modern dance not ballroom dance. I can picture dancers moving around in very small steps and like in most minimalist music, as themes develop, so the dancers movements would also get larger. About a third of the way in the tempo and feel changes and becomes more repetitive but, to my ears, the dance feel remains. This part builds and builds both in volume and in complexity. And then it returns to a more contemplative mood. And then another build up. One can come up with all kinds of scenarios here—and all kinds of dance routines.

This CD is certainly not for everyone. Fans of minimalism will find lots to like as will classical pianists.

Bernie Koenig

# New Issues

## JOHN CHRISTENSEN DEAR FRIEND SHIFTING PARADIGM RECORDS 136

DEAR FRIEND/ SOMETHING  
SAID IN PASSING/ HEY-DE  
HOEDOWN/ PRAIRIE GRASS  
SUITE/ SPOOKY ACTION AT A  
DISTANCE/ SLATE ICICLES ON  
TREES/ SMELLS ARE AWESOME  
40:48

John Christensen, bass;  
Johannes Wallmann, p; Dave  
Miller, g; Andrew Green d  
June 2018, Madison Wisconsin

## HBH TRIO SIGNALS FROM THE MIND SLAM 588

SIGNAL 1/ SIGNAL 2/ SIGNAL  
3/ SIGNAL 4/ SIGNAL 5/  
SIGNAL 6 56:39

David Haney, p; David Bajda, g;  
Jorge Hernandez, bass; Julian  
Priester, tbn June 26, 2017,  
Portland Oregon

This is a very enjoyable, straight ahead 60s style moody CD. The interplay between Wallmann and Miller is superb. Wallmann plays a great two-handed piano and Miller responds with great chords. He gets a big broad sound out of his amp, which I like. Christensen and Green provide excellent support. I would have liked to hear some solo work from them. Prairie Suite is interesting with a time and tempo change. But as with all program music I have no idea of what is being portrayed so I just enjoy the music. While Prairie Suite may be my favorite track, Spooky Action is my least favorite. It has that eighth-note rhythm I find boring and the electric guitar gets overplayed. Actually the last three tracks use an eighth note rhythm but the last two are played loosely so the music flows. Nothing new here but just some very nice playing.

This is a CD of 6 improvisations. I have been listening carefully and when I looked up I saw I was in the middle of track 3. To me that is a great sign. Many improvisational recordings can go on for a while as different players pick up on ideas and develop them differently. Often it may sound as if a piece is over and then someone picks up on an idea and on the piece goes. So when I heard a bit of a lull, that is what I assumed happened. This just speaks to the compatibility of the players. Track 3 has a steady rhythm provided by Hernandez, with Haney and Bajda providing great support for Priester. Signal 5 is slow and moody with lovely work by all.

Both Bajda and Hernandez are active classical players as well as improvisers and Haney has studied composition. So it is natural to hear them improvising with structure and great interaction. The addition of Priester to this trio is interesting as the trombone brings a whole new sonority to the group. I have long been a fan of Priester's, ever since his work with Max Roach back in the 60s. On this CD he creates all kinds of different sounds, perfectly fitting in with the other players.

In short really lovely recording which will bring great listening over many plays.

Bernie Koenig

# New Issues

## JOHN BAILEY, IN REAL TIME,

SUMMIT RECORDS DCD720.

RHAPSODY / MY MAN LOUIS / TRIPLICITY / LOVELY PLANET / BLUES FOR ELLA / MORRO VELHO(\*) / STEPPING UP / CHILDREN'S WALTZ / ENSAIO GERAL. 54:25.

Bailey, tpt, flgh; Stacy Dillard, ss, ts; John Hart, g; Cameron Brown, b; Victor Lewis, d; (\*)

Bailey, flgh; Janet Axelrod,flt; Leo Grinhauz, cel, Brown,b; Hart, g. 1/3&4/2017. Union City,NJ.

In the liner annotation from the great Ira Sullivan he allows this is brassman Bailey's debut recording under his own name. That allows for the fact that yours truly had never heard of him, but that's okay, he has probably never heard of me either. Long buried in the recording studio trenches Mr. Bailey has stepped out to issue this disc of his own making with assistance from a stellar cast; Stacy Dillard, a mainstay of Smalls in the Village and a player of immense talent whom my old listening pal, Sharel Cassity, advised me to pay attention to many moons ago, (check his invigorating ride on "My Man Louis!") John Hart, who first impressed me with his work with Brother Jack McDuff and the dynamic rhythmic duo of Cameron Brown and Victor Lewis. With a backup band of this stature Bailey need not worry as he soars through seven self-scripted tunes and a cover each of works from Brazilian writers Milton Nascimento & Gilberto Gil. An admitted disciple of Clifford Brown, Bailey has numerous weapons in his musical arsenal and most are heard here but one of the strongest has never come to light before and that is his composing ability. The originals herein are most impressive and run to gamut from sublime to smoking. As mentioned earlier, his bandmates are more than up to the task of interpretation of these gems. Veterans Brown & Lewis are both tight and elastic when need be, The youngest and perhaps most adventurous solowise, Dillard sticks mostly to his trusty tenor but displays just enough fishhorn to keep the pallet broad. To these ears, the standout of this set is guitarist John Hart who is a rock in the comping department since no keyboards are present but it is his solo work that captures my lobes every time. As stated before, there are many examples of his playing in my collection but this is the best I've ever heard from him. His lyricism and that of the leader (on flugelhorn) are present on the seductive "Morro Velho" where Dillard & Lewis lay out and Bailey's spouse is heard in the ensemble on flute and Leo Grinhauz on cello for a refreshing change of pace. Brazilian Chamber Music for want of a better term. The flugel is utilized on the hip two-step "Children's Waltz" with soprano and one of two Cameron Brown upright spots heard on this disc. Trapster Lewis gets the same amount of solo space with a brushed commencement to the dancing last cut "Ensaio Geral". After three decades of session work Bailey plays with the joyful exuberance of a man who just escaped from Devil's Island with Papillon. Something of a sleeper for sure.

Larry Hollis

# New Issues

## MIKE LEDONNE & THE GROOVER QUARTET, FROM THE HEART, SAVANT 2168.

SOMEDAY / FROM THE HEART (\*)/ YOU'LL NEVER KNOW WHAT YOU MEAN TO ME / HERE COMES THE DOCTOR(\*)/ COME BACK BABY / FUN DAY / YOU SEND ME / THEN CAME YOU. 56:42. LeDonne, org; Eric Alexander, ts; Peter Bernstein, g; Joe Farnsworth, Mike Clark(\*), d, 1/8/2018. Paramus, NJ.

Hot on the heels of his last Savant issue of mid-year 2016 comes another platter from keyboardist LeDonne's long-standing combo (his ninth for the Highnote subsidiary his tenth with this group if you count a Canadian club date from 2005 for the Cellar Live label). He has become more prolific in his writing judging from that gig, with only one number penned, where this latest sports three originals including the lightly swinging "You'll Never Know..." and a pair of finger-poppers with guest drummer Mike Clark. The funkified title tune finds him staying on a simple 2&4 backbeat with occasional sparse fills at the end of the bar lines while gets a little more busy on the "Here Comes The Doctor" boogaloo adding stop-time fills before the next solo and emphasizing the interesting walk-downs and effective punches. The remaining five numbers are all covers, the lead-off George Duke medium walker, two burners from Stevie Wonder & The Spinners along with my two faves, a gospelish "Come Back Baby" and set at a happy lope, the classic "You Send Me" from Ray Charles and Sam Cooke respectively. The only problem with this release is with the cover graphics which resemble the previous issue so closely some listeners might have trouble discerning which is which.

Larry Hollis

## ELLIOT SHARP CARBON TRANSMISSION AT THE SOLAR MAX INTAKT 311

ANALEMMA/ PERIHELION/ ORRERY/ AURORA/ ANTHELION 54:00

Elliott Sharp, 8 string Guitarbass, ss elec, samples, textures; Zeena Perkins, Elec harp; Bobby Previte, d August 2009 Saalfelden, Austria

I am familiar with Previte, but neither of the other players here. I know Previte as a pretty good drummer who has recorded with many people so was expecting some straight ahead playing. I also checked and saw that Previte has been playing with Sharp on and off since the 80s. I am not sure how to categorize this CD. There clearly is improvisation. The use of electronics is a bit heavy handed for my taste, but that is just me. In addition to some good improvisations by Sharp and Perkins with great support by Previte, I also hear classical influences in the use of electronics. And there is some great drum work by Previte on Orrery, though his drums sound a bit deadened, much like some older rock recordings. But that sound actually works well with the electronics. Parts of this CD do not work for me, other parts do. I just put it on and occupied myself doing simple things like checking email and would see if the music ever made me perk up my ears. And in a number of places it did. There is some interesting playing here and the three players work well together.

Bernie Koenig



# New Issues

## ZACC HARRIS AMERICAN REVERIE

SHIFTING PARADIGM RECORDS SP-123

SHENANDOAH / THIS LAND IS YOUR LAND / LONG BLACK VEIL / ON THE ROAD AGAIN / BE MY  
BABY / TAKE ME OUT TO THE BALL GAME / IN THE PINES / SIMPLE TWIST OF

FATE / CAROUSEL / JESUS, ETC. / TENNESSEE WALTZ / STAR SPANGLED BANNER 56:17.

Harris, g; Matt Peterson, b; Lars-Erik Larson, dr. 10/21/22/2016, Minneapolis, MN.

Like Maria Schneider, Charlie Haden, Matt Wilson and other jazz talent from the Midwest, guitarist Zacc Harris returned to his roots to find depth of feeling and musical authenticity arising from examining one's own self. Recordings recalling the former musicians' proud Midwestern roots include *The Thompson Fields*, *Rambling Boy* and *As Wave Follows Wave*. In Harris's case, *American Reverie* suggests prairies, two-lane highways, national pride, boxcars, baseball games and rolling hills extending to the horizon. Thoughtful, respectful and compassionate as only a native can be, Harris invests in *American Reverie*, a well-named album, a consideration of the soul of the Midwest that flyovers don't reveal. The album contains both Americana and reveries that contemplate spirituality, decency, community, wonder and personal quests. Harris appears to have chosen his straightforward, major-key folk songs with care, consistent as they are in narrative qualities and homespun sentiment. Slyly, Harris combines a jazz sensibility with the authenticity of country songs to steer the arrangements away from standard renditions and toward a personal amalgam of both jazz and folk music influences. A native of southern Illinois, Harris, for the past thirteen years, has been a recognized musical presence in Minneapolis, from which his individualistic style has gradually gained wider notice. The declarative nature of the songs of *American Reverie* matches the warm, precisely articulated style that Harris employs to deliver the direct emotions contained within the songs. For example, the first song, "Shenandoah," draws in the listener from its first chord, unrushed and drawn out, upon which is built the rest of the arrangement—an arrangement containing re-harmonization and improvisation entirely within the spirit of the song. Harris's trio ends on the same three broad comforting chords before its final unresolved suspended chord. The next track, Woody Guthrie's "The Land Is Your Land," is animated by bassist Matt Peterson's pulsating five-four vamp. That provides the undercurrent for Harris's ringing departure from the melody with, instead of chiming chords like "Shenandoah's," an aggressive interpretation by a different guitar voice with a wilder reverb of single-line reimagining. And while Harris adapts the ordinarily rambling "This Land Is Your Land" with a "Riders on the Storm" feel, Willie Nelson's "On the Road Again" receives a slower arrangement suggestive of peripatetic movement that results in pauses, long full singing tones, and an extended bass solo. No doubt, the two most unexpected choices on the album are "Take Me out to the Ball Game" and "The Star-Spangled Banner." The approach to the former is almost delicate, with occasional chord alternations, as if the interpretation would be a solo performance before a private audience. After the

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first chorus, Peterson and drummer Lars-Erik Larson join in the gentle lilting sway, replacing the game spirit of the song with a calm reverence for the sport. An appropriate conclusion to an American reverie, “The Star-Spangled Banner” proceeds almost entirely as an affecting solo with occasion bass support until its very ending when Peterson and Larson stir up the last repeated pedal point. And, American Reverie, thematically consistent, is an effective platform for the sound and spirit of Harris’s heartland style.

Bill Donaldson

## 1) DAVID HANEY QUARTET SIEGE OF MISRATA

CIMP 406

FREEDOM #35 / KHARTOUM / BA BOO BE BA / BROKEN WEASEL / PRANCING PRETTY HANG-UP / QUARTET IMPROV / SEIGE OF MISRATA PART 1 / SEIGE OF MISRATA PART 2 / SEIGE OF MISRATA PART 3 / SEIGE OF MISRATA PART 4 / SEIGE OF MISRATA PART 5 / SEIGE OF MISRATA PART 6 / D.D.D. DONE. 63:58.

Haney, p; Dominic Duval, Dominic Duval, Jr., b; Andrew Cyrille, d. 7/28/2011, Canton, NY.

## 2) DANIEL CARTER, HILLIARD GREENE, DAVID HANEY LIVE CONSTRUCTIONS

SLAM 589

CONSTRUCTION NUMBER ONE / CONSTRUCTION NUMBER TWO / CONSTRUCTION NUMBER THREE / CONSTRUCTION NUMBER FOUR / CONSTRUCTION NUMBER FIVE.

31:02. Carter, tpt, ts; Greene, b; Haney, p. 11/12/2017, New York, NY.

Listeners may assume that the title of pianist David Haney’s album, *Siege of Misrata*, suggests an event from ancient history, like the sieges of Samaria or Constantinople. For in this age of advanced weaponry, who hears of sieges anymore? Well, sieges happen, and relatively frequently at that. Take, for example, the plight of ordinary Syrian citizens in the middle of the recent sieges of cities like Homs. In 2011, when (1) was recorded, Haney appeared to have been affected by, and fully aware of, the stages of a recent siege in Libya. During three months of the Libyan Civil War, Muammar Gaddafi attacked Misrata, and his central government eventually regained control of this important port city. Haney musically describes this tragic event, which captured the world’s attention, in six parts that describe resistance, destruction, hope, attempted escape, starvation and defeat. We know in hindsight, though Haney didn’t know at the time of the recording, that ironically the resistance defeated Gaddafi later that year and that Libya remains a dangerous place. But the tragedy of a country’s citizens trapped in a warring city, exemplified by those of Misrata, was Haney’s theme—a theme as worthy of musical dramatization as was, say, the 1812 Overture or Hunnenschlacht. Recording engineer Marc Rusch mentions in the liner notes the large variances in volume throughout the recording, which indeed is true of the *Misrata* suite. It starts with subdued calmness expressed by

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Haney's block chords, alternating between lower bass and the piano's upper register. Drummer Andrew Cyrille understates the portentous start of the uprising with muted sporadic rolls on the tom-tom. A third of the way through the first part, both Dominic Duval Sr. and Dominic Duval Jr., father and son, join with arco darkness for the full quartet's ominous beginnings. That changes quickly in the second part, and yes, with a dramatic increase in volume, suggesting chaos and fear from realizing the first casualties. Freely improvising, Haney's scampering upper register clusters and low bass-clef pounces combine with the bassists' acceleration of movement and Cyrille's energy of assault and panic delivered by the full kit. Going from bad to worse, the uprising encountered tanks and air strikes a month later, suggested by the aggressiveness of Cyrille's unceasing drumming in Part 3. Then in Part 4, the quartet attains a strolling rhythm not present in the helter-skelter musical images of the previous parts. Haney's interest in Ellington's piano work becomes evident with the punchy accents and mid-register, off-the-beat chords, while the bassists provide at times a vamp and at other times the part's linear structure.

That structure dissolves in Part 5, as apparent dread within the rebellion resumes, suggested by Haney's sustained shadowy minor-key intimations of showdown. The showdown does occur in Part 6 with a stunning musical attack of the final collision of forces, Cyrille's solo simulating military advancement and artillery bombardment before the track's sudden ending. But that's not the end of the album itself, for the last track of (1), "D.D.D. Done," involves perhaps a celebration of the Duvals' first father-son recording. Their initial two-minute give-and-take of the bass duo moves into a full quartet mode of musical conversation, much like the unrehearsed "Quartet Improv" of spontaneous collaborative creativity. Not all of *Siege of Misrata* is spur-of-the-moment composition. Haney had written "Prancing Pretty Hang-Up" from the suggestion of a motive of variations, sometimes oblique and sometimes enchanting, that occur throughout the recording. "Ba Boo Be Ba" is distinguished by a written seemingly conventional quarter-note theme that too moves into complex rhythmic contrast as Haney maintains, at least at first, the medium-volume presentation allowing for Cyrille's ensuing louder agitation of Haney's undercurrent. "Freedom #35" may be thematically consistent with the aspirations of the *Misrata* uprising's citizenry, for "Freedom #35" adopts a stroll similar to that of "Siege of Misrata Part 4." During a two-day session at the Peterson-Kermani Performance Hall in Canton, New York, Creative Improvised Music Projects recorded both *Siege of Misrata* and David Haney Solo (CIMP 402, reviewed separately).

While the outrage over the suffering of fellow human beings may lead to distinct images and passions that flow over into musical expression, Haney also was involved in a recording of more relaxed surroundings when he, horn player Daniel Carter and bassist Hilliard Greene walked into the studio of WKCR Radio at Columbia University, picked up their instruments and started playing live whatever came into their minds. That may be an intimidating circumstance for less experienced musicians, especially when they never before performed together, and thus without

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rehearsals or knowing what concepts the other two may have brought to the session. But the trio, with over a hundred years of combined professional experience, prefer the adrenaline...and the music...that flows from spontaneous performances, which Haney compares to talking. So, WKCR's Live Constructions program brings together musicians who never performed together for on-the-air musical conversations, thereby providing the thrill of a live broadcast, much as live TV similarly records whatever happens. The live jazz of Live Constructions takes the concept a step further than TV does by eliminating the safety net of rehearsals or props. And that is the thrill of jazz. Carter takes the lead through much of (2) as he alternates between trumpet and tenor sax. That's not to say that Greene and Haney don't lead as well, though the volume of sound provided by wind instruments commands attention. Starting their conversations, the members of the newly assembled trio introduce an idea and elaborate upon it in musical discussion. "Construction Number Two" begins with Haney's tentative three-note mid-register repetition, to which Carter responds on trumpet with another tonal direction. Greene follows along, seeing where the construction is headed, until he develops after the first minute a propulsive thought with variations that animate the rest of the track for improvisation. With Greene's part of the construction established, Carter is free to enter with floating saxophone lines at ease over the rhythmic pattern. And then the theme changes when Greene switches to arco ascents and descents, to which Carter responds with trills and Haney with spare upper-register embellishments. Haney commences "Construction Number Three" with a rumbling and rippling flight across the entire expanse of the keyboard, and then Greene develops his own solo, a contrast in register and tempo to Haney's. Yet, Carter's eventual collaboration on tenor sax provides a calmness after the storm, Desmond-like in his coolness throughout agitation. As if in yet more deliberate contrast, Haney moves into percussive chord clusters as if prodding. Instead, all three agree to end with a quieter section of bowed bass, upper-register piano coruscation and almost-melodic sax lines. Carter's way with long tones and linear development in some of the earlier tracks is relegated on the final track, "Construction Number Five," only three minutes in length. Instead, he opens with altissimo tweeting and mid-range warbling without structure, an invitation to for Greene to bow descending lines and repetitions. While no doubt, all three musicians were familiar with each other's previous recordings, WKCR does deserve a great deal of credit for taking chances of this type with its air time. Nonetheless, the results break through comfort zones and provide the energy of free improvisation that creates memorable jazz moments.

Bill Donaldson

# Obituaries

## A FEW FROM 2017



ROSWELL RUDD IN 2006



JOHN ABERCROMBIE IN 2007



DAISY SWEENEY IN 1987



MOSE ALLISON IN 1975



PAULINE OLIVEROS IN 2010



LARRY CORYELL IN 1979



GERI ALLEN IN 2008



VICTOR BALLEY IN 2008



CHARLES BOBO SHAW IN 1976

# Obituaries



ALBERT "SAX" BERRY, jazz saxophonist, died on Feb. 18, 2018. He was 87.



ANDREW MARSHALL, jazz pianist, died on December 31, 2017. He was 45.



BETTY WILLIS, 60s soul singer, died on January 1, 2018. She was killed on the morning of New Year's Day in Santa Ana, California. Willis was 76, and was reportedly homeless, living on the streets of Santa Ana.



BILL MOODY, drums, died on January 14, 2018. He was 76.

DIDIER LOCKWOOD, jazz violinist, died of a heart attack on February 18, 2018). He was 62.

EDDIE KATINDIG, popularly known to his fans as Eddie K, died on December 21, 2017.

ERROL BUDDLE, multi-instrumentalist, has died in February, 2018. He was 89.

GEORGE KIDD, trombonist and popular figure on the Scottish jazz scene has died.

GEORGE SPAULDING, jazz pianist, piano tuner, Born: Nov. 22, 1922. Died: Feb. 22, 2018. He was 95.



HEINER STADLER, jazz composer, record producer, pianist and arranger. Born: April 19, 1942. Died: February 18, 2018. He was 75.

HEINZ JAKOB "COCO" SCHUMANN (14 May 1924 – 28 January 2018) was a German jazz musician and Holocaust survivor. He was 93.

HUGH MASEKELA, trumpet, singer, composer died on January 23 2018. He was 78.



He was an exceptional talent for me. For one he made me feel an intimate connection with South Africa. His music made me exuberant to feel, and to dance while in the magic needed to overcome hateful treatment in all its degrees. He was extraordinary in his description of life in SA pre-and post-Apartheid, and yet his life was so relatable to the common person. I will miss knowing that he was accessible to see and sorrow that he is no longer with us. Rest in Power as the new ancestor to be welcomed! Valerie K

KEN ORTON musician, writer, died on January 20, 2018. He was 83.

KEVIN MAHOGANY, vocalist, died on December 17, 2017. He was 59.



JOHN ALEXANDER, saxophonist, died. He was 69.

# Obituaries



**ANDRE ST. JAMES**, bass player, composer, and educator died in May 2018.



**BOB DOROUGH** (December 12, 1923 – April 23, 2018) jazz pianist, singer, composer, songwriter, arranger and producer died on April 23, 2018. He was 96.



**LORRAINE GORDON**, club owner, music advocate, died on June 9, 2018. She was 95



**GILDO MAHONES**, jazz pianist, (1929-2018) died on April 27, 2018. He was 88.



**MATTHEW MURPHY** (December 29, 1929 – June 15, 2018), blues guitarist, died on June 15, 2018. He was 88.



**CLARENCE FOUNTAIN**, singer, founding member of the Blind Boys of Alabama died on June 3, 2018. He was 88.



**REBECCA PARIS**, vocalist, died on June 18, 2018. She was 66.

**BUELL NEIDLINGER** (March 2, 1936 – March 16, 2018) bassist, composer, teacher, cellist, died on March 16, 2018. He was 86.

**REGGIE LUCAS**, guitarist and producer, died on May 19, 2018. He was 65.

**CHARLES NEVILLE**, saxophonist, died on April 26, 2018. He was 79.

**NATHAN DAVIS**, saxophonist, died on April 8, 2018. He was 81.

**JABO STARKS**, drummer died on 5/1/18. He was 79.

**HOWARD WILLIAMS**, piano, trombone, arr. died around April 15, 2018. He was about 83.

**BROOKS KERR** (Chester Monson Brooks Joseph Kerr III), pianist, died on April 28, 2018. He was 66.

**LEE JESKE**, writer, died on April 8, 2018. He was 62.

**AUDREY MORRIS**, singer, pianist died. She was 89.

**LUKAS BURCHARDT**, trumpet, died about May 24, 2018. He was 93.

**JIMMY WILKINS**, (trombone) died 9/24. He was 97.

**RANDY WESTON** (piano) died on September 1, 2018. He was 92.

**ARETHA FRANKLIN** (singer) died on August 16, 2018. She was 76.

**TOMASZ STANKO** (trumpet) died on July 29, 2018. He was 76

**RICHARD RING** (guitar) died on July 6, 2018. He was 80.





