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Volume 46 Number 4 Oct Nov Dec 2020

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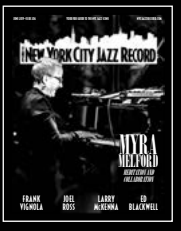

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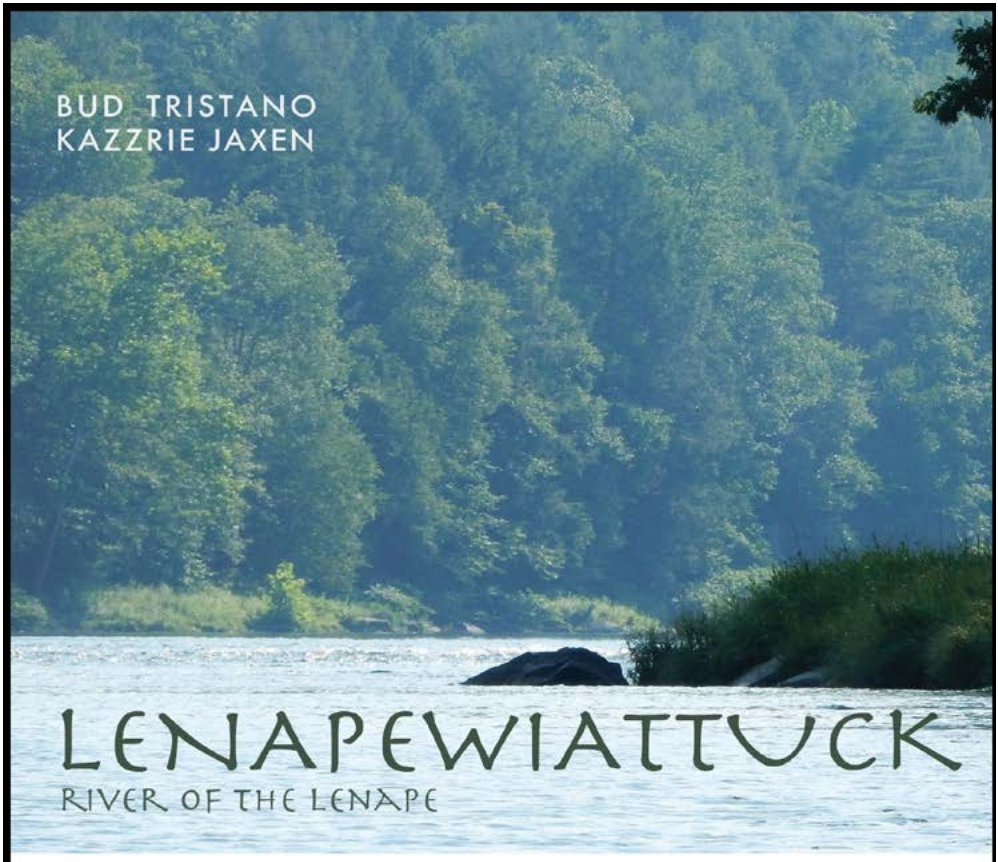

A suite of 11 genre-defying guitar/piano improvisations by Bud Tristano and Kazzrie Jaxen celebrating the passion & mystery of the Delaware River, originally called "Lenapewiattuck" by the indigenous Lenape. All of the music on this CD is spontaneously improvised and is, for both players, an expression of love for the wild passionate beauty of nature.

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"Frankly, after reading the notes I was afraid to listen to the CD. I feared that two such powerful spirits as Bud and Kazzrie, in their endeavor to unite their musical talents, might end up running each other off the road. But when I heard those wind chimes at the Fourth Crow, I knew they had arrived together. E. duobus unum. A rarity."
- Marv Friedenn

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

www.carlamarciano.com

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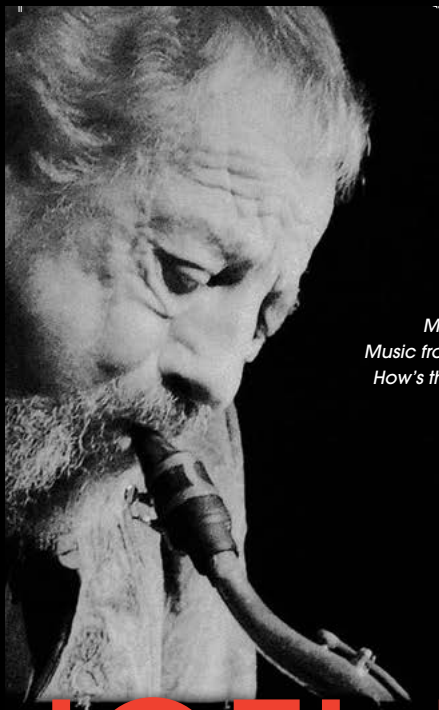

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— Katie Bull, *The New York City Jazz Record*, December 10, 2013

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Clockwise from left: *Live at Small's; JP Soprano Sax/Michael Kanan Piano; JP Quartet; Return to the Apple; First Set at Small's.*

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Dale Fielder Quartet
"Consensus"

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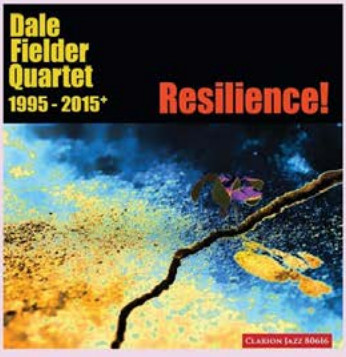

Dale Fielder Quartet
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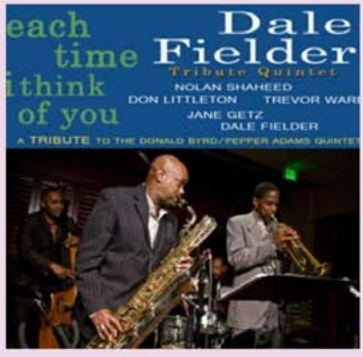
"Resilience!"



Dale Fielder Tribute Quintet plays
Donald Byrd/Pepper Adams
"Each Time I Think of You"

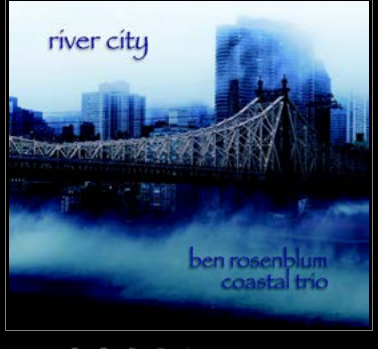
They're not necessarily easy to find. But these small-label albums can be every bit as rewarding as the well-publicized releases from Verve, Blue Note, or the other major labels. The common threads include deeply reflective improvisational styles, strong rhythmic bases, use of ethnic instrumentation and musical forms, a willingness to merge a variety of jazz genres, and a reverence for classical traditions from America, Europe, Africa, and the East. But most of all, these discs share an artistic aspiration that is uncompromised by commercial interests. These are musicians looking to establish their own voices and vision, without the help of big record company contracts.

--Bill Kolhasse/L.A. TIMES

Ben Rosenblum

Cadence top 10 critic's poll, 2019

River City



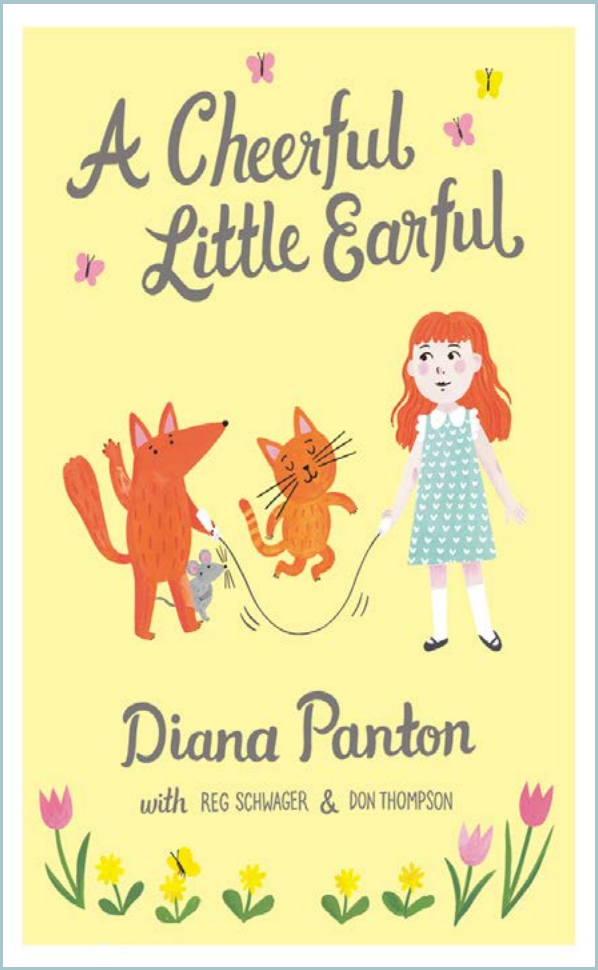
www.benrosenblummusic.com

"There do emerge conservatoire aces with grit in their imaginations and a facility to express such in their playing. Ben Rosenblum is one such performer/composer"
— All About Jazz

"Caresses [the music] with the reverence it merits"
— Downbeat Magazine

"Got the hands of a diamond cutter here." ***— Jazz Weekly***

NEW release by double JUNO winner Diana Panton!

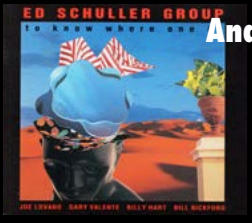


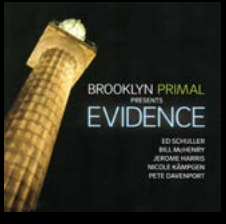
*A sequel to her chart-topping album I Believe in Little Things (****DownBeat). A Cheerful Little Earful is sure to make kids and jazz aficionados alike grin from ear to ear!*

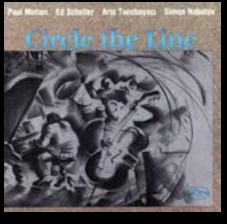
www.dianapanton.com
album available at Amazon.com

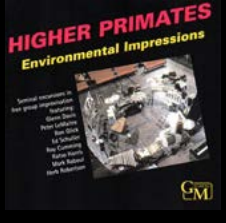
Ed Schuller
(bassist, composer)
on GM Recordings

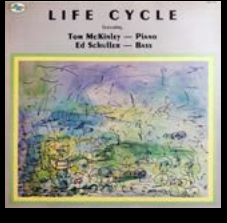
My name is Eddy
I play the bass
A kind of music
For the human race
And with beauty and grace
Let's stay on the case
As we look ahead
To an uncertain space
Peace, Music
Love and Life"











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WARREN BENBOW IS A WORLD CLASS DRUMMER, SONGWRITER, MUSIC PRODUCER, EDUCATOR AND AUTHOR IN NEW YORK CITY.

Warren Benbow is a New York-based drummer who has worked and/or recorded with Whitney Houston, Nina Simone, LL Cool J, Betty Carter, Phyllis Hyman, Larry Willis with Eddie Gomez on the CD "Inner Crisis", Olu Dara, Ted Daniel, Linda and Sonny Sharrock, Jimmy Owens with Chris White and Kenny Barron, Doug and Jean Carn, Rene McLean, Rickie Byars Beckwith, Michael Urbaniak, Billy "Spaceman" Patterson, Junko O'Hashi, Teruo Nakamura and Super Friends, and was an original member of James "Blood" Ulmer's "Odyssey" band. In addition to his jazz work, he has also worked as an actor and musician in Broadway musical productions, and in film. He has performed on television, in the studio, and in clubs or concert halls around the world with artists Mary J. Blige, Gwen Guthrie, Nancy Wilson, Mavis Stalpes, Brian McKnight, SWV, and many others. In addition to his work as a musician, he has also worked as an actor and musician in Broadway musical productions, and in film with Ernest Dickerson, Spike Lee, Bill Duke, Coleridge-Taylor Perkinson, Gilbert Moses, Chapman Roberts, and Melvin Van Peebles.

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with Rick Olson℗ Adam Lane(b)

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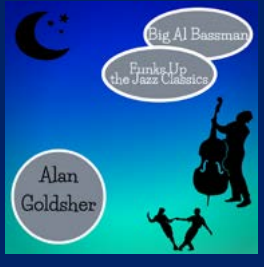

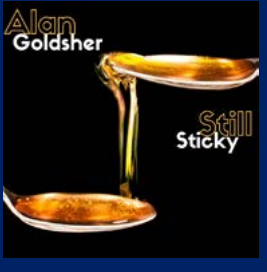

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Darrell Katz

musician composer
bandleader educator
http://www.darrellkatz.com

"Katz's compositions are a melting pot of diverse styles and cross-references; avant-garde classical machinations rub shoulders with of funky fusion, swinging Stan Kenton-esque "big band" moves, Globe Unity Orchestra- styled freakouts, and the sweetly unadorned vocal stylings of passages Rebecca Shrimpton…"
All About Jazz-Dave Wayne

"…Darrell Katz has made a name as an imaginative and innovative composer, and this collection can only increase his reputation, such is his ability to create so many atmospheres and textures over the space of one record."
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"Katz has carried on the compositional tradition of Julius Hemphill (1938-1995) in that his music is always a fusion of blues, avant-garde, poetry, improvisation, disparate elements thrown together that reveal their connections after multiple listenings…"
Step Tempest-Richard B. Kamins

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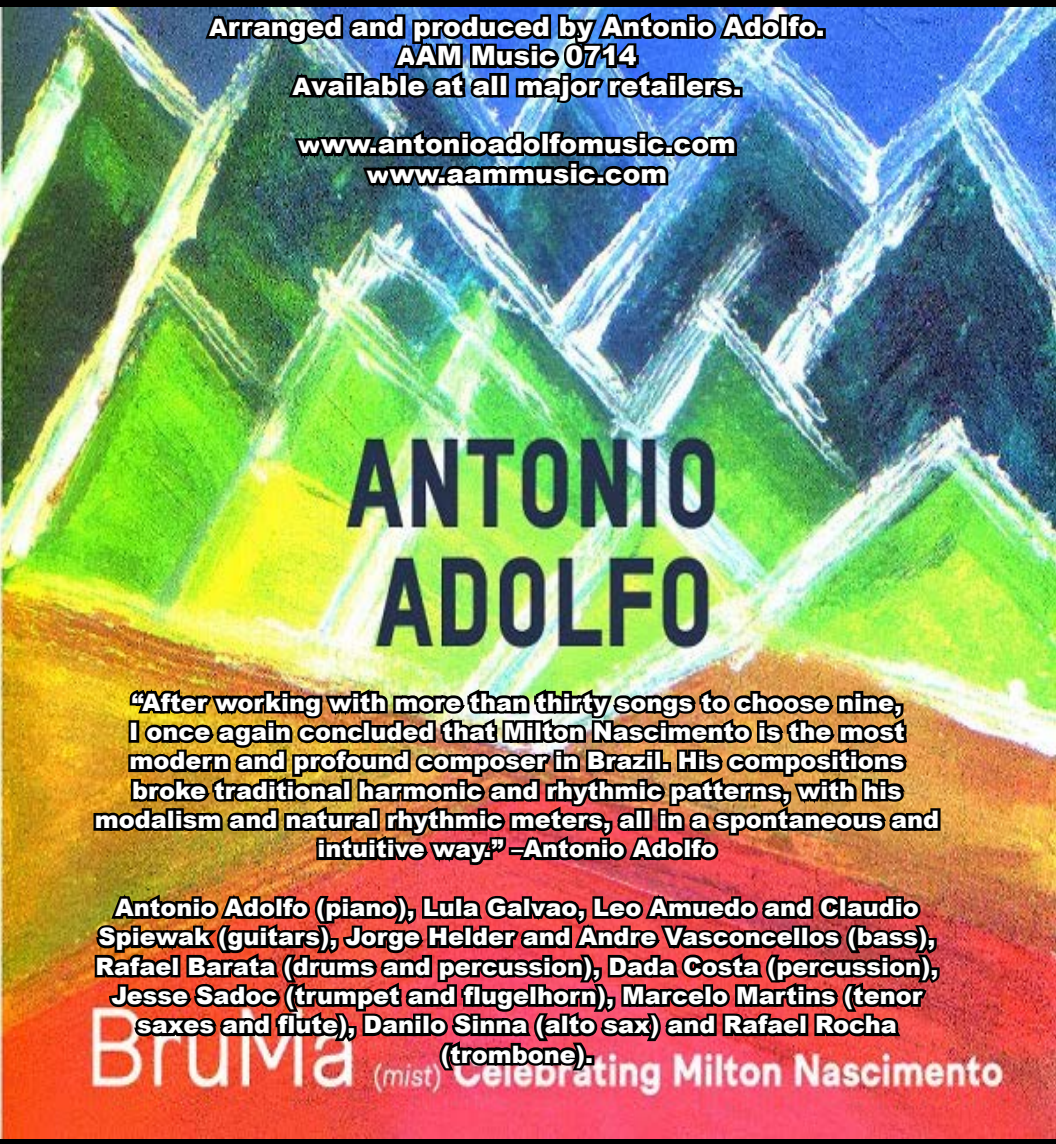

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"After working with more than thirty songs to choose nine, I once again concluded that Milton Nascimento is the most modern and profound composer in Brazil. His compositions broke traditional harmonic and rhythmic patterns, with his modalism and natural rhythmic meters, all in a spontaneous and intuitive way." –Antonio Adolfo

Antonio Adolfo (piano), Lula Galvao, Leo Amuedo and Claudio Spiewak (guitars), Jorge Helder and Andre Vasconcellos (bass), Rafael Barata (drums and percussion), Dada Costa (percussion), Jesse Sadoc (trumpet and flugelhorn), Marcelo Martins (tenor saxes and flute), Danilo Sinna (alto sax) and Rafael Rocha (trombone).

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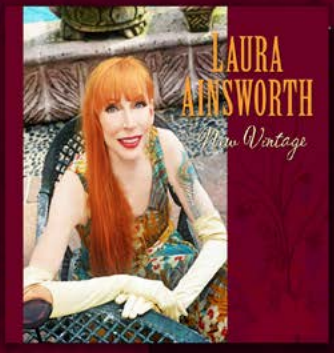

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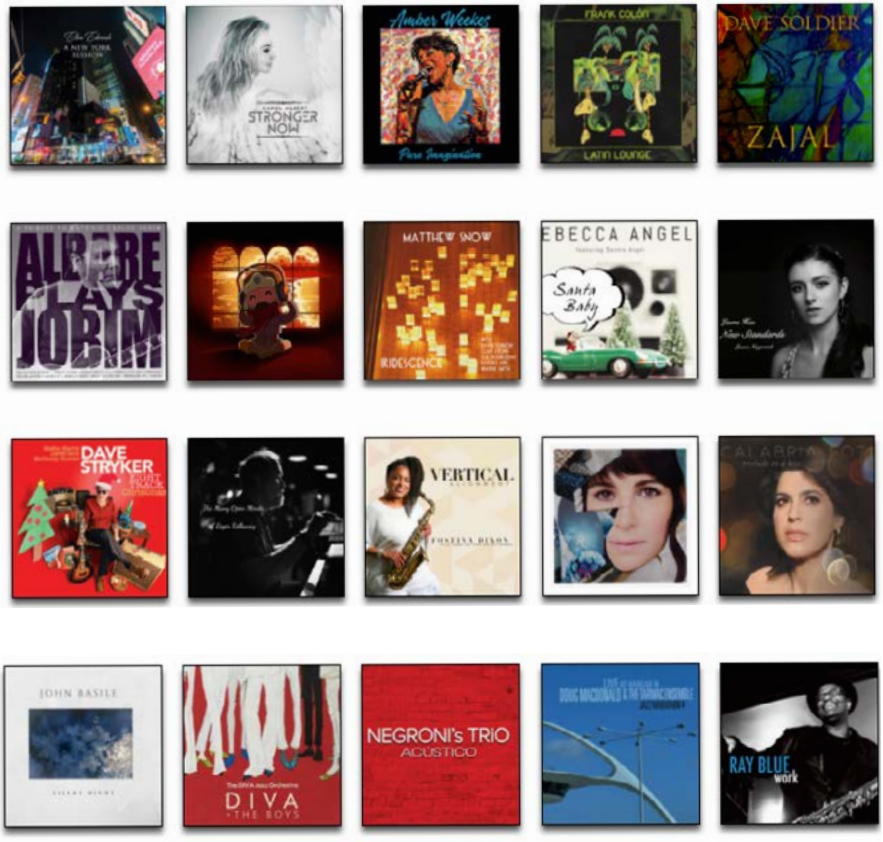

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William Hooker Interviews Nora McCarthy
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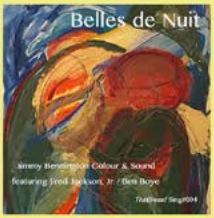

*Belles de Nuit

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  feat. Fred Jackson Jr. (AACM) and Ben Boye

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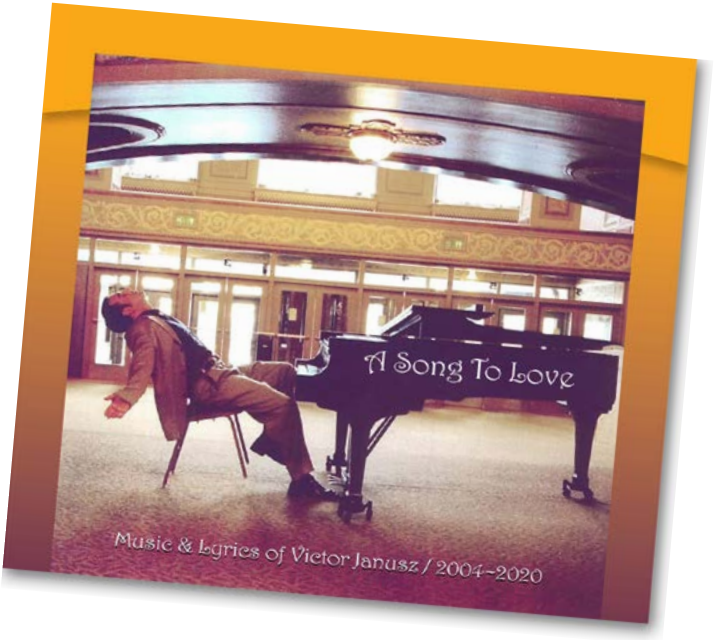
Seattle singer/songwriter releases an anthology of his most beloved songs from the last two decades with

A Song To Love

Music & Lyrics of Victor Janusz / 2004~2020



With a number of brand new tracks including a duet with blues great Duffy Bishop, *"Fruitcake Blues."*

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Photo by Jimmy Malecki

"VJ knows how to sell a song and the obvious joy he has in performing is appealing." *– Scott Yanow, LA Jazz Scene (2019)*

"Janusz sounds like a cross between Billy Joel and Vince Guaraldi." *– Tom Scanlon, Seattle Times*

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133 Roswell Rudd Trio
134 Ivo Perelman Trio & Rory Stuart
135 Brandon Evans 4tet
136 John Gunther Trio
137 Dominic Duval & Jay Rosen
138 Frank Lowe Trio
139 Chris Kelsey Trio
140 Zusaan Kefateau/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 Heward Group
149 Steve Swell 4tet
150 Kahil El'Zabar's Ritual Trio
151 David Bindman Trio
152 Ahmed Abdullah's Diaspora
153 Elliott 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 Eyges
159 Frode Gjerstad 4tet
160 Thomas Borgmann Trio plus Peter Brötzmann
161 Rob Brown - Lou Grassi 4tet
162 Joseph Scianni duets
163 John Gunther's Axis Mundi
164 Chris DahIgren/Briggan Krauss/Jay Rosen
165 Andrew Cheshire Trio
166 Ehran Elisha Ensemble
167 Ethnic Heritage Ensemble
168 David White 5tet
169 Bob Magnuson & Lou Grassi
170 Pucci Amanda Jhones
171 Marshall Allen4tet feat. Mark Whitecage
172 Charlie Kohlhase 5tet
173 Kowald, Smoker, McPhee, Whitecage, etc.
174 Kalaparush Maurice McIntyre Trio
175 Yuko Fujiyama's String Ensemble
176 John Gunther 5tet
177 Hugh Ragin & 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 Koen - Ed Ware
186 Paul Smoker 4tet
187 Patrick Brennan with Lisle Ellis
188 Th.Borgmann/W.Morris/R.Nicholson
189 John Carlson/Eric Hipp/S.McGloin/S.Neumann
190 Ori Kaplan Trio Plus Geoff Mann, Tom Abbs
191 Odean Pope & Dave Burrell
192 Ahmed Abdullah/A.Harding/M.Kamaguchi/Weinstein: NAM
193 Mark Whitecage's Other Other 4tet
194 Bruce Eisenbeil Crosscurrent Trio
195 Sam Bardfeld's Cabal Fatale
196 Dom Minasi Trio
197 Blaise Siwula 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
207 Marshall Allen w/ Lou Grassi's PoBand
208 Bhob Rainey - Jack Wright - Fred Lonberg-Holm - Bob Marsh
209 Joe McPhee - Joe Giardullo - Michael Bisio - Dominic Duval
210 Ehran Elisha Ensemble
211 Jay Rosen 4tet
212 Konrad Bauer & Nils Wogram
213 Donald Robinson Trio
214 Luther Thomas 5tet
215 Dominic Duval
216 Briggan Krauss - Chris DahIgren - Jay Rosen
217 Ken Simon 4tet
218 Phil Haynes - Herb Robertson 5tet
219 Paul Smoker - Bob Magnuson - Ken Filiano - Lou Grassi
220 Kahil El'Zaber with David Murray One World Family
221 Konrad Bauer/Nils Wogram/Dominic Duval
222 Phil Haynes & Herb Robertson
223 Ori Kaplan's Trio PlusDeliriology
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226 Paul Smoker - Bob Magnuson - Ken Filiano - Lou Grassi
227 Lou Grassi's PoBand
228 Wilber Morris & Reggie Nicholson
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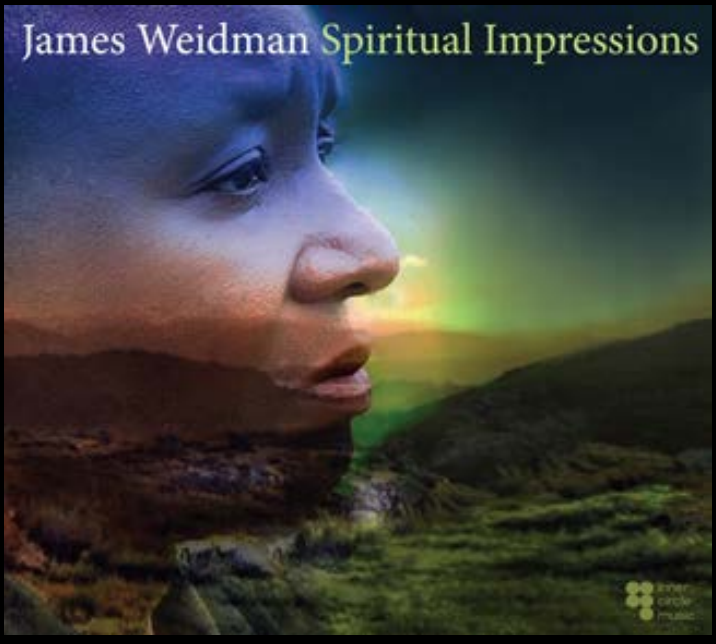
230 Dave Burrell & Tyrone Brown
231 Masashi Harada Trio
232 John Gunther 5tet
233 Paul Smoker Trio
234 John Oswald - David Prentice - Dominic Duval
235 Anthony Braxton w/Alex Horwitz
236 Anthony Braxton
237 Avram Fefer 4tet
238 Kevin Norton - Bob Celusak - Andy Eulau
239 Odean Pope - Byard Lancaster - Ed Crockett - J.R. Mitchell
240 Bobby Zankel Trio
241 Bruce Eisenbeil 4tet
242 William Gagliardi 4tet
243 Anthony Braxton 5tet
244 Rosi Hertlein Ensemble
245 Steve Lehman 5tet
246 Alex Harding Trio
247 Kalaparush Maurice McIntyre Trio
248 Ned Rothenberg & Denman Maroney
249 Fred Hess 4tet
250 Charles Eubanks solo piano
251 Burton Greene with Mark Dresser
252 T.J. Graham with Rory Stuart
253 Jay Rosen Trio
254 Tom DeSteno - Bob Magnuson 4tet
255 Steve Lehman 5tet
256 Mary LaRose - Jeff Lederer - Steve Swell - D.Duval
257 Joe McPhee's Bluette
258 Joseph Rosenberg 4tet
259 Jean-Luc Guionnet & Edward Perraud
260 John Heward - Tristan Honsinger - Jean Derome
261 Dominic Duval String & Brass Ens.
262 Lou Grassi's PoBand
263 Adam Lane 4tet
264 Daniel Carter - Steve Swell - Tom Abbs - David Brandt
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
277 Lucian Ban & Alex Harding 5tet
278 John Tchicai - Pierre Dorge - Lou Grassi
279 Dylan Taylor & Kelly Meashey
280 Kevin Norton 4tet
281 Adam Lane/ John Tchicai
282 Andrew Lamb Trio
283 Joe McPhee-Dominic Duval-Jay Rosen: Trio-X
284 Joe Fonda-Barry Altschul-Billy Bang
285 Steve Swell's New York BrassWoodTrio
286 Avram Fefer 4tet
287 Luther Thomas 4tet
288 Tom Abbs 4tet
289 Paul Dunmall - Paul Rogers - Kevin Norton
290 Charles Eubanks
291 William Gagliardi 5tet
292 Steve Swell 8tet
293 Ernie Krivda 5tet
294 Odean Pope & Khan Jamal 4tet
295 Mark Dresser & Ray Anderson
296 Paul Dunmall-Paul Rogers-Kevin Norton
297 William Gagliardi 5tet
298 Jazz Composers Alliance Orchestra

299 Devorah Day & Dominic Duval
300 Harris Eisenstadt 5tet
301 Jimmy Halperin - Dominic Duval - Jay Rosen
302 Ernie Krivda 5tet
303 Odean Pope 4tet
304 John O'Gallagher w/Masa Kamaguchi-Jay Rosen
305 Patrick Brennan 4tet
306 Kalaparush M. McIntyre & The Light
307 David Taylor Trio
308 James Finn Trio
309 Chris Kelsey 4tet
310 Scott Rosenberg's Red
311 John O'Gallagher w/Masa Kamaguchi-Jay Rosen
312 Marco Eneidi - Lisle Ellis - Peter Valsamis
313 Lou Grassi 4tet
314 Mary Anne Driscoll - Paul Murphy
315 Gebhard Ullmann - Steve Swell 4tet
316 Burton Greene & Roy Campbell 4tet
317 Marc Pompe 4tet
318 Ken Wessel - Ken Filiano - Lou Grassi
319 John Gunther Trio
320 Trio-X: Joe McPhee - Dominic Duval - Jay Rosen
321 Dave Taylor-Steve Swell 5tet
322 Khan Jamal 5tet
323 Mike Bisio 4tet
324 Avram Fefer - Mike Bisio
325 Adam Lane Trio
326 Stephen Gauci Trio
327 Jay Rosen
328 Trio-X: JoeMcPhee/ DominicDuval/ JayRosen
329 Chris Kelsey Trio
330 Prince Lasha & Odean Pope Trio
331 Byard Lancaster 4tet
332 William Gagliardi 5tet
333 Bobby Few & Avram Fefer
334 Ernie Krivda 5tet
335 Adam Lane Trio
336 Carl Grubbs Quartet
337 Lucian Ban-Alex Harding
338 David Haney Trio
339 Burton Greene Quintet
340 Byard Lancaster 4tet
341 Sophie Duner 4tet
342 William Gagliardi 5tet
343 Joe Fonda's Bottoms Out
344 Lou Grassi's PoBand
345 Burton Greene Trio
346 Mat Marucci - Doug Webb Trio
347 Dominic Duval's String 4tet
348 Jimmy Halperin & Dominic Duval
349 Michael Bisio & Tomas Ulrich
350 Seth Meicht 4tet
351 Stephen Gauci 4tet
352 Steve Swell - David Taylor 4tet
353 Odean Pope 4tet
354 David Haney Trio
355 Burton Greene solo piano
356 Mat Marucci - Doug Webb Trio
357 David Haney & Julian Priester
358 Chris Kelsey 4tet
359 Stephen Gauci Trio
360 Michael Bisio
361 Stephen Gauci 4tet
362 Kalaparush McIntyre 4tet
363 David Schnitter - Dominic Duval - Newman T.Baker
364 Khan Jamal & Dylan Taylor
365 Bobby Zankel Trio
366 Ernie Krivda Trio
367 David Haney & Andrew Cyrille
368 Chris Kelsey 4tet
369 David Haney-Andrew Cyrille-Dominic Duval
370 Bill Gagliardi-KenFiliano-LouGrassi: ESATrio
371 David Haney Trio
372 Michael Bisio 4tet
373 Ernie Krivda
374 David Arner Trio
375 Tomas Ulrich's Cargo Cult
376 Bill Gagliardi-KenFiliano-LouGrassi: ESATrio
377 David Arner Trio
378 Odean Pope 4tet
379 Jimmy Bennington Trio
380 Tomas Ulrich's Cargo Cult
381 Tom Siciliano Trio
382 Brian Landrus Group
383 Andrew Lamb Trio
384 Nate Wooley + Taylor Ho Bynum 4tet
385 Tomas Ulrich's Cargo Cult
386 David Haney 4tet Avenue of the Americas
387 Diane Moser + Mark Dresser duo
388 Frode Gjerstad + Paal Nilssen-Love
389 Andrew Lamb Trio
390 Jimmy Halperin + Dominic Duval
391 Jon Hazilla + Ran Blake
392 Adam Lane 4tet
393 Bob Rodriguez Trio w/Dominic Duval + Jay Rosen
394 Odean Pope Trio w/Marshall Allen
395 Kalaparush McIntyre 4tet



TOP 10 RECORDINGS FOR 2018
CADENCE MAGAZINE

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Lakecia Benjamin photo by Elizabeth Leitzell

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DISK 1: Ernie Krivda Quartet **DISK 2:** Avram Fefer Quintet **DISK 3:** Steve Swell Sextet
DISK 4: Ken Filiano Quinet **DISK 5:** Bill Gagliardi Sextet / Adam Lane's Villach Orchestra

CIMPoL 5037:

Trio-X - Live at Kerrytown

Joe McPhee (trumpet) - Dominic Duval (bass) - Jay Rosen (drums)

CIMPoL 5038:

Trio-X - Live at the Sugar Maple

Joe McPhee (trumpet) - Dominic Duval (bass) - Jay Rosen (drums)

CIMPoL 5039:

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

Joe McPhee (trumpet) - Dominic Duval (bass) - Jay Rosen (drums)

CIMPoL 5040:

Trio-X - Live in Green Bay and Buffalo

Joe McPhee (trumpet) - Dominic Duval (bass) - Jay Rosen (drums)

Earlier CIMPoL releases:

5001	Trio-X: Joe McPhee - Dominic Duval - Jay Rosen	AIR: Above and Beyond
5002	Odean Pope	Serenity
5003	Joe McPhee & Dominic Duval	The Open Door
5004	David Bond Quintet	The Early Show (live at Twin's Jazz)
5005	Salim Washington	Live at St. Nick's
5006-5012	Trio-X: Joe McPhee - Dominic Duval - Jay Rosen	Live on Tour 2006
5013	Gebhard Ullmann + Steve Swell 4tet	Live in Montreal
5014	Ernie Krivda	Live Live at the Dirty Dog
5015-5019	Trio-X: Joe McPhee - Dominic Duval - Jay Rosen	Trio-X - Live on Tour 2008
5020-5024	CIMPFest 2009: Live in Villach, Austria	Live in Villach, Austria
5025	Seth Meicht and the Big Sound Ensemble	Live in Philadelphia
5026	Eric Plaks Quintet	Live at Bronx Community College
5027-5030	Trio-X: Joe McPhee - Dominic Duval - Jay Rosen	Trio-X - Live on Tour 2010
5041	Mat Marruci Trio	Live at Jazz Central
5042	Teresa Carroll Quintet	Live at Dazzle

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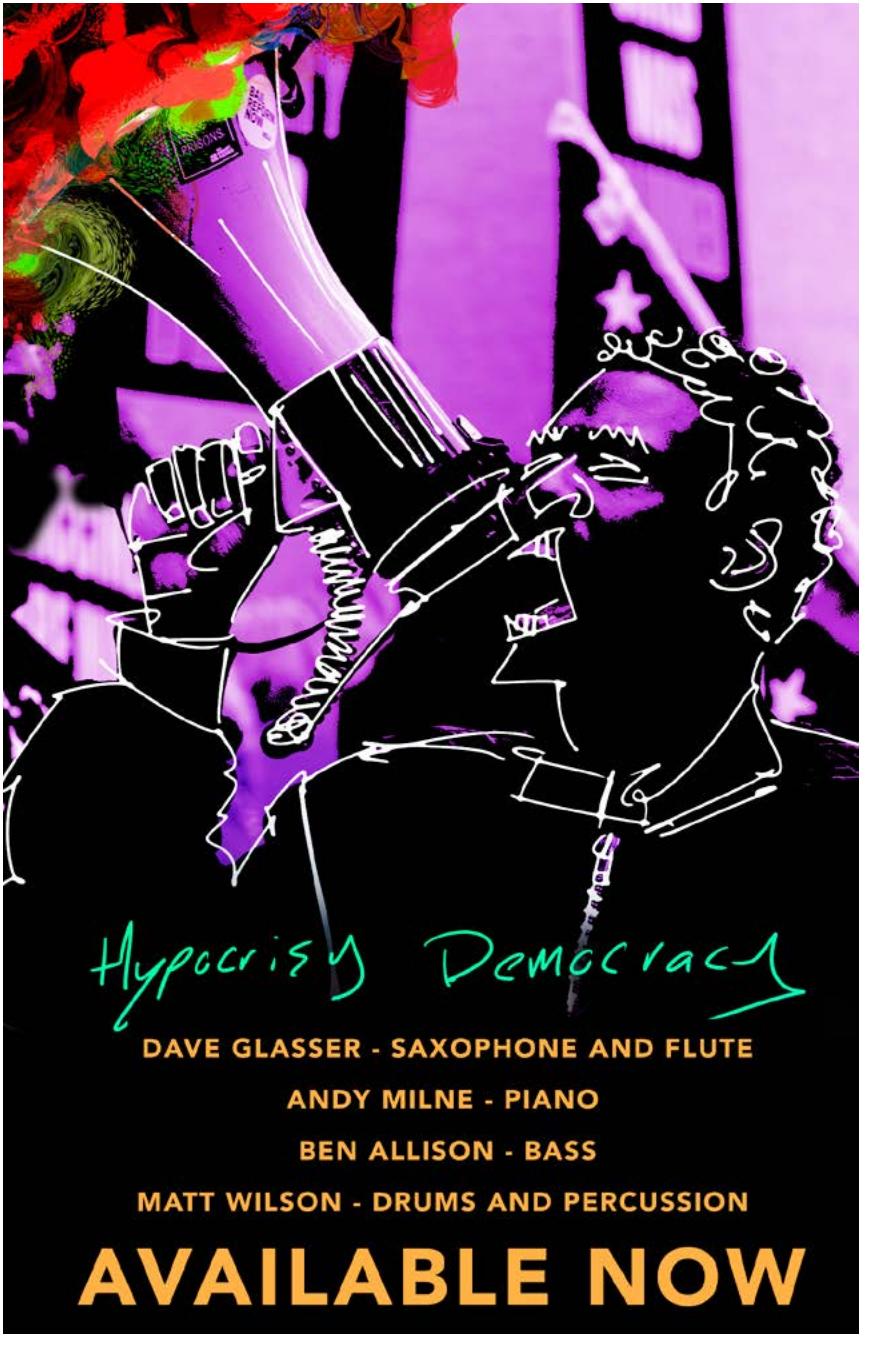
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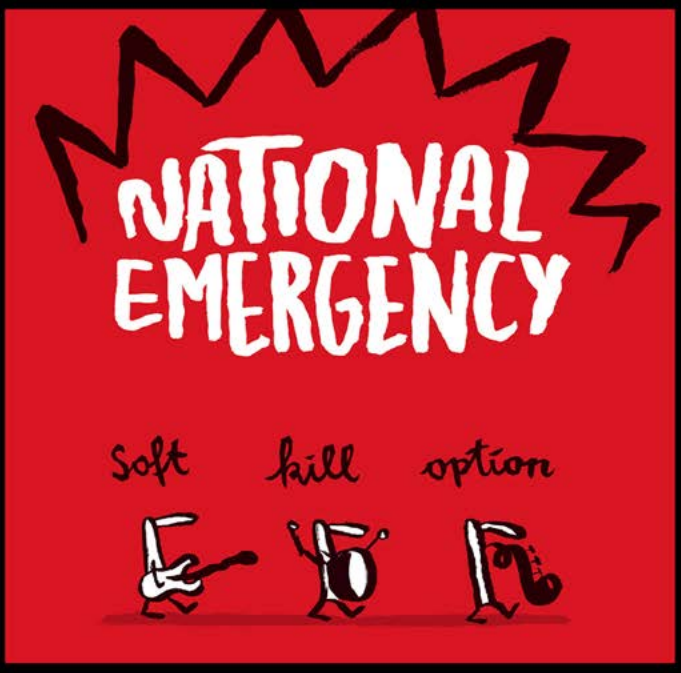

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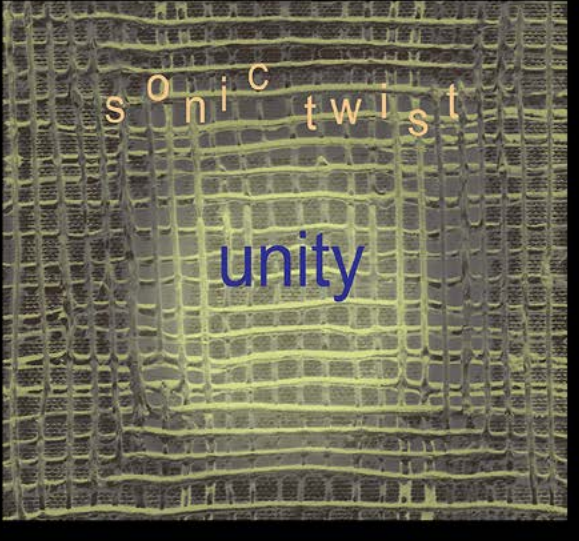

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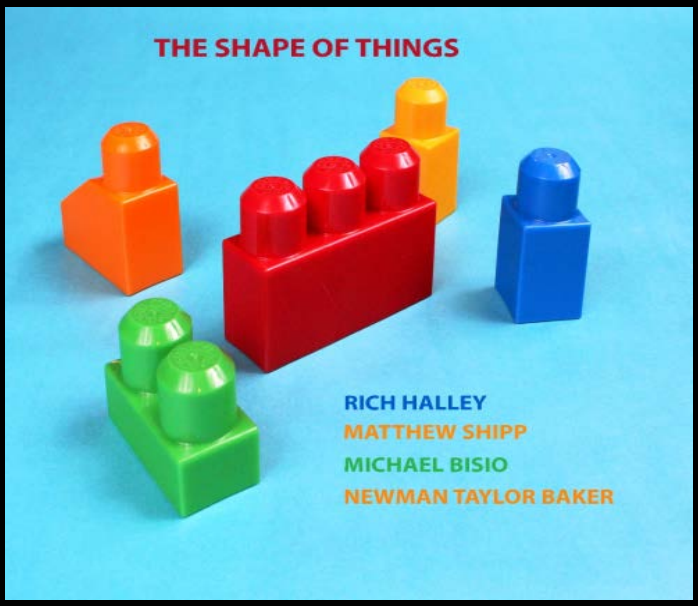
Saxophonist Rich Halley releases The Shape of Things

New Release, available November 4, 2020 on Pine Eagle Records, features pianist Matthew Shipp, bassist Michael Bisio and drummer Newman Taylor Baker



The Shape of Things is the new recording by Rich Halley, featuring a quartet with innovative pianist Matthew Shipp, standout bassist Michael Bisio and sterling drummer Newman Taylor Baker. Halley's second recording with Shipp, Bisio and Baker sees the group building on their intuitive chemistry in a series of incisive and powerful improvisations, recorded in Brooklyn in August 2019.

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ABBREVIATIONS USED IN CADENCE

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

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FRONT COVER
UPPER LEFT HAND, CLOCKWISE
JOËLLE LÉANDRE
JOSEPH BENZOLA
PUTTER SMITH
JOHN LAKE

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."

Contributors

JAMES BENNINGTON (Feature, Jazz Stories/ Interviews) *has collected oral histories and photographs of several artists, mainly published by Cadence Magazine and Modern Drummer Magazine. Bennington is also a drummer/ bandleader recording for SLAM (UK), Cadence Jazz Records/ CIMP/ CIMPoL (NY), Unseen Rain (NY), OA2 (Seattle), and his own ThatSwan! label (Chicago). Once mentored by Elvin Jones, Bennington celebrates nearly 30 years in the music field. He is a Dream Cymbals and Gongs Artist and is based in Chicago.*

LARRY HOLLIS (CD Reviews) *is a devout zen baptist, retired saxophonist & militant apathist. His work has appeared in mostly indie publications, liner annotation and Cadence for over three decades. Flanked by his books, records and videos, he lives an insular life in his hometown of Oklahoma City.*

ROBERT IANNAPOLLO (CD reviews) *has been writing for Cadence for over 25 years. He also writes for New York City Jazz Record and ARSC Journal. He works as the circulation manager at the Sibley Music Library at the Eastman School of Music and considers himself lucky to be around all that music.*

MARK KLAFTER *was born in NYC, the son of a Hungarian holocaust survivor. He was going to be a sports writer, but then became a hippie while getting an English degree at the University of North Carolina. He was radically saved by Jesus in 1973, and ten years later became a respiratory therapist. He believes jazz is God's music, and that King David and his kin were the first creative improvising musicians (see 2 Samuel 6:5).*

BERNIE KOENIG (CD Reviews, Short Takes) *is a professor of music and philosophy at Fanshawe College in London, Ontario, Canada. He had two books published includinig Art Matters (Academica Press 2009). He is a drummer/vibist currently performing in a free jazz group and in an experimental group with electronics and acoustic percussion.*

DON LERMAN *is a professional saxophonist and woodwind player, arranger, and writer who has written for Cadence for several years. A native and current resident of South Bend, Indiana, Don has also worked extensively in the Washington, DC area.*

ROBERT D. RUSCH (Papatamus, Obituaries) *got interested in jazz in the early 1950s and, beginning with W.C. Handy, has since interviewed hundreds of musicians. He has produced over 600 recording sessions of unpopular music and currently paints unpopular canvases.*

SHEILA THISTLETHWAITE (Short Takes) *is a journalist and music publicist based in Saskatchewan, Canada. Her articles on the arts have appeared in publications in Canada and the U.S. She has been a board member, and has worked as a publicist and as executive director for jazz festivals in Calgary, AB and Kelowna, BC.*

Contributors

KEN WEISS (Interviews, Photos, Short Takes) *has been documenting the Philadelphia jazz and experimental music scene with photography since 1992 and has written the Cadence Short Takes column since 2003 as an attempt to defeat the conventional adage that, once played, the music is "lost to the air." He has also completed numerous interviews for Cadence and Jazz Inside Magazine.*

TEE Watts, (Interviews) *Music journalist T. Watts has written features for Glide Magazine, Blues Blast Magazine and many others. He is a radio producer at KPFZ 88.1 fm in Lakeport, CA and currently co-writing the memoirs of Lester Chambers of the Chambers Brothers.*

JOSEF WOODARD (Festival Reviews) *is a longtime journalist-critic on jazz, other genres of music and other disciplines in the arts. Thought based in Santa Barbara, Calif., her often travels internationally to cover jazz festivals. He has written for DownBeat and the Los Angeles Times for many years, and a list of publications include Jazz Times, Jazziz, Cadence, All About Jazz, Entertainment Weekly, Opera Now, Artweek, and various newspapers. He has penned many album liner notes, and has two books published, to date, on Charles Lloyd (A Wild Blatant Truth, 2016) and Charlie Haden (Conversations with Charlie Haden, 2017), published by Silman-James Press, as well as the chapter "ECM and U.S. Jazz," for Horizons Touched: The Music of ECM (Granta) (2007).*

As a musician, he is a guitarist, songwriter and "situationist" in Headless Household (founded 1983) and other bands, and runs the label Household Ink Records, with 40 titles out to date.

Meanwhile, down in Tasmania

It's August once again and Hobart Jazz Club's indefatigable Kaye Payne, along with Christine Bailey and a host of volunteers managed, in spite of the restrictions caused by personal distancing, hand sanitising and all that Covid imposes to present a hugely successful Hot August Jazz , the annual free Festival held each year in Hobart's north supported by Hobart City Council and opened by Hobart Lord Mayor Anna Reynolds. To overcome the difficulties audience numbers were monitored and although some queueing was necessary this was happily maintained and serviced. Some groups performed outside and as if to assist, Hobart weather was unseasonally kind. All up fortysix groups appeared throughout the one day, Ally Farrow and friends with their own special style of swing/standards/Latin, the Big Small Band with Kelly Ottaway pno, and Alistair Dobson horns, D7 delighting with Eleanor Webster vcl and her Latin tunes from around the globe. Whatever your particular taste in jazz might be, it was easy to satisfy in the walk everywhere situation at North Hobart……Scott Tinkler well known Melbourne horn player now living on Tasmania's beautiful Bruny Island slotted in for monthly concerts with drummer Ted Vining, organiser of the recent highly successful Jazzamanca Festival held in Salamanca Place and rumoured to be organising the next festival for November 2021. ……The Townhouse in Tasmania's north September 17 has Sophie Leslie vcl and the Viktor Zappner Swingtet, Sept 27 Spike Mason Qtet at The Wharf Ulverstone, October 10 Only Monk with the Ted Vining Quartet, October 25 the D7 Band from Hobart, November 12 Katy Raucher vcl and Mark Schmalfuss gtr and November 29 Danny Healey horns, all presenting to restricted audiences but in spite of everything artists playing and peforming whenever and wherever possible.

Alwyn Lewis
Hobart

NO TEETH MU-NECK AND CHIEF BROKEN WING

TALES FROM THE ROAD WITH MODINE

BY ED SCHULLER

In the early 1980's I was fortunate enough to be a member of one of the great Jazz ensembles of that time led by the unique and iconic drummer/composer Paul Motian. The group was a quintet originally consisting of Joe Lovano on saxophone, Bill Frisell on guitar, myself on acoustic bass, Paul of course on drums and my main man, another genius, Billy Drewes playing saxophones.

We managed to do a couple of tours in Europe culminating in a beautiful recording for ECM called "Psalm". This recording, produced of course by Manfred Eicher and engineered by Martin Wieland in Lud wigsburg, Germany was actually among the first digital recordings ever made (the machine/processor itself was the size of a large refrigerator).

During this time I was also touring and recording with Paul Motian in other groups including a piano trio led by a guy living in Paris named Eric Watson as well as saxophonist/composer Tim Berne featuring people like Mack Goldsbury (saxophone), Herb Robertson (brass) and others.

It was on some of these other tours where Paul started talking to me about wanting to make change in the quintet. He felt that Billy Drewes was stylistically too close to Joe Lovano and was thinking of replacing him with someone who would act as more of a 'foil' to Lovano's modern and precise way of improvising. I have to admit that I didn't understand what Paul was talking about and thought maybe he was going crazy. After all, he was contemplating letting Billy Drewes go because he played "too good" and that, as it turned out, is what ended up happening, despite all attempts to persuade him otherwise.

Enter Native American saxophonist Jim Pepper who had recently moved to New York from Alaska, where he had been a commercial salmon fisherman. Even before he was recruited into the Motian Quintet, I had already met and played with him in his own groups (even recording one song with him on his landmark recording "Comin and Goin"). Pepper's main claim to fame was that he had found a way to fuse the songs and melodies of his Native culture (Creek and Kaw people) to the idioms of Jazz, World Music, Funk and Reggae. He also possessed one of the most soulful and powerful saxophone tones of anyone around (legend has it

that Jim and Mike Brecker used to practice together "back in the day") and if Paul Motian wanted someone who played completely different than Lovano, then that is what he got.

To characterize these divergent styles, one could start by saying that Pepper was definitely more of a "wild chapatulla" both musically and in his lifestyle choices. That is not to say that Joe was some sort of "wilting flower". Far from it, but Mr. Lovano's approach to music was certainly more refined and coming from an extensive knowledge of Jazz history, repertoire and technical skill.* They also each possessed beautiful but totally different tones on their respective horns, leaving no confusion as to who was playing what.

As we started hitting as a band, I began to understand what Motian's concept was about and a very unique ensemble dynamic and sound began to develop. In addition, the two saxophonists seemed to foster increasing respect for each other as it became apparent that they were both being influenced by the other in a variety of musical and extra-musical ways.

In terms of the style of music the Quintet played, I would call it structured freedom. Most of the repertoire consisted of original tunes composed by Paul (sometimes with Frisell's help) as well as some occasional Monk or Bill Evans stuff. Often we would play through the compositions playing over the changes and forms without setting up any obvious grooves, patterns or pulse. To know where you are in the form required intuition, sensitive ears and quick reflexes. We also played delicate ballads, "crazy Punk" Rock stuff and epic tone poems spurred on by Bill Frisell's haunting electronic guitar effects and Paul's one-of-a-kind approach to the drums.

In the following are three tales corresponding to the three recording dates the Paul Motion Quintet did for Soul Note in Milan, Italy: Story of Maryam (1983), Jack of Clubs (1984) and Misterioso (1986). These recordings were all produced by Giovanni Bonandrini in the same studio (Barigozzi Studio) with the same engineer (Giancarlo Barigozzi). However, each date has, what we now call a "Pepper story", associated with it. There are of course hundreds of pretty incredible "Pepper stories", because Jim Pepper was a colorful, charismatic, funny as hell crazy son of a bitch. His Native name was "Hunga chee edda" or "Flying Eagle" which sounds good but he told me many times how afraid of heights he was. He would say, "Man, I can't go up there. I'm a jumper". The one thing I would say about Jim Pepper is that he was a genius at screwing up and succeeding at the same time. How that worked, I cannot tell you but after Pepper passed, I found myself in situations where I would say to myself "I wonder what Pepper would do now". All I know for sure is that my man Pepper was a paradoxical dichotomy of contradictions and the living embodiment of the saying "the good, the bad and the ugly".

Part I The Story of Maryam aka "No Teeth"

In the summer of 1983 the Paul Motian Quintet was on tour in West Germany, France and Italy and on July 27th and 28th the band recorded the first of three records at Giancarlo Barigozzi's studio in Milan, Italy called The Story of Maryam.

Memory

Ed Schuller

I have to admit that my memory of this particular tour is a little fuzzy. After all it was approximately 36 years ago and things could get pretty wild in those days. For many of my peers and colleagues the phrase "sex, drugs and Jazz" would have been apropos to what was happening in varying degrees and one of the all-time masters of that "hang" was none other than Jim Pepper himself. Keeping up with Mr. "Flying Eagle" was a challenge to say the least and by default it became my unofficial role to at least try. Jim and I became fast buddies and along with Joe sometimes, we would partake of the wild side of what life on the road had to offer. Most of the time it was a lot of fun and as long as it didn't affect the music, everything was cool. However, I have to admit that sometimes, inevitably, things went a little too far so we eventually adopted a demerit system for keeping track of who was screwing up the most and Pep and I made that list on more than one occasion.

As it turns out, before the tour even started, Jim was having some pretty serious issues with his teeth, which for a saxophone player is definitely not a good thing. The way I understood it, his dentist had decided that the would need to get permanent dental implants so in the meantime he was given a removable temporary dental bridge so he would be able to make the tour.

If my memory serves me correctly, right before the recording dates, somehow Pepper managed to lose his temporary "clackers" in a hotel room or something and that was no laughing matter.* But, on a more serious note, it is a fact that one cannot play the saxophone properly with compromised or nonexistent teeth and here we were supposed to record a record. Paul was none too happy about the whole situation and I think he attempted to fire Pep right on the spot. It would not be the last time.

Meanwhile, the producer Giovanni Bonandrini heard about the situation and hooked Pepper up with an Italian dentist he knew in Milan and in the end, Jim Pepper was able to play on the recording, which—in spite of everything—came out great.

Here we have an example of my man Pep completely screwing up and somehow, against all odds, managing to successfully pull off what previously appeared to be, for all intents and purposes, a total fiasco. The way I see it, whenever Jim Pepper's "luck" would run out, that's when he would get "lucky" and this was only the beginning of some pretty wild adventures to come.

Part II Jack of Clubs aka "Mu-neck"

The next European tour/record date for the Paul Motian Quintet was in March 1984. It involved a lot of travel through many countries, including Germany, France, Spain, Austria, Hungary and Italy. Somewhere around the middle of the tour we played a concert in Munich at a club called Philharmonie (which of course is long gone). The gig itself was geat but it also turned out to be a catalyst for some pretty dramatic "plot points" which would unfold for all of us in the days and months ahead.

The club was packed and among the patrons were all the members of the famous band Oregon: Paul McCandless, Ralph Towner, Glen Moore and Collin Walcott. They happened to also be on tour but had that night off. During the

breaks and after the concert we all hung out and I got to meet the amazing World Music multi-instrumentalist Collin Walcott. Now that dude was righteous and we kind of hit it off almost immediately. Among other things we talked about getting together back in the States and working on some musical concepts together. For me, just getting to hang out with so many high-level musical cats was an honor and a privilege. There was a nice feeling of mutual respect between all of us that is all too rare in today's world.

Meanwhile, also at the club was another fine musician, a local saxophonist / composer named Gunther Klatt. At some point, Jim Pepper and him met and began talking and drinking wine. As it turns out, Gunther was actually a pretty good amateur saxophone repair man and Pep's horn needed some work so they decided to leave the club and go to his "workshop" to check out the horn and drink more wine.

As it turned out, our next concert was in Budapest and our itinerary called for us to fly out of Munich that following morning, thus it was decided that we should all meet in the lobby of the hotel at around 9:00 am and take taxis to the airport, but Pepper was a no-show and he wasn't answering his room phone, either. I volunteered to go up to the room and see what was going on and when I got there, I found the door half open and Pep passed out in the bed fully clothed. I somehow was able to wake him up and within five minutes he was downstairs piling into one of the taxis next to me. He was of course in pretty bad shape, totally hung-over and in a very surly mood. Sitting next to him I made the mistake of commenting on how bad his breath was and in response he pulled out a tube of toothpaste and squeezed it into his mouth and all over his beard and moustache. Nice! At that point, I decided not to comment any more about anything.

Later, after we'd all checked in at the airport, Pepper's mood improved and he told me how Gunter Klatt had done him a solid and really fixed his saxophone, and even opened the case to show me, which was kind of dumb since I wouldn't know if the horn was fixed or not, just by looking at it.

Anyway, the flight to Budapest was uneventful till we went through passport control. Right before the tour started, back in the States, I had done some laundry and had managed to mistakenly wash my passport. Amazingly enough, the damage was rather minor. You could still read all the information though the print was slightly blurred and up to that point, there had been no problem at any of the many borders we had been through. However, in 1984, Hungary was still behind the "Iron Curtain" and when the border official saw my passport I was flagged and detained. It was pretty scary stuff, but after about an hour and a half, they stamped my passport with a one-way visa allowing me to enter the country. I was then told that I would need to get a new passport at the US Embassy and after that I would have to go to a Hungarian government office to get an exit visa to leave. Luckily, we had a few days off before the gig, so I had time to make all that happen. It was all very "kafkaesk", especially at the Hungarian ministry building.

Meanwhile, I was back on the demerit list, having caused everyone to have to wait for me at the airport and my man Pepper wasn't gonna let me forget it. Luckily, the hotel was really nice, right on the Donau and we were all able to

relax, do some sightseeing and get some much needed rest.
The concert venue turned out to be a rather large sports arena and we were to share the bill with a kind of fusion band from Finland. Anyway, while we were setting up for the sound check, I went to the bathroom and when I came out, Joe runs up to me and says "Eddie, you're not 'stink number one' anymore" (meaning the top of the demerit list). He then explained that Jim Pepper appears to have lost the neck and mouthpiece to his "Balanced Action" Selmer tenor, which was pretty much a disaster due to the fact that to replace these items would not be easy, expecially the neck, which is unique to that particular kind of horn.
Paul Motian was understandably pissed off and was already talking about firing Pepper (again). But, that's just where the guy's incredible luck kicked in. As ist turned out, Joe just happened to have an extra neck, which would work with Jim's horn (both their saxophones were similar models). How this was even possible was really kind of like winning the lottery. What had happened was a little over a week before, we'd done a concert at the "New Morning" club in Paris and a saxophone-playing friend of Joe's had given him that extra neck saying that he didn't need it anymore.
Meanwhile, back in Budapest, now Joe had a neck that he could lend to Pep to use for the rest of the tour. But, he still needed a mouthpiece and once again, he lucked out because the tenor player from the Finnish band used the same type of Otto Link mouthpiece that Jim used and agreed to lend it to him for our set. And thus Jim Pepper was miraculously once again able to beat the odds, playing the gig and not get fired.
We left Budapest the next day, flying to Munich and then taking a train to Milan where we were to record Jack of Clubs for Bonandrini's Soul Note label. Somehow Pepper was able to procure a mouthpiece in Milan and on March 26th, 27th and 28th, the Paul Motian Quintet recorded another beautiful album. The session itself went pretty smoothly with a minimum of drama, so in this case, I'll let the music speak for itself.
On that first day at the studio we were visited by another crazy character, clarinettist Tony Scott. He'd been on the scene since the days of Charlie Parker and Bebop and had known Paul for decades. I guess you could say Tony was kind of an iconic Jazz star in his own right and would show up almost randomly to various festivals and gigs both in Europe and in the States. At that time, he was staying with an Italian family in Milan, which was kind of his nomadic modus operandus in those days.
As it turns out, after the record date we had a couple of days off till our next gigs, which were in Vienna. In light of that, Tony asked Joe, Bill Frisell and I, if we would be interested in doing some paid recording sessions with him for the next couple of days. We all of course agreed, play some music, make a little extra money, why not. But this was to be a unique experience for all of us. First of all, the whole project consisted of one song, Billy Strayhorn's Lush Life. Tony Scott was obsessed with this tune and wanted to make an entire album featuring different versions of Lush Life. It all sounded pretty crazy to us, but what the hell, if that's what he wanted, that's what we'll do. Meanwhile, he had also invited the entire band to have dinner with him at the home of that

family where he was staying. In the end Paul opted out but the rest of us, Joe, Bill, Pep and myself went for the free food and drink. It was quite a feast and a good time was had by all. Along with the family, Tony had also invited a rather attractive blonde Italian woman in her 40s named Lilly, whom he introduced as his girlfriend. She had a very distinctive low husky voice that was strangely seductive and when she spoke English, it was in a very thick halting Italian accent.

Anyway, we all feasted, drank and partied for hours and finally found our way back to our hotel for some much needed rest. Unfortunately, for some of us there had been some kind of overbooking problem at the hotel, meaning that I had to share a room with Pepper. Now Jim and I are good friends but to try and sleep in the same room with him is like being punished for a crime you didn't commit. The main probem was that when he snored, it reminded one of what a grizzly bear in hibernation must sound like. Trying to sleep through that was just not gonna work, no matter how tired I was and just as my despair and desperation reached critical mass, the phone in our hotel room rang. Now, at this point it's around 3 am and I'm wondering what the hell is going on now. So I answer "hello" and a very deep and husky voice says "I want to a-speak-a to the-a indiano" and I go "Ok, no problemo". I then handed the phone to Pepper and said "Yo, it's for you". It turned out to be Tony Scott's girlfriend Lilly from the dinner and she wanted Pepper to come to her house pronto. This of course was music to my ears, thus finding myself thinking things like "Wow, there really is a God and he just answered my prayers." Oops, not so fast. Pepper had to get Lilly's address and with her broken English and him trying to write it down, this turned out to be an arduous and slow-moving ordeal. Finally he had it and the plan was to call a taxi in the lobby and leave. Again, not so fast! Somehow, my man manages to lose the address in the hotel room and for the next 45 minutes, we both looked desperately everywhere for this little, very important piece of paper. Finally he finds it in some pocket and I'm like "Man, can you get the fuck outa here before something else happens". And then he was gone. I didn't see him again until we got on the train to Vienna three days later. Needless to say, when Tony Scott found out about the whole thing, he was not happy, but here I am getting ahead of myself.

The next three days Joe, Bill and I recorded with Tony at another studio somehere in Milan. Every day before the session, we would have a lavish lunch at his benefactor's family home. Nothing like amazing food and booze before recording.

As advertised, everything we recorded was some kind of interpretation of Lush Life. Tony had some pretty wild concepts. For example, on one version he had Frisell playing totally out and dissonant chords (not the original harmonies), while Tony recited the words of the song like a mad "Beat Poet", i.e. "I used to visit all the very gay places, those come what may places, where one relaxes at the axis of the wheel of life to get the feel of life from Jazz and cocktails", and so on. Another version was like a Ray Charles style Blues with Tony playing piano and singing. We also did one where I played the melody arco, having learned the melody from the late great pianist Jaki Byard, with Bill's beautiful accompaniment. Joe ended up playing more drums than saxophone, and as

bizarre as it all was, I found it to be quite interesting and creative. Anyway, that was the way it went for two days, but on the third day, the Motian Quintet was scheduled to leave around 8 pm on an overnight express to Vienna, and so we determined that we could record in the afternoon and still make the train.

As usual, we had lunch with the family (I remember lobster tails) and then on to the studio to record one more version of Lush Life. As soon as we got there, Tony Scott had Joe go into the drum booth and play fast swinging time which would be recorded until Tony determined that they had enough. So, there you have Joe playing fast swing all by himself, not really understanding the point to all of it and, as I remember, this went on for at least half an hour or so. Poor Joe was in that freaking drum booth sweatin', huffin' and puffin' and not knowin' why.

Anyway, when that was over, he told Bill and I that he wanted us to play every chord of Lush Life (verse and chorus) at a very slow rubato tempo that he would conduct. I haven't counted how many chords there are in Lush Life but it's a lot. To make it even more intense, we had that train to catch and time was running out.

So we began, with Tony Scott conducting us, looking and acting like a total crazed maniac. Each chord had a duration of five or six seconds, so getting through the whole tune was going to take a while and to make matters worse, there was a big clock right on the wall near where we were playing just to remind us how little time we had left to make the train, not to mention the fact that we still had to get to the hotel at 6:00 to pick up our bags. It was nerve-racking to say the least, but in the end everything worked out. Tony explained that he was going to superimpose the slow moving chords over the fast moving drums and overdub a clarinet solo over the whole thing, which sounded really interesting to me. Unfortunately, when the record finally came out (1989), this version wasn't on it for some reason.

Meanwhile, we had that train to catch and somehow with Tony's help we made to the station just in the nick of time. Of course, Pepper had to be there too and he showed up with that woman Lilly, who he'd been hanging with since that night at the hotel room. Needless to say, the vibe between Jim and Tony got real dark and some rather "antagonistic" words (to say the least) were exchanged as the train left the station. Paul seemed amused, like he was getting used to Pepper's antics as I guess we all were. The truth is, Paul was already contemplating letting Pepper go, which would have consequences for me as well.

Anyway, in Vienna we had two nights at a club called Jazz Land, but I don't really remember much about it. Meanwhile, Jim had started to form a theory as to what had happened to his neck and mouthpiece. He became convinced that Gunther Klatt (the guy in Munich who had repaired his horn) had somehow absconded with said items, which of course didn't make any sense. However, the fact that something mysterious had happened in Munich that night was festering in Pepper's mind and he was going to get to the bottom of it no matter what. Thus, a plan began to take shape. As it turned out, the next day, after the Jazz Land gig, the itinerary had us traveling by train to Hamburg, where we were to play the last gig of the tour. Pepper's idea was that him and I would

travel to Munich to see if we could find out what happened with that missing neck / mouthpiece and then sometime later take an early train to Hamburg and still make the gig. How I got roped into all this is a mystery to me, but I guess I figured that's what friends are for. We were in those days using Eurail passes, which meant you could just hop on any train in Western Europe wi4 ';ksavcxgthout having to buy a ticket or make a reservation. So the next day, while Paul, Joe and Bill went to Hamburg, Pepper and I traveled to Munich, where some friends were waiting for us to help us on our quest to find the elusive Gunther Klatt. Apparently, no one was able to reach him by phone, so with our friends Hermann and Beate, we were to drive around town in their car, going to various bars and cafes where he was known to hang out. What a plan! Pepper had already started drinking on the train and so by the time we got to Munich, he was already pretty lit up and we were just getting started. We arrived in the late afternoon, when our friends met us and after stowing our gear at their place, we were off to execute our "mission".

For the next six hours or so we basically bar-hopped our way across a rainy, damp and chilly Munich. However, this alcohol-fueled exercise in futulity did nothing to bring us closer to our goal, but the more we drank the more it didn't seem to matter. However, as the night wore on, Pep's mood began to darken. At around midnight, we ended up at the Jazz Club Unterfahrt (in the Haidhausen section of Munich). It was a familiar place, where all of us had hung out and played many times. All of a sudden Gunther Klatt walks in and all hell breaks loose. By this point in the night, Pep was pretty much "three sheets to the wind" and in his mind, Gunther had gone from a person of interest and possible suspect to guilty of grand theft mouthpiece and neck, no investigation necessary. My memory is a bit hazy as to what happened next, but I remember Pepper kind of pouncing on Gunther Klatt and pinning him down across a table getting ready to pound his face in with his fist. At that point I had to intervene somehow and tried to pull Jim away at which point he turned on me and threatened to kill me as well, to which I replied something like "go ahead MoFo, you crazy son of a bitch." Anyway, after that, myself and some other folks managed to diffuse the situation to where Gunther was able to explain to Pepper that he had nothing to do with whatever happened to those things and to this day, the answer as to what actually did happen still remains an alcohol-fueled mystery.

At this point, I would like to point out that Gunther Klatt and I would become very good friends and colleagues, playing, touring and recording with people like John Betch, Ronnie Burrage, Frank Lacy and others. But that's a subject of another story.

Anyway, two days after the Unterfahrt incident, Pepper and I had to take a tain to Hamburg departing form Munich at around 8 am. It was to be challenging journey, to say the least. Where ever the Flying Eagle had stayed the night before, he had somhow managed to secure several bottles of wine and began imbibing immediately and for the rest of the next nine hours, Jim Pepper was "the life of the party", so to speak. The thing about my man was that he was able to be both charmingly charismatic and obnoxiousy rude, depending on what was happening. For example, if some dude got on the train and wanted

to sit in our compartment, Pep was a master of making sure that wasn't going to happen. On the other hand, if a person of the female persuasion was to enter his awareness, "a Native American prince charming" would emerge, politely flirting without offending, and word up man, he was freaking good at it. The thing was, it seemed like four out of five women would at least find Jim interesting, but on this particular train ride, even he might have gone too far when he started hitting on 80-year old grandmothers. Suffice it to say, that by the time we got to Hamburg Hauptbahnhof, both of us were in pretty bad shape and still had a concert to play at a club called Onkel Pös, part of which was to be recorded by Hamburg Radio.

I vaguely remember that the first set, the one the radio recorded, went pretty well. But, after that, things kind of went south, as my man kind of lost it for real and we ended up playing the third set as a quartet without him. Needless to say, Paul was not happy and for all of us it was not a good way to end the tour. Apparently, later that night, back at the hotel, Pepper, in a fit of frustration, rage and temporary insanity, threw his tenor against the wall, causing considerable damage to the horn. Ouch!

Meanwhile, the next morning, Paul, Bill, Joe and I flew back to the States, leaving Hamburg at 9 am, while Pepper somehow got on a train to Paris, where he was able to visit the Selmer factory, get his horn repaired and secure a new neck, as some kind of endorsement deal. How he was able to pull all that off, I have really no idea, but in the end, as usual, Jim Pepper would once again, despite everything, find "the Great Spirit" looking out for him.

In conclusion to this crazy story, I would like to tie up a few loose ends. As it turned out, I would never get a chance to play with master World musician Collin Wolcott. Seven months later, on November 8th, 1984, he was killed in a horrific vehicle accident while on tour in East Germany with the band Oregon. Another tragic casualty of that night was our wonderful Austrian friend Joe Härting, who was driving the tour bus. He apparently got pinned down by the steering wheel and later succumbed to massive internal trauma while directing first responders to helping the other guys in the band. He'd also been a driver for some of our Quintet tours and reminded me of Arnold Schwarzenegger in the movie "Conan the Barbarian". He was so strong that he could lift a car up by himself. A great guy to have on the road with you. Fortunately, Ralph Towner and Paul McCandless were not seriously injured and somewhat ironically, bassist Glen Moore had already flown back to the States due to the fact that him and his wife were having a baby. Talk about life and death and how fate can intervene in mysterous ways.

I should also mention that while this was all happening, the Paul Motion Quintet was also on tour in Europe and we got the news while in Zurich, Switzerland. Those would turn out to be some dark days for all of us, realizing how easy it was to have your "groove seriously disrupted", trying to make the next gig. As a matter of fact, just a few years later, Paul was traveling in a van with John Abercrombie, Miroslav Vitous and pianist Joachim Kühn, when at some point Joachim, who was driving, lost control, causing the vehicle to flip over. As the guys all tried to extricate themselves from the van, they realized that Joachim was missing, which of course freaked everyone out. Suddenly,

from the other side of the wreck, Joachim emerged, smoking a cigarette with mud all over his face and without missing a beat, says to everone, "you know man, my groove has been seriously disrupted". Luckily, no one was really hurt but after that, Paul began to consider not traveling in tour busses, vans or SUVs, and eventually he would stop going on the road altogether.

At this point, I would also like to clarify a few things about Jim Pepper and why I felt the need to tell these crazy tales. First of all, as far as myself and others that knew him are concerned, there was something about his presence that seemed to defy "the laws of normalcy", manifesting in a kind of fearlessness. He did not let himself get pidgeon-holed into any categories or sterotypes, Native American or otherwise. Being around him, there would be very rarely any dull moments and even though some of his behavior can only be described as outrageous and even disturbing, most people couldn't help but like him or, at the very least, find him interesting.

I have certainly struggled with whether or not such stories should be written down as they obviously don't always paint him or others, including myself, in the best of light. However, any attempt to "sugarcoat" the narrative would in my opinion negate the purpose of telling these stories in the first place.

Perhaps another underlying reason I feel compelled to relate these wild tales is to communicate how different the Jazz community was back in those days (70s, 80s and early 90s) compared to the present. First of all, there weren't that many Jazz education programs in those days and to be even moderately successful on the Jazz scene required not only talent and the will to learn, but the ability to hang at some fairly gritty late night scenes (often involving drugs, alcohol and sex). The point is, despite the incredibly high level of skill, technique and musicianship exhibited by many of today's young Jazz musicians, I feel that something of that old school urban grittiness is missing in a lot of today's music. I recognize we now live in different times and I'm certainly not trying to bring back "the good old crazy days", but we should be able to appreciate the wild and crazy adventures of another era. As Paul Motian himself put it (in reference to the iconic New York Jazz Club The Village Vanguard) "in the old days guys went to the mens room to shoot up. Now they go there to floss their teeth." Enough said about that.

Part III Misterioso aka "Chief Broken Wing"

In the summer of 1986, the Paul Motian Quintet would go on the road for the last time, culminating in what would be our final recording as a band. So, on the 2nd of July, we took flights out of JFK, via Rome, to the city of Cagliari on the island of Sardegna. From there, we were driving an hour south along the west coast of the island to a beautiful little coastal village called Porto Pino, where our first concert was scheduled in a few days. But, a lot would happen before we'd even played a note.

The promoters of the music festival where we were to perfom had arranged for us to stay privately at the home of a wonderful, friendly Italian dude named Bruno. The journey had been long and we were all pretty wiped out, so Paul, Joe, Bill and I decided we'd better take a nap before dinner. Pepper had a different idea and apparently found a bar, made some friends and partied the

afternoon away.
Meanwhile, dinner had been organized for all the festival artists at a school cafeteria located just outside the village. Some of the other participants included Brazilian icon Hermeto Pascoal and his group, drummer Bob Moses, bassist / guitarist Jerome Harris, saxophonist Dick Oats, as well as various members of the sound crew, stage hands and organizers. When Jim arrived separately, it was clearly obvious that he was inebriated beyond what even we would consider socially acceptable. Within five minutes of his entrance, he managed to knock over a glass of red wine onto Paul who then asked him to go sit at another table away from the rest of us. How is that for getting the leader of the band to dig you. However, Pep was just getting started. He ended up sitting with an Italian dude talking trash, inexplicably about basketball and who was the better player. Pep claimed that he was a former "all-American All Star" in high school (which is actually true) and that back in the day he was nicknamed "the crack attack" (probably not true).
Anyway, after dinner, as we were leaving the school, Pep's new "friend" pointed out a nearby hoop with some kids playing one-on-one. He then asked them if he could borrow their ball for a minute and said to Jim something like "So, Mr. crack attack, let's see what ya got". When Pep got the ball, he went for a three-pointer, totally missing the backboard and falling backwards onto the hard concrete ground, while the rest of us watched in amazement. It was so freaking slap-stick funny that both Joe and I actually collapsed from uncontrolled hysteria and disbelief, none of us realizing the consequences of what had just occurred.
That night we all went to hear Hermeto Pascoal and his incredible band at the outdoor festival venue. Hermeto and everyone in his band are amazing, virtuosic genius-level multi-instrumentalists and so we were all pretty pumped to be there. The place was packed, of course, and so, to better see that was happening, I ended up hanging out with Jerome Harris behind a video monitor watching the concert as it was being filmed. Suddenly, in the middle of the set, Hermeto whistled and everyone just left the stage and a few seconds later, Jim Pepper walks out dressed in ripped shorts, T-shirt and a bandana. He then grabbed a soprano saxophone and attempted to play something. Inexplicable, as he blew into the horn, no sounds came out and he finally gave up and started singing, rather inappropriately, a rather bawdy Native courting song. It was truly bizarre and somewhat disturbing. To make things worse, the audience was not happy and as Hermeto's band came back, Jim left the stage. None of us saw him again till the next day when "the shit really hit the fan."
After the concert, we all went back to Bruno's villa to get some much-needed "shut-eye". Jim had somehow made it there on his own and when he woke up the next day, it became apparent that something was very wrong with his right wrist. Obviously, he had injured himself during his ill-fated drunken attempt at B-ball prowess after the dinner yesterday. When our dear host Bruno heard about what had happened, he offered to help, saying something to the effect: "Jimmy, don't worry, my mama, she fix." As it turned out, "mama" lived a few houses down. She was an ultra-traditional Italian woman, probably in her late 80s, dressed in the customary black attire of a woman in mourning for her late

husband.
Anyway, Bruno took Pep over to mama's house, where apparently she tried to heal his wrist by grabbing it and twisting. The scream of excruciating pain must have been deafening and if his wrist hadn't been broken before, it most certainly was now. The next thing we knew, somebody was taking Pepper to some doctor they knew, 30 or so miles away. Apparently he had several hairline fractures in his wrist and would have to wear a cast.
To say Paul was "pissed" would have been an understatement. For the next four or five hours, while Jim Pepper was getting his wrist checked out, Paul walked around Bruno's pad, ranting and raving about how he was going to fire the MoFo, do our upcoming recording as a quartet, and no matter the cost, send his sad ass home on the next available flight. It was freaking intense but clearly understandable. All this crazy shit had happened in less than two days and we'd yet to play one note.
At some point during all of this, Joe Lovano and I must have split to go hang out at the beach, away from all the mayhem and craziness. The whole area is incredibly beautiful, sunny and serene. It's the kind of place I could image to spend my "retirement", if I ever make it that far.
Anyway, while we were out, Pep returned from the doctor sporting a nice plaster cast on his wrist and arm. Paul must have cooled down a bit, because somehow Jim was able to convince him that he should not be fired and that he would still be able to play the gigs. How he did that, I cannot say. I mean, how do you convince someone, expecially Paul Motian, that you can still play the saxophone, when you have an injury like that, not to mention the fact that the doctor had told him not to play for a month. Obviously, if anyone could do it, it would be Pepper. He had a con-man side to him, that when he put his mind to it, he could convince someone of almost anything.
Meanwhile, that night (Friday, July 4th) we would play our first concert at the outdoor venue in Porto Pino. It was to be one set starting at 11:00 pm. I think we played four tunes, starting with Monks's Misterioso and then three Paul Motian originals (Dance, Yallah and The Story of Maryam). It might not have been Jim's best night, but he somehow managed to get through it, cast and all. As it turned out, he could still move all his fingers on his right hand and he had already started cutting some of the cast off to allow even more movement. He had also rigged a kind of makeshift harness to hold up his arm. It all looked pretty weird but the bottom line is he wasn't fired.
Next day was free. Joe and I went to the beach while Paul and Bill Frisell walked around the town. Those two made for quite a pair, looking like "Lurch and Igor". I know the locals found it amusing. At some point, Joe and I came up with a new nickname for Pep: "Chief Broken Wing". Meanwhile, "the Chief" spent a good part of that day actually practicing (which he normally never did), figuring out alternate fingerings on the saxophone and modifying his cast to allow for more technical fluidity.
The following day (Sunday, July 6th), we traveled to Cagliari to play our next gig, which was in a rather large arena. It would be an interesting evening, to say the least. After checking into a hotel and chilling out for a few hours, we were taken to the venue to set up and do a sound check. The first odd thing

we would notice when we got to the stage was a rather large portable round swimming pool and when we inquired as to its purpose, we were told it would be a "surprise". All we knew was that we were to play three tunes as a quintet and then one tune / percussion jam with Bob Moses, Steve Barrios and Ray Mantilla. After that Hermeto Pascoal and his band would play a set to end the concert, after which we were all invited to a big dinner. Viva Italia!
Anyway, the reason for the swimming pool was revealed as part of the show's first act. Hermeto and all seven members of his group "danced" out on the stage dressed in bathing suites playing percussion instruments, tuned beer bottles and penny whistles. They then made their way into the pool forming a circle with Hermeto in the middle, playing some sort of native Brazilian flute. I would learn later that what they were doing was re-enacting a Native musical ritual of some indigenous people of the Amazon region, where they would use the surface of the water itself as a percussion instrument. So, while some of the guys provided a harmonic tapestry via the tuned beer bottles, others slapped the water, creating a kind of "aquatically splashing groove". In the middle, Hermeto soloed on his flute, periodically dunking his long-haired albino head under the water to create a kind of gurgling sound while he continued playing. It was wet and wild with water splashing all over the stage to the consternation of poor Bill Frisell, whose amplifier and electronic effects were set up dangerously close to the pool. Fortunately, his gear survived unscathed and the show would go on more or less as planned.
We played our three quintet tunes (Misterioso, Dance and The Story of Maryam), ending with Paul's calypso-like opus Mandeville, a tune featured on our ECM release Psalm, which featured the above mentioned percussionists. As for Pepper, his efforts from the day before appeared to have paid off. Because of his injury, his ability to play fast runs or lines was somewhat imparied, which kind of forced him to rely more on his more melodic sensibilities. This was not necessarily a bad thing and I personally think it caused him to put more emphasis on a wholly different aspect of his musical language. Also, it seemed that some of the tensions created between Jim and Paul as well as the rest of us, due to his behavior those first couple of days, seemed to have abated somewhat. Once again, Jim Pepper aka "Chief Broken Wing" had somehow managed to turn what should have been a total disaster into a viable, if not perfect, situation. However, Pep wasn't out of the woods yet. We still had another gig in Sardegna and a record date in Milan, not to mention the continuing problem of a fractured wrist and a cast to deal with.
Anyway, after one off day in Cagliari, we were driven three hours north to a beautiful little medieval town called "Oziero". I don't remember much about the gig but the place itself was in a mountainous region with amazing views of the Mediterranian Sea and the surrounding landscape. All I know is, that was to be our last live concert as a band and I believe it was just one set. At that point Paul had already decided that the quintet was too expensive and that, after the recording date, Jim and I would be let go, leaving Lovano, Frisell and Paul to form what would become the famous "Paul Motian Trio".
Meanwhile, we now had five days off in Sardegna before flying off to Milan to record Misterioso. It would turn out to be more like a vacation than a working

tour. In fact, we'd already dubbed it the "Paul Motian Vacation Tour".
The next day, our driver Johnny took some of us back to Cagliari, dropping Paul and Bill of in Porto Pino. The rest of us went on to hear the Miles Davis Group performing that night at the festival. It was amazing to hear Miles - and his band, of course was great, professional and grooving, consisting of, among others, Robben Ford (guitar), Adam Holzman (keyboards), Bob Berg (saxophones) and Steve Thorton (percussion). As I recall, they played some of the Miles Davis hits of the time, Jean Pierre, Cindy Lauper's Time After Time and other intense jams whose names escape me now. The thing I remember most about it was that when Miles was actually playing, the groove seemed to have an almost magical, supernatural quality about it. However, as soon as he stopped, the music would revert to more terrestrial, albeit highly skilled, "L.A.-style funk band" kind of thing. It was all good, but what makes people like Miles Davis stand out, even among the greats, is beyond any rational or linear explanations. One might say the same about Paul Motian.
Moving right along, the next four days were spent more or less in "vacation mode", staying with our friend Bruno at his Porto Pino Villa. It was definitely not the worst place to be, i.e. great weather, incredible food, beautiful beaches and wonderful people. Meanwhile, Pep was able to get our driver Johnny to help him saw off a good portion of his cast, giving him more dexterity and freedom to play. We were also able to check out some of the material we would record at our upcoming session in Milan.
On the 14th of July, we said goodbye to Bruno and Porto Pino and took a morning flight from Cagliari to Milan. By 2:30 in the afternoon we were at the Barigozzi studio to set up and begin the session. That day we recorded takes of four tunes: Gang of Five, Misterioso, Dance and Once Around the Park, finishing up the following afternoon with Monk's Pannonica, Folk Song for Rosie, a solo guitar version of ByaBlue, Abacus and a special unaccompanied solo sax opus called Johnny Broken Wing (the latter obviously in reference to Mr. Peppers recent wrist injury).
In the final analysis, one could definitely say "all's well that ends well". Misterioso remains my favorite recording of the three Soul Note releases and despite everything, Pepper's contribution to the music was outstanding. As usual, he managed to turn a potential desaster into a beautiful success.
Paul Motian's Band would continue for many years as a trio featuring the amazing Bill Frisell and the musical mastery of Joe Lovano. Pepper eventually moved to Austria where he was diagnosed with lymphoma cancer. He was able to get back to his family home in Portland, Oregon before succumbing to this terrible disease on February 10, 1992 at age 51. I was able to attend and perform at his memorial in Portland, along with Gordon Lee (piano), Don Cherry (trumpet) and Jim's father Gilbert, mother Floy and many others.
All of us that knew him will never forget him.

Hum Buck Shay
Fly like an Eagle
Hungga Chee Edda

Joseph Benzola photo credit Bill Amutis, WUSB Radio

JOSEPH BENZOLA
INTERVIEW
BY
JAMES BENNINGTON

Cadence: For the record, what is your date and place of birth please?
JB: 6 April 1960 in Manhattan.
Cadence: When and how did you begin to play music?
JB: Both of my parents loved music. My father was a devotee of Doo-Wop but he also loved Stan Getz. My mother loved all the great singers such as Sinatra, Tony Bennet, Sarah Vaughn, and Joe Williams. She also loved people like Tito Puente and Eddie Palmieri. My uncle was a musician… a drummer. He played with Johnny Maestro and The Crest of 16 Candles fame. He was not in the studio but he was in the touring band. I was surrounded by music and instruments from a very early age. You've probably seen all the pics I've posted of me with my red and white metal drum set, piano, trumpet, and sax! My earliest memory was of Elvis singing Blue Suede Shoes. The turning point… the point where for the first time the hairs stood up on my neck was when The Beatles performed on Ed Sullivan. I was just about 4 but I remember that night… I remember the energy and pure white light pleasure that surged throughout my whole being. I could not quite grasp exactly what it was but I knew it was magic and that it would change my life!
I always loved to bang on those green and red hassacks with wooden spoons in my grandparents house. I would also take my toy rifles and machine guns and play them like guitars in front of the mirror singing Beatle tunes… for hours! My uncle turned me onto jazz at a very early age. Being Italian and living in the city, he would come over to our house for coffee and cake every Saturday afternoon. He would sit me down in the living room and put on a show called Like it Is. This was the mid 1960's which was the genesis of African-American cultural programming. Besides for politics, Like it Is aired lots of music. The day I remember in particular is the day Dizzy Gillespie performed with his band. The sound was simply astounding, along with his unique trumpet and puffy cheeks! I remember my uncle making a comment that the reason why his cheeks puffed out was that he was playing incorrectly. My thought was that if that was incorrect, I needed to find a way to sound that great and be incorrect!

My first attempt at a real instrument was not the drums or guitar which I badly wanted to play but the accordion!!!! I don't know how or why this was decided to be my instrument of choice, but I was given this instrument to play. I remember going for lessons. The crazy thing is that it was a group lesson in a large room. Everyone seemed so damn old!!!! From what I remember, it seems that everyone there was playing for quite some time and I was lost. I eventually was shown mercy and my parents took me out of lessons and sold the accordion.

Cadence: Have drums and percussion always been your first loves?

JB: Absolutely! I have always been able to play, from the first time I sat in front of a kit. I had various pads and toy snare drums which was quite frustrating. I got my first kit in the winter of 1973… a Pearl 5 piece black simulated leather finish kit with some very cheap Chinese cymbals and hi hats. I bought my first Zildjians a year or so later… a 20" mini cup ride and 14" New Beat hi hats. I still use both as my main cymbals today.

Cadence: Would you consider yourself a hand drummer first? and have health issues moved your focus into other areas?

JB: I would consider myself a drummer-percussionist first but playing the piano has had a profound influence on my conception. When I was younger, my initial thought process was that I had to be a "Drummer" but the more I learned, listened, and read about other musicians such as Max Roach, Tony Williams, and especially Jack DeJohnette I knew what my direction had to be. Someone like Jack was not only a master drummer, but he also was a band leader, composer, and pianist. You can hear the influence of the piano on his playing…. The way he tunes his drums and approaches the cymbals. I started to play the piano when I was 16 and I heard a correlation of the piano to the drums, but I thought that might be just a figment of my teenage imagination. This idea was proven true when I read an interview with Jack DeJohnette in DB in 1978. Jack was asked if the piano had influenced his playing. His response was:

" That's exactly the way I hear them. To me, cymbals are the bridge to the drum set- they connect it up. Cymbals are like the thumb on the piano; the way you use your thumb when you're making an arpeggio run up the piano, that's the way I hear my cymbals in relation to the drum set. They are pedal tones, and in the overtones of the cymbals are orchestra sounds, orchestra intervals. When I hear a cymbal I hear thousands of tones and microtones."

As to hand drumming, I see myself as a total percussionist and I integrate both standard and hand percussion into my setup. I started listening to Airto early on and his conception had a huge influence on me. He was the first person that I heard play "little instruments" in such a creative fashion… not only rattles and bells but also bird calls and whistles. All of those instruments are part of my vocabulary thanks to Airto and Don Moye.

The health issue that you mentioned was a blood clot in my leg which I had the pleasure of having a few years back! I would say that it has not altered my approach or concepts.

Cadence: How long have you been doing this?

JB: Well I've loved the drums since birth but I think I seriously began to study

and play around the age of 14… so 46 years. My uncle who I mentioned before started me on match grip and began discussing with me such exoteric topics as focusing energy and flow, approaching the drums as a melodic instrument, the importance of dynamics and phrasing, and other musical matters. He was also the one who introduced me to Airto.

Cadence: Your playing and conception, to me, is totally unique and seems very much of the moment...how have you attained this approach to music?

JB: Focus and mentally visualizing the whole process. I'm not a big proponent of the term "Free Music", Free Improvisation", "Free Jazz". Every individual has a vocabulary that they use during their playing… some more than others! For example, both Cecil Taylor and Derek Bailey are considered free improvisers but if you actually listen to their music, there is nothing free about it. Before I hear a piece by Cecil and Derek, I know what it's going to sound like. Cecil's music changed very little from the late 1960's onwards. Both Cecil and Derek have a very unique vocabulary which they have internalized in their playing and compositions.

With that said, I have developed a very unique approach and vocabulary over the years based on many different influences: jazz, 20the century classical music, electronic music, the music of India, Bali, and sub-Saharan Africa, the sounds of nature. I have taken those influences, musics, and unique energies and have diced and sliced them into my unique voice and vision. So what sounds like music of the moment which to some extent it is is actually governed by language and vocabulary. I can't escape me!!!

Cadence: You list a lot of recordings as inspiration...are there some musics/ musicians that you site as an inspiration to what you are doing?

JB: Oh my God…. YES!!!! One never truly escapes influences… it's what you do with them. Music like all of the arts is a very organic process. Innovation and the next step is built upon the shoulders of the past… that goes for everyone. No one mysteriously appears fully formed… at least not to my knowledge. Not Coltrane, not Cecil, not Sun Ra, not Charlie Parker, not Varese, not Cage…. No one!! I am what I am from what I've learned from my influences,which are MANY: Coltrane, Elvin, McCoy, Cecil, Sun Ra, Art Tatum, Tony Williams, Jack DeJohnette, Barry Altschul, Airto, Famoudou Don Moye, Anthony Braxton, The AACM, Keith Jarrett, Milford Graves, Tony Oxley, Bill Evans, Vladamir Horowitz, Cage, Varese, Stockhausen, Zappa, Art Tripp, Charles Ives, Xenakis, Scriabin, Webern, Schoenberg, Debussey, The Beatles, Pet Sounds and SmiLe, Song Cycle by Van Dyke Parks, The Velvet Underground, The Rascals, Keith Emerson, Bill Bruford, Keith Moon, Ginger Baker. And of course the profound musics of Africa, India, Bali, South East Asia, and the music of Islam.

Eric Dolphy once said that he was after what the birds in the trees were saying (singing)...nature...is it fair to say that you are inspired by the sounds of nature and the universe?

Absolutely!!! Music -Sound is all around us. This was the point of Cage's 4'33"…. How to listen deeply in the moment. One would think that the concept of music initially was listening to the sounds of nature and imitating those sounds. Probably the first sound was hitting something… your chest, two rocks together. Somebody then discovered blowing into a hollow stick produced a

sound. So there you have it… a band!! I use sounds that are all around me. It's not the sound.. It's what you do with them. Varesse and Cage both proved that noise can be used in a musical context. Oliver Meassian and Eric Dolphy both used bird songs in their compositions and playing. Sun Ra and the sounds of the universe. I have built my music and language on both musical and for lack of a better term, extra musical sounds. The sounds of the natural world have had a very deep influence on me. The integration of those sounds in my music have taken the music to another level.

Cadence: How do you continue to seek and strive, especially during these unique times of lockdown, etc.?

JB: Well since I have not been a very popular choice for other musicians over the past 25+ years, I've been developing a solo language which would take on the sound of not only playing solo, but would duplicate the sound and energy of multiple musicians. So it doesn't matter if there was total freedom or a lockdown. The results are the same… I am producing music alone. Besides for the albums I've produced, I have been producing pre-recorded and live solo concerts over the past 6 years which incorporate this solo language. I have done everything from solo piano and drum solos to electronic excursions. There is a very interesting quote from Cecil Taylor that I come back to all the time when I feel like giving up:

"Well I've had to simulate the working jazzman's progress. I've had to create situations of growth- or rather situations were created by the way in which I live. At the piano, in music, or away from the piano. What I mean is that if the making of music is your overall goal, the way you live becomes kind of a musical process. You're continually searching to absorb everything that happens to you and incorporate into music"

As you're probably aware, the frustration level of playing creative music is great. There is no money, a small audience, and very little interest. I continue to create music because I have come to the realization that I have to.

Cadence: Who are some of the artists you are proud have worked with?

JB: Early on, I worked with Makanda Ken McIntyre with his small and big bands and workshops in the early to mid 1980's. Ken was a great musician and composer who has gotten lost in the shuffle. I think that this was due to the fact that he went into academia very early so he could support his family. There were two very important concepts that I learned from playing with Makanda: Volume does not equal intensity and start where other people end. I also learned from Ken that you can do anything you want as long as you know where "One" is, which of course is very true. Some other people that I've either worked or recorded with: the great guitarist-composer-Ives scholar Dan Stearns, Jim Ross, Jim Goodin, and Ben Smith. I've worked on a few dance projects with Chris Becker contributing some percussion parts. Last summer, I performed live with guitarist-composer-micro tonalist David First in a percussion ensemble that helped realize his Schuman Resonance pieces. Marc Edwards was part of the ensemble and it was a pleasure to finally meet him in person and share a stage with him!

Cadence: Are there any projects/ recordings you have done that stand out?

JB: I started a series of compositions in 1995 entitled "Portraits of the Dead".

It's a series of sonic portraits for many of my music, literary, and spiritual heroes. The idea is not to mimic the styles but rather, it's my sonic impression of the individual. I believe at the moment I'm up to 25 portraits. I had a rather prolific year in 2019 and I'm very happy with the finished albums: 3 Haikus, Solo Language, Greatest Dance Hits, and 12 pieces. I'm also very pleased with the series of video improvs that I've done over the past 6 years. It really has defined and showed what my solo language has developed into over the past few years.

Cadence: What are your feelings about the state of the music field/ business/ industry for yourself and as a whole?

JB: For me, there has never been a music industry or field. I've produced, documented, and distributed all of my music independently. I have no outlets to perform and that includes the community that I live in. With very few exceptions, I perform and play all instruments on my recordings. I rarely get a review or interview. I am never mentioned in "Best of" lists. My music gets lost in a sea of infinite recordings that are released by the hundreds on a daily basis but yet… I still persevere. And the reason for that is that I believe that music is a spiritual endeavour and a gift that needs to be shared with all of humanity. I document my work so that others may find something of value in it that may enhance their life. I would like to share another quote with you which is from A.B. Spellman's profile of Herbie Nichols in "Four Lives in the Be-Bop Business":

"For if the products of an artist life work are to be the sum of his life, then Herbie Nichols, a jazz musician who seldom worked where he could play his own music and who has no records in the current catalog, maybe said not to have lived at all" I think about that quote often. That pretty much encapsulates my thoughts on the music industry!

Cadence: Do you have a daily routine that sustains you? How do you stay with the music? What do you see for yourself on the horizon...in the future?

JB: I don't have a daily routine. We moved into a new house in 2019. At the moment, I do not have the space to set up my drum kit but I do have my hand percussion, electronic drums (DrumKat, WaveDrum, and Nord Drum 3P), piano, bamboo flutes, and other items. The 3 albums last year were recorded using these instruments. If I'm not playing, I'm visualizing and thinking about music which is quite helpful. As far as what do I see for myself over the horizon… I would like to continue developing my solo language. I would love to have a series of duets with like minded musicians… similar to the recordings that Charlie Haden did in the late 1970's. I would LOVE to perform live and I will continue to send out proposals to spaces that might work with my musical conception. I don't feel that my music is so hard to understand… I actually find it quite listenable. You just have to follow the colors, timbres, and sounds as they flow through the air. All you need is an open mind and a set of working ears.

Interviewed May 21, 2020

Available Music:

https://josephbenzola.bandcamp.com/
https://vimeo.com/josephbenzola

Joëlle Léandre You Cannot Imagine

By Ken Weiss

Double bassist, improviser and composer, Joëlle Léandre [lee-ON-drah] (born September 12, 1951 in Aix-en-Provence, France) is one of the dominant figures of the new European music with over 200 recordings under her name. In addition to working with a lengthy list of Jazz's greatest improvisers (Derek Bailey, Anthony Braxton, George Lewis, William Parker, Evan Parker, Irène Schweizer, Barre Phillips, John Zorn, Maggie Nicols, Marilyn Crispell and Myra Melford), she has also been featured in the field of Contemporary music, performing with Pierre Boulez's Ensemble InterContemporain, and worked with Merce Cunningham and John Cage, who composed specifically for her – as have Giacinto Scelsi and at least 39 other composers. Léandre was a member of the European Women Improvising Group and later co-founded the feminist improvising trio Les Diaboliques with Schweizer and Nicols. She continues to be an outspoken supporter of the need for female improvisers in creative music. This interview was done by phone (by way of the internet) on April 18-19, 2020, during the COVID-19 pandemic. Léandre had left her home in Paris and was sheltering in in the center of France at her country house in Touraine.

Léandre: Next year I will be 70 years old. I've played for 45 years with my international friends and lived in America, Berlin, Japan and Israel. I'm a musician and a gypsy, a nomad. I started the bass at 9-years-old and I never stopped. All my years have been full of concerts, projects, and creation. After my Classical studies, I went to New Music and Free Jazz, but at the same time I listened to Jazz, even the classical Jazz. I'm deeply a musician but I've worked a lot with theater people, with choreographers, dancers, poets. My palette to be a musician is very large. I have this passion. I play with so different musicians, you cannot imagine.

Cadence: You've inspired many composers to create works for you.

Léandre: I've had 41 composers compose works for me. I've provoked them. You see, in 2020, composers are still composing for the same instrumentation. They compose for violin, piano, cello and flute. Why don't they compose for bass? It's because we are not a noble instrument. I'm from Europe and we have a very, very old culture, and the decision was always made to compose for certain instruments, to give

them roles and rules. Who decided that the bass is just a side instrument? That is just stupidity. The bass is such a rich instrument, and I provoked them, even when I was young and in the conservatory, I provoked certain composers. 'Hey, why don't you compose for contrabass?' They said, "It's a big instrument, it's very low. I don't know." This provoked me, so, I will practice my bass nonstop. I will play my bass. I practiced for 7 hours a day. This shaped my personality. I'm an outsider, an outlaw with my bass. I like this process, not only for the bass, but for my life. You create and invent by yourself. I have no recipe, I am just a bass player who's met many different people in art – musicians, writers, poets, theater people, dancers, and I was ready to create music for them, and around them with my instrument. It's freedom and love, and it's something that takes all your life to do. I do a lot of improvisation, as you know, and composition, of course! When you improvise, you have to be you. You cannot lie. Even if you play wrong, you can say, 'Sorry, I play shit yesterday, but it was me.' That's life, and life is a big work, it's never finished, that's the process of to be alive.

Cadence: I've seen you perform many times over the past decade and one thing that strikes me about you is your strength. Not only in the way you play your instrument, but the strength you present through your personality and command of the stage. Where does that come from?

Léandre: Love and anger. It's natural that when a person plays, they open their mouth. I'm a very political person about what is happening in the world. It's a feeling, an energy, that comes from the soul. It's a stupid time and stupid people, mostly the people who are the bosses, the power, the ones who make the decisions in culture, the people who pretend to have the direction to tell us what we have to do. I don't know if I am an anarchist but all that pushed me to continue, to play, to say, to scream even…I think I'm a rebel because I have a strong conscience about politics and I am against all this hierarchy, this injustice in the world. You know what? Maybe I'm a gypsy rebel. I'm like a big bee, I'm a big, fat bass bee. I go around and create my music. [Laughs]

Cadence: You've been described as stubborn, visionary and uncompromising by some in the past, and as someone unconcerned with style. Would you talk about your approach to music and what's important to you?

Léandre: This is what people are perceiving, but it's not me looking in the mirror and saying, 'Hey, Joëlle, be like that.' [Laughs] As I said earlier, I am an eclectic musician. I've played with Leonard Bernstein, Maazel, Celibidache, Barenboim and Antal Doráti… I worked freelance with Classical symphony orchestras and with chamber music too. When you play different Classical repertory – it's so far from Mingus or Monk. This is my work, this is my selection, all the time, every day. I've done it for long years! You have to search and select. You select your socks in the morning, your food, your pants, and the musician selects their music. When I finished my Classical studies, I worked with two ensembles Ensemble l'Itinéraire and Pierre Boulez's InterContemporain ensemble. I've worked with Berio, Xenakis, Stockhausen, many others, also young generation Contemporary composers like Grisey, Murail, Levinas, Fenelon and Jolas. I met John Cage in '72, he was so important for me, and Giacinto Scelsi in Rome in '78. I'm really a kaleidoscope. That's

why I say I'm a gypsy. I like to listen to La Callas, but I also like hearing Ornette Coleman and to see some new Contemporary theater pieces or dance. This is part of my food. It's not just to play the bass, that is only my tool, that's all! The rest is my selections. I started as a Classical musician, but I stopped. Why? Because it was not my life to receive a [paycheck] every month and be paid like a fonctionnaire [French for civil servant]. I made the decision to stop Classical music and New Contemporary music because of the hierarchy- you have the composer and you have the performer. The creation is only from the composer. Who decided that the performer has to shut up? What do you mean? Because you have a pencil and white paper, the musician cannot be creative? So, I stopped it. I loved it, but it was not my feeling anymore. I listened to Free Jazz at 18 and it changed my life.

Cadence: Growing up in a working-class family in the south of France shaped your concept of an artist as someone who needs to work just as hard and long as a farmer in the field. Would you briefly talk about your childhood and what led to the work hard concept that's remained with you?

Léandre: When you grow up in a worker family, you don't have too money. At that time, only the father worked and the mother stayed home with 3 children. I started out on a plastic flute at 8, and I was quite good. I loved it and I asked my mom, 'Please mom, I would like to make music.' Oh, my God, to make music in a worker family? I'll never forget what she said until I will die. This pushed my ass to grow, to be me. She said, with a long silence. "Can you repeat?" And she looked down on me, a very shy 8-year-old little girl. I repeated it, and she said, "It's not for us." Yes, art and culture were not for us, it's for the bourgeoisie. No books at home for me as a child, but since the age of 15, I've been [very active in learning from books]. In my two homes now, I have four libraries. I read a lot. It's an intense pleasure. As a musician, I travel a lot, and in the trains and planes, I read! My dear parents made a big sacrifice and put me in the conservatory in Aix-en-Provence, the small city I come from.

Cadence: You're a very creative person. You've said before that society doesn't want creative people. Too much creativity would lead to pure anarchy. Would you explain that, and if so, how does society, or the powers that be, control creativity?

Léandre: Creativity is impossible to control because we are all different and so unique. I think people are born to create something else by themselves. If you go into the track that society decides where you have to be, you become institutional. I could be an institutional musician, receive a grant every year, but I'm not. They probably look at me as an anarchist or an outlaw. The political society doesn't want people to think too much because they don't want individualism, they want the masses controlled. They want us to go the same speed, on the same track, and to shut up. If you want to wear pink pants and a yellow hat, why not? But if you have pink pants and a yellow hat, the people around you will say, "Wow! Well, he's bizarre. Who is he?" Society is built for the masses, not for the individual. If your track is a little different, the people don't like it too much. The people will be afraid. That's why we eat the same, we dress the same, we have to think the same… It's terrible! It's not liked if you give your own ideas, your own point of view but to be different is a path of

freedom, and when you're attracted by freedom, it's a long process. It's a life, it's my life, it's long and full of a lot of responsibility!

Cadence: What is it about chaos that attracts you?

Léandre: I don't think I'm attracted by chaos because even in a pure chaos, you will find the right sense because it will become your sense. My life and my thoughts and my attitude are not at all chaotic. I know exactly where I put my feet. It's decision and selection. Chaos can lead to change, it can cause explosion, but life is not black and white. we need some colors. Human beings are fragile, in French we say savoir ne pas savoir. Some days it's boring, so chaos can be good to help you find the way.

Cadence: What do you feel is your responsibility when you take the stage?

Léandre: Good question. I feel very responsible because you're nothing without the listeners. You can play at home for your cats, if you want, but if you come on stage, there's a sense of love and beauty, frustration, fear and life and death. It's all of what we are. When we go on stage, artists touch the audience. You can change a person in public because they are so touched, they are full of questions. I am sure they can receive something new, something different. They can also be shocked, they can receive something else through their senses and emotions. You can change their life, and we are responsible for that. It's not just 'Oh, she plays well the bass,' and to make good money, when we go on stage, we are totally responsible.

Cadence: You're a very animated performer. You don't just bow and pluck the bass, you sing, you groan, you shout, move around, play tenderly and violently at times. There's a strong theatrical component to your playing. Does that come out naturally or Is it done to enhance your performance?

Léandre: It's just me. I'm a performer, but first my language is sound and music. But, by chance, I have a voice, and I can sing. I have a free voice. I never studied voice. I can sing Jazzy and Opera and Pop, and I can be funny or dramatic. The fact that I play this huge instrument, it's furniture, it's like a body, maybe. When I arrive on stage, I'm not alone, I'm two. You'd have to ask the audience because it's hard to talk about myself, but the music is more than music for me, it's also action, narration sometimes, and I always try to give some sense, structure, repetitions, forms thematic or not, I try my best to organize my materials. It's like a composition! Many bass players sing along or make percussions with their bass, perhaps because we don't have a big repertory, we have to invent it. Maybe it's also a kind of rebellion against the traditional role of the bass as a side instrument, along with the drums, which is so wonderful, but also boring. It depends on the musician with who you play. Naturally, I think I provoke tension and release, which is life, which is my personal drama. Everybody has a personal drama.

Cadence: What do you see is the role of your voice versus the bass in your music?

Léandre: The voice for me is simply another string. I have 4 strings on my bass, and when I add the voice, another string is added.

Cadence: How did you decide that bass was to be your instrument? Were there concerns about the difficulties inherent in physically dealing with such a large instrument?

Léandre: I started on piano at 8. After six months, a man came to tune the piano and told my parents, "You have a son, why not put your son in the class of this fantastic, new bass teacher who is looking for students?" So, my parents put my brother into the conservatory, and he started the bass. When I saw this instrument, I saw this body, oh, my God, standing up, and it played so low [mimics a low human voice as if the bass was being bowed]. I was so attracted. I'm a sandwich between my sister and my brother. I was such a silent baby, I never cried. I just looked at people with my big, green eyes. It was like a human being to me, it became my friend, my puppet, perhaps. The bass was magical for me. I loved it and I started on the bass at 9-years-old. I stood on a chair. For six years, I continued piano and bass at the Aix-en-Provence conservatory, along with the school, it was a lot, and when I finished my study there, my teacher said, "Joëlle, you play piano not bad, but if I would be you, I would study bass at the Conservatoire of Paris. After you study there, you will be with your friend, and you will travel. You will be so happy." I stopped piano and I presented to the Conservatoire of Paris at 17 and a half, very young. I finished my studies at 20 and a half, which is also very young. I was alone in Paris, 800 kilometers away from my family. Paris was not easy. It was totally another culture, people had an accent, but I had this bass with me, and I just played and practiced the instrument all the time. It was a jubilation!

Cadence: Jazz was a little-known genre for you until you became intrigued by the cover of Slam Stewart's Blowin' Singin' Slam album [1945, Savoy], which you found at a second-hand stall along the Seine in 1971. How did that record spark your interest in jazz?

Léandre: Yes, I remember it very well. I saw the bass on the blue cover, and I bought the LP like I bought and listened to [the records of] Mingus, Paul Chambers, Major Holley, Glenn Moore, Richard Davis and Jimmy Garrison. I bought all the bass LPs in Jazz. Barre Phillips, Eddie Gomez, nobody told me to buy these, but I did, and I didn't finish my Classical studies. I wanted to know and understand what this instrument is, not only in Classical music. I was very curious. In Classical training, they give you an instrumental knowledge, in Jazz, you're given the adventure to invent, to create your own music.

Cadence: While in Paris, you heard Free Jazz players such as Bill Dixon, Anthony Braxton, Archie Shepp, Alan Silva and the Art Ensemble of Chicago. What did you learn from seeing them?

Léandre: I'm a child of Free Jazz. I was at the American Center in Paris listening to them all. I was 18 and it was a shock for me. It was a fantastic shock. We had already all this music in Europe, it was a big explosion starting in May of '68. They gave me jubilation, everything was new. Everything was possible. This was my generation. They gave me the message to "be you." They, along with John Cage, gave me this message. I didn't talk like this when I was 25, 40, or even 50-years-old, but now, I can look back at my past, and I can see how I decided. I started to meet dancers. I composed my first dancer music in 1974, and I composed my first music for theater. I never said no, I say yes! I'm a worker in fact, or a bee. If I don't understand, I go home, and I work in silence to understand what I have to do. In Europe, we had all these American artists move to and play, mostly in Paris, and I was ready to listen to it!

Cadence: Your interests quickly shifted from Classical to Free Jazz. How well versed are you in traditional Jazz and its history?

Léandre: I listened to the real, classical Jazz, Bebop and Swing on records. I have fantastic albums at home with all of Monk, all of Coltrane, all of Mingus and so many more. It's fantastic to listen to them, but it was not my music. I was not going to function with those rules and the roles of bass and drums serving as the traditional rhythm section. That was not me. That's not my music. I was looking for my music, my feeling, my decision. It's a risk, but life without risk can be so boring, no? I was looking to create new music, my music, in my century, plus I am a woman, not a man. I had to find my music, my feeling, my sounds. I don't want to play like a man. Men have examples to look up to, not only in music, but as a woman, we don't really have big figures on podiums. The only figures in front of me were men. I had to find myself, as a woman, in a creative way. All the world is built by men, almost everything. Women have to do somethings by themselves. I invent and create my own shit, I did not want to have the groove of Charles Mingus and the sounds of Charlie Haden, for example. I wanted to be Joëlle Léandre. I learned a lot from poetry, painters and composers. This is my private garden. I understood when I was so young, at 19, that I was not interested anymore in necrophile music. I want live music! Especially in Classical music, or classical Jazz, they have to sleep. It's enough! We are in the 21st century. I want to be in my century.

Cadence: What were your thoughts and concerns on leaving France in 1976 for the Center for Creative and Performing Arts in Buffalo, NY?

Léandre: I went to work with Morton Feldman after I received a grant. I had applied for grants to work at Valencia, California, Bennington College and Buffalo, and Morton Feldman invited me to Buffalo for a year. I was there with other musicians. It was fantastic. We got money every month. We were well paid, and we did what we wanted. We played some New Music concerts, and then we had parties almost every weekend. That was so great! It was a fantastic time to be there with Morty, as we called him. I was already known in France at the time from my work with Ensemble L'Itinéraire and Ensemble InterContemporain. I didn't have the position in those ensembles, I was a freelancer when they needed a second bass for certain scores.

Cadence: Do you have memories to share about Morton Feldman?

Léandre: I remember his apartment. It was empty, with totally white walls, and this huge white painting of Jasper Johns. We'd go to his apartment to practice or for some party. He was such a funny guy, he had a fantastic, heavy, and so loud, laugh. You cannot imagine. "Hah! Hah! Hah!" It was like that. He had a severe personality, but at the same time, very funny. A loving life type of man.

Cadence: You speak a lot about John Cage. He was an important mentor to you during your first stay in America and afterwards. You refer to him as your "spiritual father."

Léandre: Yes, in a way, he continues to be with me almost every day. He gave me this knowledge to love any sounds without hierarchy, without any preference in sounds. Who can decide that this sound is not beautiful, and this sound is ugly? The people with money, the institution, decide what

theater piece and what music is good. They have the power to decide for you. This I did not like at all! For them, the creation, or the creative music, can be just institutional. They will never, or rarely, send you to a little gallery or somewhere to hear a creative group. They will send you to a large and well-known institution. Creation is not institution, and John Cage understood this. If you crash a bottle filled with water, who decides this is not a nice sound? Cage knew the reality about sounds and silence, and it gave you the sense of responsibility to be you. It's so deep, and I think all my life I will thank John. I can say John because I was so close to him. Every year, since 1976, I went to New York, and each year, I called John Cage, and he cooked for me. He was a friend. Later, he composed a piece for me, Ryoanji, for bass and small orchestra. It's a dedicated piece for me. I had asked him if he had ever composed for bass and he said no. I said, 'Why haven't you composed? You could compose a piece for me.' He said okay. This happened in Paris in 1981, at a party centered around Teeny Duchamp, the widow of Marcel Duchamp. Marcel Duchamp was a very good friend of John Cage. John told me to meet him at an address outside of Paris, in Neuilly, at 7 o'clock PM. He was so precise with time. I remember he had his stopwatch all the time. I was there on time, and he screamed down from the second floor to come up. Later, he cooked for us. He asked if I knew where I was? Oh, my God, it was the apartment of Marcel Duchamp! You can't imagine how touched I was because, even before Free Jazz, and everything, I am a child of this time. A part of Erik Satie, Surrealism, Café Voltaire, Marcel Duchamp, the readymade, all the question about art or no art. I'm a child of that, and to be in Duchamp's apartment, where the piece Ryoanji was decided between John Cage and me, it's a wonderful memory. He said he had composed a series of solo instrumentation called Ryoanji, which is a temple in Kyoto, Japan with a [Zen rock garden] which is very meditative. Cage was like a God in Japan. I miss John Cage almost every day.

Cadence: Cage famously disliked Jazz and improvisation. What did he have to say to you regarding that side of your musical interests? Did you attempt to convince him of the benefits of improvisation?

Léandre: I talked about that with John. He talked about Hard Bop, Bebop. He said it's always the same tempo, and he didn't like that. He didn't like all the same beat, the repetition. But, in terms of improvisation, he made me a joke, almost the last time I met him. He had a cane, he was older in Paris by then. I asked him if he liked improvisation and he said, while laughing, he was all the time laughing, "May I tell you something Joëlle? Sometimes when Merce [Cunningham] dances above the stage, and he has different musicians, of course, we have a score, we play my music with a stopwatch," and he said, "Do you know what Joëlle?" [Laughing like a baby] "You know what? Sometimes I improvise." [Laughs] Never will I forget that! Everything was possible with John Cage, everything was great. He was unique, but he didn't like too much Jazz.

Cadence: Your first performance in Buffalo was a solo set in 1976, and your first album Joëlle Léandre - Contrebassiste (Taxi) was a solo recording [1982, Adda]. Why make the decision to present yourself as a solo artist to begin your career?

Léandre: When I received the grant in Buffalo, it was possible for me to give a solo concert. I composed for the first time for solo bass. It was a piece called "F. A.," which stood for France America. After Buffalo, I received another grant and I decided to return to America in 1980 for the second time. I stayed one year in New York. During my second visit to New York, I was so curious about bass repertory. What is the bass - an instrument that had been totally forgotten in this century. Why doesn't the bass have repertory? Because nobody in Europe at this time composed solo pieces for bass. Before me it was Bertram Turetzky from San Diego. He made a lot of things and pushed composers and received more than 200 scores for solo bass. In New York, I found different scores at a publishing company. During my second time in America, I made my first album Joëlle Léandre – Contrebassiste. I was invited to Cincinnati by the ISB [International Society of Bassists], and Classical bassist Frank Proto had a studio there, and he invited me to make my first album.

Cadence: That recording's title track begins with you screaming three times for a taxi and then venting in French about the stupidity of taxi drivers not knowing how to deal with your bass. It's really a performance art piece. Is that the direction you were heading?

Léandre: I composed this a long time ago, before the album, and I put it on the album. I don't know that I was heading in that direction. I was a freelance musician in Paris, and I took many different taxis with my bass to play with the different ensembles. I was ready to talk about the stupidity of the cab drivers. They all repeated the same complaints about why did I need this big, heavy instrument. In my brain, it was hard to listen to the same complaining sentences over and over each time I took a cab. One day, I had a recorder with me, and I took 8 or 9 cabs around Paris and I recorded all the provocation from me putting the bass inside the taxi. The result is really from the taxi drivers – it's not my text. It's what they said. I went home and selected [certain portions] and built the phrases out of it to compose the music. Yes, it's a theatrical performance. To see a musician playing and talking at the same time is forbidden for a musician. A musician had to shut up and just play! [Laughs] It's sad why a musician cannot speak.

Cadence: Bassist Barre Phillips served as an early source of inspiration for you. He recorded the very first album of solo bass improvisation, and he's lived in the south of France since 1972. Would you talk about the special connection you share with him?

Léandre: He was such an important figure for me, totally. I listened to Barre and I didn't finish my Classical study in Aix-en-Provence. My bass teacher there, Pierre Delescluse, was so impassioned, and such a fantastic bass player. At 15, he told me there was a bass player giving a recital in Aix-en-Provence that night and that I should go with him and other students to listen. It was Barre Phillips. It was a shock to listen to Barre. He played his music and part of a Bach suite – a slow-moving prelude. I was fascinated. I've told Barre that, and we've played together so many times in different bands and with dancers also, and we've composed a long theater piece together. We have invited Robert Black to play with us! I call Barre my brother. After Barre, I was the second or third bass player to make a solo recording.

Cadence: Derek Bailey was an early important influence. Would you talk about him?

Léandre: It was my time, surely. During my second stay in America, I opened the [Village] Voice paper and saw that Derek Bailey's Company was giving a concert. So, I went to listen, and at the end of the concert, I went to Derek, maybe he knew my name, I'm not so sure, it was '80 or '81, and I said, 'I am in New York for one year and I am free to do what I want.' And he said, "Ah, we have to play together." I don't know if it was by chance, but I was ready. We got together for 3 days in the afternoon, until the evening, drinking tea and playing guitar and bass. We played and talked about the music, and about the people, about freedom, Jazz, Pierre Boulez, New Music, composed music, Free music. It was fantastic. He invited me a few months later to play with another Company performance, and I started to play with Bill Laswell, John Zorn, Evan Parker, Peter Brötzmann, and others. I can say that Derek was the protagonist, the spiritual father in Europe about Free music, although I don't like the term Free music. My God, we are not free. We have a past, we have a tradition, a culture. I like to improvise. I like the term improvisation. More or less, Derek invented this genre, along with AMM, in Europe. Derek was a pure attraction for me, and for the concept of giving your life for this creative music. I was attracted by that. A year later, I went back to Europe and he invited me to play in trio with Evan Parker and him at the BBC. I met different British musicians there. I was there at the right time, and I never said no. I grew to understand sounds and music. We played with jubilation and with a pure expression, a human expression, when we improvised. Derek is a so important musician, not only in Europe!

Cadence: Talk about playing as a member of two very important and influential all women's groups – the European Women improvising Group [EWIG] beginning in 1983, and as a co-founder of Les Diaboliques, the trio with Irène Schweizer and Maggie Nicols in 1990.

Léandre: This was big. There are so few women [playing this music]. It's hard to be in a band, it's a quite hard life. It's difficult with trains, waking up early and catching, maybe three trains, because you have a gig in a small village and it's hard to reach. In a way, it's really more of a man's life, it's a challenge. I had heard the FIG, the Feminist Improvising Group [the precursor band to EWIG], in Paris, and it was fantastic to see for the first time, a women's band. For centuries, we just looked at men's bands, why not women bands? [Laughs] It's so simple. We had only a few fantastic women piano at the time, and singers in Jazz's history. When I listened to FIG, I was shocked in a good, a positive way. They made some noise and some sounds that were bizarre, but when you listened to the Sun Ra band and the Art Ensemble of Chicago, they made also very bizarre sounds and sang. I went directly to Irène after the FIG gig. She's such an important musician, she's the first woman in Europe, in '62, playing with Louis Moholo and with Kowald and more. She was the ONLY woman in all of Europe to be on the road. To be on the road means to have a band, to lead the band, to find the gigs, and pay the band. We are still very few. The FIG eventually became the EWIG which was Lindsay Cooper, Maggie, Irène and me. Les Diaboliques came after that. I've played with Irène

and Maggie for close to 40 years. You want to know what the difference was to play with Les Diaboliques? Women have a lot of humor and spirit, even on stage, and sometimes we make jokes. I love that. Men play Jazz SO seriously. Oh, God, and men in general [are so serious], only maybe Han Bennink and Misha Mengelberg, but they are Dutch musicians. What I understand to be the difference between men and women, women don't have this attraction to power and competition. Men, yes, I am quite sure. I'm quite sure. I've been on the road with them, and I've played 90 percent with them. Men are in competition, competition about the number of gigs, CDs, grants, and blah, blah, blah. I think with women, up until now, we don't have this feeling of competition. We don't care, we are happy to be together and play! There's no anxiety or stress over having to play like another sax player, or more fast, or more money, etc... Playing with Les Diaboliques was a pure pleasure, but it's also a great pleasure to play with men, don't worry, I learn a lot from being with them! And please, music is not men or women, music is… that's all.

Cadence: You've done a lot of work with dancers. What do you draw from the art of dance?

Léandre: I understand that as a musician I can learn about movement, structure, organization, rhythm, space and silence from a dancer. The three or four dancers arriving on stage can give you food for your music, in either spontaneous or composed music.

Cadence: You've gotten to play with a lot of the people who you experienced playing in Paris when you were a student. That must have been quite a highlight for you.

Léandre: Yes, I've played with many people. Braxton called me in 1982. I was supposed to play a solo at the Victoriaville festival in Canada, until Michel Levasseur [the founder] called me and said, "Joëlle, Braxton wants you to play with him." I said, 'Oh, my God! How to do?' But I knew already Braxton's music, his compositions, his scores, and I can read because I played quite a lot of New and Contemporary music in my past. So, I was ready to play with Braxton. My God, he had three kilos of scores, and we had only 3 days to prepare. With Boulez, to work his scores with his ensemble, we'd take 10 days of rehearsals. I looked at his score and said, 'Anthony, I'm sorry, it's impossible. We have only 3 days and all of this portion is composed.' He composed a lot. Braxton is a so important composer. NOT ENOUGH PLAYED! But I was ready, and we played. I have so many different stories like that with so many different musicians, as well as poets and dancers. You just need to be ready, to take risks, and to work! The risk to be you. It's work, but life is work. To be alive is a work. You could go – "Ah, life is beautiful!" No, life is difficult if you open your eyes and ears! It's a long process to slowly understand life. Did you know I played with Bill Dixon? I listened to him at 19-years-old, and I played with him a few years before he died. I met him at a party in Paris. He saw me and said, "You are Joëlle Léandre. Sit down, talk to me." We were eyes to eyes. I told him, 'Bill, in 1969 I did not even finish my Classical studies as a bass player in Paris because I went to the American Center and I heard you in duo with Alan Silva, and who knows, without listening to you, NEVER I would be what I am or have become.' His eyes grew so big and bright. He was so shocked and happy,

he gave me a bang to my stomach and arm, and he said, "We have to play together!" And we did. He asked what I wanted to do. I asked about including piano, but he said, "No, they play too much." He wanted to play as a duo, and we found gigs. This is the life I have, a gypsy life, an adventure life!

Cadence: You've produced four solo recordings. How do you decide it's time to release solo work?

Léandre: I record solo when I'm ready. The music is, before all, a collective meeting. When you play a solo, it's a moment very precise. It's an important moment.

Cadence: You've made over 80 duet recordings with a wide range of performers and instruments [violin, vocalists, spoken word, piano, vibes, bass, multi-reeds, trombone, trumpet, flute, guitar]. Why has that setting become your favorite?

Léandre: I love duet recordings, duets are art. You can hear and listen very well to your conversation. When you improvise, there is no hierarchy. You just listen deeply, in a way, you become the other one. The duo is fantastic for this. The question you should be asking me is what is composition and what is improvisation? This is the question, because when you improvise, you compose. There is exactly the same organization about sound, repetition, form, structure, organization, variation, theme or not. It's like when you compose, and you have this white page, you have to listen to do it. This is a deep and important discussion, talking about composition and improvisation. If you compose, you decide everything by yourself – just one person! When you improvise, it's a collective music, and you have to trust the musician with who you play. Life is always decisions, it's also how you select. I like to compose, and I get sometimes commissions to do that, but I really like immensely to improvise. [Laughs]

Cadence: The Not Two label released A Woman's Work in 2016, an 8-CD box set that documents some of your activities over the past decade. What were your thoughts on releasing such a mammoth work?

Léandre: You have to ask the producer [Marek Winiarski], not me. He wanted to make a 5-CD set and I told him I had more than 5-CDs of work, and he said, "Joëlle, you do what you want." [Laughs] I proposed different tapes, and I think it's an important box. Why not? It's also to say, hey, in this man's [music] life... Don't forget, some women can work, have ideas, can create, etc.…We know how men can be so macho, especially in Jazz! I don't know why. Can you imagine a woman arriving at a men's meeting? "Oh, my God! We have to be careful now, we have a woman in the band!" I think men are very well together. They drink together, they have fun together, they talk about [women]. I play 95 percent with men, it's like that! If they call a woman, she has to play FOUR times better than them. Do you know that? She has to be a strong player. That's why we are so few. This 8-CD box? I said to myself, 'Why not?' John Zorn put 20-CDs in a box. Why not Madame Joëlle Léandre? I like the title with its irony. Hey, women can do some things also, that's why I call it A Woman's Work, because many think woman's work is to clean the apartment, to make the food and take care of the children.

Cadence: You've said, "I never teach. I am not a teacher. I pass, I push musicians." That's confusing because you taught improvisation and composition at Mills Music College in 2002 and 2004.

Léandre: Exactly, I never teach. When I say that I'm not a teacher, I'm a passer. I mean that, how do you say it, I give a foot on the ass [a kick in the ass] - boom! In order to be you, you need to learn first, and then to unlearn. And when you unlearn, slowly you start to be you. It's a long process. You need to shut up and learn with humility. So, when I was at Mills, I passed something else to these young students about music, about looking at life, about a lot of things, and they grew…maybe. This came from Cage, again. It's important to put out our own music, slowly with patience! The young musicians who arrive here, for example, in Paris, for festivals or clubs, they know everything, all the riffs. They play so good, but I don't know if they play the music. You know how I call these fantastic American young musicians? I call them the "old young musicians." They are old! They have to listen to Braxton's music or all the other creative international musicians, but they don't. You know how I call this music, this commercial music? Sorry, it's commercial shit! People were afraid of John Cage's music and Rothko's painting, but art changes, it moves, and that's what it is to be alive. I'm okay to listen to the fantastic Beethoven and Mozart, and the so important Jazz people like Miles Davis. It's so good. It's big work for these students to take the risk to be themselves and to listen to the world, but without risk, life would be boring.

Cadence: Many Americans best know you from your frequent appearances at New York's Vision Festival, which was co-founded by bassist William Parker. How did you first connect with Parker?

Léandre: I played with Peter Kowald many times and Peter was very close friends with William Parker. The first time I met William was in 1979 or '80. I played in a quartet with William Parker, Peter Kowald, and Paul Rodgers in a bass quartet in New York. Then I received a grant in Berlin and stayed 2 years there. Cecil Taylor had gotten the same grant the year before me, and in this time, Cecil had a band with William on the bass. So, because of this, William was there, and we played in duo in Berlin. We became very good friends. I met many New York musicians there because Jost Gebers of the FMP label had invited them to come. William is like my big brother, and he and Patricia [Nicholson Parker – co-founder of the Vision Festival] invite me almost every year to the Vision Festival, which is a so important festival in America.

Cadence: Peter Kowald was one of the first European Free Jazz artists to have a strong physical presence in New York City. Do you have a memory to share about him?

Léandre: I was to give a solo performance at a Jazz festival in London in 1978. I had already started playing solo bass concerts around the world at that time. The organizer said he had another bass player that wanted to play with me. As I said, I never say no, so I asked who it was, and he said Peter Kowald. So, we played together. Peter was fantastic, and he later invited me to play in [his hometown] Wuppertal and Berlin, and I got to play with all of the musicians in the East and West Germany Free Jazz scene that was already beginning in the '80s.

Cadence: What's the hardest thing about performing for you?
Léandre: It's my life, if I don't go on stage, I'm sad because it's my expression, my language. What I like about Jazz, you can add this, is that I was attracted by Jazz musicians because they continue all their life to perform and to play their instruments. Music for me is instrumental life! They are a performer, improviser and composer forever.
Cadence: You've visited America numerous times. What strikes you as most odd about the culture here?
Léandre: I like the attitude they have. They can be a great child, they have a smile. They meet adventure with open arms. In Europe, especially the French people, they analyze everything, and they are very serious. What I don't like about America is that it invented this marketing system. They created this big industry that is centered around stars and money. I lived in New York twice and you can really see what's happening on the streets. You have these so, so rich people, so stupid rich, and just two blocks around the corner, you have the poor homeless. This is terrible for me. I think in Europe, it is more human.
Cadence: What are your interests outside of music?
Léandre: I read a lot. I like to walk in the forest. I'm a meditative type of person. I take time to look at nature. I planted roses and geraniums this April. I cook, I like food and wine. We have good wine in France, n' est ce pas? Ha, ha, ha.
Cadence: The last questions have been given to me by other artists to ask of you:
The first question is actually a question of yours that you gave me to ask William Parker in 2013 for an interview. You asked: "What is music? After my 53 [now 60] years of music, playing so many different musics, meeting so many people, playing so many concerts and festivals and being on the road so much, playing for dancers and poets, I don't know what music is anymore."
Léandre: Yes, exactly, I continue to think that. Because sound is both life and death, life is sounds and I'll give all my life to the music. This I am sure. I believe that. I don't know what is music after playing it for almost 70 years. I have to use a French term because I don't know how to say it in English – La Musique, c est [Music is].
Marilyn Crispell (piano) asked: "What are your perceptions of the current state of women in the music?"
Léandre: Marilyn plays the same kind of music that I play, we are on the same train. She has a Classical background, and suddenly she listened to Coltrane and she changed her mind in music. There remains many brothers and few sisters [in this music]. Creation should be made by both. I think women are the future because women have to create their music. Continue to invent! We start to be a force now in America and Europe. We will be more and more [in the music]. Men have to understand that we are a part of this creative world. That's what I think. We talk about sounds but sounds are not man or woman. I think it would be sad for women to just play with women. We have to continue to meet and play with our brothers, but our brothers have to open up their minds and their hearts and welcome the women.
Alvin Curran (composer, musician, sound artist) gave this question while he

and his wife were quarantined in California. After performing a few shows in America, they got waylaid by the coronavirus pandemic and were not able to fly home to Italy. The way he put it was they were "incarcerated" as "refugees in the luxury Greater People's Park of Berkeley, California." He said: "Much Love to you, Joëlle. In your opinion, who was Giacinto Scelsi?"

Léandre: Oh, my God, beautiful. Well, I met Giacinto Scelsi for 10 years by taking the train 4-5 times a year from Paris to Rome, and I'd stay for 3 -7 days in this first floor apartment, and Scelsi was on the third floor. I would practice his music. We'd talk about humanity, talk about men and women, about how this music is about loving sounds. Deep talk about how one sound has a soul, a heart. I remember eating a soup and mozzarella in his apartment! Scelsi's music can touch anybody of any age and any culture. Scelsi's music is really quite unique. It is a so deep music! Giacinto was also a poet, a painter, a musician and an improviser. All his music, especially piano music, was simply improvisation and recomposed later. He had a tape recorder on top of his piano. He always said to me – "Improvise, improvise." It was so important to my life to meet Scelsi, but also important to meet Braxton, George [Lewis], and the writers and poets. I don't like hierarchy, never forget that. Never I will put on the podium a person, a big figure, more than another one.

Myra Melford (piano) asked: "What are your memories of the marathon tour in the US with Tiger Trio in 2018, and on what went into getting your visa prior to the tour?"

Léandre: I remember the difficulty to bring my bass and travel case, and all the time in the different cities because it was a long tour. It was so funny, this trio, a brilliant trio! So rich, so creative! We had a long and fantastic meeting all the time in each city. We were laughing, you cannot imagine, during the buses, the flights. I tell you, it's a wonderful band!

Barre Phillips (bass) asked: "How would you describe the bass playing of William Parker in the overall scene of today's free improvisers?"

Léandre: I feel William has the Jazz history in his fingers and his feeling, plus he is a poet, a leader. He and Patricia are so human. They are so rare, I love them.

William Parker (bass) asked: "What musical event changed your life?"

Léandre: I cannot give you one event or one name that is on top of the other. I have already told you about some names, some musicians, some composers, some writers, some painters, some dancers. I don't want to make a difference. All my brothers and sisters pushed me to be me. I understood and I learned from them, and I have to thank them.

Cadence: Any final comments?

Léandre: No, I've given you my life, almost I'm totally naked, and I hope you will write a FANTASTIC paper! Thank you so much. Peace and love!

Interview

Joëlle Léandre

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Photo Credit - Ken Weiss

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"Mr. Kidd Plays the Bass: An Interview with Bass Icon Putter Smith" by Jeffrey D. Todd

Putter Smith's face is world-famous. The distinctive West Coast bassist has played with a host of jazz, blues and pop luminaries – Monk, Art Blakey, Bobby Brookmeyer, Warne Marsh, Art Pepper, the Akiyoshi/Tabackin big band, Art Farmer, Diane Schurr, Ray Charles, T-Bone Walker, Sonny and Cher among them – in a lengthy career spanning from the late 1950s to the present. But that's not why his face is famous. It is famous because of Putter's appearance as "Mr. Kidd" in the 1971 James Bond film, Diamonds are Forever. In this interview, conducted at Putter's home in South Pasadena in March of 2019 , the renowned bassist talks about his appearance on the big screen and its effect on his musical career; his brief but formative stint as a member of Thelonious Monk's rhythm section; what it was like growing up in the shadow of his brother, the great West Coast bassist Carson Smith; and much more.

J: When were you born?
Putter: January 19, 1941. I was born in the first half of the last century. [laughter]
J: Yeah. It's been a while. [laughter] So, if you were to give me the overall arc of your career, how would you do that?
Putter: I just fell into playing. My brother passed away 21 years ago. He was a great bass player, and in his day very, very famous. He occupied the same position on the West Coast that Paul Chambers occupied on the East Coast. He was on, he told me, 150 different recordings on the West Coast, on the Gerry Mulligan Quartet and all that stuff. And then, when they broke up, he went with Chet and traveled with Chet.
J: Oh, my. Roller coaster ride, yes?
Putter: Yes. And then he recorded and played with many, many people. Including Charlie Parker, and I have pictures of him playing with Charlie Parker and Chet Baker together. He was 10 years older than I, and he was my hero. My father was a baker. He worked for a big company as a dough mixer, which is kind of like the quarterback on a football team. Bakers have to get up at 2:30, 3:00 in the morning and start their thing, then they get home at 3:00 or 4:00 in the afternoon and go to bed. So I hardly saw my father until I was older. And so I looked up to my brother, Carson, as a father figure. And I kept a scrapbook of everything, when he was in Down Beat every week, or every month, and I had a scrapbook. And I listened to all that music. My father really loved music, and so we grew up with Stravinsky and Kabalevsky and all this great music, from Bartók to Beethoven to Duke Ellington. I remember hearing Charlie Parker when I was 8 or 9 years old. "Koko" was the tune. At the time it was just a sound for me. I didn't particularly even like it, but it was very recognizable. I was really listening to Dave Brubeck, Chet Baker, Gerry Mulligan, and classical music.
J: The West Coast sound.
Putter: When I was 8 he was 18, and he'd have people over to the house, and

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he would bring me out to sing along with Cootie Williams. He taught me how to keep time, then he left right about that time, when he was 18, 19, and went to New York. He had left a little half-sized bass, which I used to fool around with. When I was 11, I would pick up the bass and play along with it. I knew nothing – nothing! But I knew what it was supposed to sound like, and I would just play around with it. So at the age of 13, I'm in junior high: Bell High School, Stan Kenton's alma mater. Somebody came up to me and says, "You're Carson's brother," because he was famous, among jazz musicians at least. At that time, jazz was very hip, even to teenagers.

J: When was this?

Putter: 1954.

Putter: And he asked me, "Do you play bass?" I said, "Yeah, yeah." He says, "Well, we got a job at the Compton Community Center on Thursday night. Pays $3. You want to do it?" And I said, stupidly, "Yes. Sure." [laughter] Remember: I knew nothing. And so I went. I didn't have a cover for the bass. It had three strings, and I don't remember which three they were. [laughter] So now I'm playing, I knew what it was supposed to sound like, and I made it sound like that. Next thing you know, I'm working three nights a week. Everybody says, "Yeah, man! Sounds good!" What? I didn't even know the names of the notes! We had a piano at home with some broken keys and I used to play on that a lot. At one time I could do a pretty good imitation of Erroll Garner's style, and so I took some piano lessons. But the work was like that. Then at the age of 16, I had something like a religious experience: I knew that this is what I was intended to do with my life: to play this music. A couple years before that, a trumpet player by the name of Fred Stillman had given me his – I don't know if you would call it a Rolodex; it was just a bunch of file cards. And he said, "Call these people, get some gigs, then get the money." He had a book kind of like the Guy Lombardo book. I think it was written for a quintet. The cards had all the little VFW halls in LA, and then NCO clubs like El Toro Marine Base listed on them.

J: All the dance venues?

Putter: Yes, and they had regular dances. So I started leading dance bands. We'd go in and play dance music for these things. Before long, man, I was raking it in. I was making more than my dad when I was 14, 15. And it was really terrible. [laughter] Guys were making $2 or $3 a night, and I think on New Year's we got $7.

J: Still, that meant something back then.

Putter: My dad was making $40 a week, but I was making as much as $50 a week. At the same time, I was playing with some guys just for the love of it. A piano player named Ronnie Hoopes and Dave Koonse.

J: Larry Koonse's father?

Putter: It's his father, yeah. We've been lifelong friends. We're still the closest of friends. Ronnie passed away three or four years ago. So we were playing together, and I straightened my head and realized, "This is what God wants me to do." Although I don't have a belief in a God as somebody who's looking after me or taking care of the world, obviously. [laughter] But I believe there is a God. Of course, we know nothing. I mean that's why religion exists, I think,

because it's so frightening, the thought, "Where did this come from?" If you think about it too much, it's frightening, you know?

J: Sure.

Putter: My daughter, when she was 5 or 6, I think, asked me, "Who made everything?" And I said, "Well, honey, some people think God made everything." And she says, "Well, who made God?" And I said, "That's the question!" [laughter] I said, "Our little brains can't comprehend it. We're like dogs looking at a car. We know it goes." So, since I was a kid I've been on this trip. And I was fortunate: my father made it possible. So long after he passed away, I realized what he did for me. My head was filled with all this great music all the time. Although I say I didn't see him, he was obviously a giant presence. And he never pushed me to get a job, if I'm a musician.

J: What was he going to say? You're not earning enough money? [laughter]

Putter: Well, no. So when I received "the message", I immediately stopped calling and getting the Guy Lombardo-style dance band gigs. Immediately. I just stopped it. I said, "I don't want to do that any more. I'm only going to do this other stuff."

J: And when was that?

Putter: '57. Then one day, when I was 16, a drummer was working on a gig with me and he points down at his drum. He's got a Dexamyl spansule sitting there. And he says, "Take that." I said, "No, no, no. I don't want to do that."

J: I see.

Putter: And he actually kept on and kept on. He said, "Try it, try it, try it." And he kept on, and kind of forced me to take it. I did and was instantly hooked.

J: Oh, wow.

Putter: And so I had a period of four years… I mean the first two or couple years, you're just doing it for fun, and then it becomes an addiction. So four years in all when I was hooked. That became a giant setback in my life. But all this time I'm still studying and practicing and working, but it's mostly wasted. When I was 18 or 19, I was still living in a house with my father. It was on a top of a mountain here in the middle of Los Angeles, and I had sessions that started at midnight every night. And one guy that was there every night was Warne Marsh.

J: Good grief!

Putter: Yeah, Warne Marsh. And the music was so far above me. Maybe twice in that year I was able to play along with him. Most of the time I was just playing at the same time as he was. [laughter]

J: Yes, right. [laughter] Not quite the same thing.

Putter: No. And that was another thing: some of the guys I was playing with were Tristano students. I never got into the Tristano thing. And I really don't know what he did for so many people. I was never into him.

J: Right. But you were into Warne Marsh?

Putter: I was into Warne Marsh. I was into Lee Konitz. He's one of my true heroes, especially his early music. My brother's the bass player on "Lover Man."

J: So when was this period of addiction?

Putter: Late 50s – about '57 to 1960. I was really messed up on speed.
J: Did it affect your playing? I mean, did it speed you up?
Putter: I think so. You get in a trap. And I was stuck there. And then somebody – I don't want to say who – gave me some LSD, and I was 23. And I went out on the porch, and that was again a religious experience. And it was like the voice of God, only it wasn't really a voice, but it said, "You don't need anything." And it was like my shoulders relaxed. I went, "Aah!" And I never took another pill.
J: Wow!
Putter: Never. And that's almost – I don't know how long. I can't add. But I'm 77 now, and I was 23 then, so somebody else can do the math.
J: I'll do the math. [laughter]
Putter: And at that point, VR and I got married and decided to have children. I was so happy to be a human being again. Then I went off and got a gig. A friend of mine, Boyd Poulson, a very good bass player who now is a very prominent bass bow maker, was working with a guy named Don Randi.
J: He's playing in town still, Don Randi. I wanted to go to his gig yesterday, but I couldn't make it.
Putter: I see Don very rarely, mostly at funerals. And so Boyd says, "Come down and sit in on a set, because I'm going to leave the gig." I did, Don liked me, and I took the gig. I was so happy. Several great musicians came on the gig, drummers. There was a guy named John Clotter, who was kind of his main guy. John was in the band for a while, and then another guy I had been working with, a drummer named Jim Keltner. I got Jim on the gig and he was there for I don't know how long: a year, six months. And Will Bradley, Jr., was on it. But Don said to me – and this is in '65 – he said, "Get an electric bass, and I'll get you some recordings." I said, "OK." After all, I'm a family man. That's my main focus. So he started getting gigs, and I was recording with Phil Spector. At that time they didn't call it the "Wrecking Crew." It was just a bunch of musicians. And he had four bass players. His big secret was that he had four of everything.
J: Oh, really?
Putter: He had four bass players playing one bass line. He had four drummers, and one would be playing the bass drum and one would be playing the snare. It was four drummers doing the work of one drummer. [laughter] He had four saxophone players.
J: OK. [laughter]
Putter: He had four guitar players. That was his big secret. And I thought he was an idiot, you know?
J: I can understand why.
Putter: But now people are saying, "Those are classic," and I go, "Oh, Jesus. Give me a break!" It's horrible stuff. And most everybody on the band said the same thing. This is terrible.
J: Yeah, this is absurd. [laughter]
Putter: But then due to the worship of money, "He's a genius! Genius! He made 100 million. Oh, he's a genius!"
J: Yeah, right.

Putter: Right. Yeah, President Genius. [laughter] He was unstable. But I've done tons of that. So I was making money. In fact, I have a very small pension from the musician's union, and it's almost entirely from that couple of years.

J: What recording studio was this?

Putter: It was Gold Star mostly. I don't know who else. I didn't know anything about any of that.

J: You just showed up at an address.

Putter: I just went in and did the recording, because Don was Phil Spector's contractor. He got all sorts of things we did, recordings with Martin Denny, and Sonny and Cher. Cher was a very nice person, and probably still is. While the studio stuff is happening, I'm working at a place called Sherry's, six nights a week, and we were making $86 a week.

J: What were you doing at Sherry's? What kind of music?

Putter: I would say the closest thing would be like Ramsey Lewis.

J: And you were playing electric bass?

Putter: No, no, I was playing upright. The electric was just for getting these other gigs. In fact, on the stuff I did for Phil Spector, I was always playing upright bass. He would have an upright bass, a Fender bass, a Danelectro bass, and a guitarron, and those were the four bass players. Lyle Ritz, the upright bass player, when any of the others would take off – which was 50% of the time – he would play one of those other instruments and call me to play the upright bass. I was just a sub, but on upright bass. And then I was doing these other gigs that Don had gotten on electric bass.

J: I see.

Putter: So at one point Don says, "We're going out on strike from Sherry's. We're asking for $100 a week." So we went out for two weeks. And for two weeks I was getting up at the same time as my family, going to bed with my wife instead of coming home at 3:00 in the morning and she's been asleep for four hours already. God, it felt so good! And so Don called me up and he says, "Man, we're back. They're giving us the $100." And I said, "Don, I can't go back." And he says, "Well, that means you're out."

J: Out of also the other stuff?

Putter: Yes. And I said, "I know. I know." And I never held that against him. In my mind he's a dear memory and a dear friend – one that I never see, but that's how I feel about him.

J: Right. Sure. So, basically, if you didn't do the Sherry's gig, you were out for everything else?

Putter: Yes. Because it was all political, all that stuff. I was doing five and six recording dates a week, but it wasn't like the real big studios. It wasn't like Frank Sinatra or Peggy Lee or those big-time things.

J: OK.

Putter: So I was young and foolish and threw it away, but I felt like I couldn't do it any more. And then right away, I started working with Johnny Mathis, and it was the first time I ever was on retainer, and I was making twice as much on retainer as I had been at Sherry's. I didn't get any recording from it. But I continued to get recording calls for a while. Part of the recording business is, you have to hustle. You'll stand there and one of the producers will say,

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"I'm going to do this thing." I'd say, "Oh, that sounds really great," and sound really interested in it. So then you call them up and say, "Man, I just want to say I'm real excited about this project", and stuff like that. I don't think there's anything wrong with doing that. When you're in a business and you act like a business slave, OK. I would never do that for the jazz, unless I got some indication. I don't hustle jazz gigs, because they're too personal. But I did kind of do it for these other gigs. So one time I was on a Cher gig playing electric bass, and some prominent writer – I can't remember his name – had written a thing like a Jamerson bass line and it was [singing Latin bass rhythm]. It was a real nice little line. So the producer asks, "Can you simplify the bass part?" I'm reading it. And I say, "OK." So I go [sings simplified version]. "Can you simplify it some more?" We do a take, and he's just, "Yeah, can you simplify the bass part again more?" And I played [singing even simpler version]. "Can you simplify it again?" And so I go, [singing] "Bing, bing-bing. Bing, bing-bing." He says:"That's it! That's it!" At that moment, I decided this is not why I became a musician. I can make money somewhere else. And so the minute I stopped hustling, it was gone, because there were nine guys waiting in line.

J: Sure. Somebody else is going to step up.

Putter: And, so I had mixed feelings about giving that up but… Anyway, I did have the gig with Johnny Mathis. And I'm making fine money and going out and traveling. And one of the thing I loved about being on his band was you would spend a week in each town. And I'm an art lover, so I would go to the museums in town. There was a 10-week tour, and I hit every museum on the east coast. That went on for a while. Then I got a drummer on the gig, but he wasn't really capable of cutting it and they fired him almost immediately. He asked me to take his side at the union and say that he was supposed to get two weeks' pay. And he was my friend, so I said "OK." Then I got kicked off the the gig. That's how it goes.

J: Yeah, sure.

Putter: Later he had a chance to help me out the same way and didn't. So it's life. And you go, "Well, OK."

J: You do what you feel you have to do, right? And you accept the consequences.

Putter: Yeah, I suffered the consequences. It's very painful when it doesn't get returned. That was a painful thing in my life.

J: And that was…?

Putter: That was the 60s, when I lost the Mathis thing. But OK, I'm fine. I'm cooking, I'm grooving.

J: You got your fingers.

Putter: And by now, I'm a regular on the scene and working, and I get called to do Willie Bobo. And I loved it. I just loved playing that music. Sometimes Willie would be a week in a place like The Lighthouse or Shelly's.

J: The Manne-Hole?

Putter: Yes. But mostly it was a night here, a night there – good, though. And he was such a good guy. The money was never funny. He was the greatest guy.

J: What was he like as a musician?

Putter: He was aces. In salsa bands, it's really like a mirror of African bands: everybody has a small part. They have a lot of people, and they all have a little

spot in the rhythm. And then the genius of the band is the timbale player. That's the guy. I mean, like, Pancho Sanchez had Ramon Banda. With Ramon, you'd go see them, and they're swinging like crazy, but then Ramon would begin a solo, and it was like otherworldly. Oh, God!

J: Yes, it transports you.

Putter: Well, that's who Willie Bobo was. He was the timbale player. And he very rarely took a timbale solo, but when he did, it was like, "Whoa! Jesus!" So good. And then he got sick and died. So I'm working a mixture of everything and trying to keep it together. For a working musician – not a star – your mate is so important. I mean, I absolutely could not have had the life that I've had without my wife VR. It takes a very, very special person to say, "OK, I'll see you later", and you're walking out the door at 8:00 at night and not coming home until 2:30. And acquiescing to the fact that you have to spend a number of hours in a music room every day by yourself and that your schedule is so haphazard that it's very difficult to make any kind of plans or to go anywhere. You can't say, "Hey, let's go to New York for two weeks," or 10 days, or whatever. You can't because you've got a gig. It takes a very unusual person and somebody who really is in it with you and wants it for you as bad as you do. I can't emphasize that enough. Anybody who wants to be a musician, they have to be with the right person, because if you aren't, it can just fuck you up mentally. So I'm out working this country club gig in a tuxedo with an accordion player, and I come home and say, "Gee, I just made $150!" Now, my wife's father, Frank Bianchetti, was a boxer who was actually in the Jack Dempsey stables. When he met my wife's mother, she said, "I'm not going out with any boxer." So he gave up boxing. And he was good. He was a great, tough, Italian guy. I knew him for several years before he died. But he had taught VR how to box, and she could assume a proper pugilistic stance. Subconsciously, she would get in this stance, with her legs and her feet a certain way. And I come home and she's standing in the doorway in the pugilistic stance, and she says, "You just got the call to go with Monk, and you better say yes." [laughter] What happened was, Monk had done a tour of Asia, and was coming back. The tour was slated to end, and Charlie Rouse and the bass player were gone. I'm very sorry, I can't remember who it was. It might've been Bob Cranshaw, but I'm not sure.

J: Yes, right.

Putter: Bill Cosby, who's a giant jazz fan, had paid for these guys to go to a place called, if I recall correctly, the Manhattan School of Acting. Monk got a last-minute booking in San Francisco, so they called me. I was a giant Monk fan and had transcribed a bunch of his stuff. They called around and I was recommended by two different sources, so I got the gig. So I went up to San Francisco. There was no book and no rehearsal. I go into the – what was it called? – The Jazz Workshop. I go in there, and, in the mode of the time, I have long hair and the glasses.

J: Granny glasses? [laughter]

Putter: Yeah, all that. And so I go into the dressing room and Monk is there, and he's turning around in a circle. My thing is not to bother anybody. So he stops and he looks at me and he says, "You the new bass player?" And I said,

"Yeah." And he says, "White is right." [laughter] So at that moment, I knew everything was cool. I had read interviews of him, so I knew that he wasn't prejudiced. That was very funny.

J: "White is right." [laughter] Kind of pithy and cryptic at the same time.

Putter: Oh, and that's very typical of everything with Monk. I had two or three weeks' notice on this. And so I borrowed every record, every recording, and went through everything. And so we get on stage, and the drummer – Lenny McBrowne, he was a very nice man – said, "Remember this. Remember…" I guess he assumed I didn't know much about Monk, but I really did know more than most. So he says, "Remember that Monk is always right. And if he's wrong, he's still right." I thought, "Well, thank you." And so Monk starts playing, solo, and it's a tune I've never heard before, but which I found out was "Ugly Beauty."

J: Yikes!

Putter: But it's filled with Monkisms, so by the end of the second chorus, I have it together. My goal in that thing was to play for Monk. The rhythm section I liked with him was Oscar Pettiford and Art Blakey.

J: That early Blue Note stuff.

Putter: So I just played like that. And he really liked me. He liked me musically and personally. And I hung out with him every minute in San Francisco.

J: Oh, man. You're basking in it!

Putter: I'm telling you! [laughter] And in the middle of the second week, he got another call and I'm walking up to Mike's Pool Hall with him – that's where we would go on the breaks – and he says, "[talking like Monk quietly and indistinctly]" I have a hearing problem, and I've always had it, so I ask, "What did you say?" And he says, "Do you want to go to Shelly's with me?" Monk asked me himself! I was like, "Geez, man!" My tail is still wagging. That was something.

J: Oh, yeah!

Putter: Yeah, man! Monk himself asked me to go, you know? And so I went down there with him. The Monk stories … what I observed was so wonderful. Sometime I asked him questions – not many, because mostly I just wanted to be with him and not bother him. So I asked him one night at Shelly's, I said, "When you play 'Well, You Needn't', sometimes you have the bass going F to F#, F to F#, and then sometimes you're keeping the F and you've got the rising fifth, the fifth's going up, all the way up, and then a major seventh back down." I asked him, "Which do you prefer?" And he says, "Mix it up." That was so liberating! Yeah, mix it up! That was the opposite of control freak. I know he really appreciated that I was playing what I thought worked for him. Then, when we worked at Shelly's, we had a different drummer. It was a young guy, and his name was Leon Chancler. He was very young, 19 or 20. Astonishing drummer, like Tony Williams.

J: [laughter] Well, that's not going to work.

Putter: And the second night, I said to him, I said, "Leon, have you ever heard Monk?" And he said, "No, I haven't." And I said, "Well, you should go get a record, because Art Blakey's his favorite drummer." He got so pissed off at me,

and he turned it into like, "You guys are trying to push me around!"
J: You're bugging me. This is Monk, man!
Putter: But then a couple older guys that were around the club – Walter Bishop Jr. and these guys – they apparently heard about this. And they told me, "You're right, man. You were right to tell him that." Well, Leon later changed his name, and was still pissed off at me. And he said, "Now my name is Ndugu." And I said, "What does Ndugu mean?" He said, "It means 'lion.'" And I said, "Well, you're already named the lion." The name Leon means "lion." I saw him, I don't know, 10 years ago, and what a hell of a drummer. Jesus, what a drummer! And we got…
J: He was a young lion, right?
Putter: He was great, but it wasn't right for Thelonious. We kind of reconciled about 10 or 15 years ago. We saw each other and had a talk about it and and I enjoyed it. We said, "Yeah, man," and shook hands. "We're cool." He just died, two or three years ago.
J: Oh, wow.
Putter: Shocking. He was at least 12 years younger than me. Ridiculous! Anyway, the worst thing I've ever done professionally was… After I worked with Thelonious, a year later he called me – not he personally, but his family – and Thelonious was coming out and they were going to do two weeks at Shelly's and two weeks at – I think it's called The Jazz Alley – someplace in Seattle. And when you work with Thelonious, you're making $150 a week – Very, very low pay. They pay your way there, but they don't pay your hotel. [laughter] Of course, at that time, you could find a place for $10 a night.
J: Right, OK.
Putter: And I had just been offered, for the same period of time, to go to Australia with John Mayall for something like $4000 a month. And so I turned Thelonious down to go with John Mayall, who is a really fun, nice guy. He's kind of a cross between Stan Laurel and Rex Harrison. English, humorous, mischievous, very clever and funny. But it was completely the wrong thing for me to do. It was the Bluesbreakers, real simple blues stuff. So I went and did a month with them. Now the money is all gone, but every moment I spent with Thelonious is precious to me. I recall every moment of it.
J: How long was that?
Putter: Well, it covered a period of two months, but it was two weeks in San Francisco and two weeks in LA. And when we were in San Francisco, I hung out with him in the daytime too. Jesus, what an experience that was. I should say "is", because it's like it's…
J: It's present with you.
Putter: To have done that, you know?
J: Yes. Could you have kept on with the gig?
Putter: Well, it doesn't matter. If I'd just done that, it would've doubled my exposure.
J: I'm sure.
Putter: Yeah. Then I had several chances to go to Europe, one with Charlie Lloyd. I knew Charlie here in LA, before he became famous. He called me to go to Europe with him, which was about '71, '72. I don't know who else was in the

band. It might've been Keith Jarrett. I might've had a chance to do that. I don't know. Anyway, he called me to do it, and I said, he says, "It pays $150." And I say, "Charlie, I got bills to pay", and I'd have had to pay for room and board. The pay was $150 per week, which at the time you could survive on in Europe. And so I ask him, "Charles, man, can't you make it $250? I got to be able to send 100 bucks a week home. I have to be able to. I got two kids!" No. Couldn't possibly do it. Not possible.

J: Wow.

Putter: I kind of wish I had done it. And then when I worked with Art Blakey, Art said, "Come to New York and work with me", and I said, "Can you get me an airplane ticket?" Because we had no money, and we didn't have a backup, like a parent or relative that could provide. So how am I gonna ask VR, "Can you take care of the family until I get back?" We had no money and no pipeline. Jesus, I'd have finally gone to New York with Art Blakey, and that'd have been, whew!, major, you know?

J: Yep.

Putter: And I imagine that, if had gone with Charles, that would've been major too.

J: Yeah, he was still riding the wave at that point, I believe.

Putter: I heard stories later, long after it had happened. Keith Jarrett and Jack de Johnette were working with him, and they found out what Charlie was making a night, and they [laughter] went ballistic. "Man! Here you're paying us $25 a night and you're making this kind of money!"

J: And he's raking it in.

Putter: Yeah. I don't know how much he was making. It might've been a thousand.

J: It was enough for them to be very angry.

Putter: Yeah. But anyway, the miserliness of so many musicians… That's why guys like Lawrence Welk have a place in my heart. He took care of his guys. [laughter] Of course, I could never have done that gig, but… [laughter]

J: [laughter]. Imagine the biography: From Monk to Welk: A Musician's Life!

Putter: [laughter] Anyway, after about two months with Monk, I get a call asking if I'm the bass player with Monk. I said, "Yes", so they asked me to come down to Universal Studios. I went there, thinking they want me to lay down a bass line or something. So they set me down and hand me a script. I'm like, "What?" They said, "We want you to read this scene." Well, VR, my wife, had been in acting for about 10 years and was very good. She used to bring her scripts home whenever she would have something to learn. And so I had learned how to read a script, in order to work with her. I knew what to do. So they have me reading this part and they're laughing and I don't even know why. They liked it and said there'd be a screen test. VR said, "You've got to go!", so I go to the screen test. This was for the character I play in Diamonds Are Forever. And the character – I didn't know this until I got on the plane to go to the first shoot – was gay. That kind of threw me for a loop.

J: Oh! Seriously? I didn't know that either. [laughter]

Putter: When you say, "some of my best friends are Jewish and some of my best friends are gay people", this is true. When you're in fucking show

business, you begin to learn that all a person needs to be is stand-up. Just be honest and stand-up and that's just fine.

J: Be a mensch.

Putter: You can be in the closet or you can do whatever the fuck you want. And no judgment. I learned that years ago. When I was in high school and you're sitting in the room, and you're looking up the aisle, you're looking at the chicks… And if the chick's got a sleeveless, you're looking at her armpits… [laughter] And if they're completely covered up, you're looking at her ankles, you know? [laughter] Just like totally drawn to this. It's hard. Then you realize that a gay person, they're drawn just as strongly as I am. This isn't something you plan.

J: No. Yeah, it's not.

Putter: So I went through a period of asking myself, "Do I look gay?" [laughter] At about that time, there was this movie with Richard Burton and Rex Harrison, I think it was, about a couple of gay hairdressers. So I was trying to find some justification. "Well, if they can do it, I can do it." But I went through some changes about that, as did many others. The movie came out and I think 12 million people saw it the first week.

J: [laughter]

Putter: Wherever I went, a group of people would surround me and start asking me the same three or four questions.

J: Yes, your character is very visible. [laughter]

Putter: And I've always been a very shy person. I've always enjoyed standing on the sideline observing. And to be the center of attention was, it was…

J: A shock?

Putter: Very hard, very tough. I would deny that it was me. [laughter] "No, you must have me confused with somebody else." One time I was at the beach, on one of those rubber rafts. I was about 200 feet out from the shore, floating there. A little kid comes by and says, "Oh, you're the guy in the James Bond movie!" And I said, "No, no." And he says, "Well, who are you then?" [laughter]

J: Because you have to be somebody! I know you're somebody! [laughter]

Putter: It really bothered me. And I lost a lot of work. I mean, a lot of cats stopped calling me. I called people to ask why. "Oh, you're a big star now."

J: They think you don't need the bread.

Putter: And I was making less! I made less on that movie than I had been making on the road. I was on the road with a guy named Mason Williams, and I was making $800 a week with that. And on the movie, I made $600 a week. So I had 10 years of really, really tough times financially.

J: Wow.

Putter: Yeah, it was rough.

J: And so that's during the 70s?

Putter: Yes. The 70s were the decade of "Oh, shit!" But I kept playing with people like Kent Glenn and John Gross, and other people that were very serious about the music. I was working the worst gigs, and I'm still very grateful for the people that called me. Chuy Reyes is a guy that called me a lot. "The Mongolian Horse" was his nickname. And other guys.

J: Was this the first time you began associating with John Gross? Because I know he was on that Left Coast band that you put together.

Putter: John has been a fixture. He and Kent Glenn. Kent brought John in the late 60s. I knew those guys before all this happened. Jesus, it was rough. We tried to get food stamps. My wife can make any place look great. We had this big house in Highland Park, which we had bought for $13,000 and were paying on. That's what a big house cost at that time. I had $500 in the bank, and that was it. So the food stamp lady came to the house, looked around, and everything is beautiful. We had no money, but our poverty wasn't obvious. She said, "Well, you have to spend all that money in the bank, and then you have to sell the house."

J: Sell the house?

Putter: Yeah. And I said "What?" All I want is some help, food stamps, you know? And I got so mad that I began looking around for a way to make money without disturbing my music thing. That concept of making money without disturbing your music is a Tristano school concept. That's what Warne Marsh and Lee Konitz were doing. At one point Lee Konitz painted houses, and Warne Marsh was cleaning swimming pools. But the main thing was: don't take a stupid music gig, otherwise it disturbs your art. So I had that in my mind, even though I'd had five or six years of playing trash music. But I never, ever got serious about it, and I was always playing seriously with people as well.

J: Don't you think that you gain something by playing in different situations?

Putter: Yes, I think you do. But, see, I don't totally subscribe to what Tristano said. And some of it I disagree with violently. But I do like that idea of not disturbing your music. The idea is: don't get serious about being a rock-and-roll musician, if that's not where your heart is.

J: I see.

Putter: Just play it, but don't get serious about it. Then go play your regular, rehearse and practice. I used to read voraciously, and I got on a thing of reading about Jewish culture and all that. This is going to go way off the subject, but I'll get back to it. So when I was 11 and we got our first television – this was in '49 or '50 – they would show films of the concentration camps on one of the two channels we had. I'm watching this and I'm going, "How can this happen? How could people do this to each other?" So I began reading everything I could about the Holocaust and the Germans too, because it happened in Germany. And so then I got very interested in the whole Jewish culture thing and at one point even considered becoming Jewish. Anyway, in all this reading I came across the rabbis' commentaries on the Talmud or the Torah, one or the other. Well, this one was about what-if questions like, "What if the only thing you have to eat is pork?" And the answer was, well, first of all, you have to survive. If you have to eat pork, he says, go ahead and eat it, but don't suck the marrow. [laughter]

J: Yes. Don't like it. [laughter]

Putter: Don't like it. Eat it to survive, but don't like it. I love that. And so that's kind of what I mean here. You can start making money in rock and roll, but don't suck the marrow. Don't kid yourself that this is anything but crap. And I don't really mean that either, because for some people it's serious business,

and they're really happening. So I looked at all sorts of ways to not give up my artistic soul and to maintain, because it's a lifelong thing of practicing and playing your instrument as much as you can and very consistently. Now we're in the 70s, the period of poverty. That's when I discovered flipping houses. And so, over a period of five to seven years, I flipped about a dozen houses in my spare time, while maintaining ... And then realized at some point that flipping was the wrong way to go about it. You should buy a home. And so right now, I have this house and another duplex.

J: That you're renting?

Putter: Yes. In this house, there are four units, and three of them are rented. And then the duplex is rented. I'm making a living from that, so I can continue to work these $50 gigs and not feel like a fool. And at one point, when I first bought this, I had solved so many problems in the escrow that I felt like I could do anything. If it's a little house or if it's a skyscraper, it's the same thing. You find a piece of property with a problem, you buy it for less than market value – I mean, you're never trying to cheat anybody ...

J: Right.

Putter: It's just you buy low, solve the problem, and you sell high. Or, you buy low, you solve the problem, and you rent it out and maintain an income. And that's what I'm doing now. I highly recommend that, except that now, the price of real estate is so high. We bought this in the 80s, and it was the last piece of property we bought. And then you have to make sure you're totally insured. We had one property burn down.

J: Oh, my.

Putter: And so we had two years in the toilet. We had to borrow against this one to maintain that one, because you still have to pay for the mortgage and the property taxes. The insurance company is the worst. When I see these ads, like, you're in good hands? Yeah, you sure are. [laughter]

J: Hands that close in and squeeze. [laughter]

Putter: Blatant, blatant. And the thing I've found out through this journey is, anything that's up to, like, $40,000 or something, they'll pay you. But once it gets past that, you got to sue them. They'll just say, "No, we're not going to do that." They'll make you a very small offer, take it or leave it. But anyway: so goes the story of my financial life as a jazz musician. I knew that, if I devoted myself entirely to this for 10 years that I could probably make $10 million from it. I said, "No, I'm going to be the $10 million dollar bassist," driving 40 miles for $50. That was my choice. So, at the end of the '70s, it was a struggle financially and in terms of the quality of gigs. I was making a living flipping houses and still maintaining a regular playing schedule, but it was a pathetic living. Then, in the beginning of the '80s, I got a call through a friend of mine, the drummer Mike Stephans, to go on the road with Bob Brookmeyer. Bob was a hero of mine, from very early on. The first thing I heard was the recording he made with Oscar Pettiford, where he had that famous recording of "Stardust" and "Bohemia After Dark", and all those great things. In fact, Pettiford's solo on "Stardust" was the first thing I ever transcribed on the bass. It's just Pettiford and the piano player on that tune. Since then, many people have transcribed that, but I did it by myself, and it was great. Before that – I think I was 11 or 12 –

I had transcribed Dave Brubeck's solo on "Take the A Train." As much of it as I could.

J: All the voices?

Putter: No, just the melody. But the Brookmeyer gig opened the door, and we worked a couple of nights at Carmelo's. Carmelo's was the jazz club of LA for a number of years, and a drummer named Chuck Piscitello owned it. This was along Van Nuys Boulevard, very near Ventura. Everybody worked there, and I worked there with Brookmeyer probably three or four nights. And it was the kind of thing with Brookmeyer working in town, all the musicians came in to see him. That opened things up for me, and I began getting good calls again. After 10 years in the desert, it's like, "Oh, he can play bass!" From that point on, I got good calls. I gave up many, many years ago on ever making a living playing music, but not on being a musician. I had to set myself up to make money in another way. So when I started getting very good musical calls again, it was such a relief. Ever since then, it's been good. January and February are usually really terrible. But I'm playing all the time, and I'm working a decent amount. I've been going to New York for the last five years, since there's only a few jobs in LA. There's only a few clubs, and so there's only a few jobs, and people tend to become "the" drummer or the bass player du jour. And I was one of the bass players du jour for a nice period of time: did a lot of work, got a lot of calls, and got a little cocky, you know? And now I'm no longer the bass player du jour. There are people that like me and call me, but the ones that are advertised are Chuck Berghofer for older guys and then Darek Oles is getting most of the gigs for younger people.

J: Who?

Putter: Darek Oles. Yeah. His last name is a long Polish name, but he goes by O-l-e-s. It's Oleszkiewicz or something. He's a very good bass player, and so is Chuck Berghofer. And sometimes I get jealous. "Hey, let me get my name in the paper again!", because it used to be in the paper all the time. You go through these things.

J: Are you going to New York sometimes now?

Putter: I haven't recently. My wife had a knee replacement, and I kind of got out of the habit of going. I had a place to stay, which I lost, and I still have a roomful of equipment there – a bass and amp and clothing for New York, everything I need – but I haven't been able to leave town. And now I'm kind of antsy to get back. It's such an exciting place. I wish I had gone there when I was 20. But then…

J: But then you wouldn't have had the family.

Putter: The whole thing, yeah. But it's a much more vital scene. When I first got to New York, the first week I was there, this piano player, Leonard Thompson, says, "Let me find you a place to stay for 10 days." He found me a place, and I subletted.

J: When was this?

Putter: Five, maybe six years ago. So, the first night, he says, "You want to go and hear some music?" Duh! Of course! So, we go down to the Village, and geez, I mean, there's four or five clubs all within walking distance of each other.

J: Like 52nd Street back in the day.

Putter: So we go down there, and there was one place…. I can't remember the name of it. It might be called The Fat Cat. Well, you go down these stairs, and it's kind of like the de facto campus of NYU. The place is filled with pool tables and ping pong tables. Off to one side they have a jazz lounge, with old funky couches. Famous guys are playing: Eliot Zigmund and Todd Coolman and a piano player I'd never heard, Pete Malinverni. He is as good a piano player as I've ever heard: kind of a post-60s style, but sparkling, like Hank Jones or somebody. Really the highest quality. And then Todd Coolman was the bass. He's got books out on bass playing. Eliot Zigmund was Bill Evans' drummer. They're just the greatest. I go up and talk to them and they say, "Oh, yeah. I've heard of you. I heard you on such-and-such a record." They're, like, welcoming. On the way out, I just say to myself "Wow!"

J: Yeah, of course.

Putter: On the way out, I went upstairs, and I see this little brochure for jazz venues called the Hot House Jazz Guide. It's sort of like the restaurant guides you see in a hotel room, except for jazz. I go into one of the places it suggested – I think it's called the 545 or something like that – and God, I hear one of the best bass players I ever heard in my life: Martin Wind. Stunning. Like, man, God-darn it! Of course he never heard of me or anything, but I say, "Geez man, you're great!" He's in the same league as George Mraz or somebody like that. And these people are working $50 gigs. And so back to the pad….

J: Fifty-dollar gigs? They were probably fifty dollars 10 years ago.

Putter: I think they were more, because I mentioned this to Jon Mayer. I used to work with him on Saturday nights. He lived in New York, and said they used to pay more. Now they pay $50 and a meal, and the meal's kind of important. Anyway, so I get back, look through this Hot House brochure, and there are 25 full-time jazz venues in Manhattan. Twenty-five!

J: And that's just in Manhattan, not to mention…

Putter: In Brooklyn, there was like 10 or 11, in New Jersey six or seven, and then a couple in Pennsylvania. They have listings of every night, every musician, and I went through and looked at every name. There were names of 2000 musicians. And it wasn't like here, where you look down the list of who's playing and it's the same two guys. There, it's different guys on every one of them. I only saw two or three names that I saw twice. My God, that's a vital scene!

J: Yes. Absolutely.

Putter: And so when you get there, it's very, very exciting. So I connected with Mike Kanan, a piano player who lives there and had a spare room that he rented to me. That's where all my stuff is. So when I'd go back there, I'd fly in, get to his pad about 8:30 at night. And he'd say, "You feel like playing?", and I'd say, "Yeah! That's why I'm here." And he'd get on the phone, and an hour-and-a-half later, we were at a studio, and there'd be a session with three or four great, great musicians. In New York I was playing once or twice every day. I started getting gigs when I'd go back there, and I got to where I didn't want so many gigs. I just wanted to play.

J: "I'm getting sucked into the scene." [laughter]

Putter: But it's just so exciting. And rejuvenating. But since then, Mike has

had to vacate one of the rooms because of a possible gas leak, and so I don't have access to that room any more.

J: So are there any other important gigs in your career you would like to talk about?

Putter: Well, I didn't mention my long-term relationship with Alan Broadbent. We made quite a few CDs. That was very helpful. I certainly learned a lot. I still get letters about those CDs, and that's nice.

J: Was that a trio gig?

Putter: Yes, a trio.

J: Who was the drummer?

Putter: Well, it started off with his best friend from New Zealand, Frank Gibson, who's a marvelous drummer. Marvelous!

J: And Broadbent's from New Zealand?

Putter: Yes. He would bring Frank over to do the recording. We actually went to New Zealand a couple of times and recorded there. And then, the first drummer he used other than Frank was Joe LaBarbera. Joe was a wonderful drummer, and a superior human being. And….Let's see who the other drummer was. I don't think we ever recorded with Billy Mintz, although he was the drummer for a couple of years. I was dealing with my hearing problem when Billy was with us. He played so quietly, and when he would hit the cymbal with a brush, I wouldn't hear the hit, the "ching"; I would just hear the "bloom", the swell of the sound, which was rhythmically worse than useless.

J: Yes, right.

Putter: And, but now that I have hearing aids and I can hear Billy, I love him. I loved him then, too. Kendall Kay did a number of recordings with us, and he was the drummer for a long time.

J: So how about how many recordings did you do with Alan?

Putter: Well, it's probably around 10. It might be more.

J: Over a period of ...

Putter: Forty years.

J: Continuing to the present?

Putter: Well, he moved to New York a few years ago, and so we were unable to maintain it. It was the early 70s when we began playing together. A drummer, Nick Ceroli, brought me together with Alan. Nick was one of the great drummers, and a great guy and funny, and has so many memorable lines. He died of a heart attack when he was 43.

J: Wow.

Putter: Yeah, ridiculous. We had been on the road together when I was 18 and he was 19, and had been lifelong friends. And so it was a complete shock when he died. He was very funny. Some of his jokes are "What is it we have that nobody wants?" [Answer: Jazz] [laughter] When he struck out trying to get laid one time he said, "They just won't listen to reason." [laughter] And several other things. Another thing he said. There's this thing where bass players go "diggita-dong-ding-dong." He said about one bass player, "Too much diggita and not enough dong." [laughter] He was a very, very special guy. And so that was that thing. And then in the last few years, recording with American Jazz Institute, I've gotten to record with Lee Konitz. 10 years ago, I recorded with

Mark Turner and Gary Foster and Joe LaBarbera. That's just coming out now. It's a double album.

J: I take it Gary's playing alto and Mark is playing tenor.

Putter: Correct. And last year, I think around October, I recorded with – again, through Mark Masters – Oliver Lake, who just kills me, Andrew Cyrille, Tim Hagans, Gary and Mark Turner.

J: OK.

Putter: And there was a group of small big band arrangements mixed in but those were the soloists, and then Jerry Pinter, Stephanie O'Keefe, Dave Woodley, and Gene Cipriano. Ed Czach played piano on some of it. And there was Craig Fundyga on vibes. Anyway, that was released, and then it got a very high rating in Down Beat and they talked about how good I sounded. Said my name twice!

J: Whoa!

Putter: And then you go, "Yeah, yeah! Good writer." [laughter]

J: [laughter] "Yeah, What's that critic's name again?"

Putter: What I'm saying is that here, even at my age, I feel pretty vital, even if my being one of the central guys in LA is past. When you were asking about my formative years, did I tell you the story about Doug Watkins?

J: No.

Putter: OK. Well, you're influenced by everything, but there are certain things you listen to over and over and over, right? I talked about Charlie Mingus being a bad influence. But growing up, I heard my brother mostly, and he really stands up. You hear him now, you go, "That's bass playing." And he was never recorded as a great soloist, although he became a great soloist after his jazz career was kind of over. But the people I listened to were Oscar Pettiford. I transcribed some stuff of his. And Percy Heath, Doug Watkins. I didn't even know I was listening to Doug Watkins because I was listening to Sonny Rollins on Saxophone Colossus.

J: Yeah.

Putter: You know when you have a black vinyl record and it turns gray? I did that to two copies of that album.

J: You wore them out.

Putter: And I also listened to Paul Chambers and Ron Carter. When you listen, you don't realize that it's actually influencing you, but it is. It becomes the sound you're trying to get, but not consciously. But about 10 years ago, or 15 years ago, I was in the car listening – and I hadn't listened to Saxophone Colossus in at least 25 years. And I have this conception of myself, and people say this also, that I have my own voice, that I have a certain thing. I once heard a young piano player say that, with our kind of melodic invention, the way of playing against set chord changes, you create problems and solve them. And the way that you solve them is your style. And I went, "This is exactly what I believe." That's really what you're doing. And there's an emotional content to it as well. I have a background in theory and so I figure I have a pretty large storehouse of possible solutions. Anyway, I'm hearing this on the radio – and I think it was "Morität", the first recording I know of that song…

J: "Mack the Knife."

Putter: Yeah, "Mack the Knife." And this is Sonny Rollins, you know? And so when it came to the bass solo with Doug Watkins and he started playing, and I said, "Holy shit! That sounds like me!" Or, "That's what I sound like!"

J: Yeah.

Putter: But I've heard myself play and thought of Oscar Pettiford. I can hear things that I've assimilated from Paul Chambers too, and lots of other players. My primary listening has been to soloists: Bill Evans and Charlie Parker, Miles Davis. I was a very early admirer of John Coltrane. When the first Miles and Coltrane records came out, people were in serious doubt about this tenor player. But the minute I heard him, I went, "That guy is fantastic." And I still think that those are the best recordings of him.

J: Before he got into the sheets of sound? Where he sort of has more of the Dexter Gordon influence maybe?

Putter: I just knew it was melodic and real unique solutions to the problems.

J: I see.

Putter: And I would think, "Wow, that guy is amazing" and they'd say, "You really like that?" [laughter] And people would go on the gig and they'd play some honking stuff and they'd say, "I'm doing John Coltrane." You poor person.…

J: [laughter] That's so interesting.

Putter: Yeah. Then I got hung up on the Nefertiti album. I had it in my car and I was driving two hours a day and listening to it.

J: You were entranced.

Putter: I was, it was like, God, it was like mother's milk or something. And then I got to where I knew every note, and places where they all came in a bar late and where there were mistakes and stuff. It's charming to hear all that stuff. Beautiful, beautiful. And so that became a huge influence. And then since then, one of the biggest things I've listened to like that was Bob Marley. Something which I realized about his playing is that he uses fivetuplets, and so I did a study of fivetuplets and that influenced me. Nana Caymmi also became a fixture in my brain. I did the same thing with her that I did with Nefertiti. I would go, "Oh, God!" I don't understand what she's saying, but I sure feel it. And I analyzed it. I transcribed a tune called "Viejo Piano", which is with her brother Dori, and when you analyze it, you go, "Man, this chick is a percussionist." But it's soft. It's not hard-edged percussion. It's soft, but precise, like Dexter Gordon. Anyway, talking about my influences, there you go.

J: Cool. Now, I think I'll just segue into a related topic: your conception of bass playing. How do you classify the various concepts of playing the bass, and where do you fit into that? Is that an answerable question?

Putter: It took me many years to realize how to answer that question. At first, I thought that soloing and being the support guy was the same thing. It took me many years to realize that they're totally different things. Because when you're a bass player, in the kind of music that I play, the bass is a support and an affirmation device for the soloist, and specifically in music of the late 20th century, the bassist's role is to define the chord changes by playing the root or the third on one. And like all rules, everything can be broken, ad infinitum. But that's the bassist's role. And then it's about how you get from one note to

another. And the notes, aside from the roots, are far less important than the time itself, the time feel. Another thing that I listened to for a year or two was King Sunny Adé. And that time is to me is the time feel of the jazz that I love. I wouldn't want to limit myself to saying this is all I have to do and only this, because sometimes I'll play in what's become known as the Scott LaFaro style, and that is very, very satisfying. It really depends on who you're playing with and what they want. But the function of the bass is to provide a great time feel, a very happy time feel.

J: And can you characterize that time feel in any other way?

Putter: The African time feel, I think, is the basis of jazz. And there's also a South American time feel, which is a little different. The African time feel is so relaxed. It's not some hard-edge thing, like, "You've gotta swing, man! You've gotta swing," you know? "Hey! [claps loudly] Hey! [claps] Hey!" It's like [soft claps]. It's very easy and very natural. So part of it is becoming able to be that relaxed when you're playing, which comes from being fairly masterful of the instrument. And it doesn't mean you have to be the giant virtuoso. Charlie Haden could barely play the bass. I mean, I'm sorry: he was a dear friend of mine, whom I loved and love. But, [laughter] I saw him play quite a while ago, and it was in a small room, and in my mind I thought, "God, Charlie! I wish you'd have learned to play the bass a little more," because he was very limited in what he could do. But what he did with what he could do was so expressive and beautiful.

J: Had a beautiful sound to me.

Putter: And what's clear is, when you hear him on the later albums, he sang a song. And you go, "Oh, yeah. There's the truth right there." We were good friends. And then there's other guys, like we were talking about Wilbur Ware, who obviously had no training.

J: He was a Chicago bassist, wasn't he?

Putter: I don't know.

J: But he played with Sonny Rollins in some of those…

Putter: Oh, yeah.

J: … Sonny Rollins Live at the Village Vanguard recordings.

Putter: And Monk. I think he was probably Monk's favorite bass player. I knew some of those guys, like Charles Davis, and he just would talk endlessly about Wilbur Ware. And I think Wilbur was really the first guy to really use that broken time thing, where you don't just play straight quarter notes on the beat. He'd really break it up. And Scott LaFaro, I think, went there, with a somewhat more refined sound, but Wilbur Ware was the real thing, like Jimmy Blanton. And I just read a book about Pops Foster that's an interview of the old-timer who had played in the 'teens with guys like Freddie Keppard and Louis Armstrong. It's a brilliant book and every bass player should read it. And I had always thought of Pops Foster, partly because of his name, as an old-timer. [talking in "old-timer" voice]

J: Yes, right. [laughter]

Putter: But when you read it, this guy has perfect memory of everything. He remembers everybody's name and everything that was happening, and the vitality of his career. I think he died in the early 60s, and he had actually played

with Charlie Parker, all the way from those early guys. And he was a bad mother! He was really a good, strong bass player. And I have no idea what he sounded like. That's one of the things I want to find out. Another thing about the real early recordings is they were recording with one mic.

J: Yes.

Putter: And the nature of acoustics is that the bass notes travel slower, more slowly, than the trumpet notes. All sound moves at the speed of sound. And when you throw vibrations in it, it's going back and forth. And the slower the vibrations, the longer it goes sideways. So you have a 3-foot oscillation in a bass note, whereas it's minuscule in a trumpet. And so a trumpet player'll play a note, and 50 yards away it's pretty clear. The bass player plays something and 50 yards away, you can't hear it. That's why they're always saying, "Turn the bass up! Turn the bass up!" And where you're standing, it's way too loud.

J: Yes.

Putter: And so when they were recording, like, Count Basie's band, the bass player sounds kind of dull. And they were saying this is the all-American rhythm section, with the great, great Joe Jones on drums and I think Walter Page on bass. And they're always saying, "This is the greatest rhythm section," and you go, "Well, the bass didn't sound that good." It's because they're behind, slightly behind, whereas in reality, they might've been right on top of everything. Anyway, I'm sorry, to go a little theoretical on you.

J: Not a problem. It's all relevant. So, we were talking about your conception of bass playing. The tenor saxophone is an instrument where there are so many different colors that can be gotten out of that instrument, so many different kinds of sounds, but I think the same thing is true, maybe not quite to the same extent, but it's pretty true of the bass as well.

Putter: Well, I hadn't thought about what you're saying. I would think of different colors as more space or less space, and sometimes a solo done in wide intervals, not exactly arpeggios, but moving way up and moving down. And rhythmic solos. You can play "bass" solos, bass-type solos, where you're playing a variation of time, like Wilbur Ware. But I feel like I become a saxophone player when I play a solo. And I'm playing with a totally different mindset than when I'm playing as a support person. As a support person, I'm responding to what the other players are saying and I try not to feed them. I try not to finish somebody's line. I try not to get in their way, and I try to play affirmatively. It's mostly done on a subconscious level, but I'm conscious that my role is to affirm and to help the soloist. I worked with Bobby Tucker, Billie Holiday's accompanist, when I was working with Billy Eckstine. [laughter] I was about 20 years old. It was the first serious New York musician I had ever worked with. And he shouted at me a couple of times,"Don't do that!" [laughter] He would tell me what to do. And one of the things he said was, "You know, the bass line doesn't have to make sense." And that's kind of liberating in a way.

J: Yeah.

Putter: Accompanying doesn't have to make sense. It itself is not the focus. It's…

J: OK. So by "making sense", you mean it doesn't have to sound itself like a

melodic line?
Putter: Right. It doesn't have to stand by itself. So when I hear accompanists, piano players creating their own lines, it's generally interfering. When I was subbing at CalArts for Charlie Haden and teaching rhythm section classes – which I did for 10 years – I would really work on that. "Don't repeat what the soloist does," I said, "If you want to play a couple of notes in acknowledgement of a phrase, fine. But then go back to your support role." [laughter] And I got some pretty damned good results from the students. Drummers also would play along, and they sometimes play hits that are much louder than anything else. I said,"Don't do that. Unless you're doing a feature with a big band, don't play any louder than anybody else." And I remember this one trio that we were working with at CalArts, and they were doing this, and I spent the whole two hours working on the drummer. [laughter] The next week they came in and they sounded great. I was so thrilled. [laughter] Yay! So, whatever you do as an accompanist, you have to avoid interfering with the soloist. And then when you're soloing, everything in the panoply is open to you.
J: Yeah, sure.
Putter: One thing that's hard to break for bass players is the tendency to want to start and end every phrase on a primary chord tone, especially the root, because we're so used to playing roots. They're the bass notes, after all. But when you play a solo, you're really radically free of all of that.
J: So you've got to practice that freedom then, right?
Putter: Well, get my book.
J: Get the book! [laughter] OK. So, a new topic… A lot of people see the West Coast sound as a softer sound, a softer, more legato kind of melodic line. Do you think that came out of the more relaxed, laidback, and cool, if you will, way of being you have in California?
Putter: I think the main difference between the East Coast and the West Coast are the drummers. The West Coast drummers played very quietly, and the East Coast drummers played much louder. Not more aggressively, but louder.
J: Yeah.
Putter: I had a conversation with Lennie Niehaus sometime in the last 20 years, and we got on the subject of the writing, and he said, "We were all just trying to write Miles Davis' Birth of the Cool. We were trying to write like Gil Evans and Gerry Mulligan and those guys." And at the time, most drummers played with brushes, quietly. When you recorded anything at that time, everybody was in the same room, and so the drummer couldn't play loud or it'd be awful.
J: In my mind, there's a coalescence between what's happening musically and that laidback California vibe.
Putter: Well, it's a lot easier in California than it is in New York to survive.
J: Yeah.
Putter: Seriously, the weather's so different. And up until five years ago, it was very easy to find inexpensive lodging and you could get around with a car. And now it's become ridiculously expensive. Not as bad as New York, but almost.
J: And San Francisco's probably even worse.
Putter: They're the worst. But, the seriousness of the New York musician ...

Although some of us here were just as serious. And then the volume of music in the 60s: it got so much louder. My brother, when I was – I don't know – 12, 13, or 14, he played me some records, and he said, "This is the most exciting drummer in jazz. He's loud, but he's the most exciting drummer." And he put on "C.T.A.", Art Blakey with Miles. But then when I worked with Art in 1970, he was relatively quiet, because when rock and roll came in, with the isolation recording, drummers played at their fullest, loudest, maximus volume. And when I was talking about this trio that I worked with at CalArts, the drummer said, "I know you want me to play soft, but it feels so good to hit that thing as hard as you can." I said, "Yeah, but pretend you're a little teeny midget and you've got these little sticks and you're just hitting it as hard as you can." [laughter] There's a whole bunch of Lawrence Welk things that people have written down. One guy had a list of 50. I wish I had it. The most famous is, "And now we're going to play: 'Take A Train' by Duke Ellington." Another one was, "When you play, I want you to look like you're having a lot of fun, but don't." [laughter]

J: [laughter] That's a good one. So, the formation of that West Coast sound…

Putter: At that time, no bass player had an amp. And music was not loud. It was very quiet. Pops Foster talks in his book about how loud music had gotten, and this is in 1960. He said, "We used to be able to stand in front of a big band and have a conversation while they were playing." Real sweet, you know?

J: That's very telling.

Putter: I saw Count Basie's band, and they were playing their whole thing, and they were all playing so sweetly and softly, and then came amplifiers et cetera.

J: Right. Sure.

Putter: What music is now is ridiculous. I recorded a movie on Queen, a show on Journey, a show on…

J: Yes. I've seen the one on Queen.

Putter: You saw the movie?

J: I have.

Putter: Yeah, I liked it. And the thing at the end made me want to say, "Well, gee, they were really good." They had a little clip of the actual band, and I said, "Well, gee, they were really good." And so I recorded a thing of the actual band, and they were good, but again, it's such simple music and it's not what we do. Because we're actually creating music and dealing at a very high level of music theory, and also rhythmically so much more complex. And that thing about rock and roll – and I may have said this before – is that the rhythm section is not improvising. The bass player's playing a line. How boring. I think rock and roll is really a drummer's music. And it's funny: you hear those drum solos, and they sound like Gene Krupa. [laughter] And Gene Krupa was great. [laughter] But I like Philly Joe. He's my favorite drum soloist. But that's one thing about the kind of music that we play: there's a feeling that the four of you are one, and this thing is happening and it's so great to be in there. And when you have somebody that's playing a fucking loud drum solo, I don't care for it. Yeah, I don't care for it.

J: Yeah. Elvin was known for playing loud too. But when Elvin is playing time

in the Coltrane quartet, it's a totally different sound. I mean, it's this very relaxed feel. You feel like it's almost like the ocean.

Putter: Well, it's that big time. He's got that big time. But I've seen these clips of Coltrane's band, and if I got a chance to play with Coltrane, I would of course, but I wouldn't enjoy it. I don't want to just be the dog. "Here, let's whip the dog for 45 minutes."

J: Yeah, so is that a comment on what Jimmy Garrison had to do in that group?

Putter: Yes. And he was a very fine musician.

J: Yeah, right. So what wouldn't you like about it?

Putter: Well, physically it's unreasonable. It's fucking unreasonable.

J: You mean like playing "Impressions" or something like that?

Putter: Yeah, to play that long. And also, it's not really interesting from a bass player's point of view, because you have no movement of roots.

J: True.

Putter: And when you're playing free, that's interesting for about three minutes.

J: Yeah, [laughter] OK. Like Jimmy Garrison playing D minor and Eb minor [laughter] for minutes and minutes and minutes on end.

Putter: Yes.

J: So you don't, so how do you make that interesting?

Putter: That's the problem, right there. Well, I mean, you just have to get it totally on a time level. Just get into the ecstasy of the time. So, we were talking about the role of the bass player and what it's like to be a bass player. There's a guy I play with where I play nothing but broken lines, and it feels totally natural. It doesn't feel like I'm forcing to do it. And other people you try to do it, and it sounds like you're forcing it.

J: Right. Well, don't you think that there is a kind of analogy to playing time on the cymbal? Because, there's the classic spangalang, spangalang, spangalang, where it's just so mechanical and it's the same way all the time. And when you hear Elvin Jones, he breaks that up. Often with Elvin, that's not happening at all. That's of course only one drummer. But he was very prominent, to my ears, in changing that up.

Putter: And he could also play all the other ways, too. I mean, doesn't he play mostly brushes with Tommy Flanagan overseas?

J: Yes, right. A little cocktail trio.

Putter: Yeah, and totally capable. My friend Dave Koonse was standing with Kenny Clarke one time and heard him tell the bass player that they were working with, "If you've got a dollar, you should spend 95 cents on the time and a nickel on the notes."

J: I think Dizzy Gillespie thought that way too, because I've read some things where he was saying the same thing, and in fact a guy that used to play with him teaches this way, the pianist Mike Longo.

Putter: I don't know him.

J: Just think first of a rhythm, then put notes to it.

Putter: I think I say that in the book. I said that what we're doing in this music is we're playing drum solos and we're putting notes on the drum solos. And that's how you should think of it. Because if the rhythm ain't happening…

It's that thing of "it don't mean a thing if it ain't got that swing."

J: True. So, OK. I wanted to ask you about improvising. How do you practice improvising? Obviously improvised music is a spontaneous music. But, when you're practicing, you think about certain things. Do you think things like, "Well, this is how I want to approach the beginning of this solo"?

Putter: Often you try to capture what the last person did and continue what they were doing. And if that doesn't present itself, I try to focus on some aspect of the melody and build on that. But you're not really thinking. You're following a bouncing ball. And it's going through your head and you're just trying to capture as it goes by. And so your preparation is to learn how to capture what you're hearing. And a great deal of that has to do with mastering the instrument. But the bass, you don't really master it. You can't. It's always a wild animal. So, my practice…. At different times of your life, you practice different things. I don't practice improvising much. I do the basic fundamentals of playing the instrument – getting it in tune, getting myself warmed up – and I do that every day. Then I mostly work on new material. And I might play a few choruses on that. If the new material has some chords like the 96 chords that I work on in my book, and I'm a little foggy on some of them, then I'll work on those parts, and try to get smooth on them.

J: Smooth on the transition?

Putter: Yeah. Say it's Gm7 to Abm7b5 to Dm7 and the b5 chord is spooking me a little bit. It's like a sandwich of chords. I'll play the whole sandwich and try to get smooth on the connections. I'll do all of the work on that that I have in my book: arpeggios and scales and all that kind of stuff. And I might work on it for a few days. And then I'll try improvising. and that'll often lead to different ideas. But they're not ideas that I'll carry into my solos when I play it, because I'm just following the bouncing ball.

J: I see.

Putter: When you're not able to follow a tune, it's because you're really not sure what those notes are. When you have the material together, you can cross any bridge and go there. And most of my practice is trying to increase my technique and trying to be able to play across the strings more than just up and down a string. I've been working for the last couple of years in the higher registers. I asked Scott LaFaro what he was working on. We were colleagues here in LA at the same time. He used to come and see me play, and I saw him several times. We also played together. And we would ask each other, "What are you working on, man?" And he showed me what he was working on, and I described it – they interviewed me for his book. His sister wrote a book about him, and I described it in that. It's kind of phenomenal, what he's doing, how he was arpeggiating. And if you do it a little bit, you realize how quickly you can develop a lot of speed doing it, but for some reason I had never done it. I've never spent a year working on that stuff. And then you wonder, "Why haven't I worked on that?" Because since know what to do, why don't I do it?

J: Have you ever answered that question?

Putter: No.

J: OK. Is it that you don't want to, because it's Scott's thing?

Putter: No, it's not that. I wouldn't sound like Scott LaFaro. I mean, he was

like the Michael Jordan of the bass. You couldn't do that. But you could ask him, "What did you work on, Scott?" and improve yourself about 100%.

J: Gotcha.

Putter: He practiced a lot. His sister said he would stand in the corner and practice for four hours a day. But whatever you work on, it's all running through your head. And the more you know about music, and the more you know about your instrument, the more you can capture that. And that's what I'm trying to do. I'm talking mainly about soloing now, but also about playing bass lines. But when playing bass lines, I don't feel like I'm the boss. I'm responding. I'm the boss when it comes to the time feel, but even then, I'm really listening to the drummer as if he's a metronome. I don't fight the drummer. When I play with a drummer that doesn't have good time, I don't fight them. I just am busy the next time they call. [laughter]

J: Fair enough! [laughter]

Putter: I started to mention my practice routine. I think bass is one of the most difficult of instruments because it demands a lot of strength and accuracy. I probably don't miss 10 days of practice a year. I've just got to do it. I've practiced today. Gary Foster has a lot to do with that. I had a conversation with him almost 50 years ago about this. I always noticed that whenever Gary would play his instrument, he just sounded gorgeous! Every time, no matter when. And I asked him, "Gary, how do you always sound so great?" Because when I play, maybe after a half-hour it starts sounding OK. Gary saw that I was serious about the question, and he says, "Come to my office at five o'clock and I'll show you." And so he sat me down and told me what he does, and I have done that ever since.

J: What did he show you?

Putter: Well, he says, "First of all, you have to establish a routine that takes you through the entire instrument," and it took maybe six months before I had a routine. And he says, "You do that, and then you work on whatever is current." That's what I do. And it takes 35, 40 minutes to get through my routine. For years I was practicing three hours a day. And now I practice about an hour. But I do that whole routine, and then I work on whatever I'm working on currently, as long as I can, and then at some point my body goes, "Hey. That's it."

J: You're done

Putter: And now, if I practice an hour and 15 minutes, I feel like I've done a lot. And when I practice, I'm going to a real deep level right away. The routine goes like this… first I find my sound on the bow, and then I do intonation studies. Each of these things takes 5 or 7 minutes. I'll practice things a certain way. There's a bass exercise Gary Karr invented called "the vomiter." You start from a certain note, and slide up and down [singing] through an octave. I work each finger. Right now I'm starting on F# on the D string, going up an octave. I start with my fourth finger, then I'll do it with the first finger, and then with the second. I do it with the second finger last, because of some physical problems. Before that, I think I started on C on the A string, maybe for a year or two. And then I've been doing the F# now for a couple of months maybe, and I'll do it for a while. I've got the metronome going at 75. And maybe at some point I'll go, "OK, I'm going to move it up to 111" and do that…And I'll do these things

for years and just, it's part of my daily thing. Every six months, or sometimes a couple of years, I'll change what I'm doing. And then I play all the 12 major scales the length of the instrument. Most of them are three octaves, but there's one or two that are four. And then I do these Niels-Henning Pedersen pizzicato exercises. I've been doing those for 35 years. Per-Ola Gadd, a Swedish student where I was teaching, pulled out his instrument and he was starting with [sings a very fast, well-articulated bebop line], and I go, "Wow! What is that?" And he says, "Niels Pedersen showed me this." So I get him to show me them, and so I've been doing those for 35 years. That's the whole routine. At that point, I'm ready to play anything I want.

J: I see.

Putter: Currently I'm working on my reading. Before that I spent a year working on one of the Bach suites, trying to get the high end together. And after a year of working on this all in the real high positions, I went back and looked at some other stuff and I went, "Oh! Yeah!" I could play it easily. Big improvement, which, at the age of 77 is like "yeah!"

J: That's really amazing.

Putter: And I practice with a metronome. One thing it does for you is it keeps your ear listening outward, so that you're not just listening to yourself, but hearing what's happening out there. And then steadiness.

J: Sure.

Putter: So mostly I'm doing that. And then I'll work on current material. I've made a copy of music from Benn Clatworthy's band, and I'm going through that entire thing trying to get my reading better. When I was working with Toshiko Akiyoshi, Lew Tabackin and Joey Baron – for several years we worked together – and some of that time would be with Toshiko's big band. Joey was a delight in every way. We used to practice together – we would room together when we were on the road – and we would tape ourselves and we'd listen to it and talk. He was so helpful to me. We were in Japan for a month, and the process was you get to the venue at 6:00, concert starts at 6:30. After you get there, you just barely have time to take your instrument out of the case get it warmed up, then you do the gig, which took an hour-and-a-half. Then you put the instrument back in the case, go back to the hotel. The poor roadies would have to put the stuff on the truck and drive to the next place, and you'd go to the hotel and sleep. Then you'd jump on a plane in the morning and go to the next venue. And you wouldn't get your axe until a half-hour before the gig. And about the third week, I told Joey, "Man, I haven't practiced in three weeks, and yet the minute I take the bass out, I feel like I'm hot." It was like burning right away, with no practice. And so I realized at that point that it was essential to be playing all the time. And so my commitment is to practice every day, and perform five times a week. A performance is 90 minutes, full-out, with someone. It could be in your front room, or it could be a street corner, it could be any number of things, but it's 90 minutes full-out. I've been doing that for years. And very often, like this week, it's all non-paying work. But that's how I practice improvising: by improvising. And trying to do it almost every day.

J: OK, yeah.

Putter: But it's a bit hard in LA. That's what's so appealing about New York.

It's very easy to get guys to play, because everybody is there to play. This is more of a company town, where, if you've got the gig with Madonna, you're heavy.

J: That's what the sharks are swimming around, right?

Putter: That's right. It's a different trip. And I'm sure there's that happening in New York too, but there's this subgroup of thousands of serious jazz musicians.

J: Who are your absolute favorite improvisers, and why? What do you like about them?

Putter: Charlie Parker. So melodic, so interesting rhythmically. Truly revolutionary in his playing, and one of the things about a true revolutionary innovator, there's no doubt. "It's unbelievable what this guy is doing." Earl Palmer told me a great story about Charlie Parker. Earl was a studio drummer here, and had been in the Air Force. When he got out of the Air Force, he went to the Music Conservatory of New Orleans. Great drummer, and very successful. Very successful. When he was in New Orleans, he was the drummer that traveling soloists would pick up, and then he had a guitar player and bass player. And so they were doing a rehearsal with Charlie Parker. And a guitar player – this is 1949, 1950, something like that – and the guitar player says, "Bird! Bird! Man, man! We love you, man! But what are you doing? What is it you're doing?" And Bird says, "It's a series of miraculous recoveries." [laughter] And one thing about Bird… Miles at that time was playing nonstop eighth notes. Bird was rhythmically so angular and incredible! His spirit and his feel was so amazing.

J: Bird, OK. Who else?

Putter: Lester Young. So interesting when he played, and so heartfelt. All of the tenor players for many, many years, until Coltrane, were all playing versions – in my mind – of Lester Young. Art Tatum. I mean, talk about genius. Tatum wasn't an improviser, although he could improvise. But all those things he did are worked out.

J: Yeah, they're arrangements.

Putter: Good God! They're gigantic! I mean, it's just astonishing. When I was playing in the symphony, they'd have a piano soloist, and we'd play something, and every once in a while they'd have an encore. And I thought, these classical piano players should learn an Art Tatum arrangement or two, because they'd make a great fucking encore, man. And it would be so profound. Definitely up there with anything else they might play. Anyway, I think every musician should spend a lot of time listening to Art Tatum. I was very fortunate that I was exposed to it at a very early age. Norman Granz had given my brother 10 copies of the Hollywood Bowl recordings he made. There were 10 records, and my brother gave me one or two, and this was before they even had covers. They were just blank white covers. And I listened to that over and over and over, when I used to listen to music like that. I used to listen to music all the time, all day. I don't do that any more.

J: Why not?

Putter: I don't know. Now, the way I listen, first of all I'm immediately deep into analyzing it. And it's like working, practicing. It takes a lot of energy to really practice, to really get in there. And playing, too, it's always, I'm always

trying my best. I'm giving it my all, and so when I'm not doing that, I'm like, "Yeah, I'm relaxing." [laughter] It's my commitment. It used to be my passion. And now it's my commitment, and I think I still have tremendous passion about it.

J: That's obvious to me.

Putter: But I don't need to be doing it 12 hours a day. OK, so Art Tatum: everybody should put in 150 hours on him. Anything Miles ever did is worth study, and it's interesting to watch his development, from the time he was playing with Bird and it sounds like he can hardly play the instrument, to when he began to get tremendous technique in the early 50s, and on and on. You can see how he developed in every way. Don Cherry used to come to my house and we'd play, the two of us. Don played with me many times, and he was a very, very good musician.

J: I love his playing.

Putter: Very original. Based in the whole bebop thing. At the end, I thought Miles was channeling Don Cherry. That's what I thought and what I think. And another thing: my brother was playing with Chet Baker, and he said, when they went to Boston, that Miles was in there every night to hear him. And I do think that Miles was affected – I don't want to say "influenced" – by Chet. Before Chet, Miles played with remnants of Roy Eldridge, and all of the trumpet players. Toward the end of the solo they would get higher, and maybe end on a high note. And the other thing is there was a kind of vibrato. At a certain point, Miles loses the vibrato and no longer feels like he has to end up high. As far as the notes and rhythms that Miles plays, I don't think he was affected by Chet, but I do think he was in other ways. In his autobiography, he denies it, which to me is kind of like, "Oh, yeah." [laughter] "Tell me another one."

J: I agree.

Putter: And Chet was another great, great improviser. I don't know if people are aware of how really great he was. And early Lee Konitz. Chet Baker is so melodic and soulful. Beautiful! God, I love it! And Ethan Iverson told me, he says, "Man, you remind me of Chet Baker." I go, "Well, thanks, man." I couldn't understand what he meant, but that's Ethan. And Lee Konitz's solo on "Lover Man" is to me the apex.

J: Which record is that on?

Putter: It's on Konitz meets Mulligan. My brother's playing bass on that, which is why I had it.

J: OK.

Putter: But "Lover Man" captured me. I used to listen it over and over and over. And I wasn't listening in an analytical way. I'm just soaking it in. And it's just like the rat with the electrodes leading to the brain. "Hey, yeah! Press it again. Again, again." [laughter] I never got into analyzing records until the last 10 years. But his solo on that just totally floors me in every way. And it's like another realm of emotion. It's otherworldly. And technically so high up there. They used to say "cool," but he's the hottest. He just wasn't playing obvious, what they would think of as "hot licks" and funk notes and stuff, but it's really on fire. He plays very, very little now, without much technique. Let's see. Who else? One of my favorite bass players, not as a soloist but for his time, is Ron

Carter. I just love his sound and his time feel.

J: I want to ask you about his sound. He has this, to my ears, like a rubber band sound. There's so much sustain. [Putter agrees] Is that from the pickup, or does that have to do with the strings he uses?

Putter: Well, he uses a certain kind of a string. I bought a couple of sets of those strings and I actually felt like I got more like a Ron Carter sound.

J: Yes.

Putter: The thing is, they're expensive strings and they break down very quickly. So, if the company is giving them to you, it's great, because a set of strings at discount is close to 250 bucks. When I put these regular strings on, they last. I've been getting a year out of them, or more than a year. When I was doing Carter's strings – I can't remember the name of them, but they're black and smooth – sometimes I put them on and they broke immediately. They're very flimsy and expensive. If you get two months out of those, you're doing good. So it's too expensive for me. But I know that he gets them for free. If I were a string company, I'd give Ron Carter whatever he wanted.

J: Yeah, good call! [laughter] What do you like about his time feel?

Putter: Well, his time is perfect. His sound is very even, it doesn't go up and down. It's very smooth, and his time is just so exactly right, perfectly in the middle. Somebody that was a big influence to me, that I didn't mention before, who doesn't really get their due, was Red Mitchell. Red Mitchell was one of the greatest bass soloists ever. There are pockets of people that get it, and he killed me. No doubt about it, there wasn't anybody like him. And he also came out of Oscar Pettiford. I also have to talk about Bill Evans. I mean, I've spent a thousand hours listening to Bill Evans.

J: Did you play with him?

Putter: Oh, no. My favorite albums are… The albums he did with Scott LaFaro are wonderful and everything, but my favorites are the ones with Chuck Israels. And I don't know, there's something about that band that's just so great. And so was the one with Scott La Faro. Scott was a wonder! Jesus! I heard him live several times in different situations, and we actually played together once. And I heard him with Stan Getz and Roy Haynes and Steve Kuhn. Stan Getz was waving the piano player out every time. I think the piano player was really getting pissed, but Scott was doing some incredible things. And just how we walked the bass. He was building lines in a different way than I'd ever heard. I wish I had written them down at the time. But whew! Scott LaFaro, man.

J: What was so extraordinary about the way he built his lines?

Putter: Well, he was constructing his in groups of 6- or 7-note phrases, and then it'd repeat itself, and he was going all the way through that while the chords are changing 4 beats at a time. He was transcending bass walking. Yeah, he was something, and he should've been recorded a lot more than he was. Too bad. Let's see... Other great soloists? Sonny Rollins. I lived off of Sonny Rollins for years and years, and whew! Amazing! Who's next on the list?

J: Well, you had mentioned Warne Marsh before. Is he in the list of some of your favorite improvisers?

Putter: Oh, yeah! Great, great improviser. I was going to say, when I was

playing with him when I was 20, it was way, way over my head. And then, now when I hear recordings of him, I was like, "Whoa! Wonderful." And the other day – anything that happened in the last 30 years is "the other day" at my age – I hear a band on the radio, I hear the tenor player and he's very good, and a good rhythm section. I'm trying to figure out who the tenor player is by process of elimination. I thought, "Well, it could be Joe Henderson. It could be so and so …." I had it down to two or three guys it could be. And then a second tenor player came on, and it was as if a hologram of Warne Marsh were standing there. There was just no mistaking it. It was Warne Marsh, nobody else. And as it turned out, Pete Christlieb was the other tenor player. He's a great tenor player.

J: No question.

Putter: But I mean he's mainstream. It could be Joe Henderson, it could be Gene Ammons or somebody else.

J: Yes, right. It's got elements of…

Putter: Yeah. Got great everything. But Warne was, whew!

J: One guy. [laughter]

Putter: Yeah. And I kind of think that's the goal of playing. It's not to be one guy, but that you are one guy. And if you work at it enough, you will emerge. Your solutions to the problems and the way you go about it. And everything you learn changes your playing. You learn one thing and you keep learning stuff and more comes out. I thought, when I spent six months working on fivetuplets, it didn't emerge in my playing for several years. I was trying to put it in there, it just wouldn't go. And then I was, a couple of years later I was listening to a playback and I go, "Oh, shit! I'm playing fivetuplets!" [laughter] But they sound totally natural. They didn't stand out, like, "What is that?"

J: Over two beats?

Putter: Five against two, and five against four. And then Coltrane. I really love Coltrane with Miles – that's great, great stuff – and of course some stuff he did afterwards. The thing that annoys me is when it goes on too long. And I know that there's people going to go, "You jerk!" But when it goes too long, I stop listening. In my mind they've gone too far. I was at a gig and eating before the gig, and a thing comes on and I go, "Whoa! God, that's good!" Second chorus, "Oh, shit! It's even better!" Third chorus, "Wonderful! Wonderful!" Fourth chorus, I'm no longer listening.

J: Yeah, you're eating. [laughter]

Putter: It's just this Charlie Parker thing. Bird said that if you play more than three choruses, you're just practicing. After all, we are performing. In the end we're actually entertaining people with what we do. It's not just about how far we can get. We also have to consider the audience. I don't mean pandering. You're still playing.… And when I worked with Thelonious, his pacing of the set and mixing up of tempos and all that sort of thing was very deliberate. I got to where I felt I knew what he was going to play next, and there it was! That was a wonderful feeling.

J: I want to ask you something about working with Thelonious. You didn't work with Charlie Rouse?

Putter: Correct.

J: So, you might not have any answer to this, but I always wonder. Charlie Rouse, when I listen to him on, say, Further Definitions with Benny Carter, his pitch is perfect on that. [Putter agrees] But…

Putter: When was that made, do you know?

J: That's in the early 60s, I think. Probably '61, '62, '63, would be my guess.

Putter: Well, that's the thing: it just really bothers me, his intonation. And then he made that record Sphere with the group Sphere? He's playing perfectly in tune. And I attributed it to tuners, electronic tuners. And if he played perfectly on Benny Carter's album, I'd maybe attribute it to Benny Carter. I know that movie of Thelonious that Clint Eastwood brought out… You know, the documentary? At one point Thelonious is trying to get Charlie in tune. Have you ever seen that movie?

J: No, I haven't.

Putter: Well, it's an interesting movie. The thing about working with Thelonious is I realized what a normal human being he is. Everybody tries to make him into be some weird guy and he's half-nuts and all that, and he may have been. But to me, he was a normal guy with normal reactions. But a very unusual take. They're in a recording studio somewhere in Europe, and he says to the recording engineer, "Now, don't tell us we're going to record if you're not going to do it. Get the sound together and then let us work." I forget exactly how he said it, but he's very succinct. But clearly, he's saying, don't let us start playing and then cut us off in the middle of it. So the engineer says, "OK, everybody." Thelonius asks him, "Are you sure?" "Yeah." So they start playing this thing, and they're two or three minutes into it, and then the engineer comes in and says, "OK, we're ready to go now." And Thelonious' says, "Oh, shit!" Like, we can't be doing this over and over and over again. We're not trying to play the exact same thing. We're really making this up, you know? And you run out of…

J: Ideas?

Putter: There's a thing, it has…

J: The freshness.

Putter: Yeah, it has a thing, and then that's it.

J: I ran across something recently that Michael Brecker said. He said that usually the first take is the best.

Putter: Yes. Well, something interesting regarding Michael Brecker and Warne Marsh… Gary Foster was going to somewhere like Virginia. He'd been picked up at the airport with Michael Brecker at the same time. They were in a limo together and the tape was playing, and Michael Brecker says, "Is that Warne?" Gary says, "Yeah, that's Warne." And Brecker said – this is what Gary told me – he said, "He's really improvising. I have a whole bunch of these licks that I've pieced together, but Warne is really making up fresh stuff." And I love that, when people say things like that.

J: I know what you mean.

Putter: We all have licks that work in situations, but this material of mine, I am actually improvising: I'm actually making up new stuff, and I play stuff I've never played before and will never play again. And then I have stuff that I know works. I hear it and I know it is going this way, but I am improvising.

J: Yes. And that's a beautiful statement, because it's a tribute both to Michael

and to Warne.
Putter: I agree. A beautiful thing to say.
J: …especially for someone who has been recognized so highly for all the things that he had done as Michael Brecker. [Putter agrees] And of course Warne, [laughter] who…
Putter: … who got nothing.
J: [laughter] Yeah, bupkus.
Putter: Nothing. Yeah.
J: Absolutely. But all the accounts I've heard of Michael Brecker, he was a really nice and good guy.
Putter: Sounds like it.
J: And just as a point of interest to me, I've always loved Art Pepper. I know you played with Art.
Putter: Yeah.
J: How was he as a player when you played with him?
Putter: Way past it. And he didn't care for me. When somebody doesn't care for you, you usually don't like playing with them.
J: Yeah. And so this was late in his career?
Putter: Yeah. But his earlier stuff, it doesn't get any better than that.
J: Yes.
Putter: And I did listen to him quite a bit. And then other people that I've listened to extensively – I said Nana Caymmi – Billie Holiday. I mean, I've spent thousands of hours listening to Billie Holiday. And when you get down to analyzing what she did, say, rhythmically, it's incredible. She would change a melody completely and yet it's still the same melody. She does a thing in "Say It Isn't So." You read the sheet music of that and it's like [singing]. And when she sings it, it's completely embellished, and yet it's still the same melody. And she's not doing a jazzy version of it, she's just singing that song. And I was completely under the spell of Ray Charles for many years. It's unfortunate sometimes when you work with a great musician like that. I worked with him. He called me up a couple times to work with him, and I was too busy. Then one time I was able to do it. Then, within a few weeks, I saw what a terrible person he was. A cruel – I mean really cruel, not funny, really cruel person. I said, "I don't need this." He wasn't cruel to me, but to these young black musicians that were auditioning. He and his buddy, Joe Adams were wallowing in it sadistically. I'm sorry I didn't stick with him and get a couple of years on the road with Ray Charles, but I didn't need it at the time, and I didn't want it. And consequently, I can't listen to him.
J: Yeah. I understand.
Putter: And that's a shame, because he was really marvelous.
J: Genius musician.
Putter: True.
J: I studied Richard Wagner, the opera composer, for a long time.
Putter: The anti-Semite?
J: Well, yes. And a transcendent genius. So there's this bizarre pairing of genius and anti-Semitism. Often genius can be allied with very unsavory personal characteristics.

Putter: I'm not that into it. I just knew that he's a known anti-Semite, and that makes him a terrible person. I have never been captured by his music.
J: Sure.
Putter: Although… When I studied with Leonard Stein, Schönberg's assistant, at LA City College, we studied Structural Functions of Harmony. The book is almost built on these couple of bars of Wagner's music.
J: Probably the opening chords from Tristan und Isolde. Two of the most famous chords in Western music.
Putter: Yeah. The whole course was built around those two chords. But I never did get into listening to him. Although, I'll tell you, last night there was an old film on, and they had a little bit of something of Wagner, and I listened to it and I thought, "Well, that's really very good." But, yeah. I don't want to like him, you know?
J: I understand. It's like so many things. I was talking to a friend last night about John Scofield's guitar lines. I just have never gotten them. When I hear them, I say, "Wow, he's obviously a great player." But it just never grabbed me for some reason.
Putter: Yeah, I mostly have followed my gut totally on that, but I made an exception with Brad Mehldau. People that I really respect were talking about how great he is. So I got a copy of The Art of the Piano, and I studied it. I made myself listen to it every day. I had it in the car and listened to it every day. And I finally got to where I could analyze what he was doing. On "All the Things You Are" he's going a bar of 4/4, a bar of 3/4, and in the bar of 3/4 he was playing 4 against 3. So he'd play a line, and then they'd go into that other thing flawlessly. And killing me, technically. But it's still not moving me emotionally. And so after months of studying that, I had a dream that I was at a party in a room kind of like this. There were little couches and beige lights, and in the corner there was Brad Mehldau. It was funny. [laughter] And it was beautiful! I mean, it was moving me emotionally, it was beautiful. And I got out of bed and put it on, and it was beautiful. I thought, "Ah, Jesus, this is beautiful!" Really got it on an emotional level. And then when I was in New York, I went to see him, and again I was locked out. Again, I couldn't follow him. It was too much work. But I know that he's a giant. I did the same thing with Ornette, when I first heard him. And I listened to Something Else every day for six months. But it never clicked with me. There's too many wrong notes. Ben Webster's another giant to me. You put on Webster and he plays the most beautiful thing. You never think, "Gee, too bad he never got into Coltrane."
J: No, you don't. [laughter] You just melt, is what happens.
Putter: Yeah. This is music. It is also very interesting. But I never got there with Ornette, although Don Cherry really knocks me out. And then I heard this story from Don Payne, the bass player on that first album. It was originally Don Cherry's group. And the guys in the MJQ listened to them, and they said, "Well, you need to do original tunes," and Don says, "Well, I know this guy over in" – wherever it was – "who writes these interesting tunes," so they spent a month or two learning Ornette's tunes. They came back and did an audition again, and Lester König, the producer of Contemporary Records, was there. Lester comes up on the stage and he says, "Mr. Coleman, I love your band, I

love your music, I love you," da-da-da, and gave the recording date to him, and it was Don Cherry's band. So that was pretty bad.

J: That's pretty rough.

Putter: I know that a lot of young kids say "I'm into Ornette." I go, "Jesus! What about Charlie Parker?" Because it sounds to me that that's what he's trying to do. It just doesn't resonate with me. I mean, it's OK. And then everything he's done since, and he gets these McArthur grants? I know he's dead and you shouldn't talk ill of the dead. And I did talk to him. Once I went to see him with Scott LaFaro playing. Just not up to the level, you know? Again, I'll be banned for life for saying that.

J: Yes. Well. [laughter] I remember one story I heard, I think this came through the connection with James Clay, because James Clay is from Fort Worth, and…

Putter: James Clay was one of my brother's friends. And in the short time I worked with Ray Charles, James was on the band. They wanted my brother to do the recording, because he was pretty famous, and I asked him, "Who will you use?" He said, "I use James Clay and Larance Marable." I got to be very close friends with Larance Marable years and years later. Great drummer. You were saying something about Ornette and James?

J: Yes, so Clay is in LA, with Ornette, and they're reading through a set of exercises or something. So they're playing along, and all of a sudden Ornette plays all this other stuff, and James says, "What are you doing?" Ornette says, "Well, I'm just playing what he meant to write."

Putter: [laughter] Yeah. Well, I felt like Ornette was kind of a simpleton, that's what I thought. That's what I felt. And he was a very sweet guy, very nice fellow.

J: Maybe that's the best way to understand his music. Maybe it's more like folk music in a way.

Putter: I don't know. I don't get a lot of modern, like super-modern art. I think the benchmark is Rembrandt, Picasso, you know?

J: Yeah, if you're going modern, Picasso. [laughter]

Putter: Like, to start off with the mastery of perspective and dimension and to basically learn how to fucking paint, you know?

J: Yes. [laughter]

Putter: And that's what I feel about so much music you hear. The guys really can't play. They really don't have the instrument together. But they can make funny noises and have an attitude.

J: You were talking about Charlie Haden not having the mastery of the bass per se, but within his limited range, he can be expressive.

Putter: Absolutely. Very expressive. In fact, I think that he opened up a certain area. I was saying that Miles was affected by Chet Baker. I feel like I was affected by Charlie Haden. And when I first heard Charlie – I think that it was "Face of the Bass" on one of the early albums, I thought, "I don't want to hear any more of that, because I don't want that to influence me." Because first of all, it was so easy to do, and so it was very powerful and emotional and everything, but it was really extremely simple. But with the right attitude, you can make it sound like, "This is really some deep shit." Not that Charlie wasn't deep. He could play – I mean, he couldn't play, but…

J: He could play, but he couldn't play. [laughter]
Putter: It was very, very limited.
J: OK, yes.
Putter: He made the most of what he had. And he was a really special human being. I'm trying to think of other people that have had a big effect on me. Walter Norris had a big effect on me. He kind of took me under his wing when I was about 17. We used to play together every day, and we would go through "Stella by Starlight." We'd go up a fourth each chorus, and he'd take 12 choruses and I'd take 12 choruses. That was typical of what we did. We really worked hard. Then he went to New York. I recorded with him two or three times, and I'm on his last recording, in Berlin, in 2005, I think. Another guy I loved to play with out here was Paul Bley. I worked for six months with Carla Bley in a little coffee shop, just a duo. I saw her in New York at a memorial for Charlie, where they asked me to speak. And I said, "Hello Carla! You remember me?" She had no memory of me.
J: After six months of playing with her?
Putter: Six months, yeah. I'd pick her up at Paul's house, and we'd play the gig and I'd take her home. We were friends! But she didn't remember me at all. Of course, what you look like when you're 19 and what you look like when you're 75…. I recognized her, but when you got up closer, you could tell, it was a different…
J: Version?
Putter: Yes. She kind of looked like Lauren Bacall at a young age.
J: Before we finish, I've got one more question. I know that teaching has become an important part of your life. I don't know if it is now as much as it was at one point.
Putter: It is not now, but have you seen the documentary Itzhak? It's about Itzhak Perlman. The documentary?
J: No.
Putter: I don't know if it's on Netflix. But, absolutely see it.
J: I'll check it out.
Putter: It's so inspiring. To see him as a 13-year-old! Hah! Jesus Christ! But he said – and I think he was probably in his 60s when he started teaching – and he said, "I can't believe how much I've learned by teaching." He says, "Now I want to do it all the time," and he started a school in Israel for Palestinians and Israelites. One of the funny things in the movie is that he's invited to Netanyahu's house. And so they're wheeling him in in his wheelchair. And a dog comes up to him, and he starts to pet him, and Netanyahu says, "Don't pet him. He bites." I go, whoa! Now, there's an insight into Netanyahu. Why would you have a dog that bites coming up to Itzhak Perlman in a wheelchair? "He bites." Just like his master.
J: He just might bite his way into prison one of these days.
Putter: Right. I think that Netanyahu's creating quite a number of anti-Semites. What a prick! And I'm the furthest thing from an anti-Semite.
J: I know.
Putter: Anyway, Itzhak was talking about teaching and how much he's learned, and I realized that I've learned more from teaching than the students

have. And real early on – I was probably not even 30 – I began teaching a little bit , and somebody says, "How do you know which notes to play?" Great question, which I think led me to the work I did, and the years of searching. And it's nice to be able to answer that question 50 years later. [laughter] "Well, here's how. First of all, it has to sound good." And that's what they're asking, how to find a note that sounds good. But you learn a lot from them. I was in a school situation where you have a student for 10 weeks, and you see one who accomplishes nothing and always has an excuse why they didn't. They couldn't practice because of this or that. And then you see another person who moves along in giant steps, and is hungry. It's so clear who has practiced. And I think that's one thing that propelled me into being a fanatical practicer, not in terms of hours, but every day. The last time I was with Mark Turner, I found it kind of annoying that he never takes his tenor out of his mouth. Ever! It's like, "Geez, man, can't you just...?"

J: I'm thinking of Groucho Marx's cigar right now.

Putter: I mean, "God, how're you doing, man?" "Wow! How's everything? How are the kids?" I don't think he has kids, but…

J: No. [laughter] He never takes the horn out of his mouth. [laughter]

Putter: There's a time to be human. Although I did get to hang with him a little bit when we made that record 10 years ago. And so we had dinner together and got to talk. And I asked him some questions about playing odd times and all that, and how to work on it.

J: I've got an album he did with Jochen Rückert, a German drummer. I saw the band, in Lyon, France, and that's where I got the album. They were doing a gig there, and yeah, they were doing a lot of odd meter stuff.

Putter: Well, the thing about odd times, I've worked on 5/4 a lot, 7/4 a little, and is it engaging, or is it just a display?

J: Yeah, it's a question.

Putter: I think 7/4 actually feels freer. Rhythmically, you can feel it. But it's a specialty. It just doesn't engage me enough. I got fairly conversant in 5/4.

J: I sort of feel the same way. It's interesting, but as far as getting to the point of grabbing me, it didn't. I mean, I liked it. [laughter]

Putter: [laughter] Yeah.

J: [laughter] I like a lot of things, you know?

Putter: "Oh, I liked it …. I think I liked it."

J: Yeah. [laughter] But, one thing I appreciate about Mark Turner's playing is that he always tries to make the horn sound beautiful.

Putter: Yeah, that's good.

J: So, teaching has helped you learn?

Putter: Oh, yeah. Tremendously, tremendously. That question, "How do you know what the right notes are?" [laughter] Good question!

J: Dizzy Gillespie one time said something like, "I spent 10 years learning what notes to play, and 50 years learning what notes not to play."

Putter: [laughter]

J: Well it appears we're out of time. Thanks so much for sitting down with me. I've really enjoyed soaking all of this in. It's been a great pleasure.

Putter: Well, thank you! The pleasure is all mine. And you're welcome! Yeah, beautiful.

Putter Smith: A Selected Discography
The format of this discography is as follows: 1) headliner(s), 2) Title of Recording, 3) Musicians, 4) Label and catalog number, 5) Year of Release.

• **Alan Broadbent Trio. Moment's Notice**. Alan Broadbent p; Kendall Kay d; Putter Smith b. Chilly Bin Records 735231814422 (2008).
• **Gary Foster and Putter Smith. Perfect Circularity.** Gary Foster as; Putter Smith b. American Jazz Institute 77001 (2007).
• **Jeff Colella and Putter Smith. Lotus Blossom.** Jeff Colella p; Putter Smith b. American Jazz Institute 77002-2 (2014).
• **John Gross, Larry Koonse, and Putter Smith. Threeplay.** John Gross ts; Larry Koonse g; Putter Smith b. Ninewinds Records NWCD 0133 (1990).
• **Karen Hammack/Paul Kreibich Quartet. Lonesome Tree.** John Gross ts; Karen Hammack p; Paul Kreibich d; Putter Smith b. Two Tall records (no cat. no.) (2000).
• **Mark Masters Ensemble. Our Métier. Andrew Cyrille** d; Gary Foster as; Tim Hagens tpt; Oliver Lake as; Mark Masters comp and arr; Anna Mjöll vcl; Putter Smith b; Mark Turner ts. Capri Records 74150-2 (2018).
• **Putter Smith. Home. J**ohn Gross ts; Kendall Kay d; Theo Saunders p; Putter Smith b; Jon Whinnery as. Skipper Records SP1018 (2011).
• **Rossy-Kanan Quartet.** Bud. Michael Kanan p; Jorge Rossy vib; Putter Smith b; Jimmy Wormworth d. Swit records SWIT27 (2017).
• **VR Smith. Once I Loved.** Michael Kanan p; Chuck Manning ts; Putter Smith b; VR Smith vcl. Skipper Records 1037 (slated for 2020 release).
• **Walter Norris Duo. Elements in Motion.** Walter Norris p; Putter Smith b. Sunburst Recordings (no cat. no.) (2009).

John Lake

John Lake

JOHN LAKE

JAZZ DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

TAKEN BY BILL DONALDSON

Cadence: Why did you decide to release your first album, Seven Angels, during the COVID-19 epidemic?

John Lake: I really didn't choose now! I wanted to release the album about a year after recording it, and here we are. In some ways, it's been a blessing to have this project to focus on while the rest of our world is on pause. It does feel somewhat insensitive to be talking about this album, with so much pain and suffering going on in this country right now. But I'm hopeful that it will raise some spirits.

Cadence: What kind of effect has the epidemic had upon your career and those of other musicians?

J.L.: COVID-19 has been hard on musicians, all of us. I consider myself very fortunate to have made a living playing trumpet, at least for a while. It wasn't all artistic jazz music, but I loved it. This [June 2020] is the busy season for me, as far as gigs go. But since March every gig I've had on the books has cancelled. I don't live extravagantly, but I've probably missed out on forty percent of my annual income, with no end in sight to the cancellations. Something's got to give. I mean, I don't want to get sick, either. I think waiting it out is the right thing to do. Right now, I'm on unemployment, which is available to freelance musicians for the first time ever. I have received some grants from arts organizations, like the Grammy Foundation and the Louis Armstrong Foundation, which have made this album release possible. So I'm grateful for that.

But, at some point, unemployment income will stop, probably in late summer. Who knows when we will be able to start performing again? A lot of folks are looking at alternative ways of making a living, myself included. Part of this album release has helped me separate the art of music-making from the idea of making a living as a musician. It's extraordinarily difficult to make a living

exclusively from art. Most musicians find ways to augment their incomes with teaching, playing corporate gigs or musical theater. But I think we'll all have to reconsider that strategy after the effects of COVID-19 are felt across the broader economy. As far as the album is concerned, I would love to perform this music, in the right space, and when it's safe to do so.

Cadence: Do you have any other examples of the effects of COVID-19 on other musicians?

J.L.: Oh sure. Lots of live streams—some talking, others performing. I just did one for the album release. I watched my friend Corey Wallace perform via Smalls Live just the other day. And with electronic payments, it's easy to contribute to the musicians. I know that for some clubs, it's all about the music. I really doubt they're profiting on this. That's one of the aspects of jazz music that I appreciate the most: the sense of community. It's inspiring.

Cadence: You mention that "it wasn't all artistic jazz music." What other kinds of gigs did you get besides jazz?

J.L.: Oh boy. Cruise ships. Salsa dates. Lots and lots of weddings. Most of which I genuinely enjoy. I love being a gigging musician. I work in some very talented bands with amazing performers. But I've seen definitely an angry bridesmaid or two. And there has been a groomsman who had a little too much to drink and thought the singers were his new best friends. Too many sweaty hugs! Bandleading is an art, but on some gigs I'm very happy to be in the back of the stage. And for some reason, when people see a tambourine, their sense of entitlement just takes off. I will occasionally bring one for certain songs. But here's a pro-tip for the part-time percussionists out there: Keep the tambourine out of sight when you're not using it. I believe lawyers would call that an "attractive nuisance."

Cadence: What is the relevance of your album's title?

J.L.: The title, Seven Angels, has a few different meanings for me. First of all, from wordplay and aesthetic perspectives, it just rings a certain bell for me. Also, I don't always bring this up, but I have synesthesia. It's sort of hard to explain, but it's a condition, thought to be genetic, where letters and numbers will get cross-referenced in the mind's eye to correlate with certain colors, shapes and textures. That's one manifestation of it. So, for example, "S" is a shiny metallic grey, "E" is a sort of pastoral green and "V" has a lustrous purple velvety texture. Sounds crazy, right? This is the way I experience letters and words, and I really like the way Seven Angels looks in my head. I do a bit of film photography as a hobby, and the album cover photo has a very complementary color palette to the title. Lots of folks have synesthesia, and don't know what it's called, or even that it's a "thing." I didn't know until midway through college. My trumpet teacher told me about it. I see colors when I listen to music, or any sound really. And then, when I'm thinking of the theory, another set of colors and textures corresponds to the key I'm in and the notes I'm playing. But I can tune in and out. Like, I'm not thinking about what my right ankle feels like when I'm playing "Cherokee." It's just there.

Getting back to Seven Angels, in the physical CD packaging, I dedicate this album to the people in my life who have guided me along this journey. This is my first album under my name, and I feel it's been a long time coming to

this moment. I'm just so grateful to those who saw a rough pile of clay and thought, "Hang on, let me help this guy out." That includes my parents, of course. It also includes my wife, as well as all my music teachers from the fifth grade until I was out of school and moved to New York. So, I wouldn't say that there are exactly seven angels. The title of the record isn't a direct correlation to the number of people who have helped me. But the title is an expression of gratitude and reverence for those who helped guide me on my own path.

Cadence: Have you had the experience of being a guardian angel too?

J.L.: I wouldn't say that I have gone out of my way to be that for anybody. I'm not sure it works that way…but you never know if you might have an effect on someone. The album's release has actually made me start to think of pivoting more intentionally into teaching at some point—considering what it means to mentor, and also spreading the gospel of this music. Until recently, I haven't really felt right about that—about telling someone how to play music. But if I can show someone the ways I go about it, and if that helps them, then that's a good thing.

Cadence: How did you choose the musicians to record Seven Angels with you?

J.L.: I mentioned that a big piece of this record is about gratitude. Something I'm especially grateful for is the community of musicians in New York City. The sextet on Seven Angels isn't really a "band" that works a lot. It consists of a few colleagues I met during my time here that I clicked with personally and professionally. And I admire each one of them for their musicianship and their individual characters. I met most of them on the big band scene.

So, Steven Feifke is a fellow big band leader and arranger I met through our mutual studies with composer David Berger. We became fast friends, always bouncing ideas off each other, and he's such a monster talent at the piano. I was playing in his big band, and I was always giving him a hard time (also known as complaining) about writing the trumpets so high! But his writing is truly a thrill to perform, and it really challenges me to be a better musician. And he's been a constant source of inspiration and encouragement. I met Paul Jones on the rehearsal band scene. I think he's a fantastic foil. Every trumpet player needs a good foil! Miles Davis always had a foil. I liked Paul for this record because our sounds are very complementary. And man, his ears are always open! He listens and reacts to the band. Paul tells a story with the group, not "at" them. That's the kind of music I like to play. Alto saxophonist Michael Thomas joined us for a few tunes ["A Shade of Jade," "Signal Changes" and "cloud_down"]. I met him playing in his incredible Terraza Big Band, which he co-leads with bassist Edward Perez. Michael brings his trademark fire to some three-horn charts I had developed, including an absolutely burning solo on Joe Henderson's "Shade Of Jade." Michael is brilliant improviser and composer in his own right.

I met bassist Marcos Varela on the jam session scene. Marcos is another guy who's always excited to play and has a positive attitude on top of being an incredible bassist. He has a nice round sound, excellent time feel, very expressive, and again, a fantastic listener. Everything you want in a bass player. Marcos is quite a composer too. He's a real artist. I met drummer Jeff Davis in a very hip avant-garde big band led by Angela Morris and Anna Webber.

They actually have a new record out [Both Are True] on Dave Douglas' Greenleaf label. So I'm hearing Jeff play all these textures and colors, not too much straight-ahead time. Something spoke to me that said, "This guy swings." Understatement of the century! He took complete command of the time. There's not a second on this record where the energy is flagging. Jeff has beautiful cymbal sounds and just exquisite taste. Trumpet players need a foil, yes, but having Jeff on the drums was like filling up the car with jet fuel.

Cadence: You said that each track of Seven Angels relates to your experiences in New York. Can you give some examples?

J.L.: Sure. Let's see, I wrote "Nightwatch" at about 3:00 a.m. on Christmas morning, maybe five years ago. I wanted to give it a very alert but peaceful atmosphere, almost like standing vigil. Growing up, Christmas was always a big deal, of course. But now I'm an adult with no kids and my wife didn't grow up with [Christmas]. So there's not much to do. But if there's one night of the year when New York City is quiet, that's it.

I wrote "Whelmed" specifically for a show that I put on at IBeam with a quintet that included Anna Webber, Nick Dunston, Zack O'Farrill and Julian Shore. I sometimes find it easier to write a song if I know the people I'm writing it for. You get to know them and the way they play, and you think, "What can I write that will let them shine?" That was a fun night! All the people on that stage are incredible band leaders on their own. That show was another testament to just how robust the musician community is in New York. Fantastic musicians everywhere! And, it turned out the guys on my record played it pretty well too.

Cadence: You said that you wrote "The Bet" a few weeks before Seven** Angels **was recorded. What's the story about that composition?

J.L.: Well, the record date was about three weeks out [early May, 2019], and I knew I needed something fresh, something with a lot of energy. A strong melody too. It was a gorgeous spring day, the kind where I'd usually be out on my bike, tooling around Prospect Park here in Brooklyn. I had the day off from gigs, and I was just aching to go outside and blow off some steam. But I promised myself I would write this new tune today. Had to be today. That sparked a memory of Anton Chekhov's classic short story, "The Bet," where a banker makes a wager with a lawyer that he can't stay isolated in his room for a period of fifteen years. I don't want to spoil the ending for anyone, but that was the feeling I had. Once I had that inspiration, the song just poured out of me as I was sitting at the Rhodes piano, and then at my computer. I might have still gone on that bike ride afterwards! I can't remember. It's one of my favorite songs to play from the record, and it was the first single that we put out.

Cadence: Were Horace Silver's energy and groove influences forcomposing "Pearls of the Tartar?"

J.L.: Absolutely. As a piano player, he had such a funky, evocative touch on the instrument that's really unlike anyone else's. Everyone knows he's one of the all-time greats, but to me Horace Silver seems somewhat under-appreciated as a composer. Lots of people write great pieces, but what makes him special is that his writing is so intertwined with his playing—with his time-feel. To some, [Silver's compositions] may seem a little "low-brow" next to a revered harmonic genius like Wayne Shorter, for example. But I think there's another

layer of sophistication when you look at the complete package of Horace Silver. The way he puts it all together: the composition, the performance, the instrumental proficiency. That's a lot of work. And that's what the title alludes to. In Dostoevsky's pseudo-memoir, House of the Dead, he mentions that a Tartar will loot finery (pearls, jewelry, silk robes) from his enemies without appreciating their value. Similarly, there's a tendency for society to look down on jazz musicians as "just making things up," or as being unrefined. There's a lot of work that goes into what we do. This song is a tribute to Horace's ability to craft that finery within the stylistic confines of bebop.

Cadence: Those two tracks reflect the themes of literary works. Did you study literature and associate it with jazz?

J.L.: Not formally. I remember hating the required reading in high school English classes. My dad bribed me to read Mark Twain and Robin Hood, which I enjoyed. I didn't start reading for fun until college, when I started with The Hobbit. Then I read the Lord of the Rings trilogy. Then I got into a big Ayn Rand phase, which I'm thoroughly embarrassed about now! There was a great used book store next to the Conservatory in Cincinnati. You know the smell? Unforgettable. I picked up a copy of Dostoevsky's The Idiot, and was pretty rapt from the first chapter. Then Tolstoy, then Hemingway, then Philip Roth, then Saul Bellow. And lots of others along the way. Actually, if there's one thing I got from Ayn Rand, it's the willpower to push through some of these slower-moving old novels. Her stuff is like jogging through quicksand. It's not verbally dense, but God, is it a slog! Also, I enjoyed some Hunter S. Thompson, and Charles Bukowski was entertaining. I'm not sure how "jazzy" those guys are, though. The Malcom X autobiography is an incredible read for any jazz fan. But if a work of fiction is placed in a jazz setting, something will inevitably strike me as being inauthentic. Of course, I've read a lot of scholarly works about jazz in my university studies, but it's really difficult to draw substantive parallels between jazz and literature. But they can get along great. For example, Saul Bellow rarely mentions music, but I could clearly see a jazz soundtrack to a motion picture version of Herzog.

Cadence: Was "A Shade of Jade" chosen for its changes and mood? The saxophonists are fearless on this track.

J.L. I have always loved this tune. Joe Henderson is another under-appreciated genius. His compositions have such incredible balance between lyrical melodies, colorful harmonies and exciting rhythmic devices. And they're always fun to improvise over. That's difficult to achieve! I wrote this arrangement to emphasize all those aspects—and to include a nod to another of his masterpiece compositions, "Inner Urge." I knew this tune was going to be on the record from early on, and in some ways it sets the overall tone as being firmly straight-ahead jazz. This informed my personnel choices from the beginning. So I knew these guys would eat it up.

Cadence: The arrangement of "Lady Bird" takes the Tadd Dameron composition to another level with its stretched lines and its feel of three.

J.L.: "Lady Bird" was one of the first jazz songs I learned. I think I played it for my college auditions. So, it's been with me for quite a while. On a debut album, it's a good idea to include one or two things the audience is already familiar with. Let them know where you're from, musically speaking, but the trick is

not to bore them with the same old renditions. This arrangement was inspired by Robert Glasper's take on "Afro Blue," with Erykah Badu. Such a fresh re-imagining of the tune! It's like something you might hear in a dream, or it's like seeing the song from another dimension, just floating through space.

This is my debut album, and I'm 36 years old. So in a sense, I've been working towards this music for quite a while. I started writing music back in college, and like any instrument, [composition] is a voice that you have to develop over time. But all the originals on the album are children of New York City. I think the oldest one, "Signal Changes," was kicking around in some form in 2013, which was my first year in town, and, as I mentioned, I wrote "The Bet" just a couple weeks before the studio date.

Cadence: How did you decide to include Paul Jones' arrangement of "Everything I Love" on the album?

J.L.: I had a very hectic, very Tristano-esque contrafact on the song, which I called "My Haven." We had played it once or twice together, and it turned out that Paul knew the original song. It's not often called, even though Cole Porter's songbook is well-worn territory in the jazz world. Paul went home and banged out his arrangement, and he took it in a completely different direction. When he brought it in to the next session, I thought, "Wow, this is musical." While I was whittling down my book for the recording, I asked him if I could include it, and he agreed. I always loved the idea of ending a set with a ballad, and it filled a need for something softer and more hopeful. It was really a perfect fit.

Cadence: As for the other original tracks on Seven Angels, was there a compositional approach or balance you sought?

J.L.: "Balance" is a key word. I'm always looking for balance—in composition, in arrangement, on the trumpet. I studied with Ralph Alessi a little bit when I got to New York, and he shared a tenet of yoga with me: Growth is loss. In other words, to focus your attention in one direction, you must let go of something else. So, it's not enough to say, "Well, we need a fast one. And we need a bass solo!" I think of the three facets of music, which are melody, harmony, and rhythm. I try to find a balance for each one within every composition, and then over the album as a whole. My practice is to go slowly, putting things together and taking them apart several times. I might revise a tune of the course of years to find that sweet spot, to realize the character of the tune as clearly as possible.

Cadence: Do you consider yourself to have a personal, distinctive style?

J.L.: I think I do have a style with my writing, and I look forward to developing it further. I think I'm getting there with my trumpet playing. These things take time. In many ways, I'm still sorting myself out as a person. I've heard it said that you fully become yourself when you stop caring about what other people think. I'm working on it!

Cadence: When did you start playing a musical instrument?

J.L.: I started on trumpet in the fifth grade. I liked music. I had taken piano lessons and sung in the church choir. I was deciding between trumpet and drums, and my Mom told me that trumpet players get more girlfriends. Looking back, I don't regret choosing trumpet, but I'm not sure she knew what she was talking about.

I'm from Celina, Ohio, which is a very small town of about 10,000 people in the western part of the state. Celina has good musical resources for such a small town. The Celina Music Store is there. It's the only music shop for miles. They just happened to have a trumpet teacher—Chuck Loyer—who sadly passed away a couple years ago. When I started, lessons were $4 for thirty minutes (Okay, now I sound old). Then at school, we had jazz band every day in the morning, symphonic band in the afternoon, and because it's Ohio, lots and lots of marching band practice. We had excellent educators too: the Loughrige brothers, and especially Chuck Sellars and John Stetler. I really credit them with not only turning me on to proper jazz, but also with encouraging me to make it my career choice. And they're just really sweet, good guys. They still come to my shows in Ohio. I can't tell you what that means. At their suggestion, I spent two summers at the Bands of America camp in Normal, Illinois, where I met some professional trumpet players for the first time—first Rex Richardson and then Ron McCurdy. They were the first guys that I saw where I thought, I want to do that. Of course, when you're a kid, you don't fully know what "that" is, but it was my first taste of music as a way of life.

Cadence: Do you think you'll write music for an album about your hometown as have, for example, Maria Schneider for The Thompson Fields or Matt Wilson for Going Once, Going Twice?

J.L.: Maybe I will. This record feels like an accounting of everything up to this point, including Celina. I love Celina, and I still go back to see my family. But I'm also a very different person from who I was when I was growing up. And there are some things about small-town life that are more difficult now. I've lived in four different cities since leaving Celina, and New York is my home now. I love the food here, I love New York's diversity, its music scene, its sense of humor. But, on the other hand, the artwork on the cover of Seven Angels shows a sunset over the lake where I grew up. So there's a quiet beauty about it that will always be with me.

I grew up right on Grand Lake. There was a beach down the street from our house, and just about every day in the summertime I'd be swimming, fishing, boating, you name it. My dad was an ad salesman for the local newspaper, The Daily Standard, which is still in production. It's one of the last truly independent papers left; most others have been acquired by conglomerates. He got that job right after college, and he retired from the same desk some forty years later. That doesn't happen too much anymore. My mother was a special-needs teacher. She got me into piano lessons and singing in the church choir. She always supported our education, which I'm so grateful for. She plays piano, and she used to sing in college. I think she regrets not doing more with music in her own life. But ultimately, they both encouraged me to pursue music after high school. Keep in mind that Celina is a small town without a lot of fine arts. That was quite a leap of faith.

They wish I were closer now, but they know my life is in the big city. And they do enjoy visiting me here. Lots of great food they can't get back in Ohio! My maternal grandmother was born in Brooklyn as well, so in some sense it's a homecoming for my Mom.

Cadence: Which colleges did you attend?

J.L. I attended the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music. Looking back, this is what I'm saying about gratitude. It's a world-class conservatory a couple hours from where I grew up. I felt lucky to get into the jazz program there. In fact, I almost didn't. I was wait-listed. I hadn't even applied to other schools. Everybody at school just assumed I was going to Cincinnati. I called the jazz trumpet professor just about every day until he finally let me in. That was Brad Goode. Brad is an amazing teacher and a first-rate artist on the instrument. Brad does things on the horn that are uniquely his own. He spent a lot of time teaching me not only the trumpet—and he had a lot to teach me about the instrument. But also he taught me what it means to be an artist, and the importance of developing your own voice. As I said, I'm still working on it. But I think about his teachings every day.

John Fedchock would come to Cincinnati every year, do a clinic and then play downtown at the now defunct Blue Wisp. His big band records are part of what inspired me to write my own big band music. He knows all the parts of a big band, how it works and how to use it. Since I moved to New York, I've gotten to know him and have taken some very informative lessons. He's a fellow Ohioan and I think he just gets where I'm going and what I'm doing.

I taught a clinic last year at my alma mater, the University of Cincinnati. That was a trip. I don't think I'd been back since I graduated in 2006. It was amazing to see what's changed, and what hasn't. Scott Belck is running the program there. It was very inspiring.

After I graduated from Cincinnati, I then followed Brad to the University of Colorado at Boulder, where he relocated. All in all, I was under his wing for about eight years, and we grew pretty close. He got me into the scene in Denver, where I really started to cut my teeth as a lead trumpeter. I have a lot respect for him. The man is an encyclopedia! I really felt I could ask him anything about not only trumpet playing, but how to build a career, and what life is like as a musician. Brad gave me the tools to put my playing together, including the high register.

Cadence: You don't seem to like trumpet parts that are written in the high register, although Goode has quite a range.

J.L.: I don't want to give the impression that I don't like playing high notes; I am a trumpet player, after all. One of my first jazz records was Maynard Ferguson's Big Bop Nouveau. But Arturo Sandoval says it well; "Playing the trumpet is pain." High notes are not an issue, practically speaking, but sometimes you meet an arranger who never learned about orchestration. Past a certain point, I'm not going to injure myself because you don't understand the difference between the trumpet and the electric guitar.

Cadence: What are the differences between the Cincinnati and Denver jazz scenes?

J.L.: I think Cincinnati is the more typical Midwestern small city scene with a few handfuls of really great players and a few good performance venues. When I was there, the Blue Wisp was the spot to hear all the great local players, as well as touring acts, on the weekends. That's where I first heard greats like Tim Hagans, Ingrid Jensen, John Fedchock, Joe Lovano and Fred Hersch. Hearing someone play standards in a club with a local rhythm section is an

unusual experience in a city like New York. Here, it's mostly ultra-modern originals, usually with the band from the recording. A smaller local scene provides an education that a bigger city cannot, in some ways.

Denver has a lot more bands. Like, "Our band name is Moldy Bagel and we rehearse our collectively-written songs on Tuesdays at Mike's house." That was very rewarding too—to dig into some original music with your friends, rather than just taking turns soloing. That's where I started my project "Shirley," which was a jazz-rock hybrid band. We did a couple recordings [different-sized cages and from a bright clearing]. They still sound good! I was really inspired by Kneebody at the time. I was also very lucky to be in a group led by Art Lande called Funko Moderno, which I think he's still playing with. They put out a record after I left town. You can learn a lot making music that way, which, again, is not very conducive to survival in the Big Apple.

After living in Cincinnati, and then in Denver/Boulder, I realized that it was going to be impossible to make a living playing trumpet in a smaller city. It became apparent that most of the really well-playing local musicians had spent at least some time in New York. It really put an impression on me that, "Sure, you're out here playing jazz in this bar, with a baseball game on TV behind you. Calling tunes. But not really." Pretty much all my heroes were New Yorkers at some point. Tim Hagans was a huge influence on my playing, and he was from Dayton. Joe Henderson, of course, was from Lima, Ohio. I thought, New York is the ultimate step. To be clear, I have nothing against Cincinnati and Denver. In fact, I love them. But the reality is that there are only so many gigs, so many theaters, so many places to teach in those markets. And a part of me had always wanted to live in a big, metropolitan city. Brad was from Chicago, which was very appealing. Los Angeles is gorgeous, but I wanted something grittier. I was already worn out from driving all around Denver. Eventually I settled on New York City. I thought, This is it; I'm going to take my chance. Luckily, around the same time I was saving up to leave Denver, I met my wife, Zi. She was the first woman I dated who liked the idea of moving to New York. Everything kind of came into place. Again, this is a lot of what "Seven Angels" means to me. Somehow, the planets seemed to align, and everything felt right. Now, that doesn't mean that it was easy. Getting married, moving across the country, rebuilding my life in the jazz capital of the world. It was a lot.

Cadence: How did you meet your wife?

J.L.: I met my wife in Denver, at a salsa club that's now defunct, called The D-Note. She's not a musician; she was there to dance. I remember coming up to her while they were doing the pre-show dance lesson. I said, "You don't want to do the lesson?" And she replied, very dismissively, "I don't need it." We hit it right off! A year later we were married. She was studying psychology at the time. After we moved to New York, she enrolled at Columbia for a master's in counseling psychology. She just recently started her own practice here in the city, and is looking at doing some teaching in the fall. I couldn't be more proud of her. It's been eight years now.

Cadence: What was the most interesting job that you've had in New York?

J.L.: I was lucky to get a bank job almost immediately upon landing in Brooklyn, which I desperately needed. But that was a rough gig. I had been working in

banks before, doing customer service, and loan applications. But I had never seen a manager yelling at the staff in front of customers. Or a bank that runs out of money by eleven o'clock a.m. Unpaid overtime. It was a real introduction to the East Coast way of doing things, I guess. One of the tellers had allegedly been involved in a robbery at another branch, but the bank wouldn't fire her because they didn't want to be liable for wrongful termination. Every day was fit for a TV melodrama.

Cadence: Was there any "culture shock" when moving from smaller towns to New York?

J.L.: Growing up in a small town, I think, really shapes a lot of who I am. I'm probably way too polite for most New Yorkers, for one thing. It sounds foolish now, but at the time New York City just seemed like some inaccessible wonderland, like the lost city of Atlantis. Of course, I stumbled. That's how you learn. I was so eager to play and fit in, especially in the early days, I probably turned some people off. Playing jam sessions can teach you a lot, but they can also be harmful in some sense. To move beyond that stage, I had to learn to play with the band, to tell a story with my improvising, and not just play to impress the room.

Cadence: How can jam sessions be harmful?

J.L.: So, I'm somewhat introverted. A lot of musicians are. Sessions can be stressful, especially if you don't know anyone, you're new in town, and you want to make a good impression. In a jam session, if you're polite, you take two or three, maybe four choruses, depending on tempo. This is not your gig. This is not A Love Supreme. Keep it social, you know? It can be difficult to tell an authentic story in two choruses, with total strangers, on an unfamiliar stage. Sometimes, for me, this would result in "jazz vomit." Just playing everything I knew in two choruses, trying to be "the man." Some people can make a career out of that, in which case, good for them! But that's ultimately not how I want to play music. It's much better for me to be comfortable with the musicians, be comfortable in the space, to listen and to react to my bandmates. Maybe I'm overly sensitive, but that's how I like to play. That's when I feel the best about it. I don't want to say jam sessions are bad; they're not. I met a lot of amazing musicians and friends doing them. But there was a point where I wanted to go beyond that environment.

Cadence: Where were your first performances in New York?

J.L.: My first gigs in New York City were big band gigs. One of my very first gigs was with the Howard Williams Jazz Orchestra at The Garage, which is now closed. I think any New York big band people reading this right now will be nodding their heads and smiling. The Garage was a rite of passage for many young musicians in the city for years and years, particularly those on the big band scene. Big bands are sort of an ideal way for horn players to become introduced to the jazz scene. If people hear that you can read (I mean, really sight read), and you show up on time, there's quite a lot of activity in that scene. Double that if you can play some lead trumpet. Not that it pays the rent, but it's a way to get your name around. I've backed off of the "reading bands" circuit somewhat. I am always in need of trumpet players to sub in rehearsals. It's cyclical.

In fact, that world has kind of shaped my career since moving here. It's such a vibrant scene, with so many creative people, especially in my generation. It's invigorating. I let myself be proud of how many big bands I play in. One of the harder things about COVID-19 is that I'm not seeing my friends very much. My favorite part about New York is the big band rehearsals. Getting a coffee, going to a room in midtown, making music, and seeing all my buddies. That's as good as it gets.

Cadence: Have you been able to book many performances?

J.L.: I have a hard time with that. I'm not a natural self-promoter. I don't typically enjoy being the focus of attention. This is not an ideal set of attributes for a band leader. But I don't think I'm alone in those feelings. I have some friends who seem to be always booking gigs, and they tell me they feel similarly. I'm very proud of Seven Angels. I think it will open a lot of doors, performance-wise, when the shutdown is over. So I'm doing some homework to prepare for that.

Cadence: How did you start leading bands in New York?

J.L.: I had been writing some big band music and holding reading sessions at IBeam, which is a rehearsal/performance space in Brooklyn. I was just calling my friends, who included Steve Kortyka who has performed with Lady Gaga and Brian Newman. I knew Steve from Cincinnati. Also, I had contacted Mike Sailors and Danny Jonokuchi, both incredible trumpet players and composers. They all expressed interest in forming a collective, which we did. I had been waiting for something like that to form organically. Again, things fall into place. Running a big band is stupidly hard and expensive. I was so glad to find some like-minded friends to collaborate with because I wouldn't have done it on my own. We had a monthly show at The Django, which is a speakeasy-style club in lower Manhattan. Fancy cocktails, band in suits, playing swinging charts. We all love the hyper-modern music, of course, but we were missing that classic fifties big band sound. We have been chatting about doing a full-length recording, but we'll have to see how this pandemic ends. The interest is still there.

The Webber/Morris band is certainly different from what I usually find myself doing. I love getting into their headspace. I had played quite a bit of open/free/creative music in Colorado, when I was studying with the phenomenal Art Lande. Since I've been in New York, though, it's been mostly straight-ahead or modern jazz. So the Webber/Morris band is always a breath of fresh air. And they're just a lovely group of people. Something to note about that group is that each piece has a completely unique character. It's a rare and fun challenge to find what that is, and then to route my playing through it in a way that enhances what they wrote. It's not just "insert loud high note here."

Brian Krock is a good friend. I so respect him as a composer, and also as a player. Everything he does is with the utmost integrity. He doesn't slack off, and he has an unshakeable commitment to moving the music forward. His music is an interesting challenge in much the same way as the Webber/Morris band. As a lead player, I also love that Brian understands orchestration. So when he writes me way up high, it's not gratuitous. It's done in a way that I can sink my teeth into it, just the same as if I were playing a Frank Foster chart.

I also want to mention player/composer Remy Le Boeuf. I just adore his music

for all the same reasons mentioned above, but also because he places a priority on melody and beauty. He really has it all going, far beyond what we'd call "jazz arranging." It's not just playing music with these people. It's making art. It's playing life.

Cadence: Do you tour?

J.L.: I've done a little touring here and there—short trips. Touring as a jazz musician can be prohibitively expensive. But I still travel back to Ohio and Denver to play with friends from time to time. Ben Markley is a good friend who has me out occasionally to play in his big band in Wyoming. Another Cincinnati alumnus, Joshua Quinlan, teaches at the National University of Costa Rica and is very entrepreneurial as a bandleader. The guy is working constantly. I like to visit my friends and play some horn when I can.

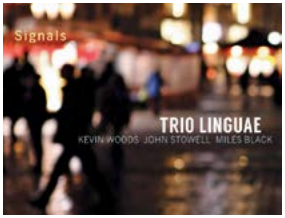
Cadence: Are there any memorable stories about any of your performances, such as for the New York Rangers NHL team?

J.L.: I was called for the Rangers through a good friend, baritone sax mastermind Andrew Gutauskas. He'd been stepping in for a few games, and he reached out to me when the music director, Ray Castoldi, mentioned he wanted a trumpet player. It's been a delight. We go in early, run the tunes like "Sledgehammer" or "St. Louis Blues", which are fun departures from my usual fare. Then we basically kick back and watch the game! We play during the intermissions, and they send up a drone for a video. I've gotten to work with some exceptionally talented folks there, very nice folks. Sometimes you have to step back and say, "I didn't think I'd be doing this ten years ago." That was actually my last gig before the COVID-19 shutdown. So I had fun writing "Madison Square Garden" on my unemployment form.

Cadence: What are your future plans?

J.L.: Good question! It depends on how all this COVID-19 stuff shakes out. I'm not sure. I would be really grateful to go back to what I was doing before everything closed. Assuming we can someday go back to normal, I want to continue playing in the bands I am in, and continue exploring the big band world. I'm 36. I have another lifetime of that to look forward to. But, thinking long-term, I also want to shift some of that focus towards my career as an artist and a bandleader. I have some music that I'd like to share.

New Issues

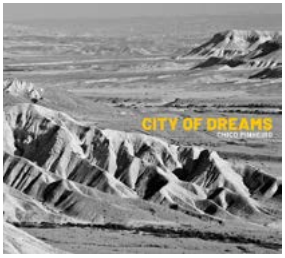


KEVIN WOODS
JOHN STOWELL
MILES BLACK
TRIO LINGUAE
SIGNALS
ORIGIN LC29049
FEW REGRETS / SOLO EN VIENTO SABE / PERI'S SCOPE / SIGNALS / MY SHINNING HOUR / SINCE LAST DECEMBER / BIG T'S / INUTIL PAISAGEM / ONE FOR B.E. / VIRGO / I HEAR A RHAPSODY
Kevin Woods,tpt, flgh ;John Stowell, ; g, baritone g, ;Miles Black, p
6/24 & 9/1 2019 Surrey, BC

A very pleasant surprise and joyful treat to hear this trio without bass and drums.
Three of the most able-bodied, spontaneous communicators in Jazz converse through six originals and five covers. "Signals" begins with Kevin Wood's beautifully written "Few Regrets". A rubato opening with John Stowell's pristine nylon string melody statement leads to a strong chord progression intro. Kevin Woods takes over the melody and then takes the first solo. Kevin's clear tone, sense of rhythm and phrasing is so beautifully born from what's happening around him. Miles Black fills the air with a full bodied, soulful accompaniment and then moves into a wonderfully melodic solo. John has the final solo, weaving magically through the changes as he dances seamlessly with Miles. "Peri's Scope" is an energetic version of Bill Evans tune that starts with everyone soloing together. The skill of listening to one another is perfectly executed here as all three musicians turn in outstanding performances. The interplay between the guitar and piano is especially moving, bringing back the voices of the Jim Hall, Bill Evans sessions. The melody is then stated wonderfully at the last chorus.
There are too many great moments on "Sigals" to list. The originals by Kevin Woods and Miles Black are outstanding. John's use of the fretless baritone guitar is an extra special treat. This is an instrument you hardly ever hear and it can play the role of guitar and bass. Add in the fact that it's fretless and you have a sound that's awesomely unique, not to mention the uniqueness of the person that's playing it!
My biggest takeaway from "Signals," is that as listeners, we all to often become accustomed to listening to music in a certain format. In a way the fact that "Signals" doesn't have bass or drums is what makes it so intriguing . I believe it challenges the players to dig down, say more and do it in a different way. "Signals" is a joyous celebration of interplay and conversation.

Frank Kohl

New Issues



CHICO PINHEIRO
CITY OF DREAMS
BURITI RECORDS
CITY OF DREAMS / INTERLUDE / LONG STORY SHORT / ESTRADA REAL / GESTURE / INVISIBLE LIGHTS / ENCANTADO / THEME / VILA MADALENA / FAROL / UP IN THE AIR
48:31
Pinheiro, g; Chris Potter, ts; Tiago Costa, p; Bruno Migotto, bass; Edu Ribeiro, d
early 2020 São Paulo, Brazil

On all fronts Brazilian guitarist Chico Pinheiro is presenting bright, multicultural music of the highest caliber. Whether one focuses on Chico's compositions or his guitar playing, jazz and the sounds of Brazil are in good hands.

The opening track "City Of Dreams" is a masterwork, beginning with guitar and piano stating the melody. The bass and drums join in and the full beauty of "City Of Dreams" and the quality of it's recording is revealed. The arrangement of this piece is also outstanding, as it travels in and out of tempo and the different written parts are shared amongst the players. A flawless solo by Chico and some up front drumming by Edu Ribeiro make this a perfect title track.

"Long Story Short" is an energetic straight-ahead piece that opens with Chico and Chris Potter playing the melody in unison. Again the arrangement is awesome, with written background parts that give Edu Ribeiro just enough space to set things on fire and give the soloist a springboard to soar. Chico solo's first, and now we witness the extent of his virtuosity. Perfect sixteenth note runs easily executed with clarity and purpose using the whole fretboard. Chris Potters up next ; a biting tone and melodic conviction, using the rhythm section to his full advantage. This is a very satisfying piece for any of you hardcore beboppers.

With "Estrada Real" Chico Pinheiro doesn't let up and keeps delivering the goods. This is dreamlike melody placed atop a masterful rhythmic canvas that one could only dream of writing. The drums play an essential role in the energy "Estrada Real" creates. Chico continues to demonstrate his abilities with nylon string guitar and by singing the melody.

"Farol" is a guitar and piano duet in 6/8 exquisitely written and performed. The intricate melody is shared and flawlessly executed by the two players. The solo's consist of Chico and Tiago Costa trading eights and then joining there solo's together before they restate the melody. The energy created in this piece brings me back to the Gary Burton - Chick Corea duet's. I make this comparison simply to point out the degree of excellence that is accomplished with "Farol", not to compare there individual voices. Special attention should be given to Chico's solo, in a few short measures he demonstrates the level of passion and ability he possesses.

With "City Of Dreams" Chico Pinheiro" achieves new levels of excellence that puts him in the realm of the worlds finest guitarists. One can only imagine the heights he will reach in his lifetime.

Frank Kohl

New Issues

ALVARO ROJAS
GRAN KASA
SELF PRODUCED
LITTLE BELL / I KNOW, I KNOW / EVERYBODY WINS / TU, LA TIERRA / GRAN KASA / AT THE WINDOW / YEAR OF THE DOG / HARMONIUM / HUM HUM / BEIJING / SHELTER
50:03
Rojas, g; Meredith Bates, vin & effects; Peggy Lee, cel; Chris Gestrin, p & kybd; James Meger, bass; Sam Cartwright, d; Liam MacDonald, cajon & cga & perc; Elisa Thorn, harp; Sam Davidson, cl & b cl; Susana Baca, vcl
Early 2020 Vancouver, BC

I'm feeling a great sense of responsibility to convey the impact "Gran Kasa" has had on me. I know very little about guitarist / composer Alvaro Rojas and in this case I embrace the role of student as I experience this amazing music. As I listen I hear enormous passion, color, love of rhythm and percussion and a powerful statement of how music can move us. "Gran Kasa" leaves me with an optimism of how we are all connected. The music begins with "Little Bell" ; a blast of intoxicating rhythm. The bass and percussion drives this piece as it warms and mesmerizes the senses. A strong passionate melody is stated with guitar and strings dancing atop the rhythm section. An exquisite solo by pianist Chris Gestrin kicks the passion up to an even higher level. Rounded out by modulations throughout, this is an exceptional piece. "Tu,La Tierra" is a rich and captivating vocal ballad with singer Susanna Baca. Driven once again by passion, a story being told. The rhythm section lays out the canvas with a wonderfully slinky feel and the vocals fly above it all. One can only imagine the motivation for "Shelter". Beautiful string arrangements begin and then layers of sound join in building the intensity. Whatever darkness is speaking here, when all is said I am left with a feeling of hope. I have trouble classifying "Gran Kasa" so I'll go out on a limb here; I see the music of Alvero Rojas as World Music. It encompasses Jazz, Afro-Peruvian, classical and a strong emphasis on rhythms of the world. For those of you wishing to expand your musical universe, I highly recommend this CD. I find the music of "Gran Kasa" to be beautifully written and performed. Most importantly I see it as a unifying force and a voice of optimism. Just what we need in these challenging times.

Frank Kohl

New Issues

RADAM SCHWARTZ ORGAN BIG BAND, MESSAGE FROM GROOVE AND GW, ARABESQUE RECORDS AJ220.

TROUBLE JUST WON'T GO AWAY / BLUES MINOR / AINTNO NO WAY /DIG YOU LIKE CRAZY / WHAT TO DO / BETWEEN THE SHEETS / MESSAGE FROM GROOVE AND GW/ A PATH TO UNDERSTANDING / WORK SONG/ VON GOTT. 60:37. Collective personnel: Schwartz, org; Charlie Sigler, g; David F. Gibson, d; Ted Chubb, Ben Hankle, James Cage, Lee Hogans. tpt; Anthony Ware, Danny Raycraft, as; Abel Mireles, Gene Ghee, ts; Ben Kovacks, bars; Peter Lin, Andrae Murchison, tbn. 2/3/2020. Montclair, NJ.

It's been over a decade since Radam Schwartz appeared on my radar, The late Joe Fields gave me the privlege of penning the liner notes to his Savant issue Blues Citizens a quintet date that deserved more recognition than it got. This new one is considerably more inhabited by the presence of the Abel Mireles Jazz Exchange Big Band and carries the byline "On Drums David F. Gibson". He is front and center on the title track and the final cut written by some guy named JS Bach. The other eight numbers run the range from John Coltrane to the Isley Brothers and individual soloists are conveniently identified on each title. By the way, there are three scripts from the leader and "Work Song" should not be confused with the Nat Adderley composition of the same name as it was written by Charles Mingus.

Arranged by Schwartz, Mireles,William Gorman, Ben Kovacs and Peter Lin the charts are thoughtful and mostly economical. A word about the album's title: the first named refers to Richard "Groove" Holmes while the initials stand for Gerald Wilson who inspired Schwartz with their organ/orchestra work. In his booklet annotation, scribe Ron Scott makes much ado about this pairing claiming this is the first time an organist has played his own bass lines under a big band which is debatable. I can recall Holmes playing with Dallasite Onzy Matthews large group on a Lou Rawls Capitol platter from back in the day but I'm unsure that he performed his own bass on every track. If you dug Brother Jack McDuff's album with Benny Golson or the many Jimmy Smith Verves with Oliver Nelson this one should fit the bill.

Larry Hollis

Reissues

SHIRLEY SCOTT,
ONE FOR ME,
ARC RECORDS 003.
WHAT MAKES HAROLD SING? / KEEP ON MOVIN' ON(*) / DO KNOW A GOOD THING WHEN YOU SEE ONE? / BIG GEORGE / DON'T LOOK BACK.41:53.
Scott, org; Harold Vick, ts; Billy Higgins, d; Jimmy Hopps, cowbell(*). Circa 11/1974. NYC.

Personally I never put much weight into the old saw "All Good Things Come To Those Who Wait" but with the release of this session which I've been attempting to obtain since its issuance has made me change my mind. Originally cut for the fabled Strata-East label its limited pressing and distribution made it almost immediately a rarity. The title of this work is self-explanatory and in her voluminous inner-slip annotation Maxine Gordon does into intimate detail regarding the circumstances surrounding the session. In addition to being a music insider, accomplished biographer of former husband Dexter Gordon and close personal confidante to Ms. Scott, Gordon will tell one all they need to know about the this releases back-story. What is heard here are three writings from the leader and a pair from Vick. The tenorist was no stranger to the Hammond B-3 milieu having played with such figures as Big John Patton, Jimmy McGriff & Brother Jack McDuff among others. Long a favorite of his peers (Sonny Rollins wrote a tune to him) he, like Hank Mobley, Tina Brooks, Charlie Rouse and a few select others, never got his due until after he left us. An all-styles saxmaster he can't be boxed in as a mere soul jazz funkster when one checks out his work with early fusion combo Compost. The same is true of Smiling Billy who ran the gamut from Lee Morgan to Ornette Coleman. That Ms. Scott would choose these two among all the other jazz giants she knew and worked with is a testament to her unerring taste which always translated to her keyboard talents. Neither a screamer or squabbler, she harks back to some of the older organ pioneers like Jackie Davis, Teddy Buckner or Wild Bill Davis. Utilizing a less-percussive attack she often employs a more chordal approach occasionally in conjunction with a mellotron (a synthesizer of sorts) which gives an overall string layering effect. The opening tune is brushed by Billy and spiked by a smidgen of salsa, its followed by Vicks' semi-boogaloo with what sounds like overdubbed horns but could be the mellotron again. "Do You Know A Good Thing When You See One?" just lays me out; a walking blues with a bridge and some extended saxophonics from Mr. Vick. Next up is Shirley's dedication to the great George Coleman, it has a nice drumkit spot from Higgins then the final number, that Vick named for his sole Strat-East LP with a larger group. This one has mellotron sounds on the theme. But enough of this descriptive jive, just buy the vinyl or disc It was worth the wait.

Larry Hollis

New Issues

CHARLES TOLLIVER, CONNECT, GEARBOX 1561,

BLUE SOUL / EMPEROR MARCH(*)/ COPASETIC / SUSPICION(*). 38:36.

Tolliver,tpt; Jesse Davis, as; Keith Brown, p; Buster Williams, b; Lenny White, d; Binker Golding, ts(*). Circa 11/2019. London, UK.

After retrieving this review CD from my mailbox and opening it up my television happened to be playing a commercial for a restaurant chain that featured the theme song from a seventies sit-com that brought back some memories. The lyrics expressed a "welcome back to someone who had been away much too long" and I thought to myself how apropos it was at that particular moment. This import disc marks the gifted trumpeter Tolliver's return to the recording studio after more than a decade. Many younger listeners may not be aware of his background so due to the absence of booklet annotation a short introduction is in order. He came to my attention in the mid-sixties on three albums by the great Jackie McLean and recorded with other artists on that esteemed label (Andrew Hill, Hank Mobley, Horace Silver) when in the early 70s he formed the legendary Strata-East company with compadre Stanley Cowell who remains equally under-valued. Tolliver's last releases, before this latest, were also under the Blue Note logo during the last decade.

The trumpet man is no novice at assembling all-star configurations, his debut under his own name (Paper Man, 1968) sported an A-list combo with Herbie Hancock, Gary Bartz, Ron Carter and Joe Chambers for the British Black Lion label that made this writer recall a Billy Preston hit "Will It Go "Round In Circles". The line-up is almost identical in instrumentation save for the addition of tenor sax on a pair of titles. Captured at London's RAK Studios while on a European tour Tolliver enlists some heavyweights as his touring band with names most Cadence regulars will be aware of. It's good to see altoist Davis back in action while Donald Brown's son Keith makes a strong impression comping and soloing with much authority. Two of the four tunes presented can be heard in previous big band versions, one each on Tolliver's pair of Blue Notes. Those titles are" Emperor March" which was the title of a 2009 live album and "Suspicion" from 2006. The former is the longest number heard with Brit Binker Golding adding his tenor to the head with its seven note punch over a Latin feel. He takes the first ride followed by alto shadowed by the leader with fast-fingered trills and brassy jabs then a probing piano spot from Brown. The latter is my favorite cut, the always dependable Buster Williams sets up the intro before being joined by keys & drums into a cooking three horn shout with riffs behind each of the horn soloists. Davis' hot alto reminded this listener of the much-missed Arthur Blythe but without the buzzsaw overlay. Piano navigates back to the lead line with Lenny White providing popping underpinning throughout. Elsewhere the leadoff title "Blue Soul" has pow-wow drums before alto/trumpet unison. Davis and Tolliver fit hand-in-glove like a musical Sydney Greenstreet/ Peter Lorre and their solo statements are expertly underlined by intermittent walkups and returns to the initial throbbing rhythm.
The folded three page insert has Ghost lyrics written for each track save "Copasetic" which is the shortest at a little over six minutes. It's taken medium up with sections of staggered time.
Speaking of time, the total playing time might be on the skimpy side but with sounds this rich let's not complain. Welcome back indeed.

Larry Hollis

New Issues

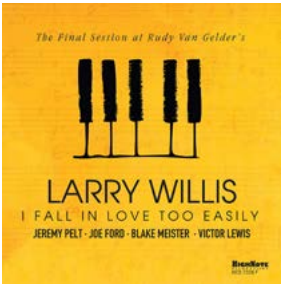
PURDIE/FABIAN/ OSWANSKI, MOVE ON!
CAP RECORDS 1068.
THE RED PLAZA / BPP BLUES / CAN'T YOU SEE (YOU'RE DOING ME WRONG) / 84-85 / GOT GROOVE (PT.2)/ LOVE YOU MADLY / MOVE ON! / THE BATTLE HYMN OF THE REPUBLIC / SO WHAT. 50:00.
Ron Oswanski, org; Christian Fabian, b; Bernard "Pretty" Purdie, d. 5/2019. Little Falls, NJ.

When one thinks of organ trios, nine times out of ten, it is usually made up of organ and drums with either guitar or sax but there have been instances of the former two with a bass player, either electric or acoustic. Shirley Scott is the name that most often comes to mind. There are arguments, both pro or con, concerning an organist playing their own bass lines with left hand or feet on the pedals as opposed to employing an outside bass provider which some argue frees up both hands to roam the keyboards. This threesome is an example of the latter.

Billed as a collective it is debatable who the designated leader is on this disc. Veteran drum master Purdie is listed first but bassist Fabian is credited with writing(and arranging) the bulk of the material. There are four covers present, one each from Duke and Miles, a soul tune penned by three of the Tower of Power principals (Steve "The Doctor" Kupka, Emilio Castillo, Lenny Williams) and a ht from the 1800s. The release sheet touts this warhorse ("Battle Hymn of the Republic) as a " amazing, surprise" which is incorrect as this B-3 buff can recall other versions with organ. TOP leader Castillo doesn't provide much info in his skimpy liner notes but Fabian seems to be the dominant soloist here with the organ and drums providing needed coloration. A competent outing but nothing to get overly excited about.

Larry Hollis

New Issues



LARRY WILLIS, I FALL IN LOVE TOO EASILY, HIGHNOTE 7326. TODAY'S NIGHTS / HEAVY BLUE / ANNA / HABIBA / THE MEANING OF THE BLUES / LET'S PLAY / CLIMAX / I FALL IN LOVE TOO EASILY. 50:36. Willis, p; Jeremy Pelt; tpt; Joe Ford, as; Blake Meister, b; Victor Lewis, d. 9/5/2019. Englewood Cliffs, NJ.

Subtitled The Final Session At Rudy Van Gelder's this disc by the under sung keyboardist Willis brought to mind an old song from the great Billy Preston "Will It Go Round In Circles". As explained in the first paragraph of Russ Musto's annotation he was in his early twenties when he first darkened the door of that hallowed studio to wax an album with Jackie McLean. For the next several decades Willis was in and out of that recording space both as a leader and sideman for various labels until his passing at age 76 from a pulmonary hemorrhage.
For this final gathering a strong lineup of three longtime associates and a newcomer were assembled. That new face was that of brass ace and co-producer Jeremy Pelt who joins Joe Ford for half of the selections and is heavily featured on the sole ballad "The Meaning Of The Blues" which not only spotlights his lyricism but that of the leader. As Musto points out in his liners these eight numbers make up something of a career retrospective with a pair of scripts from his seminal Heavy Blue issue under the import Steeplechase logo; the brisk title tune with some hot drumwork from veteran Lewis and the popping Latin-flavored romp "Habiba" from fellow pianist Kirk Lightsey. Two trio tracks from another 1994 Steeplechase date Let's Play sport "Anna" by bassist Santi DeBriano in a moody take with strong interplay between the upright and piano while the album's namesake is another Willis original that slowly builds on the suspense level. My picks for favorite tracks are the fiery full quintet reading of Jack DeJohnette's "Climax" which the pianist first essayed on a Blue Note Jackie McLean classic Jacknife from September 24th of 1965 and the final cut, a solo piano rendition of the standard that is a perfect sampling of the multifaceted talents of the late, great Larry Willis.

Larry Hollis

New Issues

MICHAEL FORMANEK
ELUSION QUARTET
TIME LIKE THIS
INTAKT CD313

DOWN 8 UP 5 / CULTURE OF NONE / A FINE MESS / THIS MAY GET UGLY / THE SOUL GOODBYE / THAT WAS THEN / THE NEW NORMAL. 58:43.

Formanek, b; Tony Malaby, ts, ss; Kris Davis, p; Ches Smith, dr, vib, Haitian tanbou. 2/14/2018, Mount Vernon, NY.

It wasn't difficult for Michael Formanek to find a subject for his first album on the Intakt label. Formanek's intention was to reflect the emotions of what we're living through, for a Time Like This in human history is unprecedented. Intentionally chosen as a pun, as was Dave Brubeck's Time Out or Bill Evans' Time Remembered, for example, the title of Time Like This refers to the presentation of Formanek's own slippery applications of meter, which can change during the process of improvisation throughout the album. The emotions of this time of global alarm-with sudden medical attention diverted to the COVID-19 pandemic, economic uncertainty if not collapse (the depth of which is still unknown at time of this review in May 2020), demonstrations against racial injustice, the cynical use of disaster for political divisiveness, the immediate evaporation of audience-based performance opportunities, online rather than face-to-face communication ["social distancing"]-have become even more fearful and darker since Formanek's Elusion Quartet's recording was released. The downward social, economic, political and medical trends are worrying. Screwball comedies and uplifting songs like "Life Is Just a Bowl of Cherries" (1931) may have been distractions after the 1929 economic crash, but they didn't reflect how people really felt. With more musical freedom in the last fifty years, recordings, and particularly jazz, have become more honest. Honest, and perhaps prescient, is Time Like This. Formanek composed the musical frameworks for each of the album's seven compositions. And then he chose three other confident, imaginative, artistically honest musicians who could deepen with their inimitable abilities the emotional bearing of the improvisational spaces. Perhaps as a warm-up to the musical social statements, the first track of Time Like This, "Down 8 Up 5," is a literal description of Formanek's compositional element of pitch, rather than meter. Pianist Kris Davis starts the rootless down-8-up-5 intervals as an otherworldly initial upper-register twice-played solo motive before Formanek and Smith deftly join, Formanek with a single note at the beginning of the pattern and Smith with light hi-hat taps at one, six-down, two-up and one. Malaby enters with his own brief legato counter melody, eerie as well as he allows for two of Davis's patterns between choruses.

And then the quartet, still weaving in the motive throughout, develops without undue drama a complex floating tapestry of improvisational forms which are all the more intriguing when Smith's vibraphone adds to the drifting colors. "Culture of None" is cultural indeed as Formanek and Smith commence with a spirited give and take. Formanek establishes a rapid movement of uneven meters while Smith adds mixed cultural references with hand drumming on the Haitian tanbou. Davis contributes to the spur-of-the-moment feel with splashes, trills, chunks and single-note scampers, mostly in the treble clef. As before, Malaby applies his melody to the improvisation, bringing eventually the four-part unity to the ending. Formanek's political statements begin with a piece whose title refers perhaps to either the Blake Edwards or Laurel and Hardy movie's title. If anything, "a fine mess" understates the current social and political chaos we live in, and so does "A Fine Mess," the jazz composition. Malaby introduces and concludes the theme, softly performed. Davis develops a gossamer rhythmless solo as a separate interpretation, individualistic as is Formanek's. (It should be noted that the recorded clarity of Davis's performances is due in no small part to the quality of the piano at Oktaven Audio.) "This May Get Ugly" obviously precedes the worldwide events after the 2018 recording because unimaginable ugliness has descended upon us. The warning of "This May Get Ugly," similar to other tracks like "The New Normal" in its organic improvisational development, moves from a tentative interplay of soprano sax and piano to a ferocity of free expression led by Formanek and Smith's rumbling movement before a hushed ominous calmness descends. "The Soul Goodbye" confirms the dark suggestion of "This May Get Ugly." Malaby is the leading voice with long tones and aggressive trills and loosened-embouchure sonic shapes and squeals and barks and overtones. Refuting the sometimes heard insistence that earlier times like that were without their own problems, "That Was Then's" rhythm surges with Formanek's vamp, splashed by Davis's chords of close dissonance. Malaby plays the unsettling twisting written melody over them. And the final track, "The New Normal," alludes to a phrase heard all too often as planned polarization in all of its unethical ways becomes acceptable. Formanek's untethered improvisation with Malaby represents his "new normal" as they intentionally set up an eerie scenario of unplanned direction before Davis and Smith come in with the written unison ringing accompaniment in defiance of a standard time. How similarly unpredictable is a time like this.

Bill Donaldson

New Issues

MAGNETIC
EP
BLUJAZZ BJ3475

ANA MARIA / NOT SO FAR AWAY / SOB A LUZ AMARELA / TAPESTRY / DIVISCERAL. 36:39.

Joel Moore, ts, ss; Nick Mizock, g; Paul Scherer, p, synth; Michael Barton, el b; Paul Townsend, d. 2018, Joliet, IL.

With the release of EP, the musicians of Magnetic recall the heyday of extended-play recordings, which bridged the length and the number of song selections between 45-RPM single plays and long-play albums. Now, Magnetic has recorded its own extended-play CD of similar-to-EP length. Without the advantage of liner notes, listeners may assume that EP is a sampler (at a little over 36 minutes), as was the intention of some EP's, rather than a fond recollection of EPs' content. EP features a quintet of seasoned Chicagoland musicians presenting, except for Wayne Shorter's "Ana Maria," their own compositions, which are consistent in the thematic objective of EP format. The five tracks vary in atmosphere and compositional approach. They feature, through their solos, the individual members' mastery of their instruments through their immersion in post-fusion-inspired sound. It is entirely appropriate that the album begins with a Shorter composition, for Magnetic plays the subdued "Ana Maria," from Native Dancer, with similar instrumentation, with Joel Moore's obviously Shorter-influenced tone on soprano sax, and uncannily with almost exactly the same tempo. Extended solos from Moore, Paul Scherer on keyboard and Nick Mizock on guitar account for EP's longer version of "Ana Maria." Magnetic's musicians have long jazz resumes, as well as degrees in music from geographically distant educational institutions like Berklee University of Music, Indiana University and the University of Southern California. Their circumstances converged in Chicago for this and perhaps future recordings. EP succinctly offers additional contrasting and complementary tracks written by three of Magnetic's musicians, thereby providing distinctive improvisational opportunities and separate musical statements. Moore's bright "Not So Far Away" establishes contrast after "Ana Maria" with a Dave Grusin-like finger-snapper similar to a movie's or a television show's theme song from the 1980's, complete with a conventional ending, but for the inclusion of dynamic solos from electric bassist Michael Barton and Mizock. The minor key modality of Moore's "Sob A Luz Amarela" veers back to Shorter's style rather than toward eighties sitcom themes. Its darker shades feature Moore's own polished burn on soprano sax and Mizock's finely articulated pizzicato guitar flurry. Barton's "Tapestry," EP's longest track, is finely woven indeed in lush atmospheric textures as Moore switches to tenor sax and as the quintet develops a rubato ethereal shimmering. And then, Mizock's "Divisceral" ends EP with an energetic scamper aligned with Carl W. Stalling's wackiness, complete with Scherer's whimsical Rhapsody in Blue quote on acoustic piano. "Divisceral" provides Scherer with more improvisational opportunity than do the other tracks, on which he plays synthesizer. This brief, challenging composition, alternating between prodding accents and rippling fluidity, offers final prestissimo performances by each of the band's members-Moore soaring on tenor sax, Mizock zinging with fascinating rapidity on electric guitar, Barton switching between bounding serial accompaniment and free interplay, and drummer Paul Townsend driving with relentless force

Bill Donaldson

New Issues

JOHN SCOFIELD
SWALLOW TALES
ECM 2679
She Was Young / Falling Grace / Portsmouth Figurations / Awful Coffee / Eiderdown / Hullo Bolinas / Away / In F / Radio
Scofield, g; Steve Swallow, bass; Bill Stewart, d
3/2019 Steinhardt, NY

The art of freewheeling improvised Jazz is alive and well in "Swallow Tales". If I could subtitle this amazing CD it would be "Ears Wide Open". Let me take you back to the early 70's when I was a student at Berklee College Of Music. Steve Swallow was teaching and John Scofield was a student, but not your everyday student. John was already recognized by many including Gary Burton as an exceptional guitarist. Steve Swallow was writing many of these tunes at the time, they were made into lead sheets and past out among the students. They became vehicles for us to learn to improvise on. The most famous of these was "Falling Grace". The tunes themselves were different, more modern with harmony unlike that of the previous era. In a similar fashion, John's playing was also different and more modern, expanding the role of jazz guitar to find new degrees of dissonance, tone and phrasing. All the things that make John instantly recognizable and set him apart from other guitarist were coming into focus. Jazz was evolving, and you're listening to two of the architects of that evolution. Add into the mix Bill Stewart. Aside from being one of the finest drummers on the planet, Bill hears everything and his reactions are cosmic and in a voice all his own. "Swallow Tales" presents nine of Steve Swallows original compositions. All of which demonstrate a uniqueness in melody and harmony and the ability to marry the two. The bass has a strong voice within the trio, encouraging vigorous conversation as they travel through the changes. Some may disagree but when I listen to this trio I can hear distant sounds of Cream's "Wheels Of Fire". I love every track on "Swallow Tales", so let me describe a few. "She Was Young", is a beautiful, playful ballad in 3/4, a story being told. John's use of voicings and counterlines shapes and colors this simple and expressive melody. "Falling Grace", the tune we know best. Eight bars of drum solo intro leads to a crashing first chord and it's off we go. Everyone is on high alert as they soar effortlessly through a tune they feel so at home with. "Awful Coffee", is a dark, colorful melody, traveling, searching and finding clarity as it leaves just enough room for everyone to show their feelings "Away", a deep and mournful ballad, climbing to express what's in the heart, like the ocean crashing into the jagged coast only to be sucked back out to sea. The whisper of Bill's brush work and an exceptional solo by Steve make this an extraordinary piece. "Portsmouth Figurations", provides a wild ride through this slightly up tempo piece. John is in top form, sucking notes out of the air, bending, twisting and slurring those notes as he weaves his way through the changes and crashes into a chord of his own invention. Bill's on fire, absorbing everything around him as he creates pockets of energy. Steve in pursuit, driving his bandmates to excellence. A perfect example of ears wide open ! All in all, kind of like "Somewhere Over The Rainbow" LOL, there's a place where jazz musicians go to be free. Somewhere between this world and the next. "Swallow Tales", takes you there.

Frank Kohl

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, but it is only a fraction of what crosses my desk. I choose to only write about things I find of interest, usually because of the music's quality. Mine is a small voice against media hype/print-ola, but be assured neither friend or benefactor has influenced my judgements. My writings are my feelings and that which money can't buy. You can contact me at 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. Thanks and cheers,

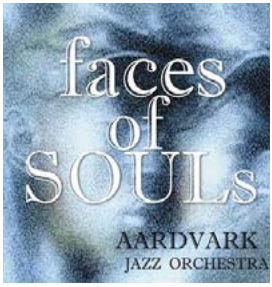
A plethora of big band recordings have come to my attention, and in turn I'll bring some of them to your attention.

Tenor saxophonist MICHAEL ZILBER leads EAST WEST [Origin Records 82791]. There are two bands — EAST [a 16-piece band recorded in March 2018] and WEST [a 20-piece band recorded August 2018]. Each CD in this two CD set has seven tracks including eight originals. The remaining tracks are covers of jazz compositions [East] or well known standards [West]. Except for Joe Bagale, who sings on one track, soloists are not identified on the individual tracks.

RICHARD UNDERHILL'S SHUFFLE DEMONS are featured on their eighth release titled CRAZY TIME [Stubby Records scrod 1703]. As its title suggests, this CD should have a certain fun and lightness to it. Sadly, all of that is lacking. What's here is mature but bland music, with two recitations added in an attempt to be hip. All this will surely disappoint followers of the band. May their ninth CD be better.

HAND PAINTED DREAM [Savant scd 2175] is the newest big band release from PETER HAND. Recorded in February 2018, this 19-plus musician recording is loaded with soloists including Valery Ponomarev and Eddie Allen [tpt], James Weidman [p], Don Braden [ts/flt], Camille Thurman [vocal], Ralph Lalama [ts, alt], James Burton III [tbn], Steve Johns [dms] and Peter Hand [as]. The program is pleasant and professional, but really excels on the five Peter Hand originals and on his arrangements of jazz classics

such as "Berkshire Blues" and "If You Could See Me Now." Kudos are also due for the well laid out notes, photos and discography. It all adds up to a first class effort, from every angle.



Of a similar style to the One O'clock Band is the UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO JAZZ ORCHESTRA showcased on EMBARGO [UOT Jazz 829982 206220]. Among the eight tunes on this dateless recording are six student compositions and takes on "A Train" and "Hi Fly." This is a pleasant, understated recording with enough dirt to keep it interesting.

In the last Papatamus I wrote about MARK HARVEY [p] on the occasion of the release of his earliest recording. I also wrote about the AARDVARK JAZZ ORCHESTRA (AJO), which Harvey led from its inception almost 50 years ago. The AJO has just released their 10th recording on Leo Records titled FACES OF SOULS [LEO Records cd lr 877]. This is an undated recording of seven lengthy tracks [70:18]. There are some vital moments over this hour, but it rarely connects, defaulting to a rambling orchestra with no one picking up and running with the inspiration. Too bad. With players like Allan Chase [as], Peter Bloom [as/flt], Phil Scarff [ts,ss] and Bill Lowe [tbn/tu], I would have hoped for more.

SILKE EBERHARD [as] admits to having a passion and knowledge of Eric Dolphy's music. She has written and arranged eight originals [51:54] for her tentet, remarkably catching the spirit of Dolphy's music on POTSA LOTSA XL — SILK SONGS FOR SPACE DOGS [Leo Records cd lr878]. This is a splendid group with strong players throughout. If you're a fan of Dolphy's music, get this without hesitation. It breaks it down in a way I don't remember ever hearing before. As Eberhard admits "the ghost of Dolphy is still around the music."

DAVE POST has issued his seventh volume of SWINGADELIC, BLUESVILLE [Zoho zm202007]. The musical content should find a welcome place for many Papatamus readers because of the familiarity of many of the tunes. Among the 14 tracks are "The Late Late

Show," "I Love the Life I Live," "Harlem Nocturne," "Whats Your Story Morning Glory," "Lonely Avenue" and "The Mooche."

The latest release from bassist JEFF REED is a fine, straight-ahead bop date titled LOOK TO THE LIGHT [Sticker Street Records ssr1003]. This November 2019 date features Sean Jones [tpt], Todd Marcus [b-clt], Jonathan Epley [gtr] and Eric Kennedy [drms]. The program is a mixture of originals and jazz standards all played with thought and heart that wears very well on repeated listenings. Special notice goes to Todd Marcus, who handles the bass clarinet without apeing Dolphy.

ZEN ZADRAVEC [p] and his septet offer strong bop on HUMAN REVOLUTION [Factor Records zz 07742]. The undated recording features seven nice originals plus a beautifully rendered take on "Soul Eyes" [62:00]. Trumpeter John Douglas shows his chops briefly on the opening track, with Derrick Gardner coming on strong later in the session. Other standouts include Todd Bashore [as, ss], who plays with emotional sensitivity, and Dylan Bell singing wordlessly on two tracks. A pleasant excursion.

STEPHANE SPIRA [ss] and GIOVANNI MIRABASSI [p] are a pair of Frenchmen who came together on IMPROKOFIEV [Jazzmax Records 3521383 461167] . They are joined by Donald Kontomanou [drm], Steve Wood [b] and by Yoann Loustalot [flg], who appears on one track. The recording has a lovely sense of humor and lightness about it as the group plays music inspired by Improkofiev Suite (excerpts from Violin #1) plus a Carla Bley and Erik Satie piece. Good stuff.

BRIAN SCANLON [as/ts] has made close to 100 dates as a sideman, but BRAIN SCAN [no label 888295 938440] recorded in 2019 is, I believe, the first session under his own name since 1972. Scanlon is joined by a group of mostly well known studio musicians including Tom Ranier [p], Trey Henry [b], Peter Erskine [dms] and Larry Koonse [gtr]. There are eight originals plus "Harlem Nocturne" on the program.

At first I was impressed by the way the music swings and by the dexterity of Scanlon's sax work. However, after another listen or two, it left me wanting more depth.

FOR NOW is the newest release from BRIAN LANDRUS [bari/bclt/flts] on the Blueland label [BLR2020]. Joining Landrus in the foreground are Fred Hersch [p], Billy Hart [dms] and Drew Gress [b]. The quartet is augmented by Michael Rodriguez [tpt], Sara Caswell [vln], Joyce Hammann [vln], Lois Martin [vol], and Jody Redhage-Ferber [cello]. The 12 tracks are a mixture of nine originals and three standards. Although the CD offers good music in many colors - strings, quartet, solo bass clarinet, uptempo, and ballads — the sequencing leaves it a bit unsatisfying as a whole.

Brian Landrus [bari/bclt/flts] is also part of the band on vocalist CECE GABLE'S fine recording — MORE THAN A SONG [New York Jazz Project 1001]. The set features ten standards that fit Gable's breathy and sincere delivery. In addition to Landrus, the band includes Roni Ben-Hur [gtr], Harvie S [b] and Sylvia Cuenca [dms]. The band is at its best when interacting with the singer. Landrus' interplay with Gable is a scene stealer on one of the longest tracks on the CD — "It's Alright With Me" [6:01].

Strings are in the forefront on ROGER HANSCHEL'S BEAUTY OF THE ESSENTIAL DETAIL [MicNic Records mn 7]. A group called String Thing — Nicola Kruse [vln], Ingmar Meissner [viola], Gunther Tiedemann [cello] and Jens Piezunka [b] — joins saxophonist Hanschel on this October 2013 recording. The nine compositions [61:54] are Hanschel originals and played mostly in unison, suggesting a strict discipline. Composition takes the spotlight on this session, with Hanschel, who has been a member of Kolner Saxophone Mafia, playing as part of a chamber string quintet.

Moserobie Records has corralled two of the finest post bop tenor men — JUHANI AALTONEN and

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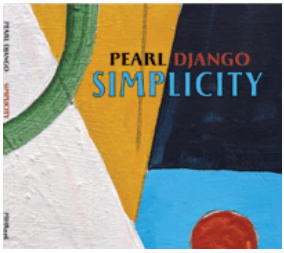


JONAS KULLHAMMAR — on this May 2019 date titled THE FATHER,THE SONS & THE JUNNU [mmlcd 124]. They are joined by two relative new comers to the Scandinavian jazz scene — CHRISTIAN MEAAS SVENDSEN [b] and ILMARI HEIKINHEIMO [drm]. The improvisations, each contributed by a band member, play out like a suite. It opens with a scratching rhythm that touches deep into one's gut as the other musicians fall in line and carry on with the spirit. Frankly, any recording that features two veteran sax men of this caliber would be tempting fate to not succeed. Three generations of creative talent bodes well, in this celebration of Scandinavian post bop.

PEARL DJANGO have been around since the mid '90s with a number of CDs to their name. Over the years they have moved away from "Django" as evidenced on SIMPLICITY [Modern Hot Records mhr 026]. This latest effort offers 11 originals penned by different members of the quintet. Even though the orthodoxy of Django may not be in the forefront, you can still hear the strum of guitar against the pluck of the bass, riding under the flowing melodies of the accordion and violin [more reminiscent of a fiddle, and before you write in, it is the same instrument but each with a distinctive sound]. A lovely recording in the pseudo- Django vernacular.

Inspired by Django, but played out of the normal vernacular is REZ ABBASI'S DJANJO-SHIFT [Whirlwind Recordings WR4762]. Here, with his trio of Neil Alexander [org/electronics/synthesizers] and Michael Sarin [drm], Abbasi plays nine tunes associated with Django but restructures the melodies and harmonies. Despite familiar titles like "Swing 42," and "Cavalerie," I could only identify the original tune when it would make a brief appearance like a sunken ship at low tide. It's a fun listen, and one of Abbasi's best, especially for folks of post-Django music.

LAFAYETTE GILCHRIST brings his exciting piano style to NOW [no label 613285 781726]. This two CD

set, recorded in November 2019, features Herman Burnie [b] and Eric Kennedy [drm] playing Gilchrist tunes like "Assume The Position," "On Your Belly Like A Snake" and "More Careful." Disc two is far less percussive and "Monkish" than disc one, and it takes a moment to adjust to its more softer, more romantic side.

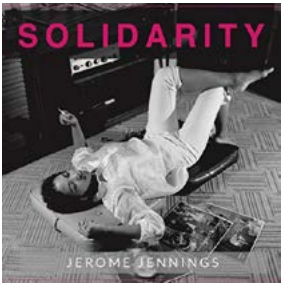
Matthew Shipp introduced a new sound/direction in jazz piano style since arriving on the New York avant scene and making his first appearance on Cadence Jazz, in 1987. Today, he has almost 200 recordings to his name. His latest is a two-CD set titled MORPH [ESP Records esp5026]. Recorded in March 2019, disc 1 (subtitled Reckoning) is a duo set with drummer Whit Dickey, while disc 2 (subtitled Pacific Noir) adds trumpeter Nate Wooley to the mix. Shipp is usually more angular than of recent, making this recording a nice respite from his more rhapsodic approach. Wooley and Shipp have been recording with Ivo Perleman, but I don't remember the energy and interplay at this inspired level.

Bassist FERDINANDO ROMANO has written some lovely music for TOTEM [Losen Records los242-2]. The eight originals [55:59] were written to feature vibist Nazareno Caputo and trumpeter Ralph Alessi, whose playing on six tracks is lovely against the composed sections. Tommaso Lacoviello is added on flugelhorn, for three tracks.

Composition is basic to the music on JASON KAO HWANG'S HUMAN RITES TRIO [True Sound Recordings ts 03]. The composed parts are well integrated into the music, allowing the listener to focus on the improvisation. There are moments of hesitancy during transitions for musical directions. There are some moving solos and group forays. After several listenings, I would concur that this is meaty music.

ANGELA TURONE [voc/p] and CHRIS PRATT [gtr] have released SOUNDS OF BRAZIL [Factor Records 829982 210586]. The nine tracks come together for a

very traditional CD that includes a lovely piece of Brazilian music, as well as familiar tunes like "The Pawnbroker" and "Bewitched." Although there are no surprises with this approach, it is an effort worthy of your time and ears.



Drummer JEROME JENNINGS' SOLIDARITY [lola Record lor-j2] is a vibrant recording with a tentet that includes Tia Fuller [sax], Christian McBride [b], Josh Evans [tpt] and others. Things open with "Bebop" taken at such a tempo that it is over before one's ears catch up with it; but it's cool. The eleven tracks on this undated session include a nice variety of material, mostly originals with two well thought-out drum solos. Camille Thurman takes one vocal and also shows her skills on tenor sax There is some subtle underlying politics to this recording which deserves attention, no matter what your politics are. Enjoy.

TWO HOURS EARLY, TEN MINUTES LATE [Accretions alpo71] is a new duo recording with JASON ROBINSON [ts] and ERIC HOFBAUER [gtr] playing a dozen compositions by the late Ken Aldcroft. As expected, there is a give-and-take of the two instruments that occasionally play in unison. Much of the variety and gifts of this music really unfold on repeated listenings, and does so without becoming familiar. This has held up for the better part of a week, making it good listening, not easy listening. The CD comes with extensive liner notes. Very nice indeed.

Strings with improvisation and/or rhythm is a combination that's hard to beat. Charlie Parker knew that, as did Archie Shepp, Max Roach, Dominic Duval and others. Bassist/composer EVA KESS keeps that tradition going with FALLING STARS [Neu Klang Records ncd4230]. This September 2019 recording features two violins, viola, cello, piano and drums, and it is a beauty. The combination of written music and improvisation is wonderful, with only minor exceptions. Overall ,this is an exciting and tasty release.

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CLAIRE DALY'S RAH! RAH! [Ride Records RID-CD-34] should find favor with fans of the baritone sax and with the music of Rahsaan Roland Kirk. The 10 tracks include Kirk originals and a couple harmless vocals, two originals and a handful of standards. "Rah Rah" for Daly to pay homage to "Rah" on her newest release.

ESP Records got its start by releasing recordings from unknown or little known free-jazz musicians of the day. The music was often played free to extreme. One of the latest releases on that label — OWL XOUNDS EXPLODING GALAXY [ESP 5050LP] — has the characteristics of earlier ESP releases, in that it is a total free blow out. These are unissued tracks [28:64] from the Splintered Visions LP by Gene Janus [b], Adam Kriney [drm], Mario Rechitern [sax], and Shayna Dulberger [b]. Previous issues were released on very limited editions. If you long for the innocence and energy of the early days of the ESP and BYG labels, then this is for you.

PETER LEMER [p] was one of the original artists recorded on ESP. Now, after a career on the continent, a few dozen recordings and about seven years of silence, he is back at ESP with SON OF LOCAL COLOUR [ESP 5031]. Recorded live at Pizza Express in February 2018 with the same group as his earlier ESP release — John Surman [ss/bari], Tony Reeves [b] and Jon Hiseman [dms], with Alan Skidmore [s] taking the place of George Kahn. I was not a fan of Lemer originally, but this CD is quite enjoyable.

NoBusiness Records has issued RICOCHET [nbcd 128], the third volume of its SAM RIVERS project. This sessions finds Rivers playing with his trio of Dave Holland [b/cello] and Barry Altschul [drm]. As with the first two volumes, Rivers is in good and forceful voice on this January 1978 date from the Keystone Corner. The title track, which clocks in at 52:14, fills the entire CD.

Papatamus

From the bizarre world of C.C. Cochran comes JOHN FINLAY, SOUL SINGER [Vesuvius Records vm002]. Eleven tracks, six of them original, are packed with heart felt singing, reminiscent of Al Green and various other soul singers.

BRENT JENSEN offers a Paul Desmond tribute on THE SOUND OF A DRY MARTINI [Origin Records 82396]. Jensen's alto is joined by Jamie Findlay [gtr], Zac Matthews [b] and Dean Koba [drm]; all do a wonderful job of evoking the Desmond sound. It is so comforting and familiar that I began to dose off about midway through the recording, and I think the producer possibly did as well, as near the end of "Out Of Nowhere" there's the unmistakable sound of a dial tone from a phone left off its hook. A lovely CD, but not as lovely as the original.

Tenor saxman, GREGORY DUDZIENSKI, hasr eleased BEAUTIFUL MOMENTS [OA2 Records 22183]. This November 2019 date has Chris White [p], Kelly Sill [b] and Jeff Stitely [drm] playing some excellent originals. If the music had been written and recorded by a first line jazz artist in the 1950s, they would have become jazz standards. Here is music that's lyrical and delivered without bravado. Bravo.

JEREMY LEVY and his jazz orchestra take inspiration from Gustav Holst on THE PLANETS: REMAGINED [QA2 Records 22182]. Levy rearranged and conducted Holst's original works and made them more enjoyable. The jazz element, unfortunately, is secondary.

Vibraphonist SERGIO ARMAROLI'S Decenver 2019 recording features Harri Sjöstrôm [ss] and Giancarlo Schiaffini [tbn]. Hence the title — DUOS & TRIOS [Leo Records cd lr892]. The program is divided into two sections — nine duos and three trios. The results are disappointing. Although Sjöstrôm and Schiafiffini have been around for many years, Armaroli is relatively new to recording. He simply adds color to the exciting sounds of the veteran players.

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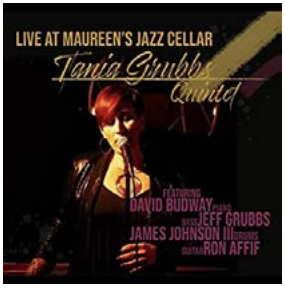
The duo of GEORGE McMULLEN [tbn] and VINNY GOLIA [reeds/flute] is featured on LINE DRAWINGS VOLUME 1 [Slidething stm101] and SLIDETHING VOLUME 2 [stm 102]. McMullen first recorded with Golia in the early 1990s, and then again in 2019. However, the artists seem less comfortable with each other on this 2015 date. If I had to recommend one volume over the other, there is a greater flow between the artists on Volume 2.

JOHN DI MARTINO treats us to a 14 Strayhorn compositions on PASSION FLOWER [Sunnyside Records ssc4114]. All tunes are nicely and freshly handled, including a vocal on "Lush Life" by Raul Midón. The tune, which is what "Giant Steps" is for saxophonists, is handled well by Midon. There is also phenomenal playing from saxophonist Eric Alexander on this July 2019 session.
Alexander, who has appeared on hundreds of recordings, is never less than average. Especially fresh here is the group's take on "Take the A Train". If you're a Strayhorn fan, get this CD for its many surprises and joys .



TANIA GRUBBS is a new singer to me, and her LIVE AT MAUREEN'S JAZZ CELLAR [Tania Grubbs Records 888295 977173] is quite enjoyable. Grubbs has a rather small mid-range voice and displays it well on subtly emotional lyrics. The setting here is jazz with David Budway [p], Jeff Grubbs [b], James Johnson III (dms) and Ron Affif [gtr] serving up more than introductions to the dozen songs on this recording. Each tune averages about six minutes, leaving time for these musicians to stretch out. The five tunes from the jazz canon are the highlights of this live date.

PAULETTE MC WILLIAMS is another new singer to me who released A WOMAN'S STORY [Blu jazz 640668 348528]. She shows great potential, but it is wasted on the dribble which makes up most of the 12 tracks here. The exceptions are two Janis Ian songs. Good singer, but a lousy CD.

Singer MAYITA DINOS released her debut disc

titled THE GARDEN IS MY STAGE [Dash Koffman Records dhr 1025]. The 13 tunes here are well chosen as Dinos handles the material with care, nuance and originality. The arrangements for her ensemble are well done, but lack interaction between the players.

RAINBOW BABY [Orenda Records 0076] is the latest release from CATHLENE PINEDA [p]. Kris Tiner [tpt], Tina Raymond [drms] and David Tranchina [b] join Pienda on ten original compositions. The linear music is winsome and lonely with nice interaction between Pineda and Tiner. This is a pianist of some merit.

Folks who enjoy guitar and organ combos will find a good one in HIT IT [no label 888295 996099] by the BK TRIO, featuring BRIAN KOOKEN [gtr], Greg Hatza [B3 organ] and Robert Shahid [drm]. The organ grinds away while the guitar glides without restraints over eight originals. Good listening.

Active on the scene for the past 40 years, RADAM SCHWARTZ [p/org] has several recordings on the Arabesque label. His latest is ORGAN BIG BAND [Arabesque Records 195081 600888], a set of 10 swinging and foot tapping tunes. There are a number of solid solos from this 14 piece band with drummer David F. Gibson — given prominent second billing on the CD's cover, but I don't see why. He has one solo and it kicks the band as expected, but there are other soloists who played more dynamically. A good listen.

The 3D JAZZ TRIO [Diva Jazz Orchestra 3dcd-2020] is yet another branch of SHERRIE MARICLE'S Diva Jazz Orchestra.The good new is I can't think of any of her many efforts that are not artistically credible, including this trio date. Jackie Warren's piano has a touch of Red Garland, while Amy Shook supports the effort on bass.

HORACE TAPSCOTT with the PAN AFRIKAN PEOPLES ARKESTRA - ANCESTRAL ECHOES, THE COCINA SESSIONS, 1976 is he latest material from the Tapscott archive eleased on the Dark Tree label (DT(RS)13). This recording has music structured similar to Sun Ra. With just four tracks and around 70 minutes, it could have made a stronger recording with some editing of redundant percussion rounds and the excessive ensemble wandering. But if all are given a chance, there are some inspiring solos in the ensemble. What is encouraging is the notes indicate that the Tapscott family retains some rights to the music.There are huge gaps in Tapscott's discography. Hopefully Dark Tree can fill in those gaps and do the recordings with good audio.One can only guess what goodies might still be issued.

There was an agreement between Paul Desmond and Dave Brubeck that when Desmond went out on his own he would not record with a piano. Here he is on a live set from Toronto with Ed Bickert [gtr], Don Thompson [b] and Jerry Fuller

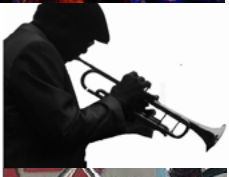
Papatamus

Desmond went out on his own he would not record with a piano. Here he is on a live set from Toronto with Ed Bickert [gtr], Don Thompson [b] and Jerry Fuller [drm]. PAUL DESMOND; THE COMPLETE 1975 TORONTO RECORDINGS [Mosiac md7-269]. captures the band at Bourbon Street in 1975. Desmond's playing with Dave Brubeck, arguably the most popular jazz group in North America In the 1950s and 1960s, helped put him on the map. I am a big fan of Desmond's distinctive and lovely style and this is a wonderful set of his music, with the quality of the recording and notes living up to the Mosaic standard. Desmond adds the "butter" to the familiar and lyrical tunes from the Great American Songbook on this recording. However, after a few hours of listening to this set, the music falls into the background. I still prefer the recordings of Desmond with Brubeck, Getz or Mulligan.

Robert Rusch, edited by Abe Goldstein

Obituaries


Annie Ross


Eddie Gale


Gary Peacock


Helen Jones Woods


Ira Sullivan


Sterling McGee


Steve Grossman

ANNIE ROSS, *jazz singer and actor, died on July 21, 2020. She was 89.*

EDDIE GALE *[tpt] died on July 10, 2020. He was 78.*

GARY PEACOCK *[bass] died on Sept. 4. 2020. He was 85.*

HAL SINGER *[ts] died on August 18, 2020. He was 100.*

HELEN JONES WOODS *[tbn] died on July 25, 2020. She was 96.*

IRA SULLIVAN *[tpt, fl] died Sept. 21, 2020; He was 89.*

STANLEY CROUCH *[drm] died on Sept. 6, 2020. He was 75.*

STERLING MCGEE *[gtr/voc] died on Sept 6, 2020 of covid-.19. He was 86.*

STEVE GROSSMAN *[sax] died on August 13, 2020. He was 69.*